

13/03/2001

Sitiawan needs to be cleaned up before it is too late

S.V. Raja

I HAVE been a resident of Sitiawan for the past 20 years and have seen it grow since the Royal Malaysian Navy started to move its base from Woodlands, Singapore, to Lumut in the late 70s.

Then, it was a pristine place with nicely kept gardens along the fringes of forest reserves near Bukit Ungku Busu, Teluk Rubiah and Segari. It is I believe, still trying to serve the Ipoh-Lumut corridor like what Klang is doing to the Klang Valley.

Please try not to be because you can be better.

A big gas power plant was built a few years ago at Segari, opposite the Dindings River from Lumut.

The world famous Pangkor Island Resort is also situated near the main Pangkor Island which is adjacent to Lumut and Sitiawan.

Several industries have been set up adjacent to the new Lumut Port. A beautiful bridge now spans the Dindings River to link up Segari.

A huge hi-tech co-generation power plant operating on coal is coming up at Teluk Rubiah.

Sitiawan or for that matter Manjung District can be the showcase of this region if it can keep its high profile tourist industry alongside the power plants and other industries.

For this to happen, the authorities and the people should rectify some basic shortcomings, or else they may be overwhelmed later by even bigger problems.

There is also the issue of lack of maintenance here as elsewhere raised by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad some time back and reiterated again recently by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The communications tower standing on a hill within the Teluk Rubiah Forest Reserve is owned by a private cellular phone company and it is surrounded by a huge pile of plastic bottles, discarded batteries, etc. The hill slopes in Damar Laut across the Dindings River have been badly scarred. Time, only if men allow it, will heal them, but I believe the citizens of Manjung, especially those living in Sitiawan, need to do something about what is easily the filthiest place in Malaysia.

Just visit the market midway between Sitiawan and Kg Koh. Here hawkers cook and sell breakfast surrounded by dogs and cats, flies, and maggots in the drain. The so-called famous sea food restaurants located under coconut palms patronised by tourists are breeding grounds for all types of bacteria, mosquitoes and flies and a feeding ground for canines and felines.

The drains are blocked and it is not surprising why dengue is prevalent in Sitiawan.

Unless we make some effort to change them soon, we have a great deal to lose.