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Enclave with storied past

PJ Old Town landmarks illustrated in cultural and food map initiative

ALL the places of interest and local food stops in Petaling Jaya's oldest township are marked out in the "PJ Old Town Cultural and Food Map".

The project, conceptualised by Petaling Jaya MP Lee Chean Chung, is a pilot initiative undertaken to inject life into the city's old town.

"I decided to embark on this project to highlight the historical places, landmarks and dining places after setting up my service centre in Petaling Jaya Old Town in May 2023.

"I find that this area has its own beauty and characteristics that are different from other urban areas in Petaling Jaya.

"People will get to experience a different vibe and atmosphere when they come here," said Lee, describing the neighbourhood as having a blend of nostalgic charm and modern living.

Petaling Jaya Old Town, better known as PJ Old Town, comprises Sections 1, 2, 3 and 4.

It was built as a satellite town in Selangor in 1952 by the British to address overcrowding in Kuala Lumpur.

The PJ Old Town Cultural and Food Map highlights 18 landmarks including places of worship, 13 old shops and 18 types of food including both Muslim-friendly and non-halal options.

"The map is designed to be a walking guide where visitors can explore on their own. It includes a suggested itinerary for a day trip, although a half-day visit is sufficient," said Lee.

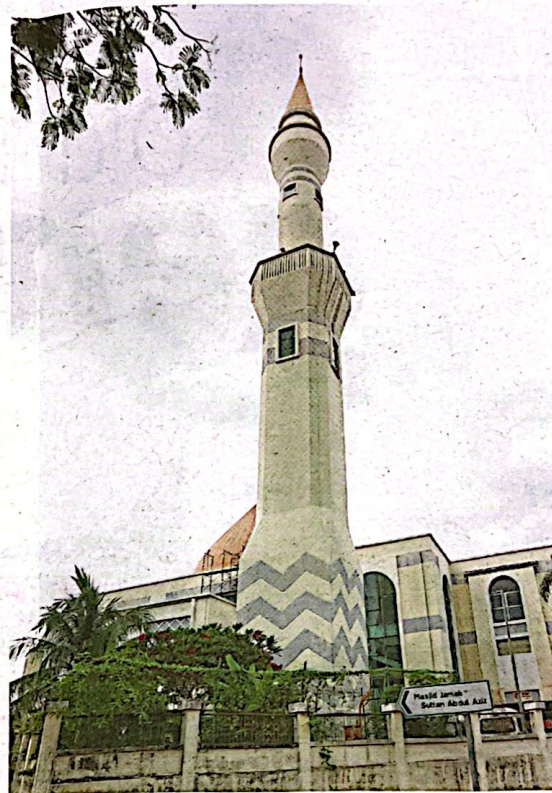
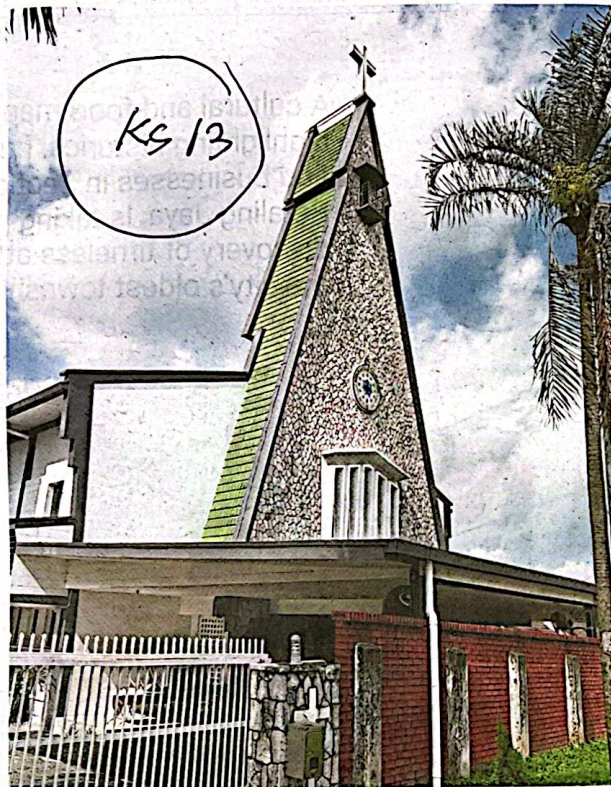
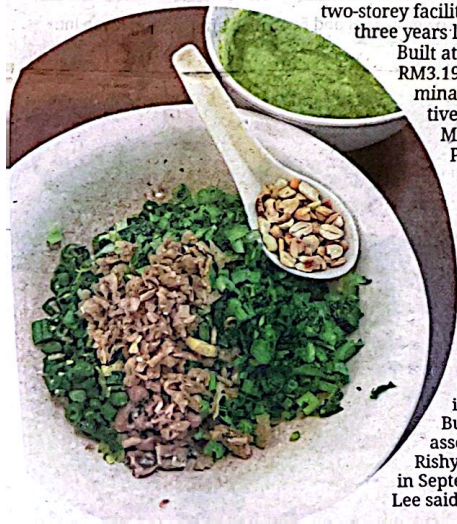
"PJ Old Town is accessible by public transport. Visitors can stop at Taman Jaya or Asia Jaya LRT stations, then board either the PJ01 or T640 bus for the PJ Old Town Bus Terminal."

