

01/05/2001

Bleak times for historic Taiping railway station

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ONE of Taiping's many firsts in the country - the Taiping Railway Station built in 1885 - is still standing tall. However, it needs to be renovated and repaired as the railway building is an eyesore to both residents and visitors alike.

It appears that a sad fate awaits it as little effort is being taken by Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad to renovate and repair the historical building.

Residents are now wondering why the building is being left in a pitiful state.

They are urging KTM to preserve the historical station for the benefit of future generations.

A little "touch-up and paint work" was carried out recently in preparation of Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik's recent visit to the railway station.

The New Straits Times visited the historical railway station recently and found that renovation work has to be undertaken in order to preserve the building.

It was sadly noted that the first railway track from Taiping to Kuala Sepatang (formerly known as Port Weld) had been lifted and sold as junk.

It was also discovered that a plaque unveiled by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in 1985, in conjunction with the station's 100th year celebration, has gone missing.

The monument is sited just opposite the station master's office and yet no effort seems to have been taken to replace the missing plaque.

A site which was proposed for a railway museum nearby has also been left abandoned and is now overgrown with bushes.

Resident Dr K.N. Rajaram urged KTM to take immediate action to preserve the station building as it was becoming an eyesore.

"This is important not only because of its place in national history but also because the building has been there for over 100 years," he said.

Aulong Assemblyman Yeong Sing Chee said the station should not be left in a state of neglect.

"Being a gateway to the historical town of Taiping, KTM must upgrade and repair the building," he added.

Assistant administrative officer Hanim Ramly said renovations must be carried out not only for its historical value but also to help bring back memories of the past, especially for the older generation.

She also said several stalls opposite the railway station were in need of upgrading. KTM should also consider building new stalls.

Businessman S. Rabindran said apart from the need to repair and renovate the building, KTM should also set up an information corner for the public, especially to inform children and students on the historical significance of the railway station.

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