

More efforts needed for residents to appreciate rivers

► FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

The Sungai Bunus catchment area is about 17.5sq km in terms of total size, with the main river stretching 9.2km beginning from Wangsa Maju (TAR University College) and ending in Sungai Kelang next to Jalan Munsyi Abdullah (opposite Pikom ICT Mall).

Areas located within the catchment include Wangsa Maju, Setapak, Jalan Genting Kelang, KL Festival Mall, Pulapol, UTM Kuala Lumpur Campus, Kampung Ayer Panas, Jalan Tun Razak, Taman Tasik Titiwangsa, Kampung Baru, Chow Kit, Dang Wangi and Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman.

An estimated 250,000 people live within the basin, including residents and a transient population who work, study or visit the area.

It is one of the most densely populated catchments in the Sungai Kelang basin.

A total of 6,121kg of rubbish was collected from gross pollutant traps managed by DID from November 2012 to September 2013 in the catchment area.

The average is 500kg per month with the highest of 1,550kg recorded in November 2012.

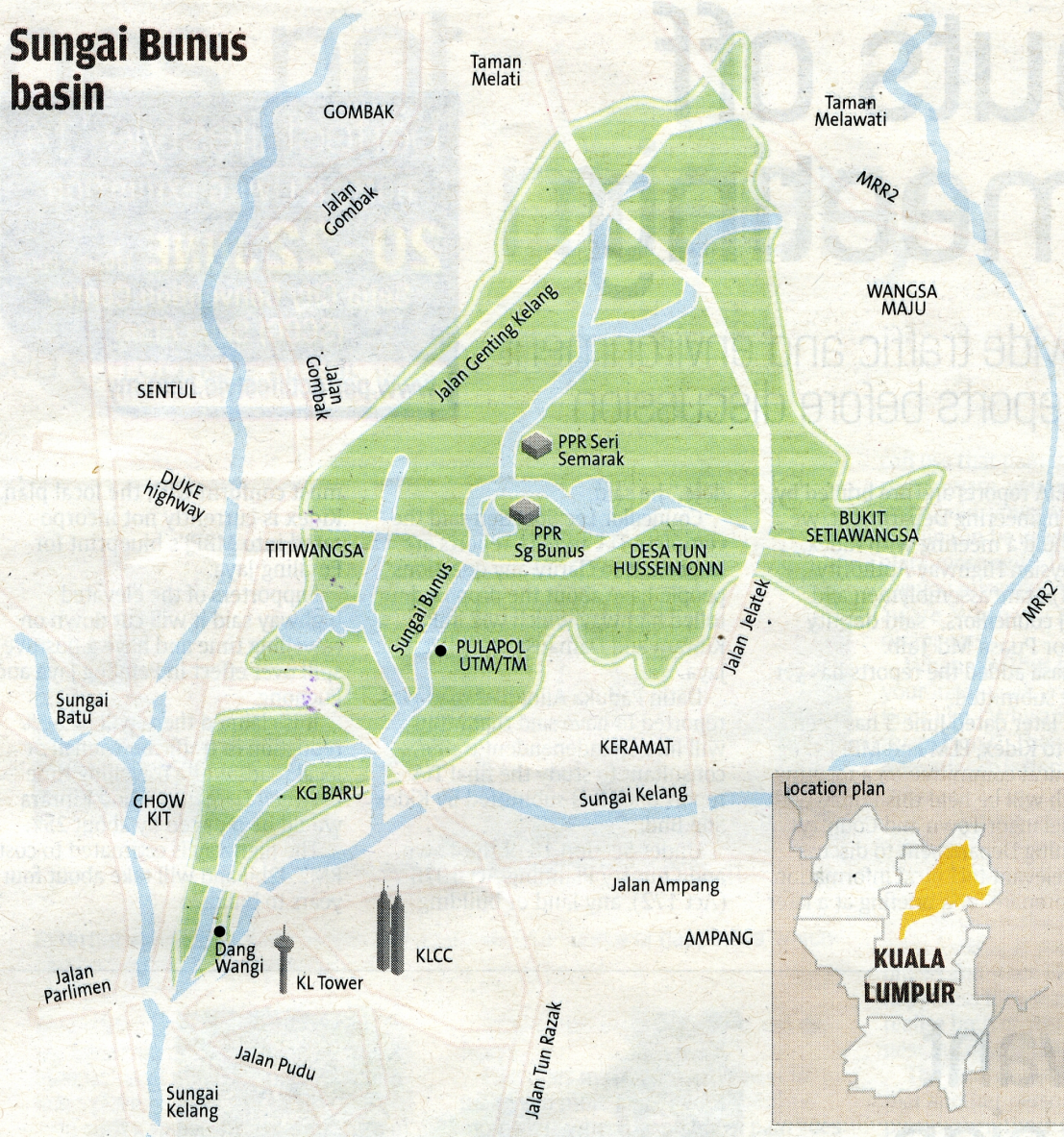
Government initiatives

The Greater Kuala Lumpur/Klang Valley masterplan is aimed at making Kuala Lumpur one of the top 20 livable cities in the world.

It includes the River of Life project (ROL), whereby RM1bil has been allocated for the beautification of a 10.7km stretch of Sungai Kelang while another RM3bil involves a clean-up exercise of a 110km stretch of both the Klang and Gombak rivers.

The river cleaning component, Lim explained, was to improve the water quality of both rivers from the current Class III-V levels, which are not suitable for potable pur-

Sungai Bunus basin



poses, to Class IIB, which will be suitable for bodily contact and recreational use by the year 2020.

"We are working towards cleaning up the rivers and the ROL is progressing smoothly, including structural and non-structural measures.

"However, long-term solutions are needed to ensure that our rivers are preserved and remain sustainable," he said.

Lim added that gross pollutant traps and lock booms had been placed to filter and trap floating rubbish, but these are only short-term solutions.

"We need to educate the community and change their mindset to acknowledge that the river belongs to them.

"This is going to be our biggest challenge, to realise that the river is not a rubbish bin or a drain but an

asset and that it is their responsibility to take care of it," he added.

Sustainable solutions

As part of a plan to educate the public on preserving the rivers, DID has engaged Asia Pacific Environmental Consultant Sdn Bhd (Aspec) to reach out to the community and convince them to take ownership of their rivers.

The company is working with the Government to transform the Sungai Bunus basin into a vibrant and sustainable river through a programme called the River of Life Public Outreach Programme (ROL-POP).

ROL-POP will be carried out in phases beginning with Phase 1, involving the upper Sungai Kelang basin, proceeding to Phase 2 for the Bunus River basin (ROL-POP Phase

2) and subsequently other phases.

"To ensure that the Government's river cleaning efforts remain sustainable, the community must be persuaded to take ownership of their rivers, and in order to do that, we have to identify the people or 'champions' to reach out to the community," said Aspec director Dr Jamie Chong.

She explained that six key groups for the ROL-POP Phase 2 had been identified — local communities, institutions, industries, corporations and developers, food establishments, wet markets and workshops — with different programmes planned for each target group.

"The challenge is getting these champions to convince their communities and workers to love their rivers," Dr Chong said, adding that they had already started implementing the programmes last month.