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SELANGOR JOURNAL

The rise of Selangor

IN the last 15 years, Selangor has cemented its status as an economic powerhouse following responsible and competitive governance. Apart from its various reforms and people-centric initiatives, the state administration has also recorded impressive figures in its reserves, increased the average household income of the people, and brought unemployment down. Its strength lies in its ability to be resilient and its commitment towards new solutions for growth.

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By SITI ROHAIZAH ZAINAL

PUTRAJAYA - The First Selangor Plan (RS-1) is a regional development strategy that would also stimulate the state's economy, says Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari.

The Menteri Besar said that the projects under RS-1 include the Integrated Development Region In South Selangor (Idriss), the Sabak Bernam Area Development (Sabda) and the Selangor Maritime Gateway (SMG).

"In redeveloping townships for the 2019 Budget, I proposed the idea of economic clusters to find the most unique characteristics of the towns and villages and to rebuild based on that.

"We don't have a large area to develop like Putrajaya, but thank God, some 40 to 50 years ago Selangor was among the earliest to progress due to its strategic location.

"Based on this idea of economic clusters, regional development has been thought through with the RS-

Economic clusters key to progress: MB

1, such as Sabda, SMG, the redevelopment of the (Shah Alam) stadium complex and Idriss," Amirudin said when delivering his speech at the Perdana Putrajaya Dialogue 2023 at Zenith Hotel here, on March 20.

With the theme 'Developing a Madani Nation', the event was organised by the Malaysian Town Planning Officers Association (Persada) and the Department of Town and Country Planning (PLANMalaysia).

On March 17, Amirudin said that a sub-committee involving all agencies will be formed to ensure that the three mega projects included in the RS-1 run smoothly.

He said the committee will be headed by a state executive councillor, a Selangor state assemblyman or an officer who can examine the projects, in addition to obtaining monthly reports.

Amirudin also stated that 18 out of 262 projects within the five-year development framework of the state have been completed as of February.

He added that as many as 64 projects are in planning while 180 projects are being implemented to complete the core of economic strengthening, social inclusion, sustainability and good governance.

Earlier this year, in his new year

speech to state civil servants, Amirudin said that the RS-1 is the outcome of the state's long-term development plan.

The five-year RS-1 plan was unveiled in July last year, involving a total of RM212.44 billion, and features the implementation of comprehensive policies, projects and initiatives between the state and Federal governments.

The plan focuses on four areas — economic growth, empowerment of the people, sustainable development, as well as good and transparent governance — that would be developed through 262 projects and initiatives.

New perks for industrial park developers

SHAH ALAM - Selangor is offering new incentives to investors and developers involved in development projects in the state, which includes the Integrated Development Region in South Selangor (Idriss) and the building of an industrial park using the Managed Industrial Park (MIP) concept.

Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari said to drive the development of Idriss, five incentives were introduced, namely a special premium scheme, interest-free instalment payments for development charges, vacant land assessment tax exemption, a 50 per cent deduction in vacant building assessment tax, and business licence fee exemption.

As for the industrial park's development, Amirudin said the state administration has introduced four additional incentives to investors, including fast-tracking processes and approval periods, and assessment tax and business licence fee exemptions.

"We also offer real estate ownership quotas for citizens or foreign companies of permanent residents, long-term non-strata development leases, and land and assessment taxes.

"Incentives help to reduce the burdens of the initial development costs, and as such draws the interest of real estate developers to expedite development activities," said Amirudin during the launch of Idriss at the

State Secretariat Building here, on March 15.

Idriss is one of the agendas outlined in the First Selangor Plan 2021-2025 (RS-1), and the development involves an area spanning 20,000 hectares in the Sepang and Kuala Langat districts, with an estimated gross development value of RM1 trillion.

The industrial park is to be systematically managed by the Industrial Park Manager (IPM) and the developer, or the IPM appointed to manage and maintain the park.

Meanwhile, Amirudin said that the mega projects within the RS-1 framework would enable Selangor to achieve its target of contributing up to 30 per cent to the national gross domestic product (GDP) by 2026.

He said projects like Idriss, the Sabak Bernam Area Development (Sabda), and the Shah Alam Sports Complex, are expected to contribute around one per cent to GDP growth annually.

"The surge in state development as formulated in RS-1 will ensure Selangor remains the country's biggest GDP contributor. Every year, we record growth of up to 0.4 per cent of the national GDP.

"If our projections continue, we can see a contribution of 27 per cent to the national GDP. With RS-1, I believe this can reach 30 per cent by 2026," he added.

30% GDP achievable, says MB

SEPANG - The state government is confident that Selangor will be able to increase its contribution to the nation's gross domestic product (GDP) to 30 per cent between 2025 and 2026.

Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari said this will be driven by projects like the Integrated Development Region in South Selangor (Idriss) as well as the NCT Smart Industrial Park (NSIP).

"With the injection of projects like NSIP and Idriss, we are confident that we can galvanise more economic activities," he said to reporters after the NCT Group of Companies' Smart Industrial Park's groundbreaking ceremony on April 7.

Amirudin added that such major initiatives would boost the state's economic growth and subsequently increase its contribution to the national GDP, which stood at 24.8 per cent in 2021.

Despite the absence of major projects, he said Selangor's contribution to Malaysia's GDP has increased by between 0.2 per cent and 0.5 per cent per annum since 2018.

Meanwhile, the ceremony saw the Menteri Besar officiate over 296.4 hectares of development under the NCT Group of Companies (NCT Group), which will feature infrastructure progress, the use of artificial intelligence (AI), and modern technology.

The industrial park is part of 10 projects in Sepang and Kuala Langat, as formulated under the First Selangor Plan (RS-1) announced in July last year.

Amirudin said the project is a starting point for both the NCT Group and the state

government in the endeavour to highlight potential economic development.

"I am quite pleased as this is not just the beginning for NCT Group, but also for development in Southern Selangor via Idriss. The groundbreaking ceremony proves that it is no longer a dream but a reality that is starting to take shape," he said.

On his part, NCT Group managing director Datuk Seri Yap Ngan Choy said the project is expected to cover three phases, and will be completed within a decade at an estimated gross development value (GDV) of RM10 billion.

"This is a project of the future, and we remain confident of working with potential investors abroad, including those from the United States, South Korea, China, Taiwan, and Australia," he said.

NSIP, with a focus on the semiconductor, electronics, electrical and pharmaceutical sectors, will feature 101 twin factory units and 27 industrial plots in its first phase.

It will serve as a one-stop centre that provides services to stakeholders like Invest Selangor and the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (Mida).

Idriss' overall scope involves the development of over 16,000 hectares, which is aimed at ensuring the distribution of Selangor's economic activities and generating more job opportunities.

The various development projects that have been proposed include those in the industrial sector, logistics and warehousing services, ports, businesses, housing, tourism, and education.



Asean's best to converge at SIBS

By IDA NADIRAH IBRAHIM

SHAH ALAM - The Selangor International Business Summit (SIBS) 2023 is set to see RM1.5 billion in potential negotiated sales in its seventh edition, which will be held from Oct 19 to 22.

State executive councillor for investment, industry and trade Dato' Teng Chang Khim said that the international expo anticipates the participation of 1,050 booths and 50,000 trade visitors.

Themed 'Selangor Gateway to Asean', the summit will be taking up all of the eight expo halls and two conference halls at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

"SIBS 2023 will continue its role as

the regional premier summit for local and international industry players to convene and explore the great potential of the Malaysian and regional markets.

"Last year, we recorded 44,342 (participants), so (this year we are targeting) an increase of about 10 per cent or so, which is reasonable. As for international participants, we had 60 countries participating and this year we are looking at 70.

"Invest Selangor will once again lead the organising committee of this four-day summit, which will be held on Oct 19 to 22 and will feature a total of six unique concurrent events," said Teng at the media launch of the SIBS 2023 at Sheraton Hotel Petaling Jaya,

on March 27.

The six components include the ninth Selangor International Expo (F&B), the ninth Selangor International Expo (Medic), the third Selangor Industrial Park Expo (SPARK 2023), the seventh Selangor Asean Business Conference (SABC 2023), the eighth Selangor Smart City & Digital Economy Convention (SDEC 2023) and the fourth Selangor R&D And Innovation Expo (SRIE 2023).

Teng said the summit will also feature three other parallel events, namely the Selangor International Culinary Festival (SICF), the Selangor International Healthcare Conference (SIHC), and the Selangor International Business Summit Invitational Golf Tournament 2023 on Oct 21.

