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Selangor Times

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The year that was...

By **Rahmah Ghazali**

What an exciting year it has been for Selangor, from the controversies that plagued the state administration, to the gruesome murder of a cosmetics millionaire.

As 2010 comes to an end on the stroke of midnight tonight, *Selangor Times* presents you a roll of the top news events of the year.

One remarkable event was the tabling of the much-desired Freedom of Information Bill last July by the Pakatan Rakyat State Government, a move to uphold the people's right to information.

Following delays, the State is now set to pass the Bill in March next year. The Bill had drawn some flak from civil society for some weaknesses, and has been going through the committee stage where input from the public has been sought.

Another event which dominated

the headlines in Selangor was the tussle to control the water industry between the state and federal governments.

Selangor had wanted to take over the four concessionaires involved in the water industry to avoid high tariffs being imposed on users in the state but their overtures have been thwarted thus far.

The height of the unending saga culminated in 10,000 Selangor citizens, backed by the State, marching to Istana Negara in December to present a memorandum to the King on the need for the State to take over the water assets. But for now, the matter is back at the negotiating table.

Shifting the limelight to another issue outside the Selangor administration, the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) finally arrested a 'bigwig' over the multi-billion Port Klang Free Zone

scandal in July, amid criticism that it only caught 'small fries'.

As former MCA president and cabinet minister, Tun Ling Liong Sik made the news for being the biggest name to be arrested by MACC so far, many remain sceptical whether it will result in anything.

December continued to be an exciting month for Selangor when former Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo resigned as Opposition Leader after he was

charged by MACC over the multi-million Balinese-styled mansion saga.

The question now is, who will take over as opposition head – whose role now focuses solely on taking the richest state back to Barisan Nasional in the next general election.

But the problems plaguing the Khalid Ibrahim administration did not end there as such as the illegal sand-mining problem hit them in the early part of the year.

On the other hand, things took a tragic turn on a national level when public tension over the 'Allah' row escalated in January, resulting in several places of worship being vandalised.

The controversy started when the Kuala Lumpur High Court, in a landmark decision, allowed Catholic newsletter "*Herald*" to use the word 'Allah'.

Eleven months have passed,

and the matter has quietly died down, but once again, the nation was shocked over the gruesome murder of cosmetic millionaire Datuk Sosilawati Lawiya and three others in Banting last September.

The murder came at a time when the nation had barely recovered from the shooting of 15-year-old Aminulrasyid Amzah a few months earlier. He was shot dead by police while fleeing in a crashed car in April.

Meanwhile, the support letters saga also hit the headlines, with Selangor criticised for not taking a firm stand to curb the practice, which many claimed would open the floodgates to corruption.

And to complete the list, the State Government made an unprecedented move by appointing Sungai Burong BN assemblyman Datuk Mohd Shamsudin Lias as Public Accounts Committee chairman, much to the chagrin of BN leaders.



SELANGOR WEATHER

	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Morning			
Afternoon			
Night			

Source: Malaysian meteorological department

Stop work order on Klang River project



Signboard on the site showed that the project was approved way back in 2006. But construction only began this year.

KLANG: The Klang Municipal Council (MPK) has issued a stop work order to the contractor of the Klang River landscaping project near Jalan Gudang Nanas.

Klang councillor Tan Heng Kim said the contractor did not obtain approval from the local authorities before they began construction.

"They only submitted their application to the City Planning Department last week," Tan told Selangor Times.

Developer Kota Maseni was appointed by the state Irrigation and Drainage Department and MPK's Parks and Recreation Department to beautify the riverside in town this year.

Kota Maseni then appointed Senlee Building Construction as its main contractor to build the waterfront and pavilions beside the river.

However, Tan said the developer and contractor had failed to submit their structural and earth work plan to MPK's Building Department and Engineering Department before construction.

This issue was first raised by Kapar MCA Youth to the Chinese press last week as the developer obtained the project permit way back in 2006 but only started construction this year.

Subsequently, Tan was alerted to the matter and immediately probed into it.

Tan said the contractor will only be allowed to continue construction after they obtain approval from the relevant departments in MPK.

"We cannot continue to allow developer and contractor to cut corners," he said.

New-look, one-stop cybercafe

By Tang Hui Koon

SHAH ALAM: With an open layout and refreshing design, the first cyber café concept store in Selangor – Cyber E Sel – opens today at i-City.

Besides surfing the net, customers can also buy snacks and drinks as well as pay their utility bills at the store's one-stop payment counter.

A brainchild of the Selangor Cyber Café Owners Association, its president, Bronson Chuah Aik King, said the concept store is part of the association's bigger plan to salvage the industry's negative public image.

He said the open layout made it difficult for customers to gamble or surf for porn on the 120 computers available at the store.

In addition, the association is waiting for approval to implement a monitoring system at the store to help reduce truancy.

Selangor Times had previously reported that the association spent RM50,000 to develop a software that will record visitors' basic information, particularly their age when they swipe



There are 120 computers available in Cyber E Sel.

their MyKad.

As such, operators can, for example, automatically shut down computers used by children at 10pm on weekdays or 12 midnight on weekends.

The State is considering the association's proposal to implement this monitoring system in all 650 licensed cyber cafes in Selangor.

Victims demand justice

By Rahmah Ghazali

SHAH ALAM: Two men, awarded damages for wrongful detention and assault while in police custody for the brutal rape and murder of Nurin Jazlim Jazimin, are crying foul after the High Court reversed the decision.

Mohamad Zamri Ibrahim and his brother-in-law Mohd Suhaimi Yusoff were initially awarded RM41,500 and RM31,500 respectively by the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court last month. But they expressed outrage after the award was set aside last week. They are demanding justice.

Mohamad Zamri said the High Court made its ruling based on the Government's argument that they failed to identify the policemen who had attacked them.

However, the 36-year-old businessman said it was impossible for them to identify their assailants because they were placed face down on the floor and there was a light shining directly on them while they were assaulted.

"Besides, there were too many cops, about 20 to 30, who had beaten us up. How could we possibly know each individual's name at that particular time?" asked Zamri. Zamri, accompanied by his wife, was speaking



Khalid (right) with Zamri and his wife at the press conference yesterday.

to the media at Shah Alam MP Khalid Samad's office yesterday.

He claimed that the policemen did not follow procedure, including not informing them why they were arrested on the night of Sept 17, three years ago, when they were remanded for four days.

"I was driving with my wife, who was pregnant at the time, before my car was blocked by three police cars. I was abruptly handcuffed without them asking for my identification.

"I was elbowed in the head and subsequently brought to my place of business where my brother-in-law was staying," he said.

Zamri and Suhaimi were among four

people who were arrested in connection with the rape and murder of Nurin. Her body was found in a gym bag on Sept 17, 2007, in front of a shop in Petaling Jaya.

However, the duo were later released after police found that they were framed by another man, who had been sending text messages to the police to connect Zamri and Suhaimi to the case.

Meanwhile, Khalid said the High Court's decision should be reviewed. He pointed out that it was already proven that they were assaulted while under police watch.

State secretary's post still open

SHAH ALAM: Selangor is maintaining its stand that the post of a new state secretary is still open despite Putrajaya's insistence that Datuk Mohd Khusrin Munawi has been appointed.

The State also denied claims that it was late in submitting the names of candidates to the palace for consideration.

"Datuk Ramli Mahmud's term as state secretary ends only on March 20 next year," said Faekah Husin, the political secretary to the Menteri Besar. She said there was no requirement which imposes a deadline on the state.

On Monday, Chief Secretary Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hassan declared that current

Selangor Islamic Religious Affairs Department (JAIS) head Khusrin would assume the post as state secretary on Jan 1.

Neither Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim nor his administration was consulted.

Faekah added that an independent selection panel had shortlisted three candidates and the names were presented to the palace on Dec 17.

The panel, established on Nov 27, was headed by state speaker Datuk Teng Chang Khim along with executive councillors Datuk Hasan Ali and Dr Xavier Jayakumar.



Free delivery to RA and JMB. Contact: editor@selangortimes.com or call: 03-55232288

SelangorTimes

phone (603) 5523 2288

fax (603) 5523 1188

email editor@selangortimes.com

EDITORIAL

CHIEF EDITOR KL Chan

COMMUNITY EDITOR Neville Spykerman

WRITERS Tang Hui Koon, Chong Loo Wah, Gan Pei Ling, Alvin Chin, Lee Choon Fai, William Tan, Alvin Yap, Rahmah Ghazali, Basil Foo, Yasleh Hani Mat Yassin

COPY EDITORS James Ang, Deborah Loh

DESIGNER Jimmy CS Lim

PHOTOGRAPHER Victor Chong

ADVERTISING Evelyne Low

ADVISORS Faekah Husin, Arfa'eza Abdul Aziz



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EVENTS

Someone Who'll Watch Over Me

The play, inspired by Irishman Brian Keenan's abduction in 1986, will run from Jan 5-16. In the story, Keenan was kidnapped while he was on his way to work at the American University of Beirut. It was only four and a half years later that he was released. Keenan went on to write an autobiographical book called *An Evil Cradling* which won the Irish Times Literary Prize for Non-fiction in 1991. Admission is RM48 for adults and RM28 for students & the disabled. A flat rate of RM28 will be charged on preview night Jan 5 and Jan 12. Venue: The Actors Studio, Roof Top, Level, Lot 10 Shopping Centre, 50, Jalan Sultan Ismail, KL.

Malaysia's 4th Chocolate Fair

Chocolate lovers will be in for a treat at the Malaysia 4th Chocolate Fair 2011 where new and exciting local and international brands of chocolate will be showcased. An additional section will feature Malaysians' very own Chocolatier, small and medium size entrepreneurs with their hand-made chocolates. The fair will be on from Jan 7-9 and visiting hours will be from 11am until 9pm daily. Admission is free. Venue: Hall 2, Mid Valley Exhibition Centre, Kuala Lumpur.

Speciality & Fine Food Fair Malaysia

The Speciality & Fine Food Fair Malaysia 2011 is setting its landmark in Malaysia's food industry. This unique speciality food show will bring together the finest food producers to showcase the most unique, high-end, luxurious & healthy food and drink products. The fair will be on from Jan 7-9 and visiting hours will be from 11am to 9pm daily. Venue: Mid Valley Exhibition Centre, Kuala Lumpur

Bobby in Blue

The concert featuring Giancarlo Guerrero as conductor and Malaysia's own star pianist Bobby Chen will be showcasing Gershwin's famous *Rhapsody in Blue*. Costa-Rican maestro Giancarlo Guerrero, Musical Director of the Nashville Symphony, also leads the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra in other Gershwin hits – *An American in Paris*, and the suite from *Porgy and Bess*. The concert will be on at 8.30pm on Jan 8 and 3pm on Jan 9. Admission is RM 85, RM 65, RM 40, RM 20. Dress code on Jan 8 is long-sleeved batik or lounge suit and on Jan 9 is smart casual. Venue: Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS, Level 2, Tower 2, PETRONAS Twin Towers, KLCC, K. Lumpur.

