River of Life in Full Flow

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Project aims to revitalise and transform Klang and Gombak rivers into waterfronts

KUALA LUMPUR: The much-anticipated River of Life project, which aims to revitalise and transform the city's dirty rivers, has taken off.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak yesterday launched the project which seeks to transform the Klang and Gombak rivers into iconic waterfronts on par with waterways in cities like Amsterdam, London, Melbourne and Paris by 2020.

The Greater KL-Klang Valley project is an Entry Point Project under the Government's Economic Transformation Programme.

"I believe there will be a drastic change to Kuala Lumpur's image. This is what Kuala Lumpur folk have been waiting for.

"The Klang river has all the elements to become an attractive waterfront bustling with daily activities," Najib said at a groundbreaking ceremony near Jalan Pahang yesterday.

He said there would be a joint effort to clean the rivers and improve water quality.

"It is estimated that 170 tonnes of rubbish enter the Klang river every year but only 25 tonnes are cleared.

"There is also treated and non-treated sewage entering the river every day," he said.

Najib said strict enforcement and a change of mindset were needed to ensure the rivers were kept clean.

The project, he said, had huge economic potential, would attract more tourists, create jobs as well as raise property value along the Klang and Gombak rivers.

Najib said the project was expected to contribute RM11.3bil to the country's Gross Domestic Product until 2020.

The project is divided into three parts, namely river cleaning, which will involve a 110km stretch along the Klang river basin; river beautification along a 10.7km stretch by the Klang and Gombak river corridor which will include pedestrian walkways; and corridor development.

Najib also viewed the five masterplan proposals for the river beautification master planning competition.

Later, at the launch of the Kuala Lumpur Architecture Festival, he said a new affordable home scheme for low and middle-income earners would be launched on Monday.

Economic potential: Najib cracking a joke after launching the River of Life project near Jalan Pahang in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. With him are (from left) Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Douglas Uggah Embas, Raja Nong Chik, Deputy Federal Territories and Urban Well-being Minister Datuk M. Saravanan, Kuala Lumpur Mayor Tan Sri Ahmad Fuad Ismail and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Idris Jala.