

SMART Tunnel channel ready to divert 90% of floodwaters

PETALING JAYA: The much anticipated and debated SMART Tunnel flood channel component kicked into operation yesterday, set to alleviate flood problems which have plagued Kuala Lumpur for a long time.

In announcing this, Drainage and Irrigation Department (DID) director-general Datuk Keizrul Abdullah said the RM2.1bil project would help divert 90% of the city's floods.

"The main rivers which run through the city - Klang, Gombak and Batu - contribute much to the flash floods when their banks overflow from incessant rain.

"With the SMART tunnel flood channel component now operational, 90% of the floodwaters can be diverted away from the usual flood-prone areas such as Masjid Jamek and Dataran Merdeka," he said.

He explained that the floodwaters

would be diverted to water retention ponds in Kampung Berembang (near Jalan Ampang) and Taman Desa (Jalan Klang Lama) and slowly be dispersed into rivers after a flood.

The Kampung Berembang pond can hold a capacity of 600,000 cubic metres of floodwaters, while the Taman Desa pond 1.4 million cubic metres. The SMART Tunnel can divert 1 million cubic metres of floodwaters.

Keizrul was speaking at a forum at Universiti Malaya yesterday, aimed at informing the public on the steps being taken by DID to alleviate flood problems in the city.

The forum also provided a chance for the public, professionals and public officials to voice their opinions.

Brickbats were hurled at Keizrul, especially from Cheras MP Tan Kok Wai, who repeatedly said the SMART

tunnel was defective and showed a two-minute video showing surface cracks and water seeping into the tunnel.

Keizrul said they were not "defects", but normal construction results when a structure was built underground.

He also reminded the audience that DID was taking steps to speed up the process of other flood mitigation projects.