He said in the previous summit, SPARK was the highest contributor to

the RM1.45 billion worth of potential business transactions, followed by the F&B and Medic international expos and SDEC.

"SIBS is a great platform for businesses to showcase their brand and services to a diverse audience from various industries and countries.

"By participating in SIBS, we hope you get the exposure you need to potentially attract new clients, which will ultimately lead to business growth."

On March 17, Teng said the state administration will visit Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines and Singapore in April to promote the summit.

The visits are also necessary to invite ministers from the said countries to be speakers at the various conferences.

Visitor registration for the summit is now open at www.selangorsummit.com.



Selangor promises a bigger, better airshow

SHAH ALAM - The Selangor Aviation Show (SAS) 2023 is scheduled to run from Sept 7 to 9 with a targeted RM2 billion in potential investments.

State executive councillor for investment Dato' Teng Chang Khim said that the third edition of the air show at the Skypark Regional Aviation Center (Skypark RAC), which will span over two exhibition halls and three forum rooms, aims to see a crowd of 12,000 visitors and 50 exhibitors representing the world's best aerospace and aviation industries.

"The exhibition is set to discover industry players and become a platform to expand the country's aviation sector. Over 67 per cent of the overall aerospace ecosystem in Malaysia is located and operates in Selangor.

"Various segments are featured at the event such as aircraft exhibitions, local and international exhibitors showcasing the latest products and services in the general and business aviation segment, sports and recreational aircraft, helicopters and drones," he said at a press conference on the SAS 2023 here, on March 21.

Themed 'The One and Only Business and General Aviation Show in the Region', the air show aims to see the par-

ticipation of more industry players with 40 aircraft slated to go on display.

"We are expecting more industry players to participate in this year's event. Many companies have already expressed their plan to join, but registrations are not yet open.

"We also invite government agencies such as the army to showcase some of their assets that are suited to the programme," he said.

Since 2021, the state aviation show hosted by the Selangor government and organised by Invest Selangor Bhd has been a networking event for the aerospace industry players, particularly for the business and general aviation sectors, to re-energise their business in the region.

The state administration had set for Selangor to become a major player in the global aerospace industry by 2030

through the Selangor Aerospace Action Plan executed by the Selangor Darul Ehsan Aerospace Industry Coordination Office (S-Daico).

SAS 2022, which was held from Sept 8 to 10 last year, exceeded expectations with a total crowd of 10,563, surpassing the initial target of 8,000, and successfully recorded RM1.174 billion in potential transaction value while SAS 2021 recorded 3,875 visitors and RM100 million.

Those interested in participating in SAS 2023 may contact the secretariat at Invest Selangor before 31 May to enjoy a 5 per cent early bird discount. Returning participating exhibitors will also en-

joy a 10 per cent discount.

Members of the public who plan to visit are advised to register at selangoraviationshow.com to choose their preferred date.



RM4m roadshows a success

By ZAREEF MUZAMMIL

SHAH ALAM - The first phase of the Jelajah Kita Selangor Penyayang (JKSP) roadshows that took place in nine locations throughout the state costs RM4.16 million.

Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari said the allocation for the success of the programme formerly known as the Jelajah Selangor Penyayang (JSP) roadshow was approved by the Selangor State Executive Council.

He said the roadshow from the Pedu-

li Rakyat (IPR) initiative has received an overwhelming response with attendance reaching 14,100 in eight locations.

"God willing, this weekend, JKSP will reach its ninth location in Sabak Bernam. This time, we are using manual public registration," he said in an answer to Semenyih assemblyman Zakaria Hanafi during the Selangor State Legislative Assembly session on March 14. Zakaria had asked about the amount spent by the state government in making JKSP a success.

In response to Sungai Panjang assemblyman Datuk Mohd Imran Tamrin's questions on what JKSP has to offer, Amirudin said JKSP is still very much like the previous JSP roadshows, with the addition of information about the Iltizam Selangor Penyayang programme.

"The new roadshows will provide visitors with information on Insan (Selangor General Insurance Scheme) and the RiDE (Roda Darul Ehsan) programme. There will also be opportunities for people to sign up for the Bantuan Ke-

hidupan Sejahtera Selangor (Bingkas) and hear about the latest regarding the Impak (Selangor Early Childhood Care and Education) programme," he said.

JKSP started on Feb 18 in Klang and ended on March 19 in Sabak Bernam. Previously, Amirudin announced that the roadshows would only be held for one day at each location but with more activities.

Other IPR programmes like the Aid-ilfitri Open House and Rewang Sekampung will take place from April 28 to May 14.

State seeks long-term options for high food costs

SABAK BERNAM - The Selangor government will look into other ways of helping the people face the rising costs of living.

State executive councillor for agricultural modernisation and agro-based industry Izham Hashim said that a new mechanism will be introduced to replace the Jelajah Ehsan Rakyat (JER) programme that is run by the Selangor Agricultural Development Corporation (PKPS), which is scheduled to end in May after Aidilfitri.

"The JER intervention programme cannot go on for much longer, but subsidies must be given in some cases or it will be hard (for the people).

"Subsidies can be used as a short-term solution but in the long run, there should be other sustainable options, such as how to lower the price of chicken.

"I have often informed the minister (of agriculture and food security) that we need to figure out how to lower the prices of chicken feed so that the price of chicken will also go down," he said when met after launching the Jelajah Kita Selangor Penyayang programme for the Sabak Bernam district in Bagan Terap, Sungai Besar here, on March 19.

He said that in addition to PKPS, the state committee plans to work with the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (Fama) and the Koperasi Warga Hijrah Selangor Bhd (Kohijrah) to offer food packages similar to Menu Rahmah.

"We will review how to package it with Menu Rahmah and perhaps come up with a suitable brand and package that is sustainable and can help the people."

From September to December of last year, two million people in Selangor benefitted from the state's affordable sales programme.

Due to the overwhelming response, the initiative was expanded to 1,200 locations from Jan 16.



Syariah-compliant plan for Insan policy holders

SHAH ALAM - A syariah-compliant Skim Insurans Am Selangor (Insan) will be offered to six million eligible recipients in the state beginning April, says Dato' Teng Chang Khim.

The state executive councillor for industry and trade said that the takaful plan of the free general insurance scheme is subject to the terms and conditions of the service agreement with the four appointed takaful service providers, namely Zurich General Takaful Malaysia Berhad, Etiqa General Takaful Berhad, Takaful Ikhlas General Berhad and Takaful Malaysia Berhad.

"The state government will provide an option between conventional or takaful plans. But when it is enforced in April, if some of them register for the syariah plan, they will receive two plans. However, eventually, we will ensure that they will receive either or.

"To date, a total of 3.8 million people in the state have registered for the insurance scheme and we have about seven more months to reach (the number of recipients)," he said.

Teng was answering on behalf of Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari to a question from Taman Medan state assemblyman Syamsul Firdaus Mohamed Supri during the Selangor State Legislative Assembly sitting here, on March 16.

Teng said that the state government considers all views and suggestions for improvements

to the Insan programme.

"This is to ensure that everyone in Selangor can benefit from this insurance coverage.

"The state government is also committed to implementing the takaful method for the Insan programme in the near future. However, the implementation must go through the procurement process and take into account a number of other factors including the allocation of funds."

Teng also recommended that eligible recipients from the age of 30 days old to 80 years old sign up for the insurance scheme via the WavPay app as it would allow them to immediately download the certificate on their mobile phones.

Meanwhile, starting March 20, up to one million students in Selangor will automatically receive insurance coverage, said Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari.

He said the premium for the coverage will cover students from Standard One to Form Six, including those in private schools.

Insan is a free general insurance scheme, with a cover value of RM60 billion, offered to six million Selangor citizens with a coverage of up to RM10,000 for permanent disability and death due to an accident.

Members of the public seeking more information can visit programinsan.com.

Kita Selangor-style governance gets royal nod

By IDA NADIRAH IBRAHIM

SHAH ALAM - Selangor's strong financial position is expected to attract more investors to the state as its economy grew at 5 per cent in 2021, exceeding the national gross domestic product (GDP) of 3.1 per cent.

Sultan of Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah Alhaj expressed his appreciation for the state's performance, noting that it continues to be the largest contributor to the country's GDP at 24.8 per cent while recording the highest revenue collection in six years.