IMU open day

The International Medical University (IMU) will hold its open day on Jan 16 from 10am to 4pm. School counsellors, students, parents and anyone interested in medical or health sciences are invited. Visitors will be taken on a tour of the educational and support facilities, and have the opportunity to speak to lecturers, staff and students to find out more about IMU. For details, call 03-2731 7272, e-mail enquiry@imu.edu.my or visit <http://www.imu.edu.my/> Venue: International Medical University, 126, Jalan Perkasa 19, Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur.

Pick up art

The Department of Extra-Mural Students of Malaysian Institute of Arts will offer art classes in January at its centre in Jalan Ampang, Kuala Lumpur. The classes include drawing and painting for adults (Thursday or Saturday), Chinese Ink Painting and Chinese Calligraphy (both on Sunday). Children art class at its campus in Taman Melawati is also available for kids aged four and above, as well as primary and secondary school students. For details, call 03-2163 2337 or e-mail mia.ems@gmail.com

Memorial for Fan Yew Teng

A memorial service will be held for former DAP acting secretary-general Fan Yew Teng at the YMCA Hall in Brickfields on Wednesday at 8pm. The former DAP parliamentarian passed away in Bangkok on Dec 7. Fan waged a six-month battle with cancer before succumbing at the Bumrungrad International Hospital. The former Menglembu MP was famous for holding the fort for his party in 1969 when Lim Kit Siang was detained under the Internal Security Act.

DOE: Hartalega not responsible

By Alvin Yap

SHAH ALAM: The Department of Environment (DOE) has cleared glove manufacturer Hartalega Holdings of pollution, maintaining that allegations by residents are unfounded.

"Our assessment shows that they are well within the limits of our requirements for effluent discharge. Hartalega is also doing its in-house monitoring which also shows that it is under the requirements for effluent discharge," said Selangor DOE director Che Asmah Ibrahim.

Hartalega, which operates in Taman Suria Batang Berjuntai, has been accused by a small group of residents of polluting nearby drains and air but the billion ringgit nitrile glove manufacturer said they have been unfairly targeted.

Asmah pointed out the drain where the factory discharges its treated waste

water was frequently clogged with rubbish because it was badly constructed, and was no fault of the company.

"The company has offered to foot the bill for upgrading works to redesign and renovate the drain, but some residents have resisted such a move," said Che Asmah.

Hartalega's owners, at a press conference on Tuesday, pointed out that their 20-year-old premises was established even before the housing estate was built.

On Dec 3, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk T. Murugiah ordered Hartalega to shut down its operations in Bestari Jaya in Kuala Selangor. He had met representatives claiming to be from nearby residents' associations who made the complaints.

Complaints against Hartalega are not new, for as recent as 2007, the factory was accused of being responsible for noise pollution. The then Deputy Natu-

ral Resources and Environment Minister, Datuk S. Sothnathan, said DOE had found the allegation baseless. He said the factory – which had been in operations for 19 years – had met all requirements set by the environmental ministry.

At Tuesday's press conference, Hartalega's managing director Kuan Kam Hon urged the media to be fair in their reporting.

"We must defend ourselves. At stake is a company that takes in million of dollars in foreign exchange from overseas. But most of all, we employ 800 workers from the community itself. They will lose their jobs if we are forced to close down," he said.

Kuan pointed out they had taken initiatives to keep pollution at bay and spent RM15 million to purchase 'green energy' technology. He added the company had spent an additional RM5.6 to maintain the factory.

Late effort pays off for three students

By Rahmah Ghazali

SHAH ALAM: Many people think that a last-minute job would result in a horrendous finished product, but that was not the case for three students from Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL).

Still in their early 20's, final year animation students Hazwan Juhari, Munira Syafira Mohd Khairuddin and Syafiq Muzakkir Zenol Ariffin proved that their last-minute work could earn the grand prize in a competition organised by the State Government.

"We are still shocked that we actually won the first prize," said Syafiq, whose team 'Animade' defeated five others from Universiti Industri Selangor (UniSel).

The trio bagged RM5,000, trophies and certificates in the animation category for Animax and Healthy Cyber Cafe Design Competition at the Science, Technology, Innovation Selangor Festival (FesSTIS) on Wednesday.

Going with a 'creativity' theme, Hazwan said their animation work was to show that insects can be as creative as people.

The short animation portrayed how a man tries to defend himself from being attacked by a swarm of mosquitoes and how the man uses his creativity to tackle the situation.

Although the contestants were given a long deadline to complete their project, Hazwan revealed that they only did



The three students receiving their prizes. On the right is Rodziah Ismail.

it in the last one and a half months.

When asked what they would do with the prize money, they replied: "We want to upgrade our computers, of course!"

Meanwhile, Selangor Cyber Cafe Owners Organisation won the first prize for the best Cyber Cafe design category and bagged RM12,000 in prize money.

State executive councillor Rodziah Ismail closed the competition at the state secretariat lobby.

MBPJ shows the way

By William Tan

PETALING JAYA: Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) is at the forefront of efforts to make life easier for the disabled.

Last Wednesday, they held a forum attended by more than 100 representatives of religious bodies, corporate entities and organisations for the disabled.

The forum was to highlight and find solutions to challenges faced by the disabled. One out of every 10 people are believed to be disabled in Petaling Jaya.

MBPJ councillor Anthony Siva Balan Thanasayan, who is himself wheelchair-bound, highlighted the concerns of the disabled, saying the country is severely lacking in its provisions for the disabled.

Thanasayan said had either Stephen Hawking or Stevie Wonder been born here, they would have been denied even the chance to utilise their talents.

He said many, particularly those in wheelchairs, are un-



MBPJ councillor Anthony Siva Balan Thanasayan (left) admires his commemorative gift with Dr Xavier Jeyakumar.

able to leave their houses due to lack of ramps, poor road maintenance and inadequate public transport.

He said the MBPJ had conducted campaigns to raise awareness of the problems. They have made the town centre more accessible by building more ramps with "press buttons" at adequate heights.

Eye doctor wins state award

By Basil Foo

SHAH ALAM: Ophthalmologist Prof Dr Muhaya Mohamad was presented the Anugerah Tokoh Ilmuwan award for her achievements and contributions to society from the Selangor State Government on Tuesday.

"I am humbled and honoured by this award because I am sure there are others who are also very good," said Dr Muhaya, who is a lecturer at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and chairperson of the Malaysian Medical Association Ophthalmological Society.

The award came with a cash prize of RM10,000.

Dr Muhaya said she planned to donate the money to a fund to help students who are unable to pay their fees and deserving single mothers.

The consultant eye surgeon and director of Prince Court Medical Centre Eye and Lasik

Centre also commended the state for establishing the award.

She pointed out that the emphasis of the award on individuals who not only have academic experience but who serve society served as a form of encouragement for everyone.

"Everybody should tell themselves every day – I want to think good thoughts, speak kind words and do good deeds," said Dr Muhaya, who is also a motivational speaker in universities and has appeared on television programmes.

Selangor executive councillor Dr Halimah Ali, who presented the award, said Dr Muhaya was a role model for society.

The Anugerah Tokoh Ilmuwan award is part of the Jejak Ilmuwan programme which includes student mentoring programmes, forums, and competitions for students in universities and vocational schools.

Fire Brigade volunteers lose RM4k of equipment

By Lee Choon Fai

SERDANG: The Taman Sri Serdang Volunteer Fire Brigade had a rude shock on Monday when they discovered their fire fighting equipment missing while preparing for their regular training exercises.

"The equipment was stored in a box in our Proton Arena and it's fortunate that we made the discovery now instead of during a fire," said 39-year-old Lim Chee Keong.

The deputy chairman of the volunteer fire fighters unit said 14 pieces of essential equipment worth RM4,000 were stolen from the vehicle parked at their headquarters in Taman University Indah.



Ean Yong (right) looks at the loss in Serdang.

These were mostly aluminium components of a pump used for getting water from alternatives sources like monsoon drains or rivers to put out fires, if a hydrant is unavailable, said Lim.

"We suspect the culprits are either petty thieves or drug addicts who are probably going to sell the items to scrap metal dealers," he said.

He added that the components can probably fetch RM30 or RM50 from scrapyards.

Lim suspects the theft was committed over the Christmas weekend when nobody was around.

"We have alerted the authorities to keep an eye on scrap metal dealers, and notified dealers to report to the police

if someone is trying to sell them the equipment," said Seri Kembangan assemblyman Ean Yong Hian Wah.

The Selangor executive councillor said some of the missing equipment bears the government's logo and scrapyards should be wary about buying them.

He added that the Ministry of Housing and Local Government has promised to allocate RM5,000 to them to replace the equipment and upgrade the security at their headquarters.

The Taman Sri Serdang Volunteer Fire Brigade was set up over two decades ago to safeguard wooden homes in the area. They supplement the Fire and Rescue Department especially in secluded areas in the community.



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NGOs: No to KLORR, protect Selangor State Park

By Gan Pei Ling

SHAH ALAM: The Kuala Lumpur Outer Ring Road (KLORR), a federal project, must not be allowed to cut through the Selangor State Park, civil society groups said.

The Selangor Government's proposal to build part of the road underground to minimise impact on the environment, was also not the solution, they said. They also warned of precedents being set if the project were to proceed on land gazetted as a state park.

The non-governmental organisations were reacting to the state's recent announcement that the highway developer would dig a tunnel to prevent the highway from damaging the Klang Gates Quartz Ridge, a potential Unesco site.

"A 200-metre tunnel to protect the ridge is not enough. The Selangor State Park is the main source of our water supply," said Leela Panik-

kar, director of Treat Every Environment Special (TrEES).

She said the proposed highway would cut through the Ulu Gombak forest reserve and Ampang forest reserve, which are the water catchment areas for the Klang Gates Dam and Ampang Intake.

"We're unable to accept that alleviating traffic congestion is more important than protecting our water supply," Leela told Selangor Times.

"Selangor's water demand is likely to exceed supply in future. In fact, RM10 billion is being spent on the Pahang-Selangor Water Transfer project to ensure we will meet the projected demand," she said.

Leela questioned the Federal Government's rationale behind building a highway that would affect Selangor, Putrajaya and Kuala Lumpur's main source of water supply.

It was revealed in the draft local plans of Kajang, Ampang Jaya and

Selayang last year that the proposed highway would cut through the state park.

Leela said TrEES is appalled that KLORR was going ahead despite objections raised by residents and non-governmental organisations.

Dr Rosli Omar, from Save Our Sungai Selangor, also warned that once the highway was built across the state park, human encroachment would follow.

"It will be extremely difficult for the government to monitor such encroachment," added the Universiti Malaya lecturer.

He added that the Selangor Forestry Department had proposed that the highway be built along the forest boundary instead of cutting across it.

In addition, WWF Malaysia policy analyst Sara Sukor said the state park, gazetted in 2005, is categorised as an Environmentally

Sensitive Area (Rank 1) under the National Physical Plan-2.

She said no development, except for eco-tourism, research and education purposes, is allowed in these areas under the guidelines.

"Therefore, it is clear that the highway shouldn't be allowed to cut through parts of the state park," said Sara.

