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Don't spoil tranquillity of Bukit Larut, Lake Gardens

pupils of 3A1, SMJK Hua Lian

KHAIRUL Nashri Idris' letter, "Please leave Bukit Larut alone" (NST, March 12), has prompted us, a group of pupils from Sekolah Menengah Jenis Kebangsaan Hua Lian, to voice our opinion on why we think Bukit Larut and the Taiping Lake Gardens should be left alone.

We feel the development that is going to be implemented will benefit only the visitors and not the residents of Taiping, especially the pupils. For your information, situated at the foothill of Bukit Larut and the Taiping Lake Gardens are a number of schools including Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan King Edward VII, SRK Treacher Methodist, SRK Convent Klian Pauh, Sekolah Menengah Sultan Azlan Shah, SM Taman Tasik, Maktab Rendah Sains Mara and SMJK Hua Lian.

There are also residential areas near the Lake Gardens. Every morning, hundreds of pupils cycle to school using the road around the Lake Gardens, enjoying the fresh and cool morning air, and the serenity and beauty of the area.

If the authorities are to build supermarkets, shopping malls, foodstalls and hotels around this area, can you imagine what will happen? There will be an influx of visitors and this will result in traffic jams and pollution.

The tranquillity of the place will be shattered. The safety of pupils who cycle to school through the garden will surely be endangered.

We will also be deprived of the simple joy of cycling to school.

The Bukit Larut and Taiping Lake Gardens are one of the most beautiful spots in the country. If development takes place, trees have to be chopped down and a large area of natural flora will be cleared. Doesn't this move contradict Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call for a "garden city" environment?

Moreover, the building of a commercial and recreational centre here will bring with it more social ills which we are trying so hard to eradicate. Imagine having entertainment and shopping centres around schools! Pupils will spend a lot of their time loitering at these places. The chances that they will get involved in unhealthy activities are high.

Without doubt, development here will be at the expense of an ideal and conducive learning environment that we pupils are now enjoying. If any development is to be done in this area, we think developing an educational centre would be most appropriate.

With the influx of tourists, the prices of goods and foodstuff will increase and this will see a consequent rise in the cost of living. This pensioner's paradise will become a pensioner's nightmare.

Of course, we cannot deny that development of this kind brings progress. Business will flourish and prosper in Taiping but the natural beauty and uniqueness of Bukit Larut and the Taiping Lake Gardens is too high a price to pay for recreational and commercial centres.

There are other areas in Taiping like Pokok Assam and Simpang which can be developed. Why not consider them? Besides thinking of the tourists who may stay for a few days, we hope the authorities will also think of us, the pupils who are permanent residents of Taiping.

Ed: This letter carries 42 signatures of the pupils of 3A1, SMJK Hua Lian, Taiping

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