

Kuala Lumpur

Recent landslides and flooding in Klang Valley not the result of overdevelopment, says mayor >4



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A uniform welcome

All entry points into Kuala Lumpur will soon feature a series of boundary markers in terms of landscape and vegetation to give visitors a feel that is unique to the capital city. The mayor gives *StarMetro* a picture of what the five-year project entails. >2&3



Getting the ball rolling: This 'Welcome to Kuala Lumpur' fixture greets out-of-town visitors at one of the entry points into the capital city. — LOW LAY PHON/The Star



The welcome gantry in Brickfields lets visitors know they have arrived in Little India.

Giving Kuala Lumpur an iconic identity

TheStar
EXCLUSIVE

City Hall on mission to add special features and more trees

By BAVANI M
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KUALA Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) is giving a reason to out-of-towners to visit the country's capital city, also known as the Garden City of Lights, by creating a series of boundary markers.

It hopes the markers themselves will become a tourist attraction.

The project, currently still on the drawing board and dubbed "Kuala Lumpur Boundary Markers", is set to start this month.

It involves creating iconic landmarks using elements such as signposts, trees, pylons, boundary stone markers, street art and even murals that will mark the city borders.

"The moment you enter Kuala Lumpur, there will be a significant change in the landscape and ambience surrounding the area or even along the route to the city centre."

"We want road trippers coming from different states to feel the change in scenery and mood the moment they enter the city boundaries," said mayor Datuk Seri Mahadi Che Ngah.

He said people who had not visited the city before would know right away when they entered Kuala Lumpur territory by just looking at the landscape and vegetation around the area.

The project, he said, was a collaboration of all departments as it involved planning, infrastructure and landscaping.

"When you visit different parts of the world, each city has its unique charm and set of characteristics that are reflected in their boundary markers," he noted.

"Take for example the Route 66 sign in the United States, which is so iconic that people stop and take photos of the signage."

"Other similar markers are the Hollywood Hills sign (US), the Selamat Datang monument in Jakarta (Indonesia), the border marker in Lloydminster in Saskatchewan (Canada), the Penny Lane sign in Liverpool (England) and Seoul's LED signage in South Korea."

"They are all the unique markers of the respective cities that make them special," he said.

Mahadi elaborated that Kuala Lumpur borders would be the entry gateway where trees of a specific species would be planted along the roads leading into the city.

"Structures like pylons, which are permanent fixtures, will be given a new look whereby anyone who sees them will immediately know that they are unique to Kuala Lumpur."

"Other structures that can add

charm to the city include sculptures, clock towers, (stone) boundary markers, road markings, murals, sidewalks, crossroads, road kerbs, columns, street arts, kinetic light installations, LED font signage and even a specific colour choice will be utilised for the markers that will give the city a vibrant look," he added.

The project, said Mahadi, would involve the whole of Kuala Lumpur's boundary spanning 103.3km.

Forest around the city

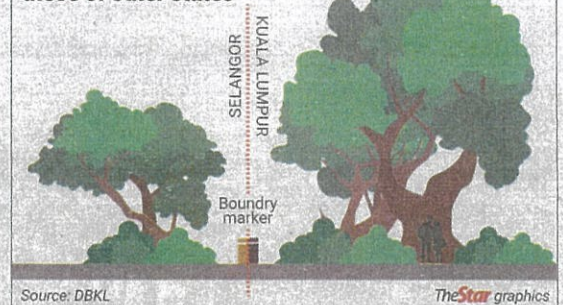
For now, 15.67km of the boundary have been identified for the tree-planting programme that will line the borders of the city.

DBKL has identified several local species ideal for the border planting initiative.

Mahadi said the species short-listed were *Shorea roxburghii* (meranti temak nipis), *Hopea odorata* (merawan siput jantan), *Agathis borneensis* (damar minyak), *Tristanopsis obovata* (pelawan merah), *Cratoxylum formosum* (mampat/geronggang), *Diospyros penangiana* (kayu arang), *Syzygium grande* (kelat jambu laut) and *Lepisanthes alata* (perupok).

"We hope that once a (tree) species is identified for a specific area, only that species will be planted in

Artist's impression of how trees in KL will compare with those of other states



that spot for uniformity and standardisation, in terms of height and width," he said.

Twenty-three areas have been identified for the green border programme. These include main roads, crossroads, parallel roads, highway, flyover and pedestrian bridges with welcome signs.

Among the streets identified for this programme are Jalan Metro Perdana and Jalan Besar (Kepong), Jalan Impian Indah (Bukit Jalil), Jalan PBS 14/2 (Mimos Tech Park), and Jalan Desa Cheras, Jabatan Perhilitan (Cheras).

