

Rubbish, rubbish, rubbish everywhere!

Tepian Loke Yew a sorry sight in the capital city

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Story and photos
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THE stench of stinking rubbish invades the nostril the moment one enters Jalan Jubilee in the older part of Kuala Lumpur. The unsightly garbage everywhere along the street is so common that the local residents have become immune to it.

The area, popularly known among the locals as Tepian Loke Yew, is being treated like a huge rubbish dumpsite by the residents and the many factories in the area.

With no proper disposal bins or refuse bins, the residents have no choice but to dispose the rubbish all over the place, and in this case, all over the streets and at the back lanes of the shop houses.

Tepian Loke Yew consists mainly of shop houses and flats where many of the shops house factories producing almost everything from sewing machines to air-conditioners.

Most of these businesses operate without signboards as the shop lots

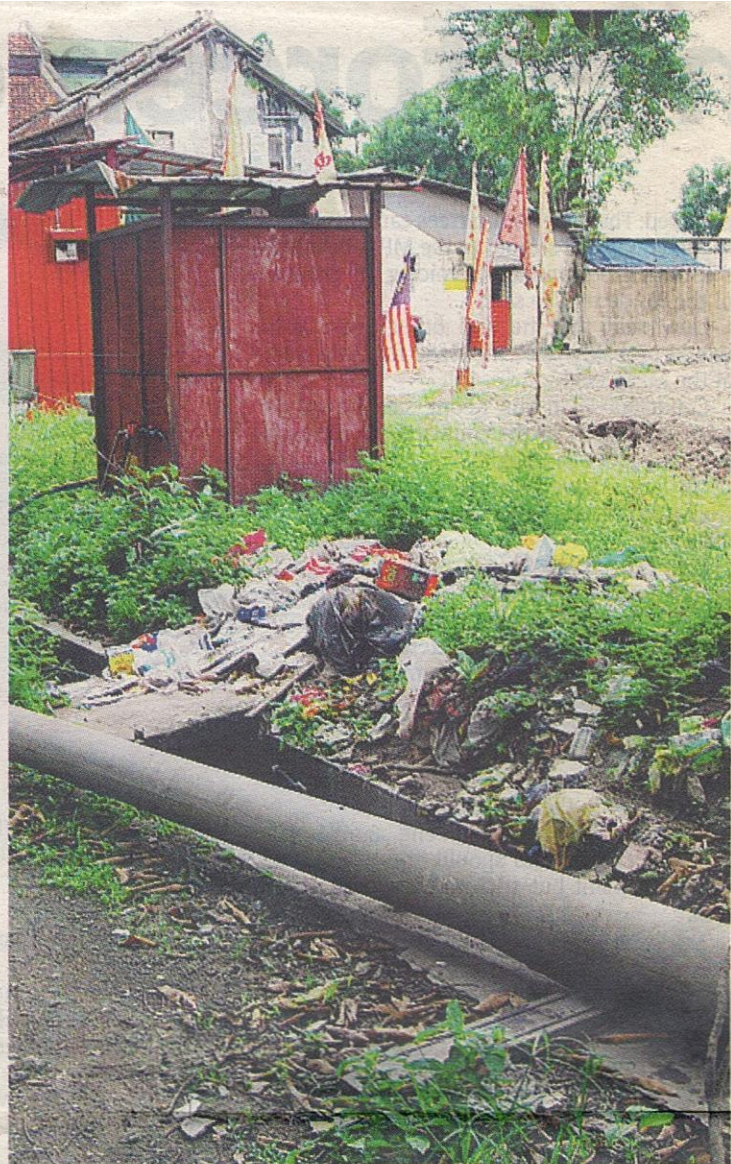
are meant for small businesses and not manufacturing activities.

According to Wong Moon Chuan, who has been living in the area for nearly 20 years, most of these businesses have been operating illegally for a long time.

"They do not have licences to operate in the shop lots but they use the space for their manufacturing processes anyway. They usually do everything behind closed doors and throw all their rubbish on the streets which affects everyone who lives here," Wong said.

The factories dispose all kinds of rubbish, including threads, needles, wires, and electrical parts, that are all non-biodegradable. Without doubt, such rubbish is harmful to the environment. Obviously, the indiscreet and indiscriminate way of dumping rubbish has turned Tepian Loke Yew into a rundown and unhealthy area.

"Since the factories are disposing the rubbish everywhere, some of the residents have also started



Even the gods are not spared: A rubbish trail leading to a Chinese altar. Residents who want to bring offerings to the altar have to bear with the stench first.

to do the same. Many shop houses here are rented out to foreign workers and obviously, they do not care about the environment as we home owners do. They will throw all their rubbish out their balconies and it will just accumulate on the street," Wong said.

"Sometimes the stench is so bad that we cannot open our windows at all. The drains around these area are always clogged with rubbish and it has become an infestation site for rats, mosquitoes and flies," he said.

Although some concerned residents have put up signs to advise the factory workers as well as residents to stop disposing their rubbish everywhere, the appeal has fallen on deaf ears. The irony is that the places with the advisory signs are the spots that seem to attract the most rubbish.

"One business owner got so angry that he put up a sign that says 'Saya Kurang Ajar, Suka Buang Sampah' (I have ill manners, I like throwing rubbish) in front of his shop. The reverse psychology method seems to have worked because the area is clean and nobody throws rubbish there," Wong said.

A spot right in front of an illegal sewing machine factory has become a favourite place for many people to dump their rubbish.

But what is of concern to the residents is that the fire hydrant is located at that spot and should a fire occur, they will problems activating it.

"We complained to Alam Flora and the Kuala Lumpur City Hall about this matter, and once in a while, they will send workers to clear the spot but within a week, the rubbish will pile up again. There is no end to the problem," Wong said.

Cheras MCA Service Centre director Dr Jeffrey Goh has sought the City Hall's help to find solutions to help residents in the area.

Some of the measures to be taken include putting up official warning signs around the area, clearing the drains regularly, and putting potted plants along the streets to prevent people from disposing rubbish.

"I urge all residents to co-operate and to dispose their rubbish properly. This is a problem that can only be solved through the cooperative efforts of the community," Goh said.



Not a pretty sight: Rubbish strewn all over the streets takes up almost half of the road and obstructs traffic.