She added that both the Federal and State Governments should adhere to the National Physical Plan-2 which was approved by a council chaired by the prime minister.

"If a major project like this is allowed within a gazetted state park, it could likely set a dangerous precedent for other big projects to be approved in protected state or national parks," Sara pointed out.

Another Ampang resident, Lim Teck Wyn, also complained that very little information about KLORR was provided to the public.

The environmental consultant

suggested the State Government amend its forestry enactment so that public consultation is mandatory before a forest reserve can be cleared.

Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) head of conservation Yep Chin Aik said MNS could not comment as the society was part of the review panel for the highway's detailed environmental impact assessment (DEIA).

State executive councillor Elizabeth Wong, who holds the environment portfolio, said the DEIA report for the highway was not completed yet.

She said the state would do its best to minimise the social and environmental impact of the federal project.

However, Wong added that Putrajaya should consider switching KLORR to an underground highway to avoid cutting through the Selangor State Park and damaging water catchment areas.



Halimah with local artists.

GeMS tour gets the thumbs up

By Rahmah Ghazali

SUBANG JAYA: A youth initiative by the Selangor Government, Generasi Idaman Selangor (GeMS), has been getting good support from the public as an attractive and non-intimidating way to reach young people with positive values.

About 200 people turned up for a GeMS event at Mydin Mall USJ 1, Subang, last Sunday despite the event being held concurrently with the much anticipated AFF Suzuki Cup final between Malaysia and Indonesia.

Among the local artistes who wowed the crowd were Mawi and Akhill Hayy.

Businesswoman Sahdia Abd Halim said GeMS was on target by inviting local artistes to attract youths and getting across the message of avoiding social problems.

"This is my second time at a GeMS event. For me, it would be boring if a programme was only filled with religious talks. Youths need entertainment and GeMS is on the right track," said the 45-year-old.



Halimah delivering her speech.

Nurul Syahirah Azri, 17, said the event was "enjoyable" and she looked forward to similar programmes.

Teacher Nor Azainah Adnan said the Selangor Government had taken the right approach by providing advice for youths while allowing a wide range of entertainment.

As a first timer, she said she had never experienced such events during her youth.

"Now we can enjoy ourselves, while reflecting on ourselves spiritually," said Nor Azainah.

State executive councillor Dr Halimah Ali said Subang was the eighth location for a GeMS event since the tour kicked off a few months ago.

"Our next stop will be in Klang. I hope the full-day campaign will raise awareness of social issues among youths," she said.

Know Your Councillors: Azli Idris

By Lee Choon Fai

KUALA SELANGOR: Kuala Selangor Municipal (MDKS) councillor Azli Idris is active in politics and sees his work in the local council as the building blocks of a political career.

He is the vice-chairperson of DAP Pekan Kapar and also a committee member of Pakatan Rakyat Kuala Selangor.

Born in Perak and a devoted father of four, Azli is now in his second term as councillor after he was reappointed earlier this year. He is in charge of Puncak Alam Phase 3 and Alam Perdana.

"Council work is the stepping stone to a political career, [it is] the first level of governance [where] we can show the people how state policies can help them," said the 41-year-old.

Azli holds a diploma in building surveying from UiTM Shah Alam, and he worked with Shell Malaysia Trading for six years before becoming a project director in Orionluck Private Limited, a developer based in Kuala Lumpur.

In the areas under his watch, the most common complaints are drainage and garbage disposal.

"I often go on-site to meet the residents and their representatives to tackle their problems and to



discuss issues," said Azli. He then raises the issues residents face in the MDKS full board meetings.

The councillor's office is located near the MDKS food court in Puncak Alam, where residents can lodge their complaints or raise concerns.

Azli said he takes his duties as a councillor very seriously because the public is involved.

"Councillors should serve the public and help them with issues, regardless of their political backgrounds," he said.

Selangor's little-known strawberry farm



Chung at the entrance to Genting Strawberry Leisure Farm.



Strawberries at the nursery.

By Alvin Yap

GOHTONG JAYA: Not many people know that strawberry picking is possible within Selangor's borders.

Cameron Highlands is considered the 'go to' place for locally-grown strawberries. But there's no need to drive all the way there, because Selangor has its own ecotourism farm that gives people the experience of picking strawberries fresh off the vine.

Genting Strawberry Leisure Farm, located in Selangor and bordering Pahang, is just a 40-minute drive from Kuala Lumpur, making it an ideal place for a family day trip or even a date.

"I know of many people from Selangor who tell me that they drive three to four hours to Cameron Highlands, spending RM20 on toll one way, to the strawberry farms. It is only later that they get to know about our farm," lamented Genting Strawberry Leisure Farm's chief executive officer, K.C. Chung. He admits that his farm suffers from a lack of exposure.

Chung said he got his farm's concept from the tea houses at the plantations in Cameron Highlands.

"We thought of the idea of a tea house for people to enjoy afternoon tea in this cooler environment. You can tuck into the fresh strawberries which you've picked yourself," said Chung, a mass communications graduate.

Situated around 1000 metres above sea level, he said that the cooler climate gives the impression to visitors of being on a farm in a temperate country.

Chung has made sure that the farm looks rustic for more authenticity and for visitors who want the feeling of a real farm. Bamboo poles are used for the structures to support the strawberry vines.

Entry to the farm is free, and Chung guarantees visitors that there will be a harvest of plump, crimson strawberries waiting for them. This is because the farm alternates the plots that are open for picking, or transfers just-ripened fruit from the adjacent nursery.

The five-acre farm is a hit with families - be it local, regional or foreign visitors from as far as the Middle-East. Besides the strawber-

ries, other attractions are a flower and orchid farm where fresh flowers and potted plants can be purchased.

There is also a mushroom farm, and a bee farm that produces honey; both products, like the strawberries, feature in the farm's tea-house cafe.

Signage is everywhere, giving educational information on how the strawberries and mushrooms are grown, and on the keeping of bees for the production of honey.

After picking strawberries, visitors can enjoy the fruits of their labour at the farm's cafe. They can while the day away sipping strawberry infused tea or coffee and tucking into the cafe's signature dishes.

A must-try is the 'oyster mushroom tempura'. Crisp and crunchy, visitors are known to keep ordering more of these deep-fried mushrooms. The mushrooms' natural sweetness, said Chung, is due to the freshness of the produce and the organic farming methods.

Another favourite is the chicken wings, which have been marinated overnight with strawberries before being deep fried to a nice golden brown. The result is a mouth-watering dish with a lip-smacking taste.

Chung said that the farm and its family-oriented attractions are a 'niche' market for those who flock to the casino at First World Genting, further up the popular hill-side resort.

The farm is promoted as a tourist destination in foreign trade expositions. Tourism Malaysia also promotes Genting Strawberry Leisure Farm to foreign dignitaries who come to Malaysia on official visit.

"As Genting Highlands is marketed as an International City destination, we feel that we complement those who might want to take half a day off from the casino," he added.

Chung lamented that while there are overseas advertisements promoting the farm, and an advertorial was even featured in an in-flight magazine, not enough Malaysians - or Selangorians, for that matter - know about Genting Strawberry Leisure Farm.

He said the farm's management is planning to market its products more aggressively in the Klang Valley, before expanding the farm's reach around the country.

Beware of fogging cheats, says MPK

By Basil Foo

KLANG: Residents have been warned of fraudsters who masquerade as Klang Municipal Council (MPK) officers demanding payment for fogging services here.

"When some of the residents didn't want to pay them, these people used verbal threats and insisted they were council officers," said Klang councillor Wendy Ong Geok Wee.

Residents have been advised to record the number plates of the trucks that the fraudsters have been using to help with investigations.

"I have also advised residents to take pictures of

them and report to MPK or lodge a police report," Ong added.

Bukit Tinggi and Bayu Tinggi areas are said to be the most targeted areas by the fraudsters with some households having paid between RM50 and RM80 per fogging exercise.

Local Health Department acting director Zulkifli Abbas said: "The fogging services are intended to be free, so the residents should not have been asked to pay.

"The council also does not employ third-party contractors to do the fogging. MPK conducts all fogging exercises itself," he added.



Ong (left) and Zulkifli (centre) talking to the press after a council meeting.

Supporting local businesses

By Lee Choon Fai

SHAH ALAM: Small businesses had a platform to promote their goods and services at the Selangor Ria Carnival at the Shah Alam Stadium recently.

The annual affair was held from Dec 18-26, and drew 125 participating businesses.

"They are all small, local businesses that often go unnoticed. This carnival is organised to help them gain attention," said Shamsul Shahril, the State Economic Planning Unit deputy director.

He said about RM700,000 had been allocated by the State Government and various sponsors to fund the carnival. Entry was free and activities were designed to be family-friendly.

The participating businesses were varied, ranging from those in the food and beverage sector, to massage centres, pet stores, and farming goods.

Exhibitions at the carnival included shows on livestock, a rabbit park, farming exhibitions and also pony rides for children.

Various competitions were also



Shamsul

held, such as a Battle of the Bands, cake decorating, fishing, a mini football tournament and several dances.

"We aimed to attract a target audience of 500,000 and I am glad that we have more than achieved it," Shamsul added.

The Selangor Ria Carnival has been held annually since 2005. It takes place every December, catering to business owners who want to promote their enterprises. Registration starts in November.



Visitors enjoying themselves at the livestock section.



Less stressful ride for motorists with the completion of the elevated highway.

Smoother traffic flow in Klang

By Yasleh Hani Mat Yassin

KLANG: A newly-completed RM2.2 million elevated highway here has helped to ease traffic congestion in the middle of town.

Klang Municipal Council president Datuk Mislan Tugiu said there is now a smoother flow of traffic in all directions in the town, except for rush hour in the mornings and evenings.

But he said the traffic situation was definitely more bearable even during peak periods.

"Residents can now breathe more easily," he said. Traffic congestion had been a perennial problem in Klang until the new elevated highway was completed in September.

He said the one-way traffic system along the major roads in town had also facilitated better traffic flow. Mislan added that traffic police had been deployed to hot spots during peak hours to ease congestion.

Meanwhile MPK has received instructions from the State to beautify the roundabout situ-

ated at the start of the elevated highway. The roundabout will be decorated with frangipanis, shrubs and flowers which will be coordinated by MPK's Landscape and Recreation Department.

The name of the roundabout, which is the main traffic route from Kapar and Meru, will be maintained as Town Bridge and this proposal has been supported by MPK councillors.

Mislan said he was confident the improved traffic flow would also have a positive effect on businesses in Klang.

Reaching out in the Xmas spirit

SHAH ALAM: There was joy for one hundred children from various welfare homes at a Christmas party hosted by Yayasan CNI at Wisma CNI last Sunday.

"We want these children to know that they are not neglected by society and as Malaysians, we value and respect the relationship with our fellow citizens regardless of race and religion," said Datin Angeline Koh, the president of Yayasan CNI.

Koh said the event was part of the company's community outreach programme to bring joy and cheer to the less fortunate.

Selangor executive councillor Teresa Kok, who was the guest-of-honour at the event, said she was happy that CNI had organised the event as part of their corporate social responsibility to the community.