"The state revenue collection in 2022 has recorded a figure of RM2.533 billion, exceeding the initial target of RM2.05 billion, and higher than the figure recorded in 2021 of RM2.284 billion.

"Selangor's current economic performance is expected to attract more investors to explore the state's potential. Its administration must always act as a facilitator to pique investor interest," said the Selangor Ruler in his royal address during the opening of the first meeting of the sixth term of the 14th Selangor State Legislative Assembly sitting here, on March 13.

From January to September 2022, Selangor recorded RM9.70 billion in investments with 199 approved manufacturing projects.

His Royal Highness expressed his appreciation to Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari's administration, who steered the state in the face of health, economic and political crises while upholding the spirit of 'Kita Selangor'.

He said Amirudin's visionary leadership in formulating the state's five-year blueprint, the First Selangor Plan (RS-1), has propelled economic growth and ensured that the state remains an economic powerhouse in Malaysia and Asia.

"The RS-1 emphasises on the implementation of high-impact strategies for the short and medium term through efficient and effective governance by providing a conducive ecosystem.

"I would like to thank the state administration and the Selangor Menteri Besar for the various efforts and initiatives to develop and boost the state's economy after the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Alhamdulillah (Thank God), the lives of the people of Selangor have nearly returned to normal in the transition to the endemic phase," he said.

His Royal Highness cited several ini-

tiatives that have encouraged the state's economic growth, such as the Integrated Development Region in South Selangor (Idriss), the Selangor Maritime Gateway Economic Development Zone (ZPE SMG), the Sabak Bernam Development Area (Sabda), the opening of new industrial areas based on the Managed Industrial Park (MIP) concept, the Selangor International Business Summit (SIBS) and the Selangor Aviation Show (SAS).

The ruler also hoped that the construction of the Shah Alam Sports Complex (KSSA) can be completed efficiently and in a transparent manner, especially with regard to the cost and quality of the building materials.

"I am confident that the KSSA can be a catalyst for a new era of glory for the Selangor football team and become a symbol of pride for the people," said Sultan Sharafuddin.

The Selangor State Legislative Assembly sitting will be the last before the expected state elections this year.

Eco-friendly state

The recognition of the Gombak-Hulu Langat (GHL) Geopark as the seventh national geopark strengthens the state's commitment to environmental conservation, said Sultan Sharafuddin.

He said the achievement would also support efforts towards realising the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

The GHL Geopark project encompasses 20 geosites in Gombak and Hulu Langat that spans over 112,955 kilometres. It features the longest quartz formation in Southeast Asia, mountainous landscapes and several inland basins.

"I sincerely hope that Selangor would become a sustainable and green state, in line with various development technologies that support environmental care," he said.

Sultan Sharafuddin also said that it is no longer acceptable for people to take the environment for granted and that implementing comprehensive, coordinated, and empowered environmental law enforcement must continue.

"I want to assure the enforcement of officers that they shouldn't be afraid of, or give in to, any threats when taking action against lawbreakers," he said.

Sultan Sharafuddin also welcomed the programme to plant 26 million trees in Selangor from 2022 to 2026, which was launched by the Raja Muda of Se-



langor in conjunction with the International Forest Day Celebration at Bukit Broga Forest Reserve, Semenyih, on Sept 24 last year.

Health matters

The state government's move to increase public health funding in its 2023 Selangor Budget is in line with the recommendation by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The Selangor Ruler said the WHO recommends that allocations for health should be 5 to 6 per cent of a government's total budget.

Selangor's RM2.45 billion-2023 budget allocated RM65.6 million to strengthen public health, a RM600,000 increase from the RM65 million allocation in 2022.

"The health of the people has my attention and must be given priority. The recent opening of new public hospitals is expected to reduce congestion and give people the opportunity to get the best treatment."

The Sultan said among the public health initiatives that have caught his attention is the Selangor Saring programme, which offers free screenings to detect non-communicable diseases.

"Since it started in May 2022, a total of 22,924 individuals in Selangor have registered to participate.

"I hope that more people would take part in the initiative as a form of prevention and early detection (of diseases)," he said.

The ruler also lauded the Anak Istimewa Selangor (Anis) programme for special needs (OKU) children, which started in 2018 and has now expanded to offer a preschool syllabus.

Anis also offers skill-development courses for youths above the age of 18 through the Independent Living Support Centre (ILSC). This will help match the youths with suitable jobs and encourage their productivity.

"Anis has developed into the only holistic and comprehensive ecosystem in Malaysia that provides support and assistance for children with special needs.

"The programme is in line with the 'Kita Selangor' spirit in ensuring that no one in the state is left behind."

His Royal Highness also urged those eligible for Iltizam Selangor Penyayang to take part in the 46 programmes offered, which cover education, welfare, housing, human capital development and health.

Halal suppliers up their game

By ZAREEF MUZAMMIL

SHAH ALAM - The Selangor International Halal Conference (Selhac) 2023 event held in the second week of March managed to record up to RM57.4 million in business matches, surpassing its initial target of RM50 million.

State executive councillor for halal industry Mohd Zawawi Ahmad Mughni said this was a result of the collaboration between leading suppliers and supermarkets, both domestic and international.

He expects an increase in transactions over the course of the next few weeks, as there are companies which are still interested in making business matches.

"Currently we are in the process of tallying the final figures, as there are still more (companies) who want to make business matches.

"This is because they could not do so during Selhac, due to a lack of time," he told the press after officiating the Selangor-level Consumer Day programme, at Dewan Teratai in Section 19 here, on March 18.

Meanwhile, Mohd Zawawi said he has received positive feedback from Selhac's exhibitors over the course of the three-day event, which ran from March 10 to March 12 at the Kuala Lumpur Trade Centre.

"These exhibitors sent in written re-



sponses to inform us of new markets. One example is those who do business supplying vending machines and products.

"Those supplying products to go into vending machines can earn up to RM300,000," he said.

In addition to the participation of

state agencies like Selangor Menteri Besar (Incorporation) or MBI and the Selangor Islamic Religious Department, the conference also saw Bank Islam, Bank Muamalat, Penang Halal International, and Melaka Halal Hub take part.

Notable brands that were featured at Selhac include Farm Fresh Malay-

sia, Sate Kajang Hj Samuri, Nims Crispy Chocotub, Restoran Hameediyah, and Yayasan Hijrah Selangor.

Selhac was first organised in March last year at the Shah Alam Convention Center (SACC), where over 200 exhibitors participated with a record of RM37.73 million in transactions.

More e-commerce brands vie for top spot

SHAH ALAM - Up to 602 entrepreneurs stand a chance at winning RM46,000 in cumulative prizes at the Top E-Commerce Merchant (Top ECM) Awards 2023, organised by the Selangor Information Technology and Digital Economy Corporation (Sidec).

Its chief executive officer, Yong Kai Ping, said the eighth edition of the awards, which runs from March to May, is aimed at recognising successful, creative and innovative e-commerce brands and traders.

"We received 602 applications to participate in Top ECM from Feb 1 to Feb 28, a 36.8 per cent increase compared to the previous year.

"Participants will be evaluated based on the online sales contest, which covers 50 per cent of the score, while the live broadcast contest and the business potential contest respectively cover 25 per cent of the score each.

"The results will be announced in early June," he said at a press conference on March 16 announcing the



Smart Raya Selangor 2023 initiative, which was also attended by state executive councillor for industry and trade

Dato' Teng Chang Khim.

Top ECM features three categories, including the Malaysia Top E-Com-

merce Merchant Awards, the Selangor Onboarding Programme Awards, and the Affin Bank Special Awards (the Rising Star and Affingem Women Trailblazer Awards).

"The Rising Star Award is a special category with three winners selected based on their company's business potential.

"Affingem Women Trailblazer Awards, which is a new subcategory introduced last year, is a special recognition for successful female entrepreneurs in their respective industries," he said.

Affin Bank is the main sponsor of Top ECM Awards 2023, together with the Malaysian Foreign Trade Development Corporation.

Other sponsors include SME Corp, the Small- and Medium-Enterprises Association (Samenta), the National Technology Association of Malaysia (Pikom), the Internet Alliance, and the Malaysian Retail Chain Association (MRCA).

Manufacturing leads in investments

By NORRASYIDAH ARSHAD

PETALING JAYA - The Selangor government attracted RM60 billion in approved investments through various sectors last year, says Dato' Teng Chang Khim.

The state executive councillor for investment said that the figure contributed 22.6 per cent to the total approved investments recorded in the country.