A must-visit destination when in the old quarters of Petaling Jaya is Medan Selera Jalan Othman, which was established in 1960.

Besides the food court, the old and popular Pasar Besar Jalan Othman is also listed on the map.

Other decades-old notable landmarks are Assunta Hospital (established in 1954), Church of The Assumption (built in 1959),

Traditional Hakka Lui Char Restaurant specialises in Hakka lei cha – a vegetarian rice dish topped with loads of herbs and green, and savoured with herbal broth.



(Left) Church of The Assumption is a popular place of worship for the Catholic community in Petaling Jaya Old Town. (Right) Masjid Jamek Sultan Abdul Aziz which started off as a surau in 1956 and was Section 1's first mosque. — Photos: MUHAMMAD SHAHRIL ROSLI, AZLINA ABDULLAH, GLENN GUAN and JADE CHAN/The Star

Sri Sithi Vinayagar Temple better known as Petaling Jaya Pillaiyar Temple with its Dravidian architecture (built in 1964), Kwan Inn Teng Temple (founded in 1952) and Masjid Jamek Sultan Abdul Aziz (started off as a surau in 1956, then a mosque in 1964) which is the first mosque in Section 1.

According to the guide, the site of Terminal Bas Jalan Othman Petaling Jaya was initially used by visiting circuses in the 1950s before the building came about.

The original bus terminal building, which was popular among commuters in the 1970s to 1990s, made way in 2015 for the construction of a modern two-storey facility completed three years later.

Built at a cost of RM3.19mil, the bus terminal was an initiative by Transport Ministry and Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ).

From vision to reality

The map was launched at a Mid-Autumn Festival event jointly organised by Lee and Bukit Gasing assemblyman Rajiv Rishyakaran's offices in September. Lee said it took his team



Sri Sithi Vinayagar Temple, a prominent landmark along Jalan Selangor.

six months to work on the project, through research, dialogue sessions with resident groups and interviews with business operators in the old town.

"PJ Old Town has a rich history as it served as the first administrative centre in Petaling Jaya. It was also an important economic and social hub.

"We included bits of interesting information as fun facts in the map, such as the biggest roundabout in Petaling Jaya (which was demolished) and origins of the names Jalan Templar and Jalan Othman.

"We also engaged a local illustrator to draw the map. A core team of five people worked on

the project, with the project costing less than RM20,000," he said, adding with a laugh that his team tried every dish and visited dining spots mentioned in the map to ensure they were worth recommending.

The first print run of the map features 7,000 copies in Bahasa Malaysia, English and Mandarin.

Lee described the map as a "living document", as his team would improve on it from time to time, with future plans to translate it into Tamil and other languages.