"I hope that what CNI is doing will influence other companies to do the same as part of their corporate social responsibility," said Kok.

The children who attended the Christmas party were from Ozanam Klang, Rumah Kebajikan SVP, PJ Agathians Shelter and Pusat Jagaan Anbe Sivam.

This was the third consecutive year Yayasan CNI had organised a Christmas gathering for children from charity homes. The foundation was established in 1988 to provide community assistance regardless of race or creed.

Rubbish woes: Residents do own clean up

By Alvin Chin

KLANG: Residents Association of Sungei Puloh, Klang took cleanliness into their own hands for two areas of Taman Klang Utama with support from local councillor Winston Phua, last Sunday.

“Cleanliness is everybody’s responsibility and the most important thing is for people to lend their support in helping out the communities,” said Klang Municipal Council’s (MPK) Phua.

The aim of the gotong-royong was to clean up areas of Lorong Sg Puloh 13A, 13B, 13C, 13D and 14A, 14B, 14C, 14D.

The success of the event might see the association moving on to clean up other areas of their neighbourhood in the future.

The gotong-royong was sponsored by local businessmen with the support from the MPK, Alam Flora and Scan Trend Sdn Bhd.

“We hope to clear all the clogged drains that are contributing to the breeding of the aedes mosquito and which are also becoming

a habitat for snakes”, said Benson Tan, secretary of the resident association.

In early August, Phua highlighted the garbage problems in Taman Klang Utama verbally, but no action was taken.

He then filed a written complaint and submitted a photo to the MPK in October. But when he visited the site on Dec 2, it had still not been cleaned, despite the local council’s claim that they had cleared the garbage at the end of November.

The team, including residents, preparing for the gotong-royong in Taman Klang Utama on 26 Dec.



Phua briefing the contractors before the gotong-royong.

No regrets for ‘sacrificing’ school holidays

SHAH ALAM: Most students would typically want to take it easy during the long school holidays. So did Abu Zar Johra, 15, but things did not turn out as planned.

He had initially planned to fill up most of his holidays with a part-time job and with playing video games, until his parents signed him up for a religious and motivational camp called Gerakan Membina Generasi Pecinta Al-Quran (GEMPAQ).

But there was a silver lining to it, as he emerged the best student in the month-long programme and won a prize to perform the umrah (pilgrimage to Mecca) sponsored by Al-Mukminin Travel.

“I didn’t want to go [to the camp] at first. I was shocked to have won the best student prize. I really thought someone else would win because I didn’t think I was that good. However, I am so thankful,” he told Selangor Times at the award ceremony last Saturday.

And he had no regrets sacrificing his school holidays for the camp, said the student from Sekolah Menengah Islam Shira, Jeram.

“This programme is worth it and I am glad I went for it. Not only was it beneficial, spiritually and morally, I also learnt to adapt to a more challenging environment,” he said.

“At first, I did not know a lot of people, but in the end, I made a lot of friends,” he said.

The motivational course was held from Nov 26 to Dec 27 in Masjid Jamek Tun Uda, Section 16 Shah Alam, where students from all over the capital city would memorise the Al-Quran, selected hadiths and do’a.

In the afternoon, they would participate in motivational programmes assisted by facilitators.

The overall cost for the programme was RM750 but through sponsorship by Yayasan Selangor, the students only had to pay RM250 each. More than 200 primary and secondary school students took part in the programme.



Md Nizam Ali with his daughter, Arissa Sofea.



Irnanie showing off her Christmas gifts.

Christmas joy for the disabled

By Rahmah Ghazali

SUBANG JAYA: They were of different races and religions, but Christmas had something for each and everyone of them.

A group of 145 children and adults who are living with various disabilities, received Christmas gifts at a grand ceremony in the Sunway Pyramid shopping mall last Saturday. The event was organised and sponsored by non-profit organisation, City Care, and officiated by Subang assemblyperson Hannah Yeoh.

Going with the theme ‘Love is a Verb’, City Care managed to successfully fulfil 90% of the recipients’ wishes. The remaining ones involve requests for job opportunities.

“Those are a bit harder to fulfill because it will take a long process and is more challenging. But we are doing our best,” said City Care chief executive officer David Oh.

But the event certainly put a smile on the children’s faces, and their parents’, too.

Chong Yen Lin, 50, whose daughter Emily is suffering from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), found the experience heartwarming.

“I moved to Subang early this year and this is such a new experience for me. My daughter Emily will certainly enjoy the

jigsaw puzzle given to her as present,” he said.

Meanwhile, businessman Md Nizam Ali said his four-year-old daughter, Arissa Sofea who suffered from Down’s Syndrome, couldn’t be happier with her gifts.

“She wanted a new set of cartoon DVDs and her wish was granted. Her favourite cartoon character is Pocoyo,” he said.

City Care, which had over 100 young volunteers assisting, selected recipients of their Christmas gifts with help from the state Welfare Department. They then called up the participants based on the department’s database.

The phone call came as a shock for Irnanie Nurul Sharrena, 21, who thought that Christmas gifts were only meant for those who celebrated it.

“I am enjoying myself here. And I also wish to be healthier and stronger,” said Irnanie, who is suffering from a mild stroke at birth. She received two sets of DVDs of her favourite artiste, Datuk Siti Nurhaliza.

“Next time, I will wish to see her in person,” she smiled.

The celebration has been held annually since 2008. Assemblyperson Yeoh said she wanted it to be an even bigger event next year.



TEOHLOGY

PATRICK TEOH

Looking back on a confusing 2010

In a few more days it will be another year. One year has passed. So how do you feel? Relieved? Angry? Disappointed? Or a combination of all of the above?

Personally, I also really don't know, lah. I spent the last few days thinking about it and about what to write for this column since it will be in the last issue of the year.

Okay lah, so I thought about it in-between drinks during the Christmas festivities. But it was still hard to come up with something positive to celebrate as we start off a new year in Bolehland.

I don't know about you my friends, but for me it has been a very confusing year. I'm happy that the euphoria of the 2008 general election tsunami lasted almost two years. It's just that, it's been quite rude awakening to the fact that all is not so well, anymore.

As an ordinary Malaysian I am getting very confused with what is going on in my country. Do you feel the same? If you're not, then you must be one of the lucky few and I would appreciate it if you could share your secret with the rest of us. I am confused because of so many things, lah.

First, I am still confused with what the slogan 1Malaysia means.

“The BN played the (PR) game to the max and scored major points in confusing the people about who they should be voting for in the next GE. And the Opposition, without the budget and the PR savvy, is wincing at every blow.”

The prime minister, who claims that it is his own original idea and not borrowed from some public relations company's bargain bin, says it is one thing when addressing one community. But then he gives it an almost completely different meaning when speaking to another group.

And on the day after Christmas, the prime minister announced that the 1Malaysia concept is not a government political agenda, but is aimed at fostering the spirit of togetherness and unity among Malaysians.

Wah! Sounds very noble and all but it still confuses me. Because, why does my prime minister tolerate and at times even contribute to com-

pletely contra-1Malaysia events and proclamations?

And since we're on the subject of 1Malaysia I must express my 'thanks' to Selangor's Ronnie Liu for banning the use of the slogan in advertisements in the state. Why he chose to do that a year after the slogan was launched is what is confusing me.

Secondly, I am confused about the tagline always attached to the slogan. "People first. Performance now." What does that mean? Sure, the meaning seems to be clear enough. But the evidence is lacking, no?

Since the launching of the slogan I honestly cannot remember the government doing anything to make

that tagline a reality. Sure, of late we have been hearing and reading a lot of news about the government spending money to reward Felda settlers, build Chinese and Tamil schools, new roads for rural areas, etc.

But these activities are what elected governments do for the people of the country. They take care of the people and their needs. Surely it is not a 'feel-good' stunt to reinforce the prime minister's slogan, no? So why do they make us feel as if THEY are doing us a big favour by giving us what is ours by right?

Since 2008, my impression is of the Barisan Nasional (BN) government spending our money to repair the loss of their omnipotence in Parliament. And of the Opposition flers expending too much of their limited resources to fend off attacks from the BN.

And of course, trying desperately to manage the increasingly popular Frog Festival that seems set to become a monthly event celebrated by at least the BN government and the mainstream media.

It also confuses me to know that nothing really great happened for the people of Malaysia in 2010. As a friend, Kee Thuan Chye, said in an article, 2010 was a year that was won by public relations (PR). (<http://www.malaysiandigest.com/opinion/13976-2010-a-year-that-was-won-by-public->)

The BN played the (PR) game to the max and scored major points in confusing the people about who they should be voting for in the next GE. And the Opposition, without the budget and the PR savvy, is wincing at every blow.

To add to this there is now a whole new list of snazzy abbreviations to confuse Malaysians even more – GTP, ETP, NEM, KPI, etc, etc, etc.

But as a Malaysian citizen the only abbreviation that I can think of to accompany me into the New Year is...WTH!

Patrick Teoh is a husband, father, grandfather, actor, former radio presenter, generally misunderstood person, loyal tax-paying Malaysian.

LEE LANDSCAPE SDN BHD



LEE LANDSCAPE SDN BHD (Company No. 433709-X)
46-1, Jalan 8/62A, Bandar Menjalara,
Kepong, 52200 Kuala Lumpur.
Tel: 03-62731913 (Hunting line) Fax: 03-62750496
E-mail : leescape@yahoo.com
Contact person : Ms Brenda Lai

PKNS introduces new affordable home concept



Artist impression of the new affordable homes concept in Bangi

PKNS is revamping low-cost housing in the state. Research and planning has been underway to develop new concept affordable homes where the objective of building communities is just as important as affordability. This is driven by the fact that the well-being of Selangorians is always central to PKNS.

To date, PKNS has built 59,000 low-cost houses at today's value of RM2 billion. Of this amount, RM1 billion has been subsidised by PKNS. Unlike other property developers, PKNS fulfils the low-cost housing requirement at the early phases of the project development.

The affordable homes project in Bandar Baru Bangi is one of two concepts currently being implemented by PKNS. These concepts fulfil researched and pre-identified parameters focused on improving living quality and encouraging closer community ties. With this in mind, the new affordable homes development will come with community centres and sports and recreation facilities. It will have its very own commercial hub for convenience stores and eateries together with day care centres.



nursery, kindergartens, modern suraus, and community and reading rooms. PKNS is also working with the public transportation providers in the area to ensure reliable and convenient public transport services are available to the residents.

The new PKNS affordable homes concept is also being implemented in Kota Puteri. While the concept remains the same, the approach taken is slightly different. Here, emphasis is on building a sustainable development through proactive preservation of the ecosystem.

PKNS has mobilised the PKNS Mobile Response Team to provide maintenance services for the low cost and affordable housing areas. PKNS is also subsidising the maintenance fee for the low-cost flats where the flat owner only pays RM15 a month while PKNS bears RM50 to RM70 a unit a month.

