

# Town gets middle-class, global investors

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SEREMBAN was originally founded as Sungei Ujong or Sungai Ujong, named after a nearby river of the same name.

History books indicate Sungei Ujong grew in prominence with the discovery of tin ore in the 1870s. It brought an influx of Arab, Malay and Chinese migrants who sought jobs in the mines while most of local Malays were farmers.

Seremban has evolved over the years and is poised to become Malaysia's 12th city. It is one of four state capitals — besides Kota Baru, Kuantan and Kangar — which have yet gain city status.

Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan had said — during 65th birthday of the Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negri Sembilan Tuanku Muhriz Tuanku Munawir — that the state would not rush into declaring Seremban as

a city.

"The state government wants to ensure all the necessary infrastructure, public transport and amenities and services, which include garbage collection and safer neighbourhoods, were in place before it did so."

The state government has also agreed for Seremban and neighbouring Nilai municipal councils to be merged to function more effectively. The population of both Seremban and Nilai now totals about one million.

The rise in population gave rise in the opening of new townships, such as Seremban 2 and 3, Bandar Seri Sendayan, Bandar Enstek and Bandar Baru Nilai.

The state government is working to beautify and upgrade Seremban with better infrastructure by building better roads and highways.

There is also a move by the state to improve the sewage

and drainage system, while RM16 million have been allocated to instal streetlights at all villages and districts.

On-going infrastructure project include a RM160 million interchange at KM267.89 between Seremban and Nilai as well as an improved Temiang-Sikamat to Likas Expressway.

Seremban has become a middle-class haven, a thriving urban sprawl of township and the property market is booming thanks to buyers from Kuala Lumpur, who now live there while working in the capital city.

The state government has also attracted a number of foreign investors with multinational and global brands operating here, such as Samsung, the state's largest employers, and Xyratex, both in Senawang; Nestle in Chembong; and Coco-Cola in Bandar Enstek.

Alps and SKF Bearings operate from Nilai and Nippon Kayaku — one of the

world's leading manufacturer of airbags along with Daihatsu Motor Co of Japan — also operates from the Bandar Sri Sendayan Tech Valley.

Philip Morris is based in Oakland Park while Jotun has a RM160 million state-of-art-facility in Nilai.

Business is also booming through the Nilai, Senawang, Tuanku Jaafar, Oakland, Springhill and Batang Benar Industrial Parks.

Nilai and Springhill are also fast becoming an educational hub with Manipal University planning to build a campus in Nilai for 20,000 students, and UCSI setting up a nursing college and medical hospital with 15,000 students in Springhill.

The improvement in infrastructure development and connectivity augurs well for locals who can now secure jobs within Nilai and Seremban to improve their standard of living.