

Malaysia's soon-to-be Tallest Building will be 'Certifiably Green'

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The 118-story tower will become a new iconic feature of Kuala Lumpur's skyline. Photo Credit: PNB

Step aside, Petronas Twin Towers. Here comes Malaysia's soon-to-be tallest skyscraper. And it will be wholly green, to boot, if its developers keep their word.

Merdeka PNB118 (so named because it will be in Merdeka, owned by Permodalan Nasional Berhad, and feature 118 floors) is set to be completed by 2020 and to serve as the headquarters for the investment bank. Standing at 630 meters, it will literally tower over the landscape. It will be Malaysia's new tallest building, claiming the crown from the current tallest, the 88-storied Twin Towers, and the world's fifth tallest skyscraper.

Designed by Australian firm Fender Katsalidis Architects and developed by Turner Construction Co, the skyscraper is planned to become an iconic feature of Kuala Lumpur's skyline. In a welcome development (pardon the pun), the building will be equipped with the latest energy-saving green technologies. Its developers will aim to obtain a gamut of green building certifications for it, including the Malaysian Green Building Index and LEED Platinum, the highest standard awarded by the US Green Building Council in a globally recognized badge of eco-friendliness.

In order to be certified as a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum building, a development must be constructed in an environmentally friendly manner from the ground up. It must be built in compliance with environmental laws and regulations, and it must be highly energy efficient by help of advanced water- and energy-saving devices.

Certified green buildings are constructed and operated at consistently lower rates of harmful impact on their environments by being resource efficient; by having a lower carbon footprint throughout their lifecycle; and by using water and electricity judiciously.

Merdeka PNB118 will take up 19 acres of land in total at ground level in a popular part of town, which is also home to Stadium Merdeka and Stadium Negara. Locals have raised concerns about the development, citing the prospects of increased traffic congestion in an already frequently gridlocked area.

"The existing LRT and monorail lines will also be connected to the MRT Merdeka station," PNB chairman Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid has said. "Therefore, the problem of traffic congestion can be handled well with the preparation of adequate access networks for exit and entry of the Warisan Merdeka area."

Time will tell how that plan works out.