Proposed design for new affordable home concept by PKNS



Activities to benefit the community



The RM5.2 million Asrama Desa Panchang Bedena

PKNS contributes RM5.2m hostel complex to Yayasan Selangor

PKNS has contributed RM5.2 million towards the construction of a hostel for Yayasan Selangor. The funds are for the building of Asrama Desa Panchang Bedena in Selangor with the objective of making available facilities for the needy children from the rural areas in Selangor. The hostel covers an area of more than 6.9 acres and consists of two hostel blocks and a separate block housing the offices, an administrative centre, dining hall, medical centre and classrooms. Asrama Desa is planned to house 200 male and female students upon completion. Completed with CF, the hostel was

officially handed over to Yayasan Selangor in December 2010. It is expected to begin operations in early 2011.

PKNS contributes RM450k for Kota Damansara School

PKNS presented Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri Selangor (JAIS) with a contribution of RM450,000 as part of funds to build the Sekolah Agama KAFA Kota Damansara in Kota Damansara's Section 8. The school will cater to the Muslim community in the area and is to help cater to the high demand caused by a shortage of religious schools in the state. Construction on the

Contribution of RM450,000 to Sekolah Agama KAFA



three-storey single block is planned to commence in early 2011 with completion targeted for end-2011. Upon completion the school will be able to accommodate 600 students. The 5,000-acre Kota Damansara is one of the 11 integrated townships built by PKNS.

VIO at PKNS Bizpoint to help entrepreneurs

PKNS has set up a Business Centre offering serviced suites and virtual offices to business owners wishing to have an impressive office address without having to incur high set-up costs and overheads. The PKNS Business Centre and Virtual Office, also known as VIO, promises entrepreneurs an efficiently serviced office environment. Located at PKNS BIZ Point in Shah Alam, VIO organises events for its customers to create opportunities for and encourage business networking.

Silicon Valley Plug n Play to promote local technopreneurs

PKNS is developing a high-tech ecosystem to catalyse a technopreneur community in Selangor. Located in Cyberjaya, Real Plug n Play Sdn Bhd – a PKNS subsidiary, offers a sustainable Plug n Play model catering to new age



The contemporary Business Centre at VIO



The Selangor Plug n Play Programme at work

industries. Under the Plug n Play Selangor Programme, the state is investing in companies engaged in the development of solutions for digital cities, mobile content or products and services. It is currently looking at 100 start-up companies to be exposed to the market and supported by more than 250 global venture capital companies. PKNS has signed an exclusive agreement with Plug n Play Techcenter of Silicon Valley, where the likes of Google, Skype and PayPal originally started.

International Professional Managers Association UK, Paris School of Graduate Management, University of Derby and the Institute of Administrative Management. The academy offers certified courses and is located in Petaling Jaya. It is planned to be opened to the public.

Free building maintenance for underprivileged homeowners

Free building maintenance and services is now available for underprivileged homeowners in Selangor. The service is intended to lessen the burden of home maintenance cost for 35,000 of its low-cost homeowners.

Starting with a fleet of 7 vans manned by 14 experienced civil and electrical technicians, the PKNS Response Team provides efficient and friendly maintenance services. This number will increase as the need arises.



PKNS Response Team

The service is also to ensure that the low-cost housing are properly maintained and do not fall into

disrepair resulting in deplorable living conditions akin to slums and ghettos. The PKNS Response Team is borne from

the desire to continuously improve and contribute to the communities PKNS have built.

58 graduate from Akademi Hartanah PKNS

58 PKNS employees formed the first batch of graduates of the Akademi Hartanah PKNS. Established in early 2010 with the objective of improving competency and fulfilling the training needs of PKNS staff, the academy is the result of collaborations with international universities and colleges such as the Society of Business Practitioners UK,

A tour around the Akademi Hartanah exhibition





From left: Datum Jelatek, Selangor Science Park 2 - Science Discovery Centre, Menara Worldwide, PJ Sentral 'Garden City'

RM14b new PKNS projects – profit to support its social obligations

PKNS has introduced new projects worth more than RM14 billion. The projects focus on urban regeneration and place a premium on sustainability.

Foremost is the intention to enhance the economic value of the developments while elevating and enriching the quality of life of its denizens, especially the people of Selangor.

These world-class projects are seen as high-yield projects from both a financial and brand equity point of view. They are developed either independently or with both local and international strategic collaborators. Profits gained from these projects will provide the funds for PKNS to improve and enhance the Rakyat-centric projects and activities such as affordable homes, maintenance cost and fee subsidies, in addition to the many cause-related philanthropic projects PKNS supports throughout the year in Selangor.

PJ Sentral 'Garden City'

PJ Sentral 'Garden City' is a 10-acre integrated urban regeneration project designed to further enhance commercial and economic activity in the new city. PJ Sentral 'Garden City' will consist of elegant futuristic designed towers comprising high-end service apartments, hotels and commercial towers. Forecasted at a GDV of more than RM2.6 billion, the iconic development will have a dedicated green lung enhancing the lifestyle of its residents and visitors alike. Adopting the 3R concept of redevelopment, reactivation and restoration, PJ Sentral 'Garden City' is a strategic collaboration with the private sector.

PJ Elevated City

Prominently located at the intersection of the LDP expressway and the Federal Highway, PJ Elevated City is a 'next generation' fully integrated city hub. Its 20 acres include a hostel that accommodates 10,000 staff and 5,000 parking bays, which are part of the Western Digital factory expansion programme.

This more than RM2.6 billion GDV project will generate 5.3 million sq ft of space comprising corporate and signature offices, SoHo office suites, flexible commercial and retail space along with al-fresco restaurants and upmarket condominiums – all within a carefully planned verdant elevated setting. Planned with the environment in mind, the PJ elevated City is designed by incorporating the latest practices in eco-sustainability architecture to achieve maximum GBI ratings.

Sports City – 'Green' sports complex

The redevelopment plan of the Kelana Jaya Sports Centre into a world-class Sports City received requests from some 40 interested international and local parties. 17 were shortlisted and have submitted their proposals for consideration.

Planned as a sports-themed mixed development with commercial and residential components, an arts centre plus an integrated sporting hub, the Petaling Jaya Sports City (PJSC) will have a GDV of RM1.8 billion.

Datum Jelatek – Iconic urban regeneration in Kuala Lumpur

Located just off the prestigious Embassy Row of Jalan Ampang, Datum Jelatek is a mixed development consisting of four residential towers and an exclusive retail podium. It is expected to catalyse the development in the area and elevate retail value. Datum Jelatek is envisioned as a Green Building Index (GBI) Platinum certified development targeted for completion in the coming years with a GDV of RM800 million. This high value development enjoys convenient accessibility located a minute's drive from the Ampang-Ulu Kelang Elevated Highway and is served directly by the Light Rail Transport (LRT) line, adjoining the Jelatek LRT Station. It is four stations away from KLCC.

Asia's first International Aerospace Discovery Centre lands in Selangor

PKNS signed a MOU with Advance Science Education Asia Sdn Bhd to develop Asia's first International Aerospace and Science Discovery Centre in Selangor Science Park 2 (SSP2). Targeted for completion in 2015, the Discovery Centre, to be built on a 12 ha site, with the aim of providing science education to Malaysians and inspiring an interest in Aerospace science especially among future generations. The Discovery Centre's first phase is to be developed at a cost of RM300 million. The announcement has also resulted in various new projects being proposed by potential international smart partnerships.

PKNS fetch RM85 million at SELPEX 2010

PKNS launched three new residential projects – Kristal Idaman, Ayu Lestari and Ayu Klasik, offering a total of 292 units at the 2010 Selangor Lifestyle and Property Exhibition (SELPEX). The three-day exhibition garnered a hefty RM85 million, indicating the popularity of PKNS

residential developments. Sales of PKNS properties accounted for more than half of the total SELPEX sales figures. A total of 1,300 residential units were available for purchase, some with promotional discounts, at the highly visited PKNS exhibition booth. SELPEX 2010 was held at the PKNS' own venue, the Shah Alam Convention Centre (SACC). Also on display was Menara Worldwide, PKNS subsidiary Worldwide Holdings' new 27-storey tower on Jalan Bukit Bintang in Kuala Lumpur.

PKNS subsidiary builds Menara Worldwide

Another prestigious development is the 27-storey Menara Worldwide, which is situated near Kuala Lumpur City Centre along the busy Jalan Bukit Bintang. In line with PKNS' adoption of sustainability as a deliverable, Menara Worldwide is a GBI certified high-rise commercial building – one of the first in the Klang Valley. The tower's strategic location has made it a prime business address and is experiencing good demand from local and international businesses. Menara Worldwide will also be awarded MSC status.

PKNS acquires 30% of AmanahRaya REIT

PKNS is to emerge as the second largest shareholder of AmanahRaya REIT (ARREIT) with a 30% stake. This is through injecting three of its properties in Klang Valley with a combined total value of RM270 million into ARREIT in exchange for new shares and cash, and the acquisition of some existing shares from ARREIT's current major shareholder Kumpulan Wang Bersama (KWB), a fund managed by AmanahRaya Berhad (ARB).

Global thumbs up for PKNS projects

PKNS was also present at the International Herald Tribune (IHT) Conference 'Dawn of the New Decade: Alternative Investments in Asia' held in Kuala Lumpur in September 2010. As the exclusive developer partner, PKNS showcased its landmark and iconic projects together with its sociocommunity-driven activities to the likes of billionaire Sir Richard Branson, founder and Chairman of the Virgin Group; and Mary Buffett, bestselling author, environmentalist and ex-CEO of Berkshire Hathaway – impressing both global business figures.

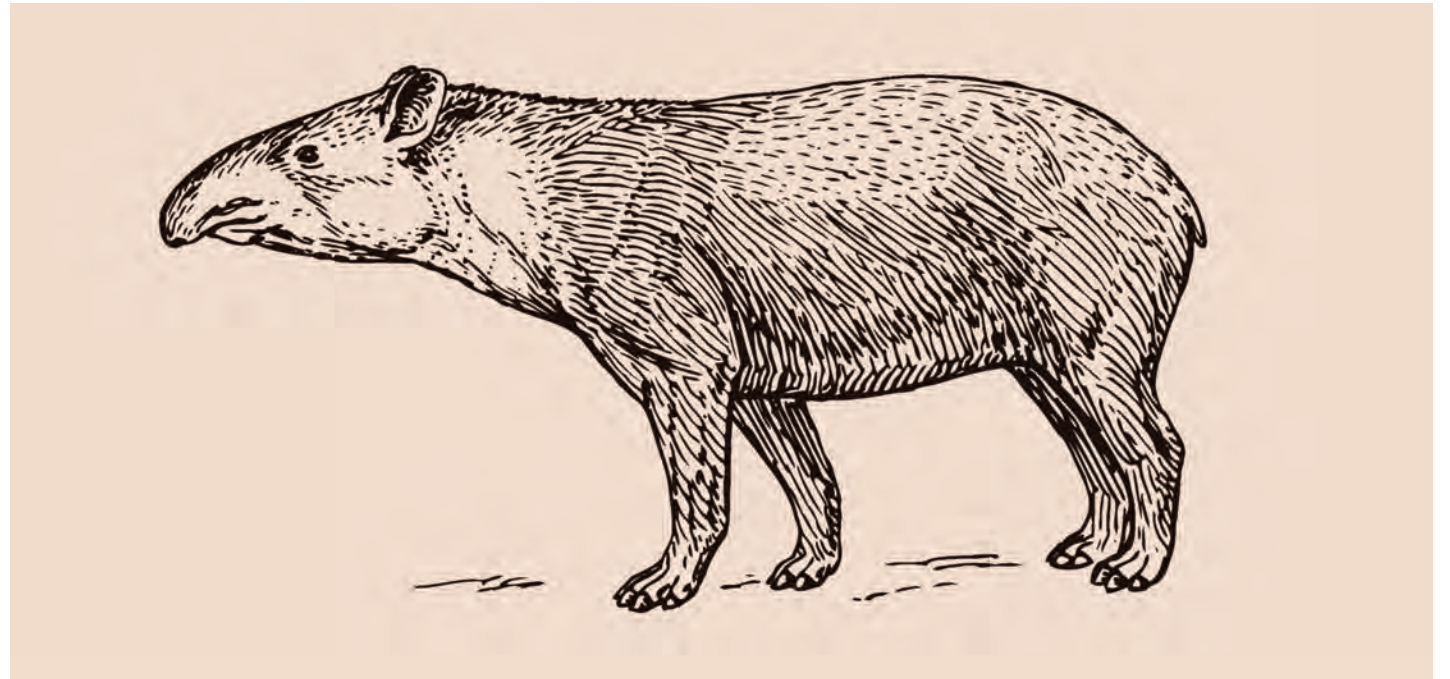
Sir Richard Branson (top) and Mary Buffett at the IHT Conference PKNS display