"The value derived from investments in various sectors, especially manufacturing. Last year, Selangor also recorded 265 investment projects totalling RM12.2 billion.

"Following the achievement, Invest Selangor Bhd will boost its efforts in attracting more investors to the state," he said when launching the 2023 Selangor International Economic Summit here, on March 21.

Previously, Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin had stated that the state's success in attracting more than 200 manufacturing projects last year demonstrated investors' trust in Selangor as one of the main investment destinations in the country.

Based on the report issued by the Malaysian In-

vestment Development Board (Mida), Amirudin expressed his confidence that the state would be able to create more job opportunities.

Meanwhile, Teng said that the annual gross domestic product increase of up to 7 per cent is among the 14 goals outlined in the First Selangor Plan (RS-1).

He said the state's development plan includes 262 projects and it has targeted between RM25 billion and RM35 billion each year in approved investments.

Teng said the five-year blueprint also aims to create employment opportunities for between 3.5 and 3.8 million people, equivalent to about 97 per cent of the total labour force in Selangor.

"I am confident that this action plan can make Selangor become a smart and prosperous state by 2025," he added.

The RS-1, unveiled on July 27 last year, has been designed to ensure the state's long-term success and for it to contribute to 30 per cent of the country's GDP by 2025.

The plan includes game-changing projects such as the Sabak Bernam Development Area (Sabda), the Integrated Development Region in South Selangor (Idriss) and the Selangor Maritime Gateway.



Selangor opens doors to Asia and beyond

KUALA LUMPUR - Selangor's ability to organise several international-level programmes over the past few years has made it the economic gateway to Asia, said Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari.

He said the state's diligent efforts to make the Selangor International Business Summit (SIBS), the Selangor Aviation Show (SAS) and the Selangor International Halal Conference (Selhac) a success also introduce local products and entrepreneurs to the world.

"This is a sign of our confidence and our earnest efforts to make Selangor the gateway to Asia, the gateway to the region.

"Therefore, we will continue to work to fulfil the dream and ensure it can be implemented as best as possible. We start small and keep growing.

"We are able to attract domestic and foreign investors. We can also improve the economy and help the development of the country," he said during the 2023 Selhac opening press conference at Putra World Trade Centre on March 10.

Selangor introduced SIBS in 2016 and has attracted the interest of hundreds of companies every year, including foreign and domestic companies. Last year, SIBS recorded a potential negotiation value of RM1.45 billion, much higher than the targeted RM350 million.

SAS was organised in 2021 to promote aerospace sector growth in addition to providing a platform for local companies as well as small- and medium-sized industrial entrepreneurs to explore the field.

Selhac was first organised in March last year at the Shah Alam Convention Centre (SACC) with over 200 exhibitors and recorded transactions of RM37.73 million.

New interest in smart tech and digital services

SHAH ALAM - The Smart City and Digital Economy Convention (SDEC) 2022, one of the Selangor International Business Summit (SIBS) components, recorded a total potential transaction value of RM50 million in 2022.

State executive councillor for industry and trade Dato' Teng Chang Khim said that the exhibition space, organised by the Selangor Information Technology and Digital Economy Corporation (Sidec), opened up opportunities for trade and investment between the attendees and exhibitors of the annual event.

"Sidec had organised the seventh edition of the SDEC last year and it was a packed four-day convention with two main tracks — the smart city track and the digital economy track.

"The Asian Smart City Conference: Mayors Summit is one of the largest

conferences planned by Sidec, which brings together mayors and representatives from different cities from around the world to share their knowledge, experiences and approaches to addressing challenges in urban livability through smart technology.

"A total of 11 cities from Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, the Netherlands, Indonesia and Australia participated," said Teng in answering a question by Bandar Utama state representative Jamaliah Jamaluddin on Sidec's performance and report card during the Selangor State Legislative Assembly sitting here, on March 14.

He said among the events featured under the smart city track include the Asia Smart Cities Conference, the Net Zero and Circular Economy Forum, and the Technology Expo. The digital economy track consists of the Selangor SME

Digitalisation Conference, the Selangor Fashion Accelerator (Demo Day), the Live Stream Festival and a technology exhibition.

SIBS 2022, which is one of the major annual events in Selangor, recorded impressively last year with RM1.45 billion in potential negotiated sales compared to RM217.6 million in 2021.

Meanwhile, Teng said Sidec has contributed RM334.37 million to the state economy through e-commerce and digitalisation activities since 2015.

Some of the achievements and programmes recorded by the state subsidiary are as follows:

- **The Selangor e-Commerce Onboarding Programme:** 100 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) launched their online business through webstore platforms and e-commerce websites in 2022.

- **The Selangor E-Commerce Education Programme:** Some 8,053 participants attended 25 classes held over three months in 2022. The figure surpassed the initial target of 1,000 physical and 5,000 online participants by 34.2 per cent.

- **The Top E-Commerce Merchant (Top ECM) Awards 2022 (seventh edition):** Achieved total sales of RM58.9 million and 427,643 orders. The highest number of applications was also recorded in 2022 at 440.

- **The Selangor Accelerator Programme (SAP):** Contributed RM15 million in gross merchandise value (GMV) with each company valued between RM500,000 and RM1 million. The programme supported 150 startups from 2018 to 2022, with 36.6 per cent of them able to secure funding.

By IDA NADIRAH IBRAHIM & JERRY CHOONG

Selangor has over the years continued to show great socioeconomic progress that has led to it being the largest contributor to the national gross domestic product (GDP). With the current economic trends, it is likely able to achieve its goal of contributing 25 per cent by 2025.

Among the factors that contribute to the Golden State of Malaysia being in the lead are the various administrative reforms that were introduced when the then-Pakatan Rakyat (now Pakatan Harapan or Harapan) took over Selangor in 2008.

Fifteen years after the historic win of the 12th general election (GE), the impact has snowballed and is reflected not only in the state's economic achievements but in the social status of its residents.

Bank Muamalat chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid (*pic*) said that the reforms initiated by the Pakatan Rakyat government have clearly signified that the state government aims to improve their governance and transparency.

Some reforms include the Freedom Of Information (State Of Selangor) Enactment, the Selangor Select Committee on Competency, Accountability and Transparency (Selcat) and environmental reforms.

"What matters to the public and investors as well as the business community is the execution rate and clear transparency and governance.

"This would definitely contribute positively to confidence building towards the state administration," he told *Selangor Journal* when contacted.

While Afzanizam is of the view that the state administration has crafted well-thought policies, he said the execution of the efforts is important to bring out the desired results.

"At the end of the day, the stakeholders would want to see the outcome. I also believe communication with respect to government assistance to those who are eligible, be it grants, subsidies, cash transfers or allowances, has been abundant.

"If we can measure how much a person gets from state government assistance, the amount could be substantial.

"So perhaps having a one-stop centre for govt assistance could improve the take-up rate among those who are eligible," he said.

First to gain

In response to the state's economic progress over the past 15 years, Mohd Afzanizam said that the state's achievements show that Selangor is the immediate beneficiary when there is an economic recovery.

Citing the Covid-19 pandemic as an example, Mohd Afzanizam said that the reopening of borders last year helped contribute to the Selangor economy by way of higher spending among both local and foreign tourists.

"When the reopening of the economy started in October 2021 followed by the liberalisation of international borders on 1 April last year, this led to tourism-related activities shooting up.

"For instance, the airport passenger traffic at the KLIA (Kuala Lumpur International Airport) and KLIA 2 grew by a whopping 517.5 per cent and 547.3 per cent to 13.3 million passengers and 12.0 million passengers respectively in 2022.

In the lead



The Selangor Maritime Gateway project aims to spur sustainable social and economic growth on land along 56 kilometres of the river

A Selcat committee holds an inquiry session

"Retail trade, transportation, hotels and convention centres are some of the primary beneficiaries within the state of Selangor. Inadvertently, it will also help improve the income among Selangor citizens," he said.

With the various initiatives introduced, Mohd Afzanizam said that it is evident that the state administration is committed to attracting foreign and domestic investments to the state, citing the First Selangor Plan (RS-1) as an example.

"I believe the launch of the RS-1 is the first where a state in Malaysia has come up with its own economic blueprint. Such a document will certainly help shape the expectation of the investors, especially in assessing potential areas that are profitable for them.

"In a way, it assists them to do their due diligence by having such forthcoming communication with the investing community," he said.

