

THE CITY OF KUALA LUMPUR

KUALA LUMPUR steps into a new era today, Feb. 1. This day, the historically rich tin town, now with a population of 451,728 celebrates the conferment of city status upon it.

It also celebrates the appointment of its first mayor. The title of 'Dato Bandarya' will be conferred on Tan Sri Lokman bin Yusoff at Parliament House, witnessed by all distinguished people in the country and foreign diplomats today.

Kuala Lumpur was populated in the 1800's with the discovery of tin. This city today stands on the threshold of an industrial revolution whilst it is being developed into a modern metropolis.

Since Merdeka with the continued advancement in the economic, social and political fields, Kuala Lumpur is undergoing urbanisation at an unprecedented rate arising largely from the rapid industrialisation of the city — Klang Valley region.

At this rate of growth, the population of the Municipal Area alone will reach one million by 1985. This population will have to be accommodated within a land area of 36 sq. miles, the

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present limits of Kuala Lumpur.

The growth and continued interest of Kuala Lumpur is also largely due to its unique position as the capital of the Federal and State Government whose major administrative, financial, commercial, industrial, institutional and political offices and agencies are found here.

The people of Kuala Lumpur and specially those in the Central Area are being transformed by the process of urbanisation at a speed that is astounding.

NECESSARY

The luxuries of yesterday have become the necessities of today.

People from outlying areas are continuing to invade Kuala Lumpur but under the new economic policy, the government is trying to prevent the "exodus" of productive agricultural labour into the urban centres.

It is conservatively estimated that about 10% of the population live in dwellings which occupy the older sections of the city where living conditions are often deplorable.

Land prices are at a premium and ranges from \$20 to \$200 per sq. ft.

The central commercial area of Kuala Lumpur is today becoming increasingly congested with buildings, people and traffic. To road users, the existing pattern is sometimes a nightmare with increasingly longer time taken for movement and parking of vehicles.

The principal reasons for this is that Kuala Lumpur is a town that was never really planned in the initial days of its growth. It was just allowed to grow day by day and by a process of adaptation it now performs urban functions without any conscious planning.

One of the immediate solutions to meet the difficult planning of the city is through an accelerated programme of urban renewal, squatter clearance and construction of sufficient number of housing units to cater principally for the low income group.

There is no single development plan which is applicable to all cities. In other words, there is really no such things as an ideal city or an ideal pattern that can be transposed on all urban centres.



The Hight Street triangle in the 1880s (above) and now.



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