

**No more 'pasar malam' under ETP
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Say goodbye to *pasar malam* (night markets), *pasar tani* (farmers' markets), *pasar minggu* and *pasar tamu* (weekly markets) and say hello to *Pasar Komuniti*.

The project under the Wholesale and Retail national key economic area of the Economic Transformations Programme, aims to relocate all of these markets to a permanent central location.

"(The markets) operate at various temporary locations that often contribute to cluttered and unhygienic conditions.

"The *Pasar Komuniti* initiative is an effort to coordinate the various markets and amalgamate them in locations where conditions are conducive," the ETP roadmap launched yesterday, notes.

Expectedly, this would cost the traders more capital as setting up stores in the traditional markets can be as cheap as less than RM10 per lot per day.

To assist the traders relocate, the project which will require private funding and investment of RM15.5 billion, would involve assistance in obtaining reduced interest loans and stall license rates.

The "modernisation" proposal is expected to result in an additional RM8.8 billion in gross national income annually and create 141,000 jobs by 2020.

Giant food courts

A similar project will also see street hawkers selling food taken off the walkways and placed in "one-stop food centres where diners can find and sample the best of Malaysian and international food", called Makan Bazaars.

According to the roadmap, ten of the giant food courts measuring 9000 square metres and seating 3500 people, will be built in the next ten years in major cities and will be managed by Wesria Food Sdn Bhd.

The project will cost the government ten percent of the RM270 million total investment required, and is expected to results in RM230 million in additional income and 4,200 jobs by 2020.

New internet packages and ways to use EPF money

Other interesting projects proposed include:

- An 'eco-nature integrated resort' in Karambunai, Sabah, which will feature river and rainforest safaris, nature lodges, a discovery cove, a mangrove centre and international events, costing RM6.7 billion of which RM600 million will come from the government.

There is no mention of a casino to be built as part of the resort, as speculated by media.

- A mix-development project, including a modern art museum and amphitheater at the site of the old Pudu Jail, with the iconic gate and parts of the historical building to be retained. 30 percent will be kept as open space accessible to the public.

This, along with a heritage trail, assisted by interactive kiosks at key sites, and turning Central Market into an 'art colony', will cost the government RM120 million, which is half of the total cost until 2010.

- Distribution of government vouchers for low income families to cash in at early childcare centres and preschools. The value of the vouchers will be pegged to household income, and is expected to cost the government RM2.4 billion.
- Broadband internet to be offered in tiered prices according to usage caps and speed, to ensure that those who use the most bandwidth pay more. 30 percent of service providers are expected to do so by the end of 2012.
- To allow Employee Provident Fund members with more than RM120,000 in Account 1 to invest up to 50 percent of the excess in unit trusts or exchange-traded funds, which trades in the stock market.

At present members who have amount in excess, based on their age, can only invest up to 20 percent in unit trusts.

- An investment of RM1.8 billion, with RM64 million from the government, for swiflet nest farming aimed at capturing 30 percent of the market size estimated to be a total of RM29 billion by 2020.
- Compulsory separation of waste by household by 2012, with the aim of achieving recycling rates of 40 percent by 2020.

The roadmap which gives an overview of all 131 entry-point projects can be downloaded from the ETP website.

However, it must be noted that Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, in his keynote address, said that these projects could be changed or dropped altogether, based on market conditions.

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