Ask Lord Bobo is a weekly column by LoyarBurok (www.loyarburok.com) where all your profound, abstruse, erudite, hermetic, recondite, sagacious, and other thesaurus-described queries are answered!

Monochromatic causes, lawyers, yoga & good cause



Why do lawyers always wear black and white? Why not embrace the entire rainbow? @adriene, via Twitter

Seeing lawyers in their full regalia often reminds Lord Bobo of the Malayan tapir. If you don't know what a tapir is (shame on you, by the way), it is a solid black and white, large pig-like mammal closely related to the horse or rhino. Its nose is prehensile, and is used as a snorkel while swimming.

Solitary creatures except during mating season, and because of its large size, it has few predators. Tapirs defend themselves with their powerful jaws, and can give nasty bites.

Yet, the tapir population is on a decline worldwide. The similarities between tapirs and lawyers will be left to your imagination.

Good lawyers usually have wonderfully colourful yet nuanced personalities, unlike the lousy ones. Since judges tend to envy the freedom of such colourful lawyers to hang out with whom they like, eat wherever they like and frequent whichever spa or karaoke joints without fear of scandal, they imposed black and white attire in the futile hope of stifling their beauty, brightness and creativity.

The judges claim that conservative attire is needed so it would not distract from the arguments put forward. But it does not take a lemur to point out that if a judge can be distracted like a guppy from the arguments because a lawyer's tie is brightly coloured or he/she is decked out in full Mexican regalia inclusive of poncho and sombrero, that judge has no business sitting in judgment over others.

A judge that can so easily be distracted by a multitude of colours except black and white, instead of argument, should be in a fish tank, not a courtroom.

After all, the courtroom is a place for serious argument and stylish dressing, not stylish arguments and serious dressing!

Lord Bobo, someone asked me to name ten reasons why yoga is like human rights. I think it is a trick question. Can you help? *Yogi Bear, via email*

Whoever asked you that question obviously has too much time on his hands. But Lord Bobo is nothing if not helpful, so, in the spirit of yoga, let us now sit in the lotus pose, put our hands together (just your own hands please, His Supreme Eminenceness is not Sting, and this is not that kind of meditation), close our eyes and imagine a rose far, far away... Universal, Indivisible, Inalienable, Inter-dependent...

Ohhmm... Ohhmm... Yoga is Life. Human Rights (HR) improves Life. Therefore, HR = Life, and Yoga = HR.

(1) Yoga is for all, not just the Europeans. No cultural relativism please. HR is for every human being wherever you live. No distinction, no discrimination.

(2) Yoga unites the rakyat; it unites the

body, mind and spirit of each. It helps people progress as people. HR upholds individuality and individual beliefs while defending diversity in culture and language. HR makes people less savage and more civilised.

(3) Everyone can do Yoga. Anyone can be an HR activist. You are never too old to do Yoga. You are never too young to be an HR activist.

(4) Yoga flushes toxins from your body and clears evil thoughts from your mind. HR wards off evil practices and bad people. Politicians are afraid of Yogis (Yoga activists) and HR advocates.

(5) Yoga and HR calm you down; and puts life in perspective. Both demand and give the bare minimum to sustain life. They help you focus on the important things in life.

(6) Yoga frees your mind. HR frees your spirit. Both concentrate and meditate our energies and allow us to enjoy the beauty of life and people.

(7) Like it or not, you are a Yogi. Like it or not, you are a HR activist even as you write on LoyarBurok. Everyone embraces Yoga and the HR movement/cause when proper guidance is given.

(8) Yoga makes you many friends as it's most fun done in groups. HR activism can only be effective if it is done collectively by communities of interested participants.

(9) Yoga revolves around strengthening our spine, while HR is the spine of humanity.

(10) Yoga improves blood circulation. Without HR, we have no blood to flow in our veins.

(11) Yoga exercises and practices must be done daily to be effective. HR principles must be repeated to HR violaters everyday, even if it means naming and shaming them repeatedly.

(12) Discipline in Yoga and HR is important. Both are to be inculcated as part of our lives. Both must be mainstreamed for mass acceptance. Both are long term projects; no short-termism allowed. You who enter Yoga or evangelise HR are in for the long haul.

(13) Every turn and twist in Yoga is a challenge while HR activists must persevere in the face of adversity. You need to have patience and an open mind. Both are painful and long; but the results are edifying.

(14) Once you start Yoga you cannot stop. Once the beast of HR is unleashed, we will start the feast.

Ohhmm... hang on, there seems to be 14 items in that list, not ten. More proof (as if any was required) of Lord Bobo's extreme generosity. Or perhaps His Supreme Eminenceness has overdosed on purple bananas again.

I am moved by many causes, how do I choose one (or two) to invest my time in? @lishun, via Twitter

There are so many causes these days, especially with the Internet. You surely would have received at least one Facebook invitation to "like" a cause.

If you must choose only one, you should support the "1M Malaysians Reject 100-storey Mega Tower" as it currently looks quite silly with that name and less than 280,000 members.

The first rule of thumb is always to think, think and think some more. Have you asked yourself what type of causes move you the most, or do you really think you're that magnanimous that everything moves you equally?

Are you saying that a HIV-infected baby brings you the same amount of sadness as the prohibition of same-sex marriage?

This is not a trick question. Think about this, and conduct a process of elimination to narrow your choices down to one or two.

What most people forget is that joining a cause is not just about making them feel good. It is also about making that cause better by being a supporter. Ask not what the cause can do for you, but instead ask what you can do for the cause. Identify your skills, area of expertise, resources or anything else which could help you add value to the cause.

Also, if you're going to support something,

you better know what it is that you're supporting. Always ask the founder or manager of the cause you're thinking of supporting about their mission and values, their deliverables, the impact of their work, and how they manage their funds.

If all the above does not help you, then you should just stop over-analysing it. In fact, stop the thinking and just start the doing. Try out a few causes, for whatever reason. Maybe it makes you look cool, or more attractive? Or is tax deductible?

Hopefully, what appears to have started off with the wrong intention may help you find the right one. It is much better than sitting around scratching your head (not to mention that excessive head-scratching leads to hair loss, which is not the reason Lord Bobo wears a wig, by the way).

If you are still clueless, and just need a starting point, do consider supporting Lord Bobo's new cause: "Leave My Banana Trees Alone and Use Your Own Bloody Plates".

Although Lord Bobo already knows your question before you even knew you had a question, as a practical display of your true desire to have your query answered, His Supreme Eminenceness has graciously allowed you to communicate your questions by –

- emailing asklordbobo@loyarburok.com, stating your full name, and a pseudonym if you wish the question to be published anonymously (and a good reason for anonymity).
- tweeting your questions by mentioning @LoyarBurok and using the hashtag #asklordbobo. The first 100 questions published will receive LoyarBurok's ONLY merchandise you ever need (worth a lot for humankind) courtesy of *Selangor Times*. Now, what the hell are you waiting for?

Hear This and Tremblingly Obey (although trembling is optional if you are somewhere very warm)!

Liberavi Animam Meam! I Have Freed My Spirit!

THE TOP 10 STORIES

Compiled by **Rahmah Ghazali and Yasleh Hani Mat Yassin**

1 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION BILL

Pakatan Rakyat Selangor created history when it tabled the country's first Freedom of Information Bill 2010 in July at the state assembly, a move to strengthen the people's right to information.

It received strong objection from the opposition, the Barisan Nasional, which claimed that the bill was irrelevant and in violation of the Official Secrets Act (OSA) 1972, a federal law.

But Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalid Ibrahim insisted that an FOI Act should be enacted to eventually stop oppressive laws such as Printing Presses and Publications Act and the OSA, which have been used to suppress the media.

The Bill is likely to be passed at the assembly sitting next March. It is currently at the committee stage, being subject to public feedback.



4 KHIR TOYO RESIGNS AS OPPOSITION LEADER OVER MANSION SCANDAL

In a surprise move, former Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo resigned as state opposition leader in early December. This followed his arrest by the MACC over allegations of the scandal regarding his multi-million ringgit Balinese-themed mansion in Shah Alam.

The 45-year-old politician said quitting was the only way for him to clear his name. He allegedly obtained two plots of land for the mansion at half the price of the market value for himself and his wife.

The expose was first made by DAP assemblyman Ng Suee Lim who claimed that Khir had constructed the mansion at a cost of RM20 million and had purchased the land for RM3.8 million during his tenure as menteri besar.

5 SAND MINING SAGA

It was a tough year for the Selangor administration as it dealt with unresolved issues related to sand mining.

The Menteri Besar had wanted to resolve the issue quickly. But the illegal activity is still rampant, with culprits getting away due to lack of enforcement.

Although Khalid had sought the assistance of the Federal Government, help did not arrive. Enforcement is under the purview of the police. The setting up of a consortium, Kumpulan Semesta Sdn Bhd (KSSB), to streamline all sand-mining activities has also come under fire. Many claim that it has been ineffective as it has no enforcement powers.

A joint MACC-KSSB taskforce has been set up to fight the sand-mining corruption problem.



2 WATER DISPUTE COMING TO AN END?

The long-winded water tussle between Selangor, the water concessionaires and the Federal Government continues to plague both sides.

Despite offers, counter offers and a protest rally being held to hand over a memorandum to the King to protest the Federal Government's bailout of water concessionaire Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor (Syabas), there is still no end in sight.

However, the State, which already owns 80 per cent of water supply assets, is again preparing to take over the remaining assets after Putrajaya said it did not object to direct negotiations between Selangor and concessionaires.

