

OVERDEVELOPED KL SUBURB

# MONT KIARA TRAFFIC A 'NIGHTMARE'

An 800m journey can take up to an hour, says resident

AMISHA SYAHIRA  
KUALA LUMPUR  
news@nst.com.my

RESIDENTS of Mont Kiara want the authorities to tackle the increasingly congested traffic in the area, made worse by recent development projects, forcing them to spend long hours in traffic congestion and air pollution.

The affluent residential and commercial area in northwestern Kuala Lumpur is well-connected to other parts of the city through major roads and highways, making it popular among expatriates and professionals.

However, residents complain that rampant development has resulted in a surge of vehicles on the road, turning trips that should take a few minutes into an hour-long nightmare.

Checks in the morning found a long queue of vehicles on Jalan Kiara — from the closely spaced traffic lights near the 1 Mont Kiara Mall all the way to the condominiums further along the road — waiting to enter the Sprint Highway.

Similar congestion was ob-

served in the evening rush hour, made worse by vehicles parked illegally on both sides of the road.

Motorists had difficulty entering shopping malls, condominiums and office buildings lining the thoroughfare. Motorists' frustration was evident, with horns blaring and many drivers ignoring traffic lights, leading to several near collisions.

Drivers often blocked yellow boxes at junctions, worsening the congestion.

A resident, who wanted to be known only as Sindhu, 35, blamed the congestion on poorly planned traffic lights, narrow lanes and illegal parking.

"It's a nightmare. We have to time our journeys heading out or coming back home because the gridlock can leave us stuck in traffic for 30 minutes to an hour," she told the *New Straits Times*.

"That's so much time wasted sitting in a car due to poor road planning," she added.

She said travelling when it rained or if there was an accident could be frustrating, as even short journeys of 800m could take an hour.

The Mont Kiara Residents Association had reached out to officials several times to address their plight, but progress had been slow, she said.

She questioned how the roads could accommodate the influx of vehicles expected from the new



A long line of vehicles on Jalan Kiara near the 1 Mont Kiara Mall waiting to enter the Sprint Highway. NSTP PIX BY AMISHA SYAHIRA

developments the authorities had approved.

Another resident, Joanne, 34 said new condominiums in nearby Segambut had worsened traffic as motorists must go through the congested roads.

She said Jalan Kiara 4, which had three lanes on each side, was reduced to a single lane each way due to illegal parking.

Cars even blocked pedestrian crossings, making it difficult for those in wheelchairs and parents with strollers to cross the road.

Emily Tan, 27, said the traffic congestion had affected residents' wellbeing.

She said new pedestrian crossings meant to improve safety were less effective due to the heavy traffic.

She said the congestion also increased air pollution, which harmed the health of pedestrians, including schoolchildren.

Tan said the traffic woes had damaged Mont Kiara's reputation as a desirable place to live.

Many residents had reached out to Segambut member of Parliament Hannah Yeoh on social media to express their distress.

Yeoh, who is youth and sports minister, said she had advocated for Kuala Lumpur City Hall to halt approvals of new developments until adequate infrastructure was in place.

"MPs do not participate in one-stop-centre meetings, leaving us reliant on City Hall to oversee and regulate development in Kuala Lumpur.

"MPs are notified only when developments are approved," she told the NST.

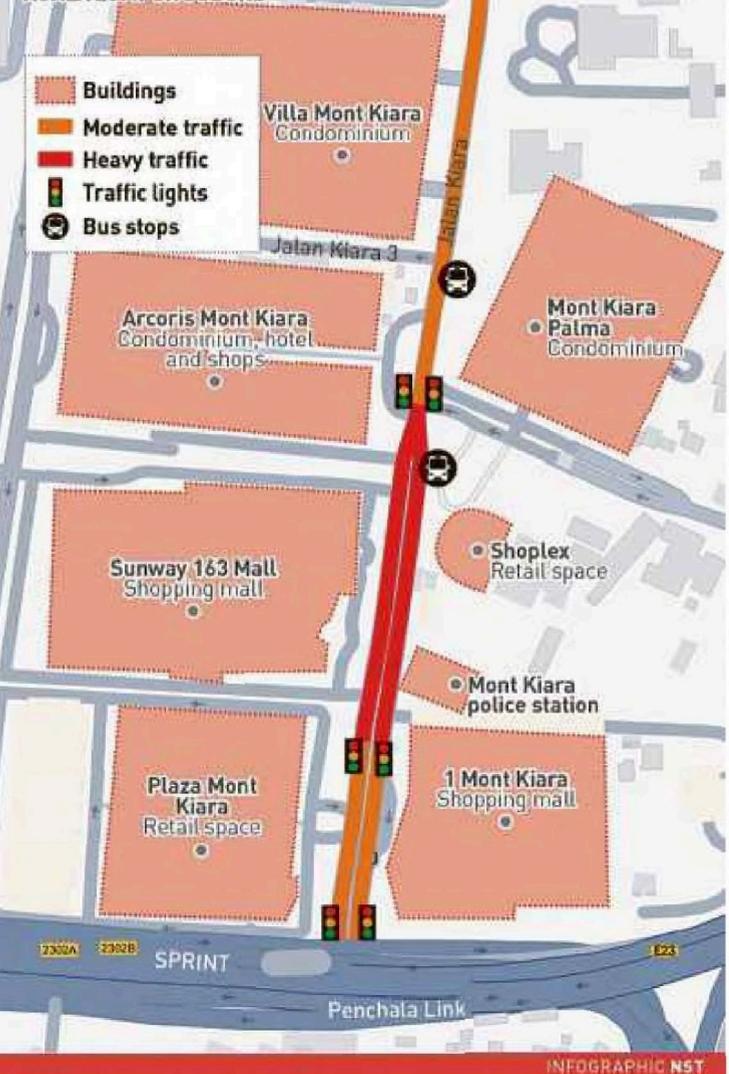
Yeoh cited the recent breakdown of a crane and bus on the Sprint Highway as examples of how any untoward event could cause congestion in Mont Kiara and Segambut.

"These events resulted in severe traffic delays, with some reports indicating it took up to an hour to cover a 2km stretch."

Yeoh said residents should do

## IMMOBILE IN MONT KIARA

RESIDENTS FUME OVER THE POOR URBAN PLANNING THAT CAUSES GRIDLOCK AND POLLUTION AT THE AFFLUENT KUALA LUMPUR SUBURB



INFOGRAPHIC NST

their part by not parking illegally.

"Despite continuous efforts, including reasonable parking rates by malls and enforcement by police and City Hall, the challenge persists," she said.

"While summonses are issued daily, it is impractical to expect enforcement officers to be stationed there 24/7.

"Residents must do their part." She urged City Hall to prioritise sustainable development.

"It is crucial for town planners to conduct site visits, ensuring that solutions to the challenges posed by overdevelopment are not left solely to engineers."

City Hall has not responded to a request for comment.



Traffic congestion on Jalan Kiara during evening rush hour.