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Township still green and tranquil

reports on "My Wakil Rakyat and I" by Zakiah Koya
ALTHOUGH Bukit Jalil, site of the 1998 Commonwealth Games, is in Bandar Tun Razak, it appears to be a township that has yet to have been affected by preparations for a major sports event that will place Malaysia on the sportsworld map.

Either this, or it is merely the calm before the storm, for, one can never be so sure as the residents do not mention neither Commonwealth Games nor Bukit Jalil.

A quiet town with all the necessities and facilities, it makes an ideal retirement place for the middle income earner with no kampung or nowhere else to retreat to.

This township is formerly a part of the Sungai Besi constituency. For the 1995 elections, it was decided Sungai Besi constituency be divided into two - Cheras and Bandar Tun Razak.

Up to 1995, the Sungai Besi constituency has remained a DAP stronghold. However, after the formation of Bandar Tun Razak as a separate constituency by itself, BN surprisingly managed to gain a majority when they fielded MCA candidate Datuk Tan Chai Ho.

In its early days (and at present among the older generation) it was known as Kampung Konggo as its original settlers comprised of soldiers who have served in the Congo.

Locals who have been living here since its Kampung Konggo days say it was thought to have been founded by one Hitam Hussin. The place was then a dense jungle and Hitam, not liking the urban accommodation he was provided with, was said to have been looking for a settlement where he could build a home surrounded by nature.

The story goes that while he was clearing the land, he was helped by some soldiers who had served in Congo, thus the appropriate naming of the new settlement as Kampung Konggo.

Over the years, with more and more people migrating to the city and as accommodation became more expensive with the influx, Kampung Konggo grew with its squatters and early settlers.

The government, realising its potential and attractions, took over in 1974 and drew a programme to develop 400 hectares in the area, which included Kampung Konggo.

Rosli Kari Sain, one of its early settlers, says Kampung Konggo spanned from where Bandar Tun Razak is divided from Bandar Tasik Selatan up to the housing estates of Mewah, Ikhlas and Jujur.

In what the government said was paving the way for "an integrated residential, commercial, and recreational township", the original settlers as well as those who were squatting on Kampung Konggo, were moved into low-cost flats (urban accommodation which Hitam initially shied away from).

These flats, formerly known as Kampung Konggo Flats, are now known as Sri Labuan Flats and come under the Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur.

Many more flats and housing estates have also come up. Skyscrapers, however, have yet to make a mark in this town. In 1982, Kampung Konggo township was officially opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as Bandar Tun Razak, named after the second Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak.

In that short time since then, Bandar Tun Razak can be said to have bloomed into a full fledged township with developments taking place,

although not rapidly, but obviously.

Within this time frame too, it has changed affiliation - while under the Sungai Besi constituency it was within the boundary of Selangor, but now, the parliamentary constituency of Bandar Tun Razak is under the Federal Territory.

A drive through Bandar Tun Razak would have a first timer impressed with its greenery and town planning.

One will be impressed to find the main driveway of Bandar Tun Razak as tranquil as its name, Jalan Tenteram. On one side are some of the oldest and top educational institutions such as the Maktab Perguruan Ilmu Khas and Sekolah Sains and Sekolah Alam Shah, making it one of the education centres in the country.

In the same row, there is also the International Youth Centre, an impressive building, and a sports complex which is accessible to all (but which opens only in the evenings).

There is also the newly-completed UKM hospital, spanning over acres of land, and which seems to be a bit out of place, what with its Austrian-like design. It is scheduled to open in July this year and will serve as the general hospital for the residents there.

The landscape of Bandar Tun Razak is natural and beautiful, not the pruned shrubs and trees-on-stilts one usually finds in KL. It is lined with majestic old trees, which cast their timeless shadows as one drives under their branches arching across the roads.

Predominantly a Malay area with Malays making up 56 per cent of the population and Chinese constituting another 35 per cent, Bandar Tun Razak has quite a number of religious schools as well as suraus, one just as big as a mosque.

Then there is the beautiful Sayyidina Osman mosque, where the Friday congregations are held.

For recreation purposes, there is the Taman Tasek Permaisuri, lake and all, which is said to be the original site where ancestor Hitam cleared the jungle.

But when you enter the vicinity of low-cost flats, which is not very far from the Tasek Permaisuri, do not breathe as the stench of uncollected garbage is quite unbearable - especially after coming in from the fresh air under the majestic old trees.

Litter is everywhere, and this is especially obvious in the low-cost houses and low-cost flats.

One wonders if Alam Flora, the newly privatised garbage collector, services these areas of the town. The special officer to Tan, Abd Rahman Abdullah, says it is not that these places are not serviced, but that the people do not place their garbage in the proper places, thus the refusal of Alam Flora to collect. This standoff must be sorted out as a matter of urgency, for, the overriding concern must be the health ramifications from rubbish overflowing from the main bins.

Throwing of things from the top floors of the flats is a popular activity here, and has yet to be addressed. It seems every morning litter of all sorts can be found on the ground floors. One resident remarked that "the authorities are waiting for some bricks to fall on someone's head before they do anything about it".

Water is the biggest worry of Bandar Tun Razak residents as water cuts are a common occurrence, for a stretch of hours every two or three days.

One of the recent cuts, lasting for more than one-and-a-half days, left many of them steaming.

The main reason given by the Water Supply Department is that there is always one project or another. Furthermore, the residents, say no proper notice is given.

However, Abd Rahman claims that water cuts are broadcast on radio before the disruptions.

Residents of Bandar Tun Razak say that it does not help as not many of them have their radio on all day long and then again there have been times the news was too late for them to store any water.

Water trucks despatched to the affected areas do help but a few of the residents say that even in such times of need, there is the tendency to "pick" areas.

Not one person that this writer met failed to talk of their water woes. They say their complaints seem to have fallen on deaf ears and most are at present just putting up with it - but their patience has its limits, they caution.

Despite these setbacks many residents believe that these are some of the sacrifices they are willing to go through in the name of development.

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