They are said to want to offer about the same amount they initially tabled in February of about RM5.7 billion to acquire the remaining water assets.

The offer will likely be made in January for private assets and equity owned by Syabas, Puncak Niaga Sdn. Bhd. (PNSB), Syarikat Pengeluar Air Sungai Selangor (Splash) and Kumpulan Abass.

3 BIGWIG FINALLY HAILED UP OVER PKFZ SCANDAL

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) finally hauled up a 'big fish', former MCA president and cabinet minister Tun Dr Ling Liong Sik, in July over the RM12.5 billion Port Klang Free Zone (PKFZ) scandal.

Ling was the Transport Minister when the project was mooted.

Earlier in late 2009, former Port Klang Authority general manager Datin Paduka OC Phang and three others were charged with criminal breach of trust and cheating by making false claims. Although the move was lauded, many are still sceptical as to how deep investigations will go, and are waiting to see who else will be made accountable.



6 "ALLAH" ROW SPILLS OVER

Controversy over who could use the word "Allah" reached its lowest ebb when several churches were attacked early this year. The first to be firebombed was the Metro Tabernacle Church in Ampang, Selangor.

A total of 10 churches and a few mosques nationwide have been the target of attacks and vandalism since a High Court judgement on Dec 31, 2009, which allowed Catholic newsletter, *The Herald*, to use the word "Allah" in its Bahasa Malaysia edition.

Although the Government appealed against the court verdict, the attacks on places of worship escalated in January. Not only were churches affected, two mosques in Petaling Jaya were vandalised too.

The Government's appeal is pending; no date has been set for hearing.

7 SOSILAWATI MURDER

Cosmetics tycoon Datuk Sosilawati Lawiya and three others were murdered in a river near Ladang Gadong, in Tanjong Sepat, Banting, in September.

The tragedy, which occurred during the Muslim celebration of Hari Raya Aidilfitri, shocked the nation. The three individuals had been reported missing since Aug 30.

Police believe Sosilawati and her companions were killed and their bodies burned following the discovery of charred remains at a poultry farm in Tanjung Layang, Morib. Police suspect the motive as business rivalry.

Following this, a lawyer and three farm workers were charged in October with the murder of Sosilawati and three others. One of the farm workers pleaded guilty on Oct 15 to disposing of evidence by burning the remains of the four murdered people, and was sentenced to seven years' jail.

But the fate of the lawyer and the other men is still uncertain. The Telok Datok magistrate's court has set Jan 27 for mention of the case.



9 SUPPORT LETTERS CONTROVERSY

Pakatan Rakyat Selangor was tested over its own mantra of transparency and accountability when the use of support letters by its appointed councillors surfaced in July.

The public questioned why the administration had not taken a concrete stand on the support letter that got Klang municipal councillor Tee Boon Hock and also Pandamaran assemblyperson Ronnie Liu, into trouble. Liu is also an executive councillor.

The controversy started when Tee allegedly abused his position as councillor by using Liu's letterhead and seal to obtain contracts. Tee was expelled from the DAP and sacked as councillor.

Selangor, however, has not banned the use of support letters completely, but decided to limit their use to charity cases and not for business tenders.

10 SELANGOR'S PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE APPOINTED BN LEADER AS CHAIRMAN

In an unprecedented move of bipartisanship, Selangor in July appointed Sungai Burong assemblyman Datuk Mohd Shamsudin Lias from the Barisan Nasional, to head its Public Accounts Committee (PAC).

This didn't please the BN, though, which called the move "politically motivated" and a "gimmick". Opposition leader Datuk Seri Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo said BN was still the minority on the committee with two assemblypersons as opposed to seven from Pakatan.

Mohd Shamsudin then rejected the post through a motion tabled in the assembly.

Happening places to greet 2011

If you have no plans for tonight to usher in the New Year, you might want to check out one of these countdown celebrations happening around town.

If you are in Shah Alam, head out to i-City tonight. One of the events planned from 4pm to 12 midnight is the Lightscape, where 1 million LED lights will be lighting up the night sky and the landscape in the surrounding park.

Another event will be held at the Canopy Walkway, where the public can gather to greet 2011. This walkway leads to a 'snow theme' park where the temperature is at a constant -5 Celsius. There will also be fireworks, a lion dance and solo saxophone performances.

If you want to join a street party for the New Year, head to Sungei Wang Plaza for its Street Party Countdown 2011 Celebration which begins at 9.30pm. This Street Party is straight up your alley if you are into the Chinese music scene.

Some of the acts include A-Bin, Power Station, Tank, Yu Heng and many others.

If a themed dance party appeals to you, the celebration in Mist and Milk will be the right place for you to go. Its '2011 : A Space Odyssey NYE Celebration', which starts at 9pm, has a futuristic theme to it. Party like it's back to the future and get your more fashion forward sci-fi costumes and gadgets together!

Join Jedi Voize, Darth Funkzu, DJ Monkey-Wookie, HAL-Terry-Thousand along with Captain Kirk-A and Ray-Spock for the most hard hitting beats to ring in the new year.

Admission is RM30 for those in futuristic costumes or with a space gadget (includes one drink) and for those without costumes, it's RM40 for ladies and RM50 for men (includes one drink). Venue: Mist and Milk, 18 Jalan Liku, Off Jalan Riong, Bangsar

Another club scene you might want to check out is the 2011 Countdown Party with DJ Ian Ross at Luna Bar. Starting off the night is a buffet dinner and a glass of Luna bubbly, wine or beer for RM148++ per person, followed by one

of the biggest countdown parties with Ross,

known for his soul, electronica and uplifting progressive beats!

On top of that, Najee will be spinning at Cristallo, so make sure you get to the city on time for one of the most hectic 2011 countdowns. Party starts at 7pm and will last until 3am. Admission is just for the countdown party is RM100 inclusive of one drink. Venue: Luna Bar, 34th floor (Rooftop), Menara Pan Global, Jalan Puncak off Jalan P. Ramlee, KL.

For an Indian flavoured celebration, the Tantra party at 7atenine is the place to be. Take yourself to mystical heights with sitar music, sensual podium dancers and mingling characters, for a hedonistic party. Hong Kong based DJ Nicole and DJ Acid will keep you on the dance floor. They will be accompanied by Klai on sitar, Keeran on dhol and Mathan on electronic drums.

With a wide variety of food infused with exotic spices and herbs. Indian inspired cocktails, cham-

pagne, beers, wines and spirits are on hand to keep you reeling with joy when we all usher in 2011. Party starts at 7pm and ends at 3am. Admission is RM167 inclusive of one drink. Venue: 7atenine, Ascott Kuala Lumpur, 9 Jalan Pinang, KL.

For those who are feeling flush with year end bonuses and feel like really splurging for their new year celebration, try the New Year's Eve party with DJ Keza at Skybar. Coming in straight from Paris, DJ Keza, recent winner of Beijing's City weekend DJ of the Year and a connoisseur of luxury tunes and heavy productions, will be rocking your countdown!

Bringing a French touch to an eclectic track selection, DJ Keza is known for deep soul shaking house to the sharpest hip hop joints. Party starts at 9pm. Bottle and food packages range between RM690-RM4330, admitting 2-6 pax. Venue: SkyBar, Floor 33, Traders Hotel, KL.

For those who feel like dining at Hotel Nikko on New Years Eve, you can join in their New Year's Eve Final Countdown 2011 at the Lobby Lounge when you present your dining bill. For non-diners, cover charge is RM60++ inclusive of one house beverage.

The countdown begins at the Lobby Lounge. Get onto the dance floor and celebrate till the wee hours of the morning. The celebration begins at 9pm and ends at 3am. For reservations, call 03 27826244. Venue: Hotel Nikko, 165, Jalan Ampang, 50450 Kuala Lumpur.



JUSTICE 4 AMINULRASYID

8 THE AMINULRASYID SHOOTING

Aminulrasyid Amzah, a 15-year-old student from Shah Alam, made national headlines and sparked public outrage after he was controversially shot dead by police in April in a car chase. Police said they thought he was a 'criminal'.

The Home Ministry, under public pressure, established a special panel to investigate the cause of death.

A police officer has been charged, and the case is now being tried in the Shah Alam Sessions Court.

Aminulrasyid's case highlighted allegations against the police force as being "trigger-happy".

After his death, came news of another shooting victim, Norizan Salleh, who was shot five times by police but survived.

Police also refused to reveal their guidelines when handling firearms, not even to the Malaysian Human Rights Commission (Suhakam).

A new way to do business

By **Lee Choon Fai** and **William Tan**

SELANGOR: Online shopping has been around for a while, but a new breed of entrepreneurs are hitting the web to start a new kind of business.

Simple to set up, requiring almost no start-up expenses, easy to maintain, and best of all, not taxable; independent blog shops have been picking up momentum in recent years.

“There is almost no capital required and if you ever lose interest, you can just pack up and close shop,” said Adeline Chua.

Chua operates a blog shop named ‘Pick Me Up, Buttercup’ and has been doing it for the past two years.

The 22-year-old university student and her partner Eileen operate the shop together. Eileen deals with the customers and Chua designs the blog and displays the items for sale.

Their merchandise consists of second-hand clothes supplied by friends, or from their own cupboards. The items are in good condition and are often only used a few times, or not used at all.

According to Chua, they set up the shop because “we were bored and needed extra cash, two of the most powerful driving forces in life”.

She added that clients are mostly young women and students on a bargain hunt. They request their items

through e-mail and the items will be delivered to them via mail after payment is settled.

Juliana Jamaludin shares Chua’s sentiment, saying that it was a good side income with flexible working times with little overhead costs.

Juliana runs an online bookshop named ‘Jules Online Bookstore’ and has been doing it for a year.

“I love books, and I find buying them online is cheaper than retail. When I get a good bargain, I’ll mark-up a bit and re-sell them to cover my reading habit,” said the 29-year-old.

The operations assistant manager added that she has regular customers who enjoyed her fast and friendly services along with bargain prices.

However, there is no such thing as a business without challenges.

Qistina Rahmat has put her second-hand clothing and accessories shop named ‘Tyna’s Vintage’ on hold since last year.

The reason? She ran out of stock. The 20-year-old university student said it was not a stable business as there was difficulty finding merchandise to sell, and Malaysians generally do not trust online shops.

She added that she will be back in business as soon as she can find enough stock to resupply Tyna’s Vintage.

