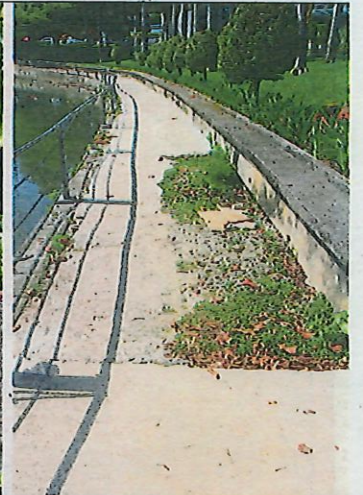




Senior citizens performing light exercises is a daily scene at Taman Jaya. — Photos: NORAFIFI EHSAN/The Star



Regulars to Taman Jaya say the broken jogging path is a safety hazard. — Filepic



The park's lake banks are in dire need of a clean-up. — Filepic

July start for Taman Jaya upgrading project

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UPGRADING of Taman Jaya, the venue for Petaling Jaya's annual Chap Goh Meh festival where the tossing of mandarin oranges takes place around the lake, is set to start in July.

Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) confirmed that it had allocated RM4mil under its 2020 budget to upgrade the park, including its banks, drainage and water gate systems as well as for desilting work.

In a reply on *StarMetro's* queries on the upgrading work, MBPJ said the whole project was expected to take a year to complete.

However, the city council was quick to allay concerns among those who frequented Taman Jaya that the entire park would be sealed off for the purpose.

It was confirmed that only affected areas would be closed for works, specifically the lake edge and pedestrian walkway encircling

MBPJ says visitors still free to use park as only certain parts will be closed

the lake.

"Taman Jaya will not be closed completely. The work will consist of desilting the lake up to 3.5m deep, repairing the lake bank, upgrading the pedestrian walkway around the lake, upgrading silt and trash traps, and installing new water lock to prevent overflow during the rainy season," said MBPJ corporate communications officer Ahmad Iskandar Mohamad Mukhtar.

The park in Jalan Timur is popular among Petaling Jaya residents who spend their mornings and evenings exercising, fishing and socialising there.

There is now an outdoor library where park-goers can sit on the benches and read or borrow a book to take home.

Adjacent to that is the Petaling Jaya Museum which showcases the city's history.

On Jan 1, *StarMetro* reported that the 6.1ha park which opened in 1954, would undergo major upgrading sometime this year. The last upgrade was in 2001.

But according to an earlier news report, there was another round of upgrading in 2015.

As of October last year, a contractor had been appointed by MBPJ to maintain the landscaping and public amenities in Taman Jaya.

"Maintenance of the facilities and cleaning are carried out regularly by the appointed panel contractor," said Ahmad Iskandar.

Retiree Chan Yat Wah, 70, was relieved to hear that MBPJ would not be closing the entire park to carry out work. Chan, who is disabled and a resident of Puchong, visits Taman Jaya four times a week for his morning walk and spends the rest of his time at the park's outdoor library.

"I like the facilities here because there is parking for the disabled, the library is sheltered, and it is safe," he said.

Marimalar Segaran, who lives near the park, frequently brings her four-year-old son to the playground after pre-school.

"It is very convenient for us and he likes to play here for a while before we go home."

"But MBPJ really needs to spruce up the area. Some parts look neglected," she said. Joyce Tan, 65, was relieved to know that

the lake would finally undergo thorough cleaning and desilting.

"The stench is there on most days, but otherwise it is a nice, conducive place to relax and exercise."

"Public parks need regular maintenance to ensure that they are safe for public use," she said.

MBPJ Landscape Department deputy director Dr Badruzaman Jaafar said the upgrading was still in planning stage.

"It needs to be discussed further with relevant departments to work out the details."

"Based on our projection, the final draft plans will be confirmed by the middle of March," he added.

The lake takes up one-third of Taman Jaya, which has heritage features interspersed with trees.

The park features a variety of commodity crops, herbs and fruits to educate visitors.

In the early 2000s, the idea for a museum was mooted to further enhance the park's cultural and heritage value.

The Petaling Jaya Museum in Taman Jaya is housed at the building of the former environmental education centre.



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Taman Jaya's outdoor gym equipment is popular with park-goers.