Promising figures

MIDF Research, in a report, showed that as Selangor has contributed 22.8 per cent to the national GDP in 2015 and 24.8 per cent in 2021, the state is set to reach 25 per cent of GDP

contribution by 2025.

"This surpassed the 12th Malaysia Plan's (12MP) target rate of 23.6 per cent by 2025. Steady economic expansion in Selangor while other states grow at a relatively slower pace are the factors contributing to the GDP ratio surge," it said in its thematic report titled 'Exploring Opportunities in the Golden State of Malaysia', released on April 5.

Based on the compound annual growth rate (CAGR) measurement, MIDF Research said Selangor grew by +4.6 per cent per annum, against the nation's plus three per cent per annum from 2016 to 2021.

"Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, the annual average growth rate from 2016 to 2019 for Selangor was +6.4 per cent, compared to the 11th Malaysia Plan's (11MP) target rate of +6.9 per cent, while Malaysia registered +4.9 per cent, compared to the 11MP target range of between plus five to six per cent.

"The state economy contracted by -5.2 per cent in 2020 and recovered strongly



I believe the RS-1 is the first where a state in Malaysia has come up with its own economic blueprint. Such a document will certainly help shape the expectation of the investors

Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid
Bank Muamalat chief economist



by plus five per cent in the following year. We opine Selangor's resiliency lies in the strength of its diversified manufacturing sector and huge consumer demand," it said.

Similarly, MIDF Research cited the state government's prediction of its GDP expansion by +6.5 to seven per cent per annum from 2021 to 2025, under the RS-1, which is relatively higher than 12MP's forecast rate of +4.7 per cent.

"If the state economy were to grow at above +6.5 per cent, we believe Selangor's economic contribution to the national GDP will breach the 25 per cent level, against the 23.8 per cent target for 2025 under 12MP.

"RS-1 has also set a target for the state's household median income to reach RM9,290 per month by 2025 (2019: RM8,210). Under the sustainability 2025 target, Selangor is set to reach a reduction in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission intensity to GDP at 35 per cent and a 15 per cent water recycling rate," it said.

To this, the research house added that RS-1 targets are crucial for the state and Malaysia, due to Selangor's economic size. Its themes, strategies and targets will shape the new landscape for the state economy and will also be beneficial for Malaysia's macro-economic performances and financial markets.

The report's other findings include the following:

- Services and manufacturing are Selangor's main anchor, with the services sector supporting over 50 per cent of the state economy since 2015, while manufacturing is the second key sector in Selangor, supporting one-third of the state economy.
- Selangor's construction, manufacturing and services sectors are the largest contributors to Malaysia's economy in accordance with each sector.
- One-fifth of Malaysia's total population resides in the state, which stood at 21.5 per cent in 2021 compared to 19.8 per cent in 2015, a +2.3 per cent population growth per annum.
- High-skilled jobs dominate in Selangor by occupation, standing at 35.4 per cent in 2021 in comparison to 29.6 per cent nationwide during the same period. Such jobs include managers, professionals and associate professionals.
- Over 20 per cent of the national employment is located in Selangor. In line with population trends, the state is the first in terms of the national employment pool, with 23.4 per cent of national employment in 2021. More than half of Selangor's workforce is in the services sector.
- Selangor's unemployment rate constantly remains lower than the national average, which has been recorded since 2015. MIDF Research said it believes this buffers the state economy from global market uncertainties, as Selangor has minimal exposure to price fluctuations, particularly crude oil and crude palm oil prices.

6 KEY REFORMS in Selangor since 2008

1 ESTABLISHING THE SELECT COMMITTEE OF COMPETENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Known by its abbreviation SELCAT, the committee was set up in 2008 as a watchdog to promote efficient, accountable and transparent public service and good governance. From 2008 to 2022, 16 public inquiries were held on issues ranging from the misappropriation of public funds to efforts to curb dengue cases.

2 INTRODUCING THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ENACTMENT 2010

Selangor made history as the first state to form such an enactment, whereby any individual can request for access to information kept at any state departments. Requests are made through an information officer with a small processing fee.



3 PUBLIC FEEDBACK BEFORE DEGAZETTING OF FOREST LAND

On April 1, 2011, the Selangor administration passed an unprecedented amendment to section 11 of the Enactment (Application) Forestry Act 1985 to ensure that no forest reserve can be degazetted without a public inquiry being held. At the same time, any forest land replacements must be made according to section 12 of the Enactment (Application) Forestry Act 1985.

4 MANDATORY FOREST LAND REPLACEMENTS

The state government aims to increase the total area of forest land in Selangor to 32 per cent by 2025. Any degazetted forest reserves must be replaced with a forest area that is larger than the one degazetted, and be of the same ecological conditions.

5 BAN ON LOGGING

The state froze all logging activities in 2010 and the ban would be enforced until 2035. It will also stop issuing logging licences to concessionaires throughout this period and remains the only state in the country to do so.



6 RM1 MILLION MAXIMUM FINE FOR POLLUTERS

On Nov 9, 2020, through an amendment to the Selangor Water Management Authority (LUAS) Enactment 1999, anyone found guilty of causing river pollution can face a maximum fine of RM1 million, up from the previous RM100,000. The heavier punishment was introduced to protect the state's water sources.





Championing sustainable growth

By IDA NADIRAH IBRAHIM

A balance of good infrastructure and agriculture is essential for economic development to be sustainable and inclusive. Growth is directly impacted by investments in energy, telecommunications and transportation networks and all forms of infrastructure are necessary for the production of goods and services.

As for agriculture, it not only offers solutions for expanding employment opportunities in the industry and improving the income of the community, but it also plays a crucial role in ensuring food security, a factor that is significant in the country's development, particularly in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

With two significant portfolios under his name, Infrastructure and Public Amenities; Agricultural Modernisation and Agro-based Industry Committee chairman Ir Izham Hashim, who has an engineering background and is an experienced local councillor, acknowledges

the difficulties in striking a balance between the two and said that being at the policy-making level presents its unique challenges.

"When I first developed the Selangor Agro Transformation Plan (PeTA), it called for the agricultural sector to be sustainable and environmentally friendly. However, aside from the industrial factor, another cause of the pollution of our water sources is agriculture. This doesn't make sense because I am in charge of both water and agriculture.

"Therefore, we need to learn to coexist and develop a plan on how to ensure that our water remains unpolluted and our crops are fertile. And the answer to this is organic farming, which we have encouraged and championed across the state," he said.

Izham stated that providing practical and sustainable infrastructure helps to a great extent in the development of Selangor. This includes providing solutions for advanced telecommunication networks, building and maintaining highways and roads, managing water sources and treated water supply, creat-

ing digital infrastructure, and providing energy. All of these, he said, are costly and demand large budgets.

"When we are at the policy-making level, surely the challenges are different. If you notice during the State Legislative Assembly sittings, a lot of the questions raised are on infrastructure and this is because as an advanced state, people have high expectations of seeing the best infrastructure.

"Of course, the development cost of infrastructure isn't small, which is why when you look at allocations for flood mitigation efforts costing RM1 or RM2 billion, it may sound like a lot but it isn't for infrastructure projects. Although we get some funding from the Federal (government), it has to be managed with proper coordination and prudence," said Izham in a recent interview with *Selangor Journal*.

As for agriculture, Izham said coming up with an effective plan for the industry to accommodate the limited land for farming that is also expensive poses one of the challenges. To this, he said that the agriculture sector in Selangor

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I hope that when we have achieved all that we have done in developing the master plans, whoever succeeds would continue with them because they would ease the implementation process in the future

needs these considerations — that it can produce high-value products, that it must go through modernisation, that it must be a complete supply chain, and for it to include agropreneur development and agrotourism.

“We act as pioneers of many policies developed for both infrastructural development and agriculture in Selangor. For example, we are the first to the Selangor Utility Corridor (Kusel), which is an agency that manages the process of installing utilities to ensure better planning, and we came up with a holistic approach to safeguard our water sources under the Selangor Raw Water Security Scheme (SJAM). We are also the first state to reuse wastewater for industrial use, which currently is being done in Setia Alam.

“Soon, we will also be introducing the Selangor Connectivity Master Plan (SCMP) to ensure the continuity of telecommunications and the IoT (Internet of Things). The initiative, which is currently in the implementation process, will also play a role in narrowing the digital gap between the rural and urban areas.”

Ahead of time

Looking back on when he was first handed the portfolio in 2018, Izham recalled that the policies in place then were not suited for the present time.

