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# Merdeka 118 Tower a true reflection of how far we have come as a nation



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The restoration of Stadium Merdeka, where the country's freedom was declared in 1957, and the adjoining grandiose development of Merdeka 118 Tower truly reflects how far the country has progressed as a nation.

The iconic building is set to open its doors at the end of this year with Permodalan Nasional Bhd (PNB), the owner of Merdeka 118, moving in to take up 17 floors of the tower, said project developer PNB Merdeka Ventures Sdn Bhd's chief executive officer, Tengku Datuk Ab Aziz Tengku Mahmud.

PNB owns Merdeka 118 via its wholly-owned subsidiary, PNB Merdeka Ventures.

Work to restore Stadium Merdeka began in 2007 and was completed in 2008, while the development of the country's latest iconic building started in 2016, but the Covid-19 pandemic delayed its completion for a year.

"We are now in the final phase of getting approval from relevant authorities, including the Fire and Rescue Department.

"After PNB moves in from its current location in Menara PNB, Jalan Tun Razak, our anchor tenant, Maybank, is expected to move next year, making it 70 per cent occupied," he said.

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Tengku Ab Aziz also said Stadium Merdeka is expected to be reopened to the public by the first quarter of next year after being closed since 2016, while the indoor Stadium Negara is slated for renovation.

Speaking to media during a recent media tour of the skyscraper, he said another main tenant will be the five-star Park Hyatt hotel, occupying the top 17 storeys with 252 guest rooms.

Its sprawling seven-storey "118 Mall" is expected to be completed in 2024.

Once fully completed in 2027, Merdeka 118 will feature the state-of-the-art tower standing at 678.9 metres that will transform the area, once known for its sporting arenas, into the capital's new landmark of premium office buildings, hotels, mall, residences, heritage site, museum and mosque.

The latest skyscraper in the city is the second-tallest building in the world, after Dubai's Burj Khalifa at 828 metres.

Designed by Melbourne-based Fender Katsalidis, the structure includes the tower's 40-storey spire (160.4 metres).

### Development of residential towers

According to Tengku Ab Aziz, other major developments in the area include a 65-storey Merdeka Residences East Tower and the 63-storey Merdeka Residences West Tower, as well as the Oakwood Premier Kuala Lumpur serviced residences.

The RM5 billion Merdeka 118 development has 3.1 million square feet of floor space and the highest observation deck in Southeast Asia, standing 500 metres above the ground.

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It will also feature an "Edge Walk" for thrill seekers, who will do a safety harness and walk on a glass floor.

Tengku Ab Aziz added that the development has a gross development value (GDV) of RM7 billion.

Merdeka 118 consists of approximately 18,000 glass panels that make up the tower's crystalline façade, and the installation of the final panel marks 95 per cent completion of the tower.

On concerns that the development will contribute to traffic nightmare in the area, which is close to Petaling Street, Tengku Ab Aziz assured the public transportation is easily available, such as its own Merdeka MRT station, and access to the Plaza Rakyat and Hang Tuah LRT stations, as well as the Maharajalela and Hang Tuah monorail stops.

"The traffic flow will also be opened one way to ease the congestion once the skyscraper is fully operational," he said.

Apart from public transportation, the tower also has a direct link via the Belfield Tunnel, access from the Federal Highway, as well as Jalan Damansara or Jalan Istana.

### 97.8 per cent completed, focus on sustainability

As of August 2023, Merdeka 118 is the first tower in Malaysia working to achieve a triple green platinum rating with international sustainability certifications and has completed 97.8 per cent of its work.

Tengku Ab Aziz also said international companies are showing interest in operating in Merdeka 118, and many were looking for environmental, social and governance buildings (ESG) as there were not many ESG-certified buildings in the city.

"Office spaces are open for leasing at RM20 per square foot," he said.

While many people tend to confuse between the Tun Razak Exchange (TRX) and Merdeka 118, Tengku Ab Aziz clarified that the second tallest building in the world would be positioned with the entire Malaysia's heritage, cultural and sustainable building to set the industry benchmark for sustainability features rather than being a financial hub.

It is also to be noted that the Merdeka 118 design is based on the silhouette of Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman raising his hand while shouting "Merdeka!" on Aug 31, 1957, while the spire that tops the building reflects the image of the father of independence raising his hand during the proclamation.



The glorious view of Merdeka 118 from Stadium Merdeka provides a wholesome experience and vibe of time travel from 1957 to the current days, development and modern architecture, a solid manifestation of the country's progress over the last six decades. — **BERNAMA**



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