

Headline	A birthday wish for Kuala Lumpur		
MediaTitle	The Star		
Date	31 Jan 2014	Color	Full Color
Section	Nation	Circulation	298,821
Page No	34	Readership	1,839,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	437 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 20,351
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 61,053



HAPPY Birthday Kuala Lumpur! Our capital city celebrates the 40th anniversary of the creation of the Federal Territory tomorrow and boy has it come a long way.

From its beginnings as the modest Federal capital in 1974 to the bustling metropolis that is home to almost two million people now, Kuala Lumpur is recognised as among the world's most liveable cities. In fact, with an estimated nine million tourist arrivals a year, KL is the sixth most visited city on the planet.

KLites tend to have a love-hate relationship with their city. We are forever complaining about the endless traffic jams, limited parking spaces, the lack of hygiene in eateries and unscrupulous cabbies.

But, we also take great pride in KL's fantastic shopping, glorious food and world-class night-spots. As a KL resident myself, the following is a list of three important areas that we can improve on to ensure that our capital is truly a world-class city.

Cleanliness

Attending a tourism meeting in City Hall with some bigwigs recently, I was given a stark reminder on the state of cleanliness and hygiene in Kuala Lumpur. The discussion was about recognising the efforts of various parties who promote tourism in the capital. The Kuala Lumpur Mayor's Tourism Awards 2014 (KLMTA) will be given out sometime in June – timely, when you consider that this year is after all Visit Malaysia Year.

However, one attendee, well-known socialite and public relations doyenne Datuk Nancy Yeoh put things into perspective, when she remarked that tourists will be less than impressed with the state of hygiene in our capital city.

"I have seen rats as big as cats in Bangsar! I am not kidding you. I got a shock when I saw the size of the rats. They are huge!" she told us, adding that she had an office in Bangsar.

Yeoh's remarks were a reality check for me, as I have seen these super-sized rodents myself. And that is why certain eateries in Taman Tun Dr Ismail have been struck off my

list.

DBKL must crack down hard on dirty eateries. Organising rat-catching competitions isn't good enough; the rodents' food source must be stopped. City residents however should also stop waiting/asking for DBKL to do everything. They should take responsibility. Boycott dirty restaurants and hawkers.

The Residents Associations should also regularly organise *gotong royong*, especially in commercial areas.

A greener KL

We have got some great parks in the city. Some of them are little-known gems that even KLites are not aware of. My favourites include Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) in Kepong, Taman Rimba Kiara in Taman Tun and Lake Gardens in the heart of the city.

These and a number of others are green lungs which are a welcome respite from the hustle and bustle of city life. These green lungs must be gazetted and protected to ensure that KL continues to have large swathes of green that break the monotony of its high-rise, concrete buildings.

The Taman Rimba Kiara saga has filled many column inches in *The Star* over the past year. There is a genuine concern that a large part of this pristine park will have to make way for commercial development. Following a number of protests from residents and joggers, the authorities have indicated that the park will be safe. Yet, even now, nothing has been done about the park's status.

Public transportation

The MRT phase one, when fully complete in 2017, will certainly make a difference to public transportation for KLites. For now though, we will have to bear with the maddening traffic congestion caused by the MRT construction.

The LRT and Monorail lines have already proven to be popular, but the increasing volume of peak hour travel means that commuters have to put up with crowded carriages and sometimes, even breakdowns.

Connectivity is also an issue with the lack of links to suburban areas from train stations. Is it a wonder then, that KLites choose to run the risk of

Headline	A birthday wish for Kuala Lumpur		
MediaTitle	The Star		
Date	31 Jan 2014	Color	Full Color
Section	Nation	Circulation	298,821
Page No	34	Readership	1,839,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	437 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 20,351
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 61,053

traffic jams rather than endure the painful experience of taking public transport?

City Hall has tried everything – from bus-lanes to restricted hours for heavy vehicles. Still, the jams persist. The long-term solution is simple: improve public transportation and you will give commuters a viable option to leave their cars at home.

Once we have an efficient public transport system, City Hall's proposal of some years ago, to introduce congestion charges in the city centre,

should be implemented. These charges will force KLites to leave their cars at home and use other means of transport to get into the city centre.

The idea, somewhat similar to what Singapore has in their central business district, was shot down by business owners who claimed their operations would be affected.

> Executive editor Brian Martin avoids KL in the day, but makes a beeline to the city at night to sample the food and nightlife.



Captivating sight: This gorgeous shot of the Petronas Twin Towers is a reminder that KL is truly a world-class city.