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Go green

Head outdoors and explore nature at Taman Tugu, writes **Meera Murugesan**

THE Taman Tugu project is a not-for-profit corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative led by Khazanah Nasional Berhad (Khazanah) with various public, private and civil society organisations.

The project encompasses a 26.7-hectare green lung in the heart of Kuala Lumpur, turned into an urban forest for the community and a public trust to own, manage and protect Taman Tugu as well as other potential assets of heritage value - including natural heritage.

Currently, the park includes 16 hectares with a 5km trail. The rest of the park will be opened progressively.

The site was initially brought to Khazanah's attention as a proposal to be converted into a theme park. At the same time, other developers were pursuing the land for commercial development.

With feedback from various communities and engagements with organisations such as the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS), Khazanah decided to convert the site into a public park and conserve the secondary forest within it.

A GREEN SANCTUARY

In partnership with the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM), up to 1,000 trees within the site have been identified



A jungle in the city.

and tagged for preservation.

Over 4,000 trees from more than 230 indigenous Malaysian rainforest species are also being added to the site.

These trees, sourced from nurseries, include those categorised as endangered or critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) such as the Keruing, Meranti and Mersawa species.

One of the criteria in selecting trees is the type of fauna it will attract.

An increase in fauna will enhance biodiversity of the site and promote the ecosystem including natural pollination.

If this happens, the site could eventually have more than 200 trees per acre - similar to a rainforest.

Its trails have also been created in a manner that none of the tagged trees are compromised.

As one walks the trails, one will also notice a number of oil palm trees. These were believed to have been brought in by the British prior to independence when the site was home to British residences. The British initially brought in oil palm seeds from West Africa and planted it for ornamental purposes.

Taman Tugu is open daily from 7am to 6.30pm. Entrance is free. RMC0 (Recovery Movement Control Order) standard operating procedures apply. Check out @friendsoftamantugu on Instagram or www.tamantugoproject.com.my.

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Entrance to Taman Tugu is free for the public.