

Launch of MRT puts KL on a par with top global cities

WITH the launch of the second phase of the Mass Rapid Transit Sungai Buloh-Kajang line in July, Kuala Lumpur has now come of age.

The MRT is comparable to the best anywhere, in terms of design, facilities, safety and ease of travel.

Two days after the second phase was opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak on July 17, I took a ride on it, from Sungai Buloh to Kajang.

I was able to appreciate what Kuala Lumpur has turned out to be.

After 160 years of its founding as a mining town at the confluence of Sungai Gombak and Sungai Klang, the city is a developed urban centre, comparable to the world's best capitals.

When I first came to live in Kuala Lumpur 50 years ago from a rural town in Negri Sembilan, Kuala Lumpur faced many challenges.

In the heart of the city were squatter houses and houses with

no running water. The river that flowed through it would occasionally burst its banks and flood the city.

In a relatively short time, all that has changed. Places like Sentul, Jalan Ipoh, Cheras and Setapak are booming centres with high-rise buildings, shops and tree-lined streets.

Well-maintained trees dot every street. The older trees are still standing and a sight to behold, especially in Ampang, Jalan Loke Yew and Jalan Mahameru.

The roads are clean, thanks to workers who sweep the streets every morning.

Hawkers are orderly and hygiene has improved. I noticed City Hall has built signature islands in the city, welcoming visitors. These are well designed and maintained.

The many elevated highways, railways, traffic islands and delineations are not the result of haphazard planning. They are works of art. For this, City Hall and the Federal Territories Min-



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istry must be congratulated.

Kuala Lumpur is among the most livable cities in the world, its traffic notwithstanding.

For horrendous traffic, visit any city in the region. Of course,

there's much to be done. Enforcement can be improved.

Those who deface billboards and road signs with their notices and advertisements must be brought to book, as must mo-

torists who park their vehicles haphazardly and at traffic junctions.

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