

Interesting fusion of cultures

By WANI MUTHIAH
wani@thestar.com.my

IT IS EASY to fall in love with Klang because of its unique features and rich history. Those born and raised in the royal town and who have made it their home will attest that there is no place like Klang.

The town, which was the administrative capital of Selangor before Shah Alam was built, has many tales to tell. Given that Port Klang was the arrival point of several communities from other countries some two centuries ago, the town's identity revolves around a meeting of these cultures and eventual co-existence.

Reflective of this are the many religious and cultural structures and places of worship that stand close to each other in harmony. According to Klang MP Charles Santiago, Klang is the very microcosm of Malaysia with its interesting mix and fusion of cultures.

"The community here is mixed yet independent of each other and that is a unique facet," said Santiago.

He said tourists who come to Klang should visit the town's places of worship to understand its colourful communal identity.

Divided into two sections - Klang North and Klang South - the town has a modern and eclectic side, as well as an old section with its special charm. Klang North is now considered the older part of Klang, while Klang South houses new commercial centres as well as residential areas.

The Star 11-12-18 15 KEG13



Kota Bridge is Malaysia's first double-decker bridge and overlooks the Royal City Klang Mosque.

One of the most interesting facets of Klang is Kai Hong Hoo, which is the only temple in Malaysia dedicated to the Song Dynasty's most notable judge, Justice Bao.

Kota Bridge, which connects north and south Klang and was opened in 1961 by Almarhum Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, is the first double-decker bridge built in Malaysia.

And then there is the Kota Raja Mahadi, built as a protective fort during the Klang civil war from 1867 to 1874 between royals Raja Mahadi and Raja Abdullah.

Klang also has several interesting and unique places of worship such as the Sultan Sulaiman Mosque, which opened in 1934 and has four Sultans and three royal consorts buried in its premises.

Since Klang is home to a large

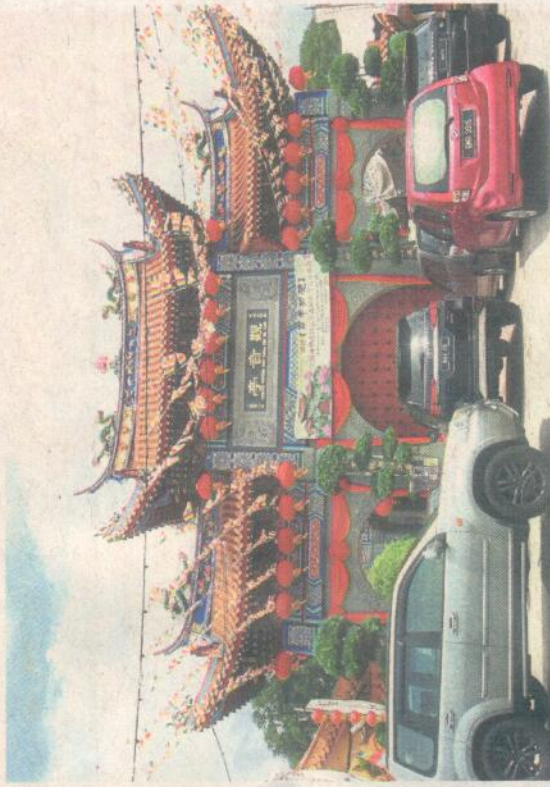
Indian Muslim community, one of the town's prides is the 112-year-old Indian Muslim Mosque in Jalan Tengku Kelana, which is reminiscent of Islamic architecture in South India.

Then there is the 124-year-old Kuan Yin Teng Temple, which is the gathering point for the Hokkien community during every full moon.

Located at Simpang Lima, the temple was almost demolished after it suffered severe termite infestation some years ago.

Luckily, Selangor Ruler Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah intervened, saying the temple was one of the town's legacies. After that, it was refurbished instead of being torn down.

Another first in Klang is the Sri Sundararaja Perumal Temple in Persiaran Raja Muda Musa, which



The 124-year-old Kuan Yin Teng Temple was saved from demolition through the intervention of Sultan Sharafuddin.

is the country's first granite temple.

Glass panels from Sime Darby Medical Centre, which became a sensation after an alleged apparition of Mother Mary was seen on them in 2014, are housed at the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes in Jalan Tengku Kelana. This has also attracted many devoted Christians to Klang since the panels were given a permanent home at the church.

In spite of all these treasures, the older section of Klang is currently in danger of losing its identity due to rapid development in the newer parts of the town.

Santiago has expressed his concern over this matter and calls for

a quick intervention to retain Klang's original identity.

"What we need now is the rejuvenation of the old Klang while still maintaining its structures and original charm.

"It is crucial to do this as the rapid development of the new sections of Klang is taking away the old charm of the original sections of the royal town," said Santiago.

Currently, he added, there were efforts to do this but a strong intervention is needed to give the plan a push forward.

Santiago reckons that the best way to get the efforts moving forward quickly is for Sultan Sharafuddin to intervene.