Colour the streets

An integral part of the project is incorporating street art in the city,

including bringing colour to sidewalks, crossroads, kerbs, columns and pillars.

"We already have some beautiful murals in Kuala Lumpur, but we want to bring that art to other parts of the city, even on the roads," said Mahadi, citing the popularity of street art in the Netherlands, Australia and the United States.

"Our previous mural projects have proven to be very popular and have been Instagram sensation, so we are confident that street art is going to be a hit too," he added.

Welcome gantries

Gateway signs that are usually placed at border entries are impor-



(Left) TNB boxes like these add colour to the streets of Kuala Lumpur.

A mural that extends to the road in Bukit Bintang. — Filepic





Norlin Zainal, 46, taking a selfie under the flyover painted rainbow colours in Kuala Lumpur.



PONGGAL BAZAAR

Malaysian Ceylonese National Community Centre (MCNCC) will hold a ponggal bazaar called Darbar Bazaar from 10am to 8pm on Jan 8 and 9 at the MCNCC hall No. 15, Jalan 18/16, Taman Kanagapuram, Petaling Jaya. It will showcase almost 40 vendors.

FLOOD AID

Shah Alam City Council (MBSA) is distributing essential supplies and dry food to flood victims. Donations can be sent to Wisma MBSA (flood operations room) daily from 8am to 5pm. Donations can also be banked into their account. For details, call 012-388 9235 (Nor Hamimi Shariff) or 019-214 0164 (Juliah Alimun).

CNY BAZAAR APPLICATION

Klang Municipal Council (MPK) has opened the applications for trading spots at Chinese New Year bazaars. The bazaars will run from Jan 18 to Feb 17. Applications can be made at portal.mpklang.gov.my/permitonline until Jan 7. Balloting will be done live via MPK's Facebook page.

SELVAX BOOSTER

Selangor residents can book an appointment for their free booster jabs under Selvax Booster programme via the Selangkah app. Users need to input a voucher code specific to their preferred Selcare clinic. The voucher codes are available on all Selangkah social media platforms.

TRAIN TICKETS

The Electric Train Service (ETS) and KTM Intercity tickets for trips from Jan 15 to June 30 will be available for sale starting Jan 5. The public can buy tickets via the KTMB app or the Keretapi Tanah Melayu Bhd website. For details, call 03-2267 1200 or visit the website.

SKYWALK REOPENED

Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) has reopened its Forest Skywalk. Bookings can be made at skywalk.frim.gov.my or email frim_enquiry@frim.gov.my (for more than 10 people). For details, visit [facebook.com/FRIMKepong/posts/229951345833704](https://www.facebook.com/FRIMKepong/posts/229951345833704).

EMERGENCY HOTLINE

Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) has launched a 24-hour hotline for city folk to lodge complaints about fallen trees, collapsed lamp posts, oil spills on roads, as well as presence of snakes and beehives. Send photos and location via WhatsApp to 011-653 99004 or call 03-9284 3434.

FREE BIN RENTAL

Pharmaceutical Association of Malaysia is sponsoring 300 roll-on, roll-off (RoRo) bins to expedite rubbish disposal. Selection of applications will be based on urgency. Terms and conditions apply. To apply, go to <https://forms.gle/AhWnDxZsjPFT1Gxd6> and for enquiries, email phama@phama.org.my.

PARKING FEES

Seremban City Council has enforced parking charges in Nilai involving commercial areas of Taman Semarak, Taman Desa Jasmin, Taman Desa Cempaka, Pekan Nilai and Putra Nilai. Motorists can pay via apps such as Jom Parking and Flexi Parking. Parking compounds can be paid at Wisma MBS or by scanning the QR code on the compound notice for online payments. For details, call 06-765 4782/4785/ 4789.

"Structures like pylons, which are permanent fixtures, will be given a new look, whereby anyone who sees them will immediately know that they are unique to Kuala Lumpur"

Datuk Seri Mahadi Che Ngah

tant as they welcome visitors to the city.

