

Flooded with fear

The Monorail depot project by the Klang River in Brickfields is causing uneasiness among residents who feel construction along riverbed may lead to flooding. ➤3



In progress

Syarikat Prasarana Negara Berhad says the company has obtained all the necessary approval from the authorities, including the DID, to carry out the construction works.

— By M. AZHAR ARIF / The Star

Project raises safety concern

Brickfields community questions construction work along riverbank

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Photo by **M. AZHAR ARIF**

CONSTRUCTION work to build a Monorail depot along the banks of the Klang River in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur, is causing residents sleepless nights.

The residents are questioning the authorities, in particular the Department of Drainage and Irrigation (DID), the logic behind allowing the project to go through despite knowing that any construction of piers and elevated highways along the riverbed would cause flooding.

After a meeting last month with community representatives including NGOs in the township, the group had written to DID director Datuk Ahmad Husaini Sulaiman seeking an explanation on the feasibility of the project in view of safety factors.

"I find it ironic that DID allowed this project despite knowing that such construction can lead to flooding," said Rukun Tetangga Brickfields B chairman S.K.K Naidu.

Naidu said the community's concern arose after reading a paper written by former DID director-general Datuk Keizrul Abdullah on Oct 2, 2004 entitled *Kuala Lumpur: Re-Engineering A Flooded Confluence*, which gives the causes of flooding.

One of the paragraph reads: "Constrictions to

the river flow, especially at the piers of LRT line and elevated highway, are factors that contribute in one way or other to retarding the flow in the river channel and thus increasing floods in the city".

Naidu said he had also read newspaper reports that building piers and elevated highways along riverbanks could cause flooding and it was the main cause of a massive flood in Kampung Baru years ago.

Temple of Fine Arts president V. Kanagasivam said he was concerned that a project was being carried out on a river reserve that was affecting the temple.

"Due to the construction work, the pipeline system of the temple had been damaged and our sewerage is not flowing properly," he said.

Kanagasivam added that no consultation was carried out by Monorail or Prasarana with the community for the project.

"Normally, if it is a Kuala Lumpur City Hall or Federal Territories Ministry project, the public are invited to voice out their objections, but there was no such thing for this one," he said.

A resident of Tong Weng Mansion, Joseph Raj, said he was surprised that those living nearby the riverbank were not told about the project.

"I think we should have been informed," he said.

Meanwhile, in an email statement, Syarikat



Depot in the making: Works along the riverbank is part of the Monorail Fleet Expansion Project.

Prasarana Negara Berhad (Prasarana) Infrastructure Development Division group director Amiruddin Maaris said the company had obtained all the necessary approvals from the authorities, including the DID, to carry out the construction works.

"Currently, works along the riverbank is part of our Monorail Fleet Expansion Project (MFEP). These include depot expansion and construction of an access road to the depot.

"We are constantly liaising with all the authorities in charge in order to ensure full compliance to the required standards and

regulations. For that matter, we even constructed an easy access along the riverbank for DID officers to come and inspect our construction sites at any time.

"We adhere strictly to all the authorities' guidelines. Barring any unforeseen circumstances, we expect the construction works to be completed by the year-end," he said.

When contacted, a DID spokesman acknowledged receiving the letter from the NGOs in Brickfields and said they were preparing a report on the matter and would respond soon.