He said that during his five-year tenure, he had made sure that all the programmes and policies developed could be continued in the

coming years and would only require improvements to meet current needs.

“Throughout the past five years, even though I was previously an engineer and a local councillor for 10 years, the experience as a state executive councillor of Selangor had really challenged my capabilities and placed immense pressure because we want to give the best.

“I hope that when we have achieved all that we have done in developing the master plans, whoever succeeds would continue with them because they would ease the implementation process in the future.”

Izham cited the PeTA, SCMP and the state’s highway development plans as examples that would help the future state administration implement their policies.

“When I first came in, suffice to say there was not much in place. Even for the agriculture sector, for example, they had a thick document on the state agricultural policy which in my opinion was more suitable as academic material. What we need is to form a document that would be practical to be implemented.

“I made sure that these documents are living documents that could adapt to changes. Though it may not be drastic changes, change is inevitable and the policies would be able to adapt to it,” he said.

Ensuring equitable growth

Izham said that the First Selangor Plan (RS-1) and the Smart Selangor Ac-



The development plan has to be holistic and involve the participation of various parties, including the local authorities, private sector, and the public

tion Plan to 2025 (SSAP 2025) have underlined measures that would propel the state into becoming a smart state by 2025.

He said that both physical and digital infrastructures are among the main contributing factors to the development of a state, and will be the driving force for his committee to develop more programmes.

“The development plan has to be holistic and involve the participation of various parties, including the local authorities, private sector, and the public.

“If the infrastructural development fails, then this would hinder the development of other sectors as well,” he said.

Izham is in charge of two of the mega development projects under the RS-1, namely the Sabak Bernam Area Development (Sabda), which focuses on developing the agriculture sector in Sabak Bernam, and the Economic Development Zone of the Selangor Maritime Gateway (ZPE SMG).

“ZPE SMG is an example of an effort where we focus on river conservation and developing its surrounding area to show that the river is the theme of the development and becomes a valuable asset to the state.

“The river quality would first have to be improved before we can proceed with residential and commercial developments. In Sungai Klang, we cleared waste in the river that was three metres deep. Then, the river was seen as something useless where we would dump all our waste. This perception is wrong because the river is the source of our water supply.

“We will prove that failure is not an option. When we succeed in this development project in Sungai Klang, we can do it with other rivers, such as Sungai Langat and Sungai Selangor.

“But if we fail, then other areas will fail as well. Which is why we have to ensure that the development of SMG succeeds.”



Strength in numbers

Selangor's status today as an economic powerhouse is the culmination of 15 years of good and competitive governance by the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) government.

PR's historic win in the March 8, 2008 elections not only brought together opposing factions but paved the way for better ties that allowed the state to prosper.

In this report, ALANG BENDAHARA gathers vital information from the Department of Statistics Malaysia as evidence that positive changes can happen to a state under the leadership of a responsible and accountable administration.

Top contributor

When Selangor was governed by Barisan Nasional (BN) in 2007, it contributed 21.0 per cent to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In comparison, Kuala Lumpur's contribution at the time was 12.8 per cent; Sarawak's, 10.7 per cent; Johor's, 9.0 per cent; and Penang's, 7.6 per cent.

When PR took over Selangor, its GDP contribution to Malaysia rose to 21.9 per cent, with Kuala Lumpur trailing at 13.4 per cent, while Sarawak, Johor and Penang's contributions lessened or remained stagnant (at 10.2 per cent, 8.9 per cent and 7.6 per cent respectively).

In 2020 when Covid-19 hit the hardest, the Selangor administration's measures to tighten belts and bank on its manufacturing sector again placed the state as the most reliable GDP contributor, at 22.8 per cent. Kuala Lumpur came in second at 21.8 per cent, followed by Sarawak (12 per cent), Sabah (10.1 per cent) and Johor (7.7 per cent).

The Department of Statistics' 2021 figures show that Selangor remained the country's largest economy, contributing almost a quarter (24.8 per cent) to Malaysia's GDP pie. The second-best showing was Kuala Lumpur (15.7 per cent), with Sarawak (9.5 per cent), Johor (9.5 per cent), Penang (7.1 per cent) and Sabah (5.7 per cent) making up the significant rest.

The First Selangor Plan (RS-1) that steers the state's progress from 2021 through to 2025 forecasts an average GDP growth of 6.5 to 7.0 per cent per annum.

Impressive reserves

Selangor's reserves are made up of monies and government investments pooled together in a Consolidated Fund. The fund consists of three accounts, namely the Consolidated Revenue Account, the Consolidated Trust Account and the Consolidated Loan Account.

Under the management of BN in 2006, the state's reserves totalled RM991.75 million and a year later, it reached RM1.39 billion.

When PR took over the reins in 2008, Selangor's reserves grew to RM1.4 billion, dipping slightly to RM1.3 billion in 2009, and then rising again to RM1.6 billion the next year. By 2011, it had reached RM1.9 billion.

In 2012, the state's reserves hit the RM2.6 billion mark, and in 2013 the figure rose some more to RM2.9

billion. By 2014, Selangor managed to secure an impressive RM3.2 billion in savings.

On Oct 16, 2022, Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari announced that the state's coffers stood at RM3.4 billion, a significant accomplishment considering that the state's expenditure has been hovering between RM300 and RM500 million a year since 2008.

Bigger paychecks

Statistics from 2007 show that the median monthly household income in Selangor was RM4,046 compared to the national average of RM2,552.

In 2009, the figure rose to RM4,306 in comparison to Malaysia's RM2,841. In 2016, the average Selangor household was bringing home RM7,225.

In 2019, Selangor citizens were making good money, on average bringing home RM8,210 per household, as compared to other Malaysians earning RM5,873 per household.

This all-time-high figure was challenged only by Covid-19. In 2020, records show that the median household income of the whole country fell by 11.3 per cent to RM5,209, with Selangor folks managing RM7,300 after an 11.1 per cent decline.

Aside from the tough times of the pandemic era, the

state's household income has overall recorded a robust growth in line with Malaysia's financial performance.

Amirudin's government is aiming for an average household income of RM9,290 by 2025, which is also when the RS-1 completes its five-year run.

Tackling unemployment

The jobless rate in Selangor in 2007 was 3.0 per cent, but when PR took over the running of the state the following year, 2.4 per cent was achieved.

The best unemployment rate achieved by the state was in 2014, at 2.0 per cent, but in 2020 Covid-19 effectively put many citizens out of employment.

Selangor took a hard knock, its unemployment statistics rising to 4.3 per cent. The gloomy year that ensued could not bring down the jobless figure.

Only by the fourth quarter of 2022 did the unemployment rate fall to 2.9 per cent. Getting to this point was no mean feat — the state went into overdrive to up-skill and reskill the people, and organised job fairs and job-matching sessions through its Selangor Kerjaya programme.

In the 2023 Selangor Budget, some RM1.4 million has been allocated to further this cause.



By SULYN CHONG

Those who know Ng Suee Lim know that Sekinchan, the tranquil village tucked away in the northern part of Selangor, is his pride and joy. Ng has invested his heart and soul into the place since 2004 when he took on the role of state assemblyman there.

Right from the start, he committed himself to the sleepy enclave, determined to fix the people's problems and reinvigorate the place.

Fast forward to June 26, 2018. At the first session of the first term of the 14th Selangor state legislative assembly, the Menteri Besar of Selangor and Sungai Tua assemblyman Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari proposed for Ng to be the Speaker.

Ng took his oath, and overnight, he had new responsibilities and a lot more on his plate.

The four-term Sekinchan assemblyman was already well-versed in serving the people but now in his new role as the 11th Speaker of the state assembly, he had to serve the state and act with both authority and impartiality to maintain order in the House, too.

In short, Ng was suddenly forced to split his time between being a good representative for Sekinchan and being in the 'hot seat' of the state government.

"It has not been a simple task, carrying two heavy responsibilities. It is tough, but not impossible, because I have a strong team who helps me all the way.

"In this day and age, I do not believe in a one-man show. It can never work that way, especially if you are a representative of the people."

Challenges definitely abound when, as Speaker, the Covid-19 pandemic hit Malaysia in early 2019. Movement control orders were put in place, a state of emergency was called at one point, and the Federal government even changed twice during that time.

Ng took them all in his stride.

"There were so many tests and obstacles, but all were lessons to be learned," he said.