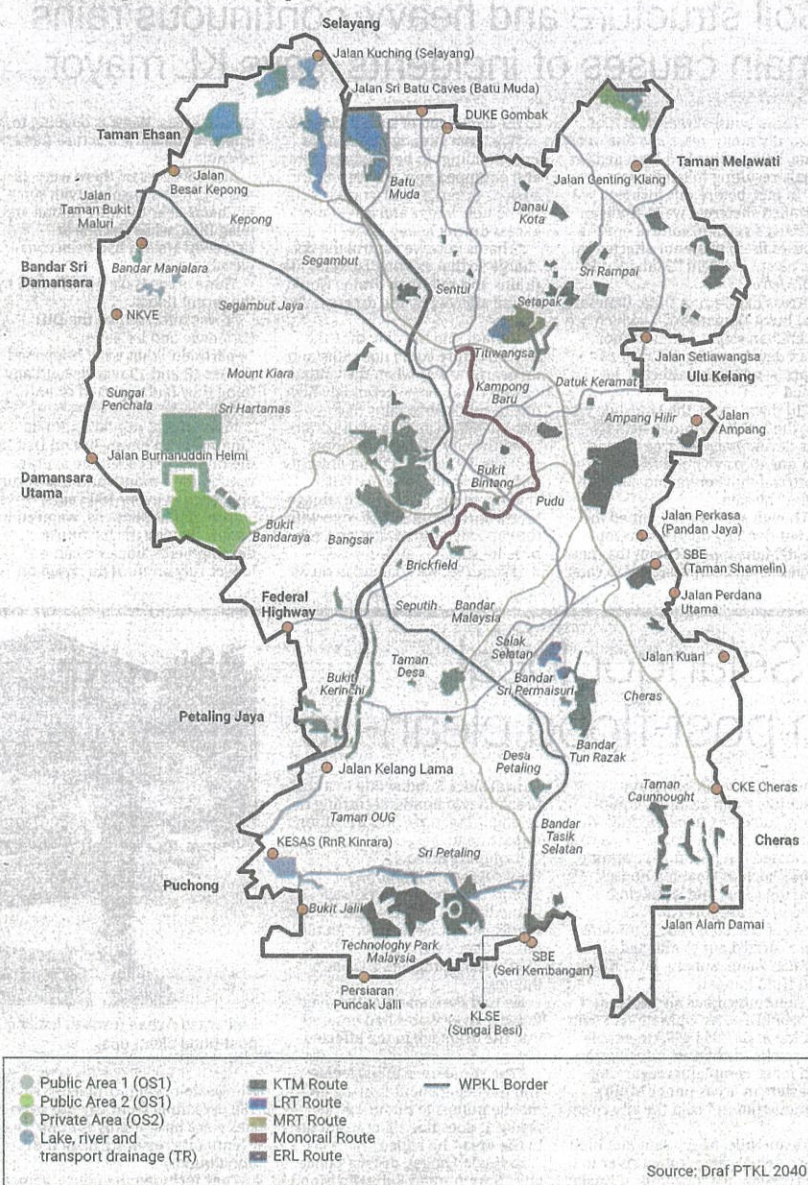
There are 15 border entries to Kuala Lumpur and many are located on the city outskirts.

Plans are also in the pipeline to build welcome gantries in some areas to give a sneak peak of the city.

"First impressions are important and we want that first experience to be inviting," said the mayor.

He added that the project would take five years to complete, starting with the borders, while the greening of the borders programme was ongoing.

Greening Kuala Lumpur's borders





The landslide in Jalan Palimbayan Indah in Kampung Sungai Penchala on Dec 20, 2021 affected 284 residents. — Filepic

(Far left) Residents of four blocks in Seri Duta 1 Condominium who were affected by a landslide were advised to evacuate. — Photo courtesy of DBKL

By BAVANI M.
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THE recent spate of landslides in Kuala Lumpur occurred mostly in older neighbourhoods, where there has not been any development for decades, the Kuala Lumpur mayor says.

Datuk Seri Mahadi Che Ngah said the majority of areas that experienced landslides were older townships like Bangsar and Taman Duta, with no construction sites located nearby.

"As such, it is wrong to blame overdevelopment for these occurrences," he said.

He added that some areas in Bangsar Indah, the landslide occurred on vacant land.

"A lot of it has to do with the soil structure of the area," Mahadi said, explaining that the amount of water the earth could hold depended on the type of soil.

"Soil with a lot of clay and silt can hold more water. Loose soil structure, on the other hand, won't be able to absorb water and this can result in slope failure after a continuous downpour."

The mayor said that since Dec 18, over 80 areas in Kuala Lumpur were affected by landslides precipitated by the continuous heavy rains that weakened the soil structure.

One of the worst landslides in the city was at Jalan Palimbayan Indah in Kampung Sungai Penchala.

"This is an old area with kampung-style houses on steep slopes with no proper infrastructure like drainage.

