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For a more vibrant city centre

Local authorities plan to restore some buildings in Johor Baru back to their former glory

JOHOR BARU

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LOCAL authorities plan to restore some 30 buildings in efforts to rejuvenate and rehabilitate Johor Baru city centre.

Think City Sdn Bhd, a Khazanah Nasional Bhd wholly-owned subsidiary, is hoping to work with at least 30 property owners in the city to restore the buildings back to their former glory in the second phase of the project.

Its executive director Hamdan Abdul Majeed said the first phase was a success with eight buildings repaired and restored with an investment of RM280,000.

"It took us about eight months to remove the paint, redo broken parts, restore some of the facades and organise the utilities, among others.

"We hope to see more businesses and building owners coming forward to make this initiative a success," he said after the launch of the Johor Baru City Council (MBJB) Clean Zone programme and visit to the restored heritage buildings here.

Hamdan said response from business and building owners were positive, as they had received about 12 applications for the second phase.

He added that Think City, together with MBJB and Iskandar Regional Development Authority, would first conduct an assessment with the building owners before carrying out



Md Jais (left) and Amran (centre) looking at photos of restored heritage buildings at the launch of the MBJB Clean Zone programme.

restoration works.

"Some of them also want to improve the insides of the buildings, so depending on the owners' capacity, we will invest together.

"It is a partnership, where Think City along with building and business owners

will contribute to the cost," he said, adding that restoration of back lanes would also be carried out in the second phase.

Meanwhile, city mayor Amran A. Rahman said a large portion of the city centre here had been designated as "Clean Zone" in line with the council's initiative for a cleaner and

more sustainable city.

He said the areas identified for the second Clean Zone covered a 600m radius from the Johor Urban Transformation Centre along Jalan Trus here.

"Among the aspects looked into include a smoke-free zone, dengue-free, zero waste and zero polystyrene zones.

"We will also instal signage at several strategic locations besides promoting the cause via social and mainstream media to get traders and city dwellers to be part of our initiative," he added.

Amran also said some RM9.8mil had been allocated for infrastructure and public amenities, including installing 350 new rubbish bins around the Clean Zone.

He added that cleanliness at the first Clean Zone in Stulang Laut, which was launched two years ago, was improving.

Johor Housing and Local Government Committee chairman Datuk Md Jais Sarday, who launched the event, said the lack of awareness on cleanliness and the public's perception on the matter could hinder the initiative.

"We hope to turn the city centre into a clean city by next year in conjunction with MBJB's 25th anniversary.

"However, there is no point in the council carrying out all these efforts if the people's attitude towards keeping the city clean does not change.

"I urge all parties to work together to make this programme a success for the betterment of our city," added Md Jais.