Balancing act

When Ng serves the House, his role is to put questions after debates, interpret and apply the Standing Orders, and make rulings and decisions. On other days when he is back in Sekinchan, he devotes his time entirely to the causes there.

His reputation as the constituency's spokesperson precedes him, as the people there know how to find him when they have a problem. He employs an open-door policy and is determined to listen to every grievance and assist where possible.

But before he arrived in 2004, Sekinchan was somewhat different from what it is today. It had the attributes of a retirement village far away from the city.

Right from the start, Ng wanted to change that. He wanted to make Sekinchan exciting, a place where young people could come, not just for holiday, but to make it their home. This is slowly coming true, with more of its youths now returning to begin their own



When duty calls

ventures and start a new life.

"If you ask the young people from this village to continue their parents' livelihoods as farmers and fishermen, they would not do it because the work is seen as dirty, dangerous and demanding — the 3Ds. But now, they have other options to find an income.

"Many have started their own business such as cafes, restaurants and homestays. There is diversity in building a career in Sekinchan and it is sustainable with the tourism industry that is flourishing there. That has been my aim and I am glad it is slowly showing fruit," he said.

Apart from pushing for a more sustainable economy for his people, Ng has many a time helped to settle disputes relating to land matters.

"When I got to know about the land issues in Sekinchan I was surprised and knew they would not be easy to settle. I felt it was unfair to the people who have lived here for generations and still do not own the land they live on. But I eventually got most of the disputes settled.

"There was even a method of resolution that was 'a first' in the whole of Malaysia. I swapped a large area of Malay reserve land just so that the families who have been living there for decades can get a fair chance of owning a home. The process is still underway but more than half of the applicants have already got their land grants," he said.

More to be done

"I have so many plans to improve Sekinchan. Some are in the planning process, some are already underway, while others are just ideas but I do not have much time left in this seat," Ng said with a touch of melancholy.

His most recent achievement, which kicked off last

year, was the implementation of the 'cashless kampung' initiative in collaboration with Hong Leong Bank Berhad and Payments Network Malaysia Sdn Bhd in conjunction with Visit Sekinchan 2023.

"As we see the end of the Covid-19 pandemic and the rise of tourism, I really want Sekinchan to rebuild its appeal as a tourist destination by bringing lots of activities to the small town because I feel this is the best way to elevate the financial stability of the people," he said.

Through the Sabak Bernam Development Area project under the First Selangor Plan, Ng has been working closely with agencies such as Menteri Besar Selangor (Incorporated) to upgrade infrastructures like expanding the highly-congested jetty and deepening the river for larger vessels to pass through.

He also has visions for a sustainable and environmentally-friendly village to impress the tourists, on top of making sure that the flash floods that happened last year do not repeat, by improving the water lock in Bagan Sekinchan.

Kept busy

As the state elections draw near (hinted by Selangor Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari to happen in July or August) Ng said he places his trust in the people and that he will always uphold their mandate, whatever it may be.

Nevertheless, he holds on to the hope that he will be given a chance to continue his work in the village that he loves.

"I want to develop Sekinchan to be known nationwide ... worldwide, if possible. But I want its 'kampung feel' to be maintained because that is its attraction, but with modern facilities, especially digitalisation upgrades," he said.

In the meantime, Ng also knows that whatever the outcome of the elections, his work for Selangor does not end. For a man who isn't afraid to serve, his Speaker duties will certainly be keeping him busy.

N21 PANDAN INDAH

Without fear or favour

By IDA NADIRAH IBRAHIM

Nestled close to the centre of Klang Valley, Pandan Indah (which replaced the Chempaka state seat in 2018) is home to about 50,000 electorates and has been a Pakatan Harapan (then Pakatan Rakyat) stronghold since it took over the state in the 2008 general election (GE).

Izham Hashim, a first-time contestant in the 2018 elections for the state seat, said he did not prepare a specific manifesto for the contest but had one objective in mind: to make sure he delivers the best service to the people.

After serving for five years, Izham expressed optimism that the socioeconomic situation in the constituency has significantly improved.

"As it was my first time contesting, I wasn't sure what to promise but what I could tell the people was that I would do my best to help them. So when I took over the seat, I saw several things that needed attention, which were the economic status (of the constituents), infrastructure and social issues.

"In Pandan Indah, many of the residents are still in the lower-income bracket (B40) border lining the middle-income (M40) bracket, so we need to see what sort of support suits them, such as providing help to their online business.

"Pandan Indah has several low-cost flats and to my surprise when I first gave out contributions to the residents, many of the recipients were from the Indian and Chinese communities. This clearly shows that urban poverty not only impacts the Malays but also other races," he told *Selangor Journal* during a recent interview.

Serving where needed

Izham said one of his constituency's achievements is the distribution of food boxes. The practice started when the Covid-19 pandemic hit in 2020, and has continued till today.

"From 2020, every month, with the support of various parties, we will give out 500 boxes, which has never stopped.

"The value of one box is RM50, so monthly we spend RM25,000, which is funded by private contributions as well as the allocation for the state constituency. We have even distributed the boxes to those outside of Pandan Indah, such as in Sabak Bernam and Puchong, where people are in need," he said.

In addressing the infrastructure issues in the constituency, Izham, who is an engineer by profession and a former local councillor, said while many of the problems were solved over the years, a few still require attention, such as the upgrading of public halls.

"One or two halls will be upgraded this year. But in terms of the issues relating to roads and floods, a lot of them have been resolved, except for several minor cases.

"What has been continuous is the need to ensure that the public areas are clean and there are sufficient amenities and facilities for

Izham hands over bags containing basic necessities to his constituents for Deepavali last year

**BELOW:
The assemblyman visits the home of Parkinson's patient Uncle Lim in Pandan Indah during Chinese New Year**



people to use. Since it is an urban area, there have to be attractions for the locals," he said.

Hope for the young

Izham said that more focus needs to be given to young people, especially students, to ensure that they are provided with a good upbringing and are exposed to beneficial programmes.

This, however, requires the collaboration of various parties, such as the security forces and educators, he said.

"We have to strengthen the initiatives because while the social problems in the constituency are not too serious, there should be cooperation between the schools, the police, and community heads to ensure that we can provide beneficial programmes.

"For example, we can introduce urban agro programmes to get the young people involved, e-commerce initiatives, and such," he said, adding

that healthy activities can help to curb social issues such as drug abuse.

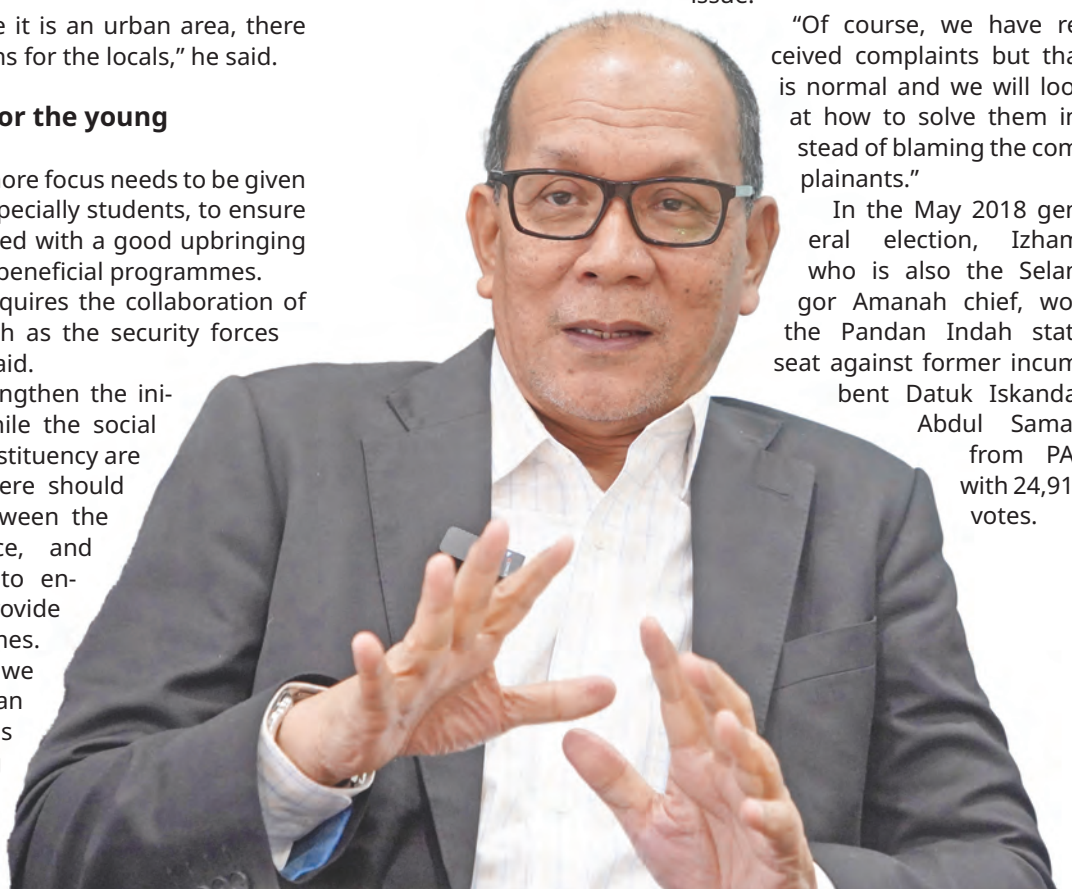
Despite the challenges faced, Izham said that from day one, he has received encouragement from the people and that he has always helped them back regardless of their race, religion or political stance.