'Recent landslides mostly in older neighbourhoods'

Soil structure and heavy, continuous rains main causes of incidents, says KL mayor

"These houses were built haphazardly many years ago and over time, heavy rains had loosened the earth, resulting in landslides."

"In fact, before this incident, we installed shotcrete walls along an affected stretch to control erosion. Houses there were not affected by the recent incident," Mahadi told StarMetro.

Areas like Taman Duta, Bangsar and Bukit Damansara — which are located on slopes and have not been developed for the past 20 years — were also affected, he noted.

"In these areas, the landslide was not the result of human activity like development or tree cutting, but due to gravity and friction from soil movement and constant rains," he said.

Though some have blamed the recent flooding on overdevelopment, Mahadi pointed out that new projects had been designed to cater

to the likelihood of such incidents.

"We have already planned for new buildings to be flood-resilient and equipped with infrastructure such as drainage and storage facilities to hold water and divert any excess during heavy rains."

"That is how we control the discharge so that existing facilities like drains and monsoon drains would not be affected by the excess water."

Mahadi said the only time the infrastructure could not withstand an overflow was when the volume of water was overwhelmingly high due to continuous rains that exceeded the capacity of the drains. On the city's flood mitigation projects, he said 173 flood hotspots had been identified since 2019.

Many of the areas face drainage issues and are unable to cope with the capacity of the water and rubbish, he said.

"From 173, we zoomed in on 39

critical areas. Work is ongoing to improve the infrastructure there," he said.

Mahadi also said there were 22 major projects ongoing, with some in Cheras near the MRT station and Jalan Duta, while the one at Universiti Malaya had been completed.

"These areas were not affected by the recent floods."

"I was informed by the DID (Drainage and Irrigation Department) that what happened on Dec 18 and 19 was beyond anything they had expected or anticipated."

"The annual rainfall in Kuala Lumpur is 2,400mm, but on Dec 18 the rainfall exceeded the average rainfall for a month and this occurs only once in every 100 years."

"And if that happens, we need to review the designs for future developments since we can no longer rely on the data based on



Mahadi: Over 80 areas in Kuala Lumpur were affected by landslides since Dec 18.

100 years anymore.

"Bottom line is we have to accept the fact that climate change and global warming are going to play a major role in increasing the risk of flooding in the future."

"We all need to play a role to counter or mitigate that," he concluded.

MBPJ helps Selangor local councils with post-flood clean-up

PETALING Jaya City Council (MBPJ) has been sending relief teams to help other local councils in Selangor with clean-up works after massive floods struck parts of the state last month.

"The relief teams consisted of MBPJ's Pantas squad and 90 volunteers comprising council employees, led by Petaling Jaya mayor Mohamad Azhan Md Amir," said MBPJ's corporate communications unit in a statement.

"They were sent by Shah Alam City Council, Subang Jaya City Council, Klang Municipal Council and Kajang Municipal Council to help with the clean-up works."

The team members helped to transfer flood victims and deliver essential supplies to temporary relief centres, provide logistical support such as tow trucks, four-

wheel-drive vehicles, heavy machinery and cleaning equipment, transport flood victims who tested positive for Covid-19, as well as carried out post-flood cleaning works such as cleaning houses, clearing roads and supplying trucks to transport rubbish.

"As of Dec 22, 17 such missions were carried out to affected areas in Shah Alam, Subang Jaya, Klang and Hulu Langat.

"The council has also activated its MBPJ Disaster Operations Room hotline at 03-7954 2020 to enable the public to channel information and lodge complaints regarding disasters in areas under MBPJ's administration," said the city council.

Meanwhile, heavy rain and high tide caused water from a river to overflow in two locations in Kuala

Langat since Sunday due to a slight break in two bunds, according to Selangor Drainage and Irrigation Department.

Its deputy director (Development), Mohd Nazri Yasmin said repair work was immediately carried out at the two bunds, which were in Kampung Rancangan Tanah Baharu (RTB) Bukit Changgang and Labohan Dagang.

He told Bernama that the overflowing river water had entered into the drainage in the affected areas.

"The situation is manageable and the department is using its mobile pumps to pump out the water. It does not affect residents in the area," he added.

In Kuala Langat, district police chief Supt Ahmad Ridhwan Mohd



Mohamad Azhan (centre) leading MBPJ staff who volunteered for post-flood clean-ups.

Nor@Saleh, when contacted, said 150 personnel from various agencies were on stand-by for any eventuality resulting from the burst bunds.

They included the police, armed

forces, Fire and Rescue Department, Malaysian Civil Defence Force, Malaysian Volunteer Department and Kuala Langat Municipal Council, he added.