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Sin and stink of Gurney Drive

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir's lament on public apathy towards a clean environment on March 4 is timely. Indeed there are many things the public can do to make Malaysia a better place to live in.

We need to change our mindset, and be aware that everything is inter-dependent. When the environment is gone, the people will reap the whirlwind of neglect.

Among other things, our health will be affected, and it will lead to a domino effect in many things that we do. We have been talking for a long time about boosting Malaysia's image as a tourist destination - to attract foreign tourists.

Along the way, we tried to promote things like eco-tourism. All these are fantastic ideas, but have we really built the foundation to this end?

Let's not look very far. Just take the "famous" Penang Gurney Drive as an example. Almost all tourists who step on to Penang's soil will visit Gurney Drive. The food is good, and the sky is beautiful.

But, guess what? The sea and its beach stinks. The sea water is one of the worst one can find in Malaysia. During low tide, the situation is even worse. I am sure when foreigners visit Penang, Gurney Drive is now a place to avoid.

There is no need for me to describe further the appalling situation. Just visit Gurney Drive one day and see for yourself - please do not be surprised to experience the companionship of 'friendly' rats, and witness various unique sea-born creatures as well.

What is the problem, and is there a solution to it? I shall leave this to the relevant authorities to contemplate, and judge for themselves. If they do not know, or think that nothing much can be done, then I am sure a solution will come if Dr Mahathir visits the site.

Let's start to improve things close to heart as the first step towards making Malaysia into a garden nation by 2005.