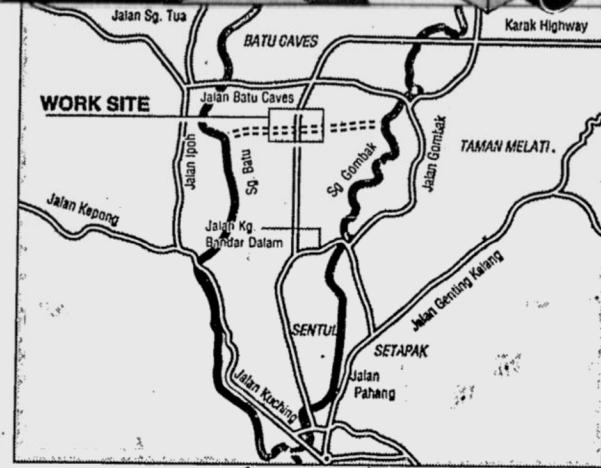
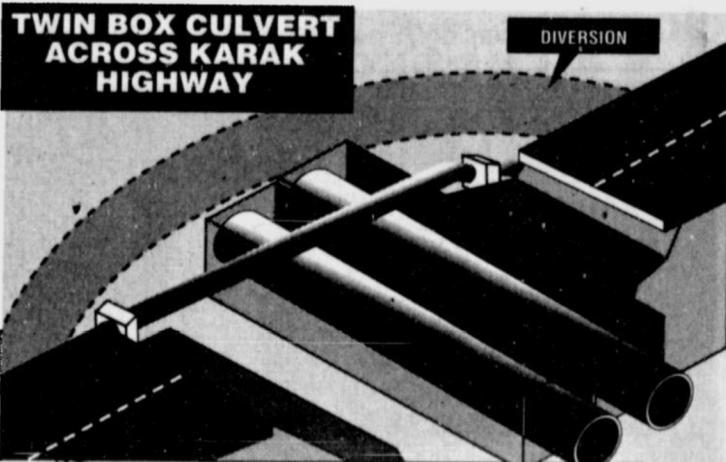




NEW CANAL ... work in progress at Km 3 of the Karak Highway to build a 26-metre twin-box culvert for flood alleviation.



Klang Valley diversion canal held up

By Sager Ahmad

WORK on the 3.4 km diversion canal connecting Sungai Gombak and Sungai Batu to alleviate floods in the area is behind schedule and will only be completed in March next year.

The project, supposed to have been ready by the end of this year, is delayed by the reluctance of squatters to relocate.

Landowners have also been delaying the RM24 million project which began in September last

year.

The project is being carried out by the Federal Territory Drainage and Irrigation Department.

A spokesman said work was in progress to complete a nine-metre wide and 4.5-metre deep canal.

The canal will run 26 metres across the Karak Highway at the Km 3 point which is still inside the Federal Territory.

He said work to construct a twin box culvert which began on Dec 3 last year was expected to be

completed in May. This will include the resurfacing of part of the highway which was dug up last month.

He said a 100-metre diversion road was opened on Dec 3 and will be closed once the box culvert under the highway was ready.

He added that so far 1.3 km of the 3.4 km canal had been completed.

"A 900m canal passing through Kampung Changkat to Sungai Gombak will be dug by the middle of the year with two box culverts

passing under two roads affected by the project.

The Sungai Gombak diversion canal and Sungai Batu flood retention pond system are the brainchild of the Japan International Corporation Co-operation Agency (Jica) which carried out a study in 1989 on the feasibility of the projects.

The spokesman said the study recommended the building of the canal and several retention ponds. About 50 per cent of the project has been completed.

The canal, located between Sungai Gombak and Sungai Batu, is part of the Klang Valley flood mitigation project which is expected to cost RM1 billion by the time it is completed in 2007.

Earlier, FT DID director Tan Jiak Kim said the scheme was designed to reduce flooding and improve existing river and drainage systems without affecting the environment.

About 50 per cent of the project has been completed.

He said experts predicted that a major disaster like the 1971 floods, which hit the Klang Valley and caused RM35 million in damages, would recur once every 100 years.

"Work on Sungai Batu includes the Batu retention pond project which is actually divided into three ponds — a retention pond, recreation pond and regulation pond — all covering 68.3ha of disused mining pools."

Tan said the ponds would act as a buffer to

hold excess water during heavy rain.

"Water channelled from Sungai Gombak will be released into the ponds periodically to prevent flooding in low-lying areas."

He added that under the dam construction component of the flood mitigation project, a dam was to be built for Sungai Gombak in an area along the Karak Highway.

The construction of the RM19.7 million Batu Dam in 1987 and the raising of the Klang Gate Dam by three metres at a cost of RM3.4 million in 1980 were also part of the dam construction component of the flood mitigation project for the Klang Valley.