

River project to start

RM4bil to be spent on development, cleaning and beautification

By **FAZLEENA AZIZ**

fazleena@thestar.com.my

Photo by **ELLIS KHAN**

THE first phase of the River of Life (RoL) project in Precinct 7 near Masjid Jamek will start in the second half of this year, said Kuala Lumpur mayor Tan Sri Ahmad Fuad Ismail.

Ahamd Fuad said the project would not be successful if people did not change their attitude in preserving and keeping the rivers clean.

Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) collects about 20 tonnes of garbage daily from the rivers in Kuala Lumpur, which has caused fears pertaining to the project, said Ahmad Fuad at the signing ceremony between Aecom Perunding Sdn Bhd.

The project is part of the Greater KL/Klang Valley National Key Economic Area under the Economic Transformation Programme.

It is aimed at developing public recreational spaces, tourist attractions and retail outlets.

The beautification will be carried out in 11 precincts along 10.7km of the Klang and Gombak rivers.

Aecom was chosen to work with DBKL on the River of Life Masterplan and Precinct 7 design after winning the River of Life Masterplan International Competition held from April 12 to June 15 last year.

Fuad said city folks did not have the level of understanding needed to preserve the rivers but instead looked at the waterways as a dumping ground.

"Restaurants and factory operators also tend to channel their waste to the rivers.

"The New Year Eve's celebration was a clear indication of how much garbage was thrown by the public. We spent so much money on waste management, all of which can be



Seeing the details: Ahmad Fuad (left) looking through the documents for the project. With him are Lo (right) and Federal Territories and Urban Wellbeing secretary-general Datuk Ahmad Phesal Talib.

saved," he said.

He said RM4bil had been allocated for this project which had three components — river cleaning, river master planning and beautification and river development.

"About RM3bil is for cleaning while the rest will be for beautification. All land along the river has been frozen by the ministry from any development.

"Perhaps City Hall should have better enforcement to keep the rivers clean. There is no point of having the best infrastructure if the attitude of the people does not reflect it," he said.

During the event, Aecom regional

managing director of planning, design and development Southeast Asia Scott Dunn said RoL was a redevelopment project which involved residential and retail outlets along the river.

He said the project would have a network of pedestrian walkways while maintaining the heritage sites.

"People will be able to walk and cycle along the river. Eco-friendly features will be included as well with landscapes. The project will also involve flood-mitigation by deepening the river," he said.

The river-cleaning will be conducted along a 110km stretch of the

Klang River basin to improve the water quality for sports and recreational purposes.

The signing ceremony was held between Fuad and Aecom chief executive officer for Asia Dickson Lo and witnessed by Federal Territories and Urban Wellbeing secretary-general Datuk Ahmad Phesal Talib.

Aecom's track record includes the Jinji Lake in Suzhou, China, Hudson River in New York, United States, and Fort Bonifacio in Manila.

The public will be engaged on both the RoL masterplan and design of Precinct 7 to ensure feedback is incorporated before plans are finalised.