While most places listed in the map are accessible on foot, Lee acknowledged that more needed to be done to make Petaling Jaya

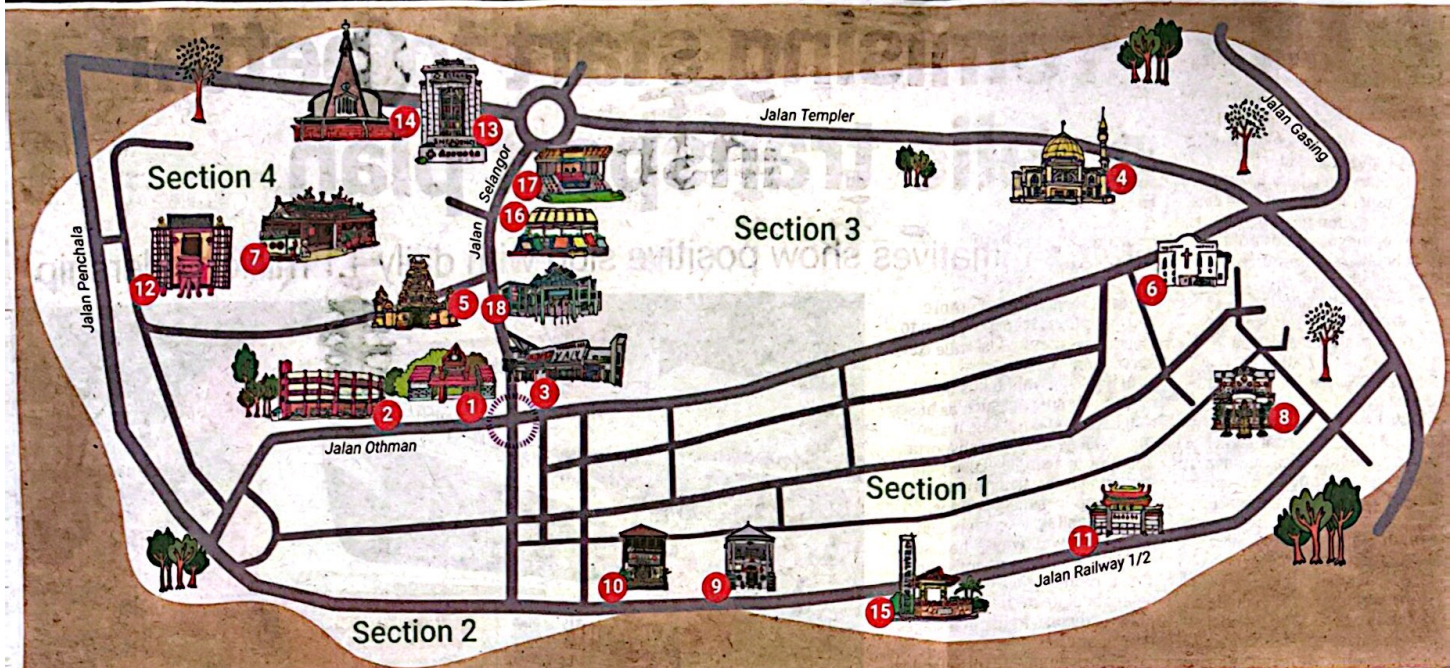
Old Town suitable for walking. To make the area more inclusive, MBPJ upgraded Section 1's commercial area to include disabled-friendly facilities such as ramps.

Lee is hoping that the map project encourages people to visit the area and patronise businesses there – be it discovering old shops with their unique trades or the local food.

For example, Pat Seong Wine Merchant and Sang Hup Hardware and Sons, which have both been around since 1954, are touted as the oldest shops in Petaling Jaya.

Then there is Brother Lim Cushion, which specialises in

Landmarks in Petaling Jaya Old Town



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|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Medan Selera Jalan Othman | 6. Good Shepherd Lutheran Church | 11. Cheng Leong Keong Temple | 16. Kompleks Rakan Muda Arena Petaling Jaya |
| 2. Pasar Besar Jalan Othman | 7. Kwan Inn Teng Temple | 12. Nam Tin Tao Tse Kung Temple | 17. Stadium Hoki Petaling Jaya |
| 3. Terminal Bas Jalan Othman Petaling Jaya | 8. Sau Seng Lum Temple | 13. Assunta Hospital | 18. Petaling Jaya Community Library |
| 4. Masjid Jamek Sultan Abdul Aziz | 9. Sun Hoon Keong Temple | 14. Church of The Assumption PJ | |
| 5. Sri Sithi Vinayagar Temple | 10. Sun Tau Jing Sheh Temple | 15. Railway Park | |

