

Kuala Lumpur

The name Kuala Lumpur translates from Malay as "muddy confluence" and derives from its position where the Klang and Gombak rivers meet. The city lies midway along Peninsular Malaysia, approximately 35 kilometres inland from the west coast.

The city began as a tin-mining settlement in the mid-nineteenth century. From an obscure settlement surrounded by jungle, it quickly became a small trading post and meeting place for miners and then developed into a small town.

Popularly known as "KL," Kuala Lumpur today bears little resemblance to its humble beginnings. It has been transformed into Malaysia's largest city, a vibrant, thriving metropolis of 1.2 million people. The population contains the national make-up of Malay, Chinese and Indian, as well as a large expatriate community.

Kuala Lumpur became the capital of the British-protected Federated Malay States in 1896. When the country became independent as the Federation of Malaya in 1957, Kuala Lumpur was declared the federal capital. On February 1, 1974, it was ceded to the Federal Government by the State Government of Selangor.

KL is a combination of modern and old world charm with its towering skyscrapers, pre-war Chinese "shophouses" and traditional Moorish/Mogul influenced architecture. The twin 88-storey Kuala Lumpur City Centre, with the world's tallest office towers, is under construction.

The rapid pace of development has increased traffic congestion and pollution problems, which may be alleviated by the light rail transit system being built. KL is a cosmopolitan city, with modern indoor shopping centres, a wide range of entertainment outlets, including pubs, discos, international restaurants, as well as traditional markets, mosques and temples. Air travel from Kuala Lumpur is easy, as it has air links with most major cities of the world, including Vancouver.