

Clean-up underway at KL historical buildings

By **BAVANI M**
bavanim@thestar.com.my

SELANGOR government's investment arm Menteri Besar Incorporated (MBI) has initiated clean-up efforts at two historical buildings located in the heart of Kuala Lumpur's heritage zone.

Contractors were seen driving a crane into the courtyards of both buildings recently, presumably to carry out the clean-up work.

At the Industrial Court building, workers were seen pulling out shrubs and weeds growing on top of the buildings, while over at the old Chartered Bank building a few hundred metres away, a man was spotted on a ladder carrying out cleaning work.

Both buildings are more than 100 years old and are gazetted National Heritage buildings.

Referring to the buildings as "The Court" and "Selangor House" respectively, MBI said both buildings, which were their assets, would be turned into tourist information centres to highlight Selangor's historical and unique attractions.

MBI aims to open them by the end of next year.

Jane Rai, who leads Free Walk Kuala Lumpur Unscripted which is a heritage walking tour of the country's capital city, said she was excited to see the two historical

buildings being cleaned up.

"We have always been interested in exploring new heritage buildings in the city and we cannot wait to include these two buildings in our future tours," she said.



By **BAVANI M**
bavanim@thestar.com.my

TWO historical buildings in the heart of Kuala Lumpur belonging to Selangor government will get a major makeover following years of neglect.

Mentri Besar Incorporated (MBI), the state's strategic investment arm, said Selangor government through MBI would develop the old Chartered Bank building and the Industrial Court building into tourist destinations.

"Selangor in A Day" programme that showcases cultural, heritage and tourist attractions, as well as provide information on business and investment opportunities in the state.

As they are heritage buildings, MBI will

Mahkamah would become a tourist centre to provide information on Selangor's historical and unique attractions as well as initiatives MBI said the buildings were to become the "gateway to Selangor" in Kuala Lumpur, providing visitors a sneak peek of the state's best attractions.

This, it said, would be in line with the "Selangor in A Day" programme that showcases cultural, heritage and tourist attractions, as well as provide information on business and investment opportunities in the state.

As they are heritage buildings, MBI will

Contractors going up in a crane to remove the shrubs growing on the rooftop of the Industrial Court building in Jalan Mahkamah, Kuala Lumpur. (Inset) StarMetro's report on Feb 7.

— **LOW LAY**
PHON/The Star

She added that the buildings were in a sorry state for many years and was now looking forward to seeing them back to their former glory.

The old Chartered Bank building

Buildings with chequered history

After withstanding two major floods—one in 1906 and another in 1971—the old Chartered Bank building in the heart of Kuala Lumpur's tourist heritage zone at Merdeka Square was inundated by floodwaters once again last Dec 18—exactly 50 years after the 1971 flood.

However, unlike the previous floods when immediate clean-up and repairs were called for, this time, the heritage building at

Located next to Kuala Lumpur City Gallery, the building that was previously

When StarMetro visited the site recently, the building was in a sorry state and there was mud everywhere.

The grass and shrubs had not been cut in months.

The pretty chandelier at the entrance was the only indication of how charming the building used to be.

A cheer, once used by a security guard, was stationed at the entrance. It has been more than two years since the security services were terminated.

The National Heritage Department (NHD), which is the custodian of heritage buildings in the country, is aware of the situation.

was built in 1891 to house the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China (later known as The Chartered Bank). A new three-storey building replaced the old one in 1909.

The Industrial Court building was built in 1905 and housed Chow Kit & Company, a department store catering to European women. The department store closed down during World War II.

Over the years, the building housed several government agencies, including the Election Commission and Registrar of Societies.

The building was renovated and restored in 1982 and temporarily housed the Industrial Court before it moved out in 2017.

Time for upgrade:
The former Chartered Bank building in Jalan Raja Kuala Lumpur was damaged by last December's flood. — **YAP CHIE**
HONG/The Star