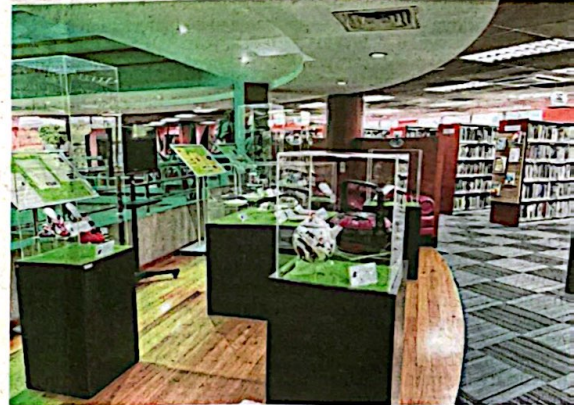
Credit: Sankemakly, Petaling Jaya MP Lee Chean Chung's office



Lee embarked on the project to highlight the historical places, landmarks and eateries in PJ Old Town after setting up his service centre in 2023.



Medan Selera Jalan Othman has been around since 1960.



Petaling Jaya Community Library has a small exhibition area with artefacts curated by Petaling Jaya Museum.

repair and customisation of sofa and car seat cushions and has been in the old town since 1972.

Auntie Peggy's Classic *ais kacang* and *cendol*, Kavitha Banana Leaf, Traditional Hakka Lui Char Restaurant and Nasi Lemak Goreng Chef Fauzey are among the well-known eateries listed.

Lee is open to the idea of future collaborations, such as a photo exhibition featuring old snaps of Petaling Jaya Old Town or in-depth walking tours led by experienced guides.

"I feel very welcomed since opening my office here. The senior folks enjoy sharing and chatting about their experiences, and life here resembles the harmonious fabric of Malaysia."

"PJ Old Town has reached a crossroad. It is an ageing neighbourhood, so there is a need to develop it in a sustainable manner to retain its traditional charm while attracting young people to come here."

"There is also a need to look into better care and having engaging programmes for the many senior folk living here."

Physical copies of the map are available at Lee's office in

Section 1, Rajiv's office in Petaling Jaya New Town, Jalan Othman Petaling Jaya Bus Terminal as well as at these restaurants - Tingkap Cafe in Section 1, Kanna Curry House in Section 17 and New Ipoh Chicken Rice in Jalan Gasing.

The digital version is available at pjlestari.com/cultural-map/

Walking tour

Lee, a first-term MP and former assemblyman from Pahang, personally led a group on a half-day walk in mid-October to visit several places mentioned in the PJ Old Town Cultural and Food Map.

For Heidi Khalisah Azwari, the walking tour allowed her to gain insight and rediscover old places she used to frequent during her childhood years.

"I grew up at my grandmother's house in Taman Medan and studied at SK Assunta 2," said Heidi Khalisah, 20, who is now studying at a private university in Raub, Pahang.

"I got the opportunity to appreciate the buildings I used to walk past."

"It is also nice to know the eat-



Kompleks Rakan Muda Arena Petaling Jaya is a sports complex located along Jalan Selangor.

eries I frequented are still around."

She said she used to eat satay at Medan Selera Jalan Othman, *nasi lemak* with *ayam goreng* at Nasi Lemak Goreng Chef Fauzey and enjoyed celebratory treats at McDonald's when she did well at school.

Heidi Khalisah added that the Petaling Jaya Community

Library was where she would study for her exams and hang out with friends.

Pong Siew Chu, 62, said the walking tour offered new insight into her neighbourhood, even after having lived in Section 1 for 40 years.

Her husband, Wong Chong Tow, is the Section 1B Rukun Tetangga treasurer.

"It was the first time I entered the premises of several places of worship," said Pong who did the half-day walk with her son, Wong Jun Zhi, 22.

"I am keen on renewing my membership at PJ Community Library after learning of its newer facilities."

"It has a play area with books and activities for children aged up to seven years, so I can take my two grandsons, aged two years and five months, there when they come for a visit."

Pong said she has patronised a number of shops and eateries listed in the map, and goes to Pasar Besar Jalan Othman to do her daily marketing.

"I hope the map helps draw in more visitors to the Section 1 neighbourhood and revive businesses here."

"Perhaps Lee or a relevant authority could consider having murals on walls to add an artistic element to PJ Old Town, similar to the 'Little Children on a Bicycle' mural in George Town, Penang," she added.

Pong said she would also promote the map to her neighbours and students attending the day-care service she operates.