Zaharuddin sets his sights beyond the ordinary
THP’s solid foundation will serve as launch-pad for greater things, says new chief

When Zaharuddin Saidon took over the helm of TH Properties Sdn Bhd (THP) earlier this year, he didn’t just take the reins of a development company. He assumed the driver’s seat of one of the country’s largest, most ambitious ventures.

The futuristic RM9.2 billion Bandar Enstek in Negri Sembilan is more than “just” a township providing houses, commercial units and industrial premises in an emerging part of the Klang Valley near the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA). If that was its main mission, it would most likely have lived up to the task years ago – and then become another forgettable development.

But Bandar Enstek was not conceptualized to be “ordinary”. Its 5,116 acres were meant to stand out and cradle a knowledge-based community within a green, healthy and high-tech environment boasting unique real estate assets.

The new chief executive’s stewardship of THP comes at a time when things are really heating up and Bandar Enstek begins delivering on its promises. Dubbed the “prime suburb of KLIA”, 1,117 residential units have so far been completed to accommodate a population of 3,300, with the launched phases generating RM288 million in sales, while land sales have raked in RM360 million.

Components such as its technology park are also attracting over RM500 million in domestic and foreign investments. There’s still a long way to go, though, and Zaharuddin knows this. Ultimately, Bandar Enstek is meant to accommodate over 35,000 people, with a third of them calling it home over the next five to seven years.

He admits the job at hand is “massive” and understatedly “the biggest thing” he’s ever done. However, he’s confident of meeting the challenge with “just a few changes and some minor tweaks” to the company that was previously run by Datuk Syed Mohamed Syed Ibrahim, who left in March to helm the development of the Madinah Knowledge Economic City in Saudi Arabia.
Zaharuddin said a style will continue introducing principle solutions and technology to encourage fullest organisational momentum to build the company’s “solution-centric” identity.

“I see THP not merely as a developer but a lifestyle solutions provider,” said Zaharuddin.

“It’s like form following function: The physical aspects, infrastructure and technology we will develop are the conscious result of the lifestyle we want the population to have. I’ll ensure the company continues to build on this principle.”

Among the minor tweaks Zaharuddin said he will be introducing are those that will make his management style more effective. Being a hands-on type of guy, he said he will “be spending a lot of time with staff members as they go about their daily routine”.

“It’s not to be over-bearing … but to extract the fullest potential out of them to motivate them beyond their own expectations. Mind mapping and Blue Ocean Strategies … these approaches suit me as fresh ideas are important.

“That’s why I want to encourage more group discussions … to tap into the talent pool inside THP.”

He will also be fine-tuning the organisational structure to make management “more horizontal” and the company “more agile”, as well as conducting more training courses to develop staff members into leaders.

On the company’s business direction, he said its main focus will continue to be Bandar Enstek, though “undertaking other projects will also be considered”.

“We have people constantly knocking on our doors … one was from a Saudi Arabian firm inviting us to build a high-tech township similar to Bandar Enstek in the Middle East.”

“However, we want to complete our flagship venture in Negri Sembilan first because we know its success will justify our purpose and define us as a solutions provider … only then can we use it as a launch-pad for similar knowledge-based communities around the country and beyond.”

Bandar Enstek, he said, is at a critical juncture now. Among the components underway are the 500-acre Kel Education City, a 65-acre commercial hub called Bizpark@enstek, 784 acres dedicated to advanced manufacturing and biotechnology industries, as well as almost 2,000 acres for residential properties, of which two phases have been completed.

Also in the pipeline is a 528-acre medical hub called medicalcity@enstek, which will contain the whole value chain of medical services and healthcare industry products.

Looking to the future, Zaharuddin said THP has ambitions to increase its landbank, especially if opportunities present themselves within Kel’s Golden Triangle and Johor’s growth corridor.

“Overall, I’d say we are a company that’s ‘getting there’ … we aim to be a major player in the property market in the next five years.

“I’m sure we’ll reach this goal, because we have a young and dynamic team in place that’s capable of achieving it.”

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