

Waterfronts to zest up city life

The government is embarking on a RM4 billion project to transform Kuala Lumpur's two most notable rivers, which is expected to contribute billions in gross national income and create some 86,000 jobs by 2020. **A. AZIM IDRIS** has the story

A RM4 BILLION project to rehabilitate and beautify the Klang and Gombak rivers will create 86,000 jobs and earn billions of ringgit in revenue for investors by 2020.

Known as the River of Life (RoL) project, it is a federal government initiative to transform the two rivers into vibrant and liveable waterfronts with high economic value.

"Both rivers have the potential to spur high-value investments due to their central location," said Kuala Lumpur Datuk Bandar Tan Sri Ahmad Fuad Ismail.

He expected the project to provide opportunities for various economic activities and bring in billions of ringgit in income for investors.

At the same time, he said some 86,000 jobs would be created in the service sector, including construction and retail activities.

He added that with the recent appointment of the master planner, Aecom, a prominent design firm from the United States, the awarding of tenders to local contractors would be done in six months and construction work would begin in less than a year.

The project would be divided into three components: river cleaning, river master-planning and beautification and river development.

Of the RM4 billion for the RoL, RM1 billion is solely for the beautification phases, which involves seven parcels of land in 11 sectors in the city.

They cover the key heritage sites and buildings such as Dataran Merdeka, Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad, Central Market, Petaling Street and Masjid Jamek.

The rehabilitation and beautification works would cover a total of 10.7km stretch of the two rivers.

Ahmad Fuad said that to spur economic investments potential, government land along the river banks would be identified and tendered to private developers through competitive bidding,



An artist's impression of the rehabilitated and beautified centrepiece where the Klang and Gombak rivers converge.

He also said the aim of the cleaning up works on the two rivers was to improve the water quality from being not suitable for body contact, to suitable for recreational use by year 2020.

These works would be led by the Drainage and Irrigation Department with the collaboration of 26 government agencies and departments.

They would be from the ministries of Federal Territory and Urban Well-being; Natural Resources and Environment; Energy, Green Technology and Water; and Housing and Local Government.

The RoL is an entry point project identified in the Greater Kuala Lumpur/Klang Valley National Key Economic Areas (NKEA) under the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP).

■ **TOMORROW: A batik maker's efforts to prevent pollution**



An artist's impression of a site on one of the 11 parcels of land that would be beautified for recreational use by 2020. — Pictures from River of Life website