

'Make city rivers safer'

RISE CONCERN: Checks reveal need for better safety measures at the rivers, especially those running near LRT stations, schools and residential areas

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CALLS for better safety measures at the city's rivers have surfaced following the recent drowning of a teenager in Sungai Kerayong, near the Taman Maluri LRT station, here.

On Oct 22, a 13-year-old boy was said to have fallen into the river while playing with friends during a downpour.

His body was found the next day, about 4km from where he was last seen.

A recent *Streets* check revealed a need for better fencing and more safety measures at the rivers, especially those running near LRT stations and residential areas.

The rivers here are mainly easily accessible due to the lack of fences. There are also no signboards to warn or advise the public.

Sungai Kerayong, for instance, is accessible to all as it is not protected from Jalan

Cheras by a fence.

Car salesman Wilson Lim, who works nearby, said he saw some boys, about 12 years old, playing by the river about a week ago.

"The boys were throwing rocks from the riverbank on the road (Jalan Cheras), but I didn't see them go down to the river," he said.

"The river should be fenced to deny access, especially to children. We don't want to see another child fall into the river."

Sungai Kerayong is also accessible via the Pandan Jaya and Pandan Indah LRT stations.

Subramaniam Gopal, who runs a stall selling snacks near the Pandan Jaya LRT station, said he saw people fishing at the river in the mornings and afternoons almost every day.

"Usually, this part of the river is quite shallow but the water can rise to several metres deep during heavy rain."

"The authorities should implement safety measures, including erecting fences along riverbanks near the LRT stations, where there are commuters, including schoolchil-



Sungai Klang, near Kampung Melayu Ampang, is **accessible** through an entry point near Jalan Merbau.

dren," he said.

Sungai Langat along Jalan PDR 1 in Seri Kembangan is another example of an easily accessible river. Even worse, it is located only a few metres away from SK Taming Jaya.

Sungai Klang, near the Dato Keramat and Damai LRT stations, has a fence running alongside and is accessible via designated entry and exit points.

A group of children passing by LRT Damai was asked if any of them had ever swum in the river. The boys grinned and nodded before running off.

Another accessible river is Sungai Klang near the AU3 Flats in Taman Keramat and the MRR2 Highway.

It is poorly fenced and there is no signboard warning the public against entry.

A few men were fishing there while some

were loitering in the area.

AU3 Flats resident Hamizah Mohd Nasir, 51, said the river should be properly fenced to prevent accidents.

"I see children playing near the river in the evenings. Several years ago, an adult swimming in the river was swept away by strong currents. The authorities should act to improve the safety of the rivers in the city. There should at least be a signboard to warn people. We don't want to see another tragedy happening," she said.

Sungai Klang, near Kampung Melayu Ampang, is fenced but it is still accessible through an entry point near Jalan Merbau.

A resident, who wanted to be known only as Nor, said the authorities should also take steps to prevent untoward incidents, especially drownings, while carrying out projects such as the River of Life to beautify the rivers.

"Riverbanks should be off-limits to the public until such projects are completed with proper facilities like benches, walkways and railings."

"The authorities should also consider installing safety features such as floats, in case someone falls into the river, and putting up warning signs."

City Hall deputy director-general (project implementation and maintenance) Datuk Mohd Najib Mohd said the matter would be brought up with the council's civil engineering and drainage Department.

"The entry and exit point at the rivers are to allow access to our engineers and staff from the Drainage and Irrigation Department to do maintenance work. Most of the rivers have fences to dissuade people from venturing into the riverside, but some of the fences have been vandalised."

"We will work with the relevant department to improve the safety of the rivers," he said.



Sungai Klang, near the Dato Keramat and Damai LRT stations, is **easily accessible**.

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