

Sungai Way thriving as industrial area

RICH PAST: The township, which was built on tin mining and rubber, is seeing prosperous times due to demand on its real estate

NST 12/5/12 MS 1.

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ALTHOUGH the shine from the tin mining industry from which Sungai Way grew has faded, the glitter in the area is not all lost. What appears to be a sleepy hollow today is enjoying high property value.

"The property price here has gradually increased. Today property owners here can fetch a rent of between RM5,000 to RM6,000 monthly," said Yapp Poh Kiong, a second-generation restaurant owner.

A property valuation carried out by the Petaling Jaya City Council in 1991 showed that the property value here had shot up to 300 per cent. The demand for property could be due to the large presence of industries.

Kampung Tunku assemblyman Lau Weng San said there are about 700 houses in Sungai Way.



→ Turn to **Page 2**

SJK (C) Sg Way was once a single-storey wooden building.

Sungai Way still retains old charm

MST 12/5/12 MS2.

→ From Page 1

"More than 100 of the houses here have been converted into hostels for migrant workers who work in the Free Trade Zone."

Lau added that more than half of the 14,000 residents in Sungai Way are female migrant workers.

Meanwhile, Yapp, 66, who runs the Heng Lee restaurant here, reminisced about the old days.

He said after the tin mining industry waned, miners turned planters.

"The area had many rubber plantations. Miners began planting rubber trees due to the high rubber price then," Yapp said.

Both mining and rubber planting brought prosperity to the village.

In 1882, Sungai Way was one of the stops included in the construction of Kuala Lumpur-Klang railway line.

Today Sungai Way is known as Seri Setia and comprises Sungai Way New Village, SS9 and Sungai Way Free Trade Zone (FTZ).

The Seri Setia market is its biggest landmark. The three-storey building was built at a cost of RM1.2 million.

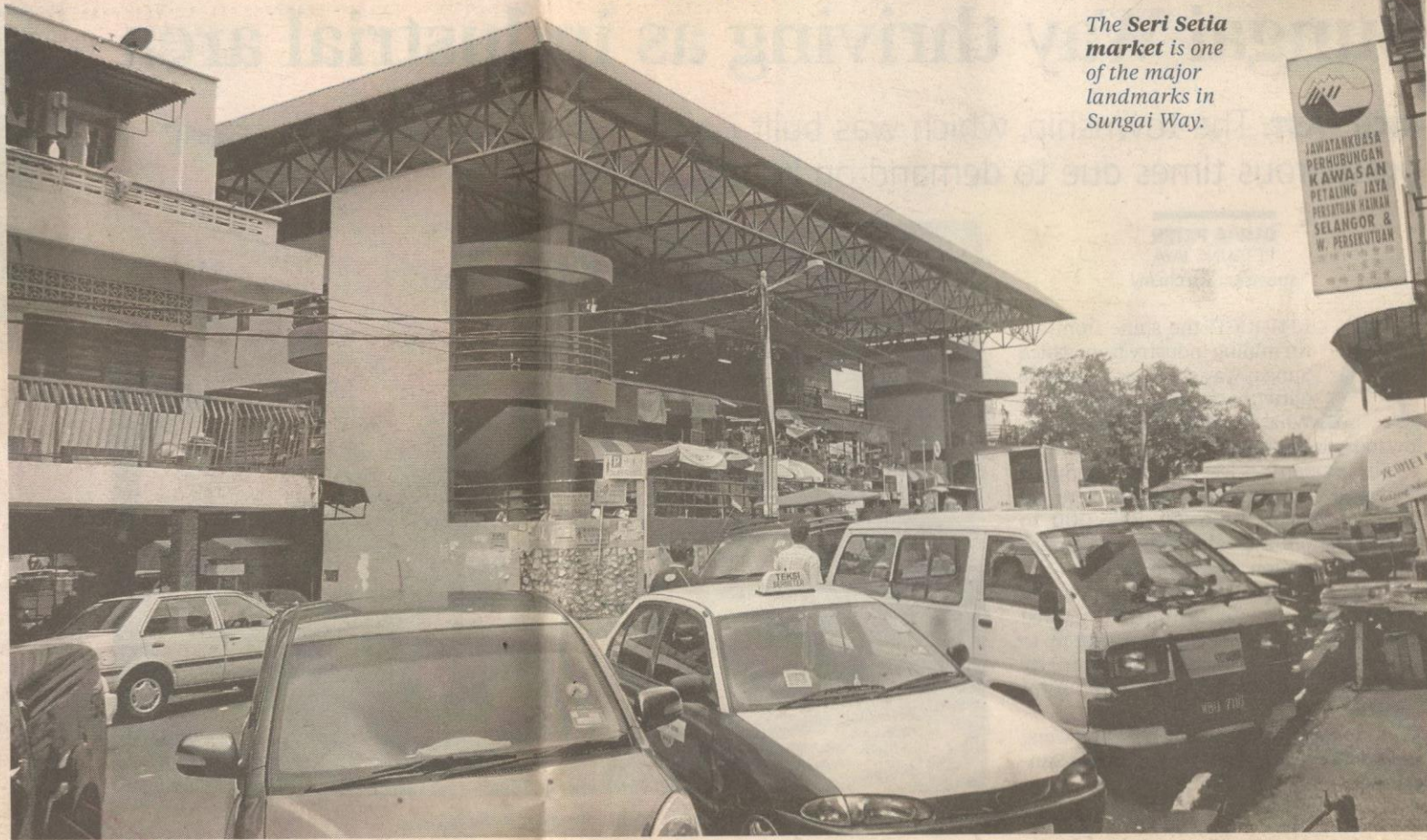
Just down the main road of the business area at SS9A/1 are the upgraded SJK (C) Sg Way and the police station.

"I remember my school, SJK (C) Sg Way, as a single-storey wooden building. Look at it now," he said.

Yapp added that many of the elder generations here attended the school and were instrumental in raising funds for the school's development.

A 66-year-old florist, who only identified herself as Tan, said she plans to retire in two years' time.

"Business is slowing down, and



The **Seri Setia market** is one of the major landmarks in Sungai Way.

I'm getting old," said Tan, who has been selling flowers here over the past 20 years.

Tiew Poo, 70, a claypot chicken rice trader, said a majority of the youngsters here have left the place to seek greener pastures in other parts of Petaling Jaya and Kuala Lumpur.

"My customers are mostly workers around here," he added.

An old folks home, Rumah Se-

jahtera Seri Setia, is another upgraded building in Sungai Way.

It was officiated by then deputy prime minister Tun Abdul Razak in 1966.

Part of the premises has been rented out to Pingrong-NKF Haemodialysis Centre for the past four years.

The dialysis centre with a capacity of 13 clients per session caters to patients from here, Puchong, Sungai Buloh and nearby areas.

The home's resident, Lim Poh Tiong, was grateful to have a roof over her head and three meals a day.

"I will sit here in front of the home and observe petty traders going about doing their business in the area," she said.

Jalan SS9A/20 has a daily market run by the residents here. It operates from 8am to 11am.

Gunalan Kathirvelu, 42, who used

to stay at SS9, a kilometre away from SS9A, said many government servants bought the low-cost terrace houses here in the 1970s.

"My parents bought their house for about RM9,000 in 1970," he said, adding that during that time, other races started to move in to the settlement.

Gunalan also claimed that he was the first batch to attend the SR Sungai Way in 1977.