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Home > Newspaper Catalogue > The Straits Times > 1958 > November > 16 > Page 10 > A ghost town comes to life



A ghost town comes to life

The Straits Times, 16 November 1958, Page 10

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A ghost town comes to life

By Sunday Times
Reporter

 **A**TOWN which died seven years ago is coming back to life today. Its 1,500 people who had been forced to leave in disgrace for non-co-operation with the authorities in the Emergency are now slowly returning from all parts of the Federation with raised heads and new hope.

The town is Jenderam in Selangor, about 30 miles from Kuala Lumpur. Once a notorious black spot, it was ordered in 1951 to be sealed under the Emergency Regulations for failing to supply information about terrorist activities in the area.

Empty town

The return to Jenderam started about eight weeks ago when the Government lifted its ban on residence there.

But when the first 25 families of about 200 people came back to their town, they found emptiness everywhere.

The old mosque was there but the town's 400 houses had vanished. Of the Malay school

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opposite the mosque, only cement posts remained.

Jenderam's 1,000 acres of rubber smallholdings and 600 acres of padi land were a jungle of lallang.

Today, however, a few weeks after their return, 20 wooden houses have been put up along the main road; the mosque grounds are being cleared up; a coffeeshop and grocery has been opened and acres of lallang have been cleared.

Money is needed to repair the mosque, build a new school, houses and cultivate the land, and the Government has promised to help.

So far only the Malays have returned — the Chinese section of the community has yet to come back.

But by word of mouth, the message is being passed to former residents now scattered throughout the country: "We have come home. We hope you will come back too and help us rebuild our town."

During their exile they had eked a living here and there, all the while yearning to return to their own rich rubber and padi land. Now that their hope has been realised they have banded together for the hard work that must be done.

Determination

They are showing what co-operation and determination can achieve. Today Jenderam is humming with activity.

One of the first to return to Jenderam is Mohamed Yakim, 48. He said: "Our family has been here for many generations. When the authorities ordered us to leave we couldn't bear to be too far away—so we chose to settle down in nearby Jenderam Hilir.

"I'll never forget the day we moved out. It was a sad day as we left with our barang barang. I had to leave my 15 acres of kebun getah and three acres of padi land, from which I had

earned a good living.

"In the new place we moved to, I had to go to work for people. All those years, we were longing to return to Jenderam. So when the Government said we could do so, I wasted no time in bringing my wife and five

Painters busy as life returns to 'ghost town'

29 October 1956 - Painters busy as life returns to 'ghost town' RAUR sunn. rPHREE HUNDRED families, mostly Chinese soon return to the, "ghost town" of Tra miles from here, which was closed by the dnm ent in 1951 when it was found that iv Jl er actively helped the terrorists who murder^ 'thSvi...

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27 April 1958 - Snip! Terror town Tras comes to life again JEFFREY FRANCIS Once a red-hot bandit centre^but today the people promise to start afresh By Beware Reds —they may try come-back' TRAS, Saturday. AMID the clashing of cymbals a pair of golden scissors snipped a white ribbon and this once notorious Pahang...

THE PIONEERS

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Show More

children back.

"It was a bit of a shock to find our homes gone and our land overgrown with lallang. But we were not disheartened. We set to work and everybody did his share. We have already put up a house and my land is slowly becoming fit for cultivation."

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Mother of six

Abdul Rahim bin Dasar, 30, who was repairing the Jenderam town sign on the road, said:

"My brother, sister and I left Jenderam with the rest of the people. My sister and I went to Kuala Lumpur; my brother to Singapore. We had to leave our 15 acres of rubber land and eight acres of padi field.

"In Kuala Lumpur, I worked as a labourer but I was not happy. I wanted to come back here. So as soon as the Government lifted the ban on the town, my sister and I returned."

Rabeha binte Mat Pya, mother of six children who ran a coffeeshop and a grocery store in the old town, has already started a new shop.

Raja Izam bin Raja Hussain, is not a former resident of Jenderam, but he came with the returnees as the town's new penghulu.

"I have never seen a happier or more hard working people," said Raja Izam. "They came back to desolation. Except for the old mosque, not a stick was left standing. Yet, within a few weeks, they have made Jenderam a semblance of a town."

"I'm sure at the rate the people are rebuilding it, the new Jenderam will be an even better and more prosperous town."





*One of the returned inhabitants
fixes a misspelt traffic sign.*

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