"The people here are very welcoming and friendly and I have never had problems when I meet up with them.

"My approach is that when we are the people's representative, our mandate is to look after them. If we do this right, there would be no issue.

"Of course, we have received complaints but that is normal and we will look at how to solve them instead of blaming the complainants."

In the May 2018 general election, Izham, who is also the Selangor Amanah chief, won the Pandan Indah state seat against former incumbent Datuk Iskandar Abdul Samad from PAS with 24,914 votes.



Sultan of Selangor Cup returns

SHAH ALAM - The Sultan of Selangor Cup (TSSC), an annual friendly football competition contested between two rival football clubs, Selangor and Singapore, will make a comeback after a three-year break due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The 19th edition of the TSSC will be held at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil on Oct 28.

The competition was the brainchild of Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah Alhaj, which began in 2001 to strengthen ties between the Selangor FA and Singapore and to rekindle their rivalry after Singapore pulled out of the Malaysian League in 1994.



The rivalry between the two teams had always been intense because of their status as the two most successful clubs in Malaysian football history.

Chairman and TSSC team manager Tan Sri Abd Karim Munisar said a Selangor Selection and a Singapore Selection will vie for the RM80,000 prize money while a selection of veterans from Selangor and Singapore will play in a curtain raiser prior to the main match.

"Fans from both sides of the causeway have been eagerly waiting for the TSSC because it gives them a chance to watch their beloved former veterans in action and to reminisce the past since a match be-

tween Selangor and Singapore has always generated excitement," he told reporters after presenting appointment letters to the new TSSC exco members who have received the consent of Sultan Sharafuddin, here, on March 15.

Abd Karim said the TSSC will kick off with the match between Selangor Veterans and Singapore Veterans at 8pm while the main match — a Selangor Selection vs a Singapore Selection — will kick off at 9pm.

Some 70,000 fans are expected to fill the National Stadium for the event.

In the previous edition held in 2019, Selangor beat Singapore 1 - 0 to lift the trophy. - Bernama

From village champs to professionals

SHAH ALAM - The Klinik Asas Sukan Budak Kampung programme is the best way for the state government to identify and produce new talents who can emerge as professional athletes.

State executive councillor for sports Mohd Khairuddin Othman said the programme, held at Padang Bola Sepak Bukit Rahman Putra in Sungai Buloh, focused on football, sepak takraw, and netball. Participants were aged from 10 to 17 years.

"During the two-day programme on Saturday and Sunday (March 11 and 12), we brought former state athletes to conduct training sessions.

"They included Karishma S Loganaathan and Nur Firra Syuhada Hasrin

for netball; Khalid Ali, Shahrin Majid and Hardi Jaafar for football, and Farhan Adam and Haziq Hairul Nizam for sepak takraw," Mohd Khairuddin said in a statement.

The Paya Jaras state assemblyman said the event, which is also a continuation of Kejohanan Piala Budak Kampung, is the state government's continuing effort to reach out to the sports community on the grassroots level.

The inaugural Klinik Asas Sukan Budak Kampung was met with an enthusiastic response, with close to 1,000 participants.

Mohd Khairuddin added that several more sessions will be organised this year.



Mohd Khairuddin (in red cap) poses with the trainers and children after the two-day programme



The jubilant Under-22 Squad with the prized cup after their win in Singapore. - Picture by Football Association of Malaysia

Merlion winners ready for Cambodia

By **AFIX REDZUAN**

SHAH ALAM - The national Under-22 Squad is ready to take on the SEA Games challenge in Cambodia in May.

In a report by Berita Harian, head coach E Elavarasan said his boys have a chance at winning as they have been putting hours into training.

"The last time we emerged champions was in 2011, and it is now already 2023. I think the target set by the Football Association of Malaysia is fair," he said on March 27.

"From the viewpoint of the coaches, for certain we will be doing the very best to meet our KPI."

Malaysia failed to win a medal at the

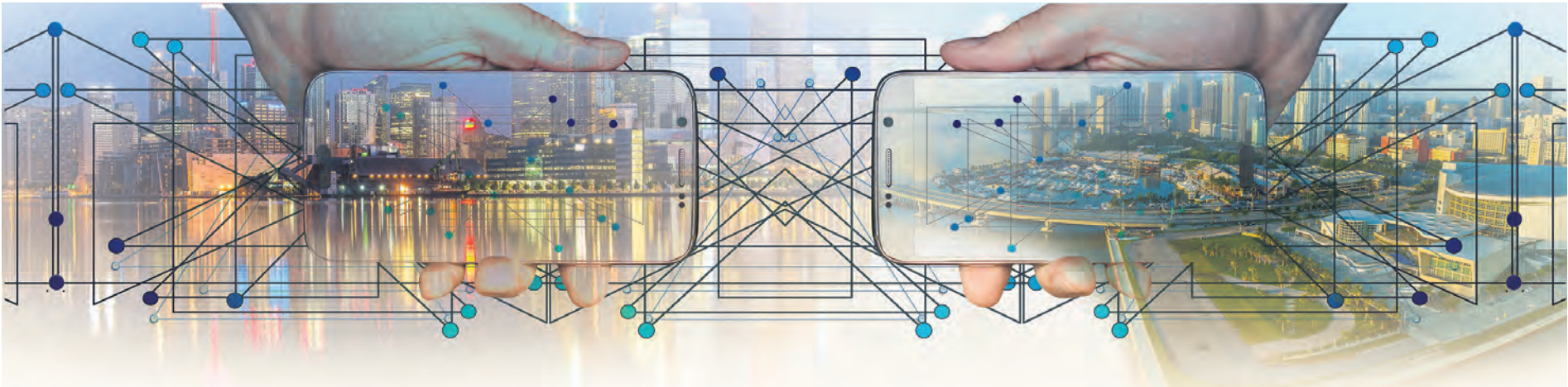
2021 Vietnam SEA Games, losing 3-4 to Indonesia in a penalty shootout for bronze.

Meanwhile, the Under-22 Squad became Merlion Cup champions for the first time after beating Hong Kong 2-1 at Stadium Jalan Besar in Singapore on March 26.

Substitute player Najmudin Akmal Kamal found the back of the net in the 74th minute, followed by a long-range goal by Safwan Mazlan four minutes later.

Hong Kong's Lau Ka Kiu narrowed the goal difference in the 80th minute after a blunder by goalie Rahadiazli Rahalim.

Third place was won by Cambodia who beat host Singapore 2-1.



The Integrated Development Region in South Selangor (Idriss)

Objective	Idriss is a privately-funded integrated development project in the Sepang and Kuala Langat districts driven by the state government and supported by state and Federal incentives
Highlights	<p>The development involves an area spanning 40,000 acres (20,000ha) with an estimated gross development value (GDV) of RM1 trillion</p> <p>A task force has been set up to facilitate and coordinate the implementation of projects and resolve any issues that may arise</p> <p>Among its other duties are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to encourage high-impact investments and development in Sepang and Hulu Langat• to see to the completion of the development plan and resolve all complications that arise• to ensure that development covers all environmental impacts and achieves sustainability• to monitor the development process and ensure the well-being of the people in the surrounding areas• to prepare performance reports on the project
Timeline	Ongoing
Outcome	To have a mega industrial project in Sepang and Kuala Langat with a GDV of RM1 trillion