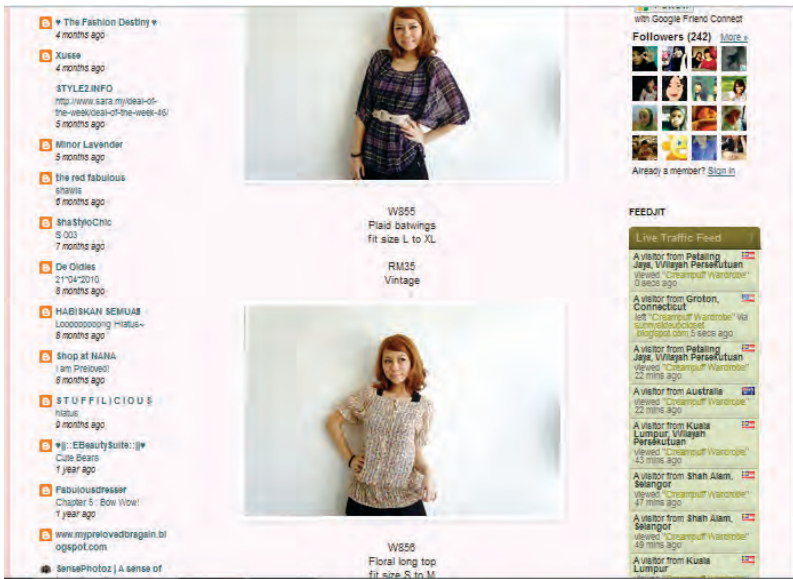
All of the operators who were interviewed also agreed that sometimes customers get cold feet and are reluctant to part with their money.

Some of the advantages of a blog shop also work both ways.

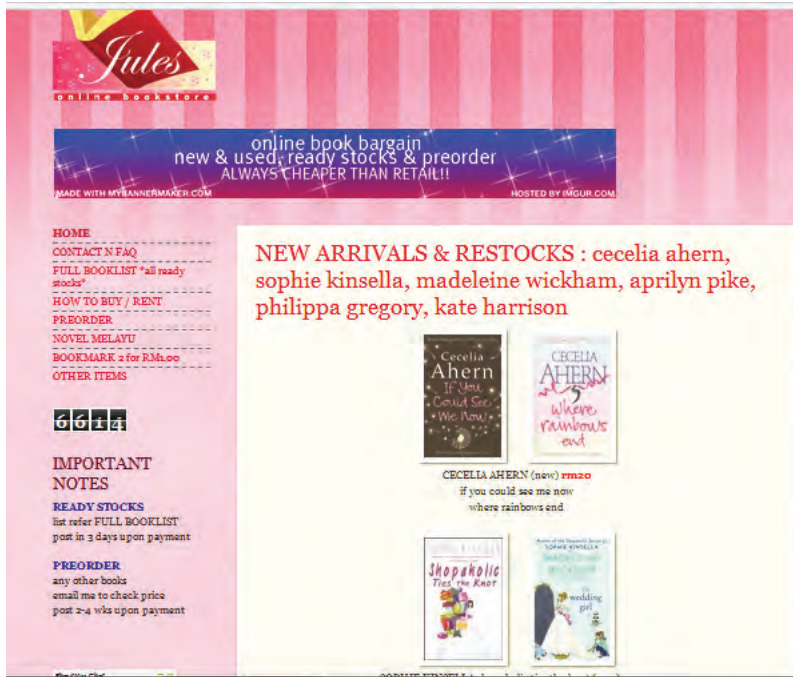
According to Joie Khor, a great amount of patience is needed when dealing with customers.

“We don’t have fixed working hours, so customers can call you anytime and anywhere. There are even times when I have to reply e-mails till late at night,” said Khor.

The 26-year-old make-up artist started her business in 2006 during her university years, but the venture failed due to Malaysians’ unfamiliarity with online shopping. She has now restarted her business after getting a steady job. She added that although it was an easy business compared to “normal” entrepreneurship, a great amount of time and effort must still be dedicated to maintaining the blogs.



Cheap second-hand clothing can be found at **Creampuff Wardrobe** (above) and **Pick Me Up, Buttercup** (bottom right).



Online bookstores like **Jules Online Bookstore** mean cheaper books for everyone.



Good food at a good price in SACC

SHAH ALAM: The SACC Westside Bistro unveiled their new menu for the upcoming year last Friday that offers everything from pasta to Nasi Lemak.

“This is an effort to add more variety to the restaurant, we hope this will be able to attract more customers,” said Westside Bistro executive sous chef Zulkifli Yusof (pic).

Zulkifli said that although the food is good but business has been slow. He believes the reason for the lack of customers is because of the lack of publicity.

Zulkifli, who has 12 years’ worth of experience working in the food business, has been working in the SACC’s Westside Bistro since it was set-up in 1998. Zulkifli’s

previous high point in his career was working in the kitchen of the KL Golf and Country Club.

“Prices of the main courses vary from RM7-RM20. It is actually quite cheap in the sense that we are offering quality food at those prices,” he added.

The menu that was unveiled includes 17 new additions to the existing menu in the Westside Bistro. Ranging from the home-made kaya butter toasts and kampung fried rice, to the more luxurious sirloin steak and seafood arbiatta pasta.

All 17 dishes were cooked and displayed in the unveiling and were available for sampling.

The new menu will be in place by next week.



By Raman Krishnan

The bookseller of Santo Domingo and APNET

When Miguel D Mena stood up and said, "I sell my books mostly to my friends," we all laughed.

That is the story of our lives, I thought, indie publishers. Ultimately, that's how we sell books: to friends of friends of friends.

Miguel laughed with the rest of us, shyly pushing up his round horn-rimmed glasses with his fingers, and with his tightly curled ginger hair, looking like a less neurotic, more rotund version of Woody Allen. Except, he was dead serious.

This was on the first day of a series of seminars organised by Litprom (Society for the Promotion of African, Asian and Latin American Literature that collaborates with UNESCO) for first-time guests of the Frankfurt Book Fair. We were discussing book selling in difficult markets.

I make my books

Miguel D Mena says, "I make my books."

"How? What do you mean, make?" I think he means he designs his books.

"I make my books in my house. I write, I edit, and I type on computer. Now the, what you say, my quality is little bit better because I have InDesign. Then I print, glue the pages and the cover using a carpenter's, what you call it ..."

He gestures with his fingers. He means a vice. I help him with the word.

"Trimming, I cannot do. I take to a shop. My friend do cheap for me," he says in his heavy Spanish-accented English, giving me the disarming smile I have grown accustomed to.

He would have no difficulty making friends, I conclude.

I gawp at him.

We are at his stand at the Book Fair, and I am admiring his display of books of old and new writers from the Dominican Republic, with their neat and trim standardised look, black fold-in covers and paste-on artwork -- not slick, but not unattractive. They, certainly, didn't look home made.

He flips open an anthology and shows me the table of contents. His finger is pointing to a name on the list. It is Pulitzer-prize-winning novelist, Junot Diaz.

"I meet him in New York, he give me permission to use his story, no copyright, no royalty. He say I contact him anytime."

With a name like Junot Diaz on your list, what else could one ask? Still, Miguel D Mena is a struggling publisher, absolutely devoted to his profession.

My family have no money to buy books

"When I was a child in Santo Domingo, I was very poor. See my skin? I am white, but my family was very poor. Some people say, 'Huh, you white. Why you poor?' But we have not only black people who are poor. When I was young, my family had no money to buy books. So when I see books, I say, 'Hoh, I want to read.' So I start writing my own books, then I sell them to my friends.

Sometimes, my friends come to my house for a party and I read ..."

"When did you start this," I interrupt.

"He shrugs. "Maybe twenty years ..."

Before he can continue I interrupt him again. "How many titles have you published?"

"I think about sixty-four."

"And, your own books?"

"I don't know, a few. Not many."

"How many copies do you make?"

"It depends. Sometimes five, sometimes ten. If I get an order from a university, maybe fifty or one hundred. But that is not important. The books are important. I want to make collection of all Dominican Republic classic literature."

The forty-eight-year-old father of three explains that few in his country,



Africa's book ambassador Tainie Mundondo.

which shares the island of Hispaniola, where Christopher Columbus first landed in the New World in 1492, with Haiti, can afford books.

So the biggest market for literature from the Dominican Republic is in New York where more than a million emigrants from the country, including Junot Diaz, live. He sells his books to universities in the US, Germany, Spain and Canada apart from his own country.

Ripping up the carpets I am still thinking about my conversation with Miguel earlier that afternoon as I walk (or run) to the train station with Tainie Mundondo, the Executive Director of African Publishers Network, APNET, based in Harare, Zimbabwe.

It is six in the evening on the last day, the Frankfurt Book Fair is just over and we are rushing to the station after our short farewell party before they shut down the travelators and escalators. On the way, we see workers already ripping up the carpets.



Miguel d Mena, the bookseller of Santo Domingo.

Germans waste no time.

"When I was here last year, I had to carry my suitcase full of books 200 metres and up and down the stairs because they had turned everything off when the fair closed."

I look at her suitcase.

It looks heavy and I am glad I am not lugging it. (I did make her a half-hearted offer, but she refused it.)

I am panting by the time we get to the platform but our train is still 25 minutes away.

Leaning against a wall to catch my breath I try to take in everything; the book fair, the people now emptying it, a group of young people in Halloween costumes and a train at the opposite platform carrying hundreds of loud, drunk supporters home after a soccer game. The first leg of the journey back to the hotel is relatively quiet. We seem to have run out of things to say after being together for ten days or, maybe, we didn't want to break a spell.

The transformation of African peoples through books

Tainie Mundondo has been in the book industry since 1982, starting as an educational editor in a publishing house, and joining a publishing association several years later. It was while she was with the latter that she helped found APNET, a non-profit organisation, in Harare in 1992 with nine founding members – Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Namibia, South Africa, Togo and Zimbabwe – to "strengthen African publishers through networking, training and trade promotion in order to fully meet African's need for quality books relevant to African social, political, economic and cultural reality".

The network now represents 45

countries. APNET's vision is "the transformation of African peoples through access to books."

Because APNET had no funds when they started, Tainie used to work for the organisation part-time for no salary until they sorted that out. In 2008, she was made Director of APNET when it was in the midst of serious financial problems, which she has managed to solve and take the network to the next level.

Her grievances sound familiar: The Ministries of Education and Culture do not seem to understand that they need to support education and the book industry. She questions too, her government's motives in giving all funds to just one publisher at the expense of the rest of the industry.

"I love my job very much and sometimes I am scared of this love because I do it wholeheartedly and sometimes with no thanks from those I represent, and it hurts when they don't follow-up to enquire (about the contacts I have made) at the book fairs."

She attends about six book fairs a year in three continents, but doesn't think it affects her family life because her children are all big and she often lives alone. But, she says it does affect her farming life; raising pigs, preparing for the rainy season, and setting up for her retirement. Africa's

book ambassador I am looking out of the window dreamily when I hear Tainie shout.

"We get off here."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, the other train's already waiting."

I look out the window and cannot see another train, but I know better than to argue: Tainie has been my guide in Frankfurt for a week now. I strap my backpack over one shoulder and follow her.

"Can you slow down, I can't keep up with you," I shout after her.

"We have to hurry. If we miss this train we'll have to wait for thirty minutes."

I remember it is Sunday. Still, I feel a thirty-minute wait is better than a heart attack, though I don't say it.

She moves very quickly, dragging her suitcase, and I pant after her. Then she stops suddenly, turns around and flashes a 100-watt smile at me, immensely pleased with herself.

"Come, help me lift this box onto my head."

I stare confused. Fortunately, there are others with us who understand and help lift the suitcase and rest it on her tightly braided hair.

"This is the way to do it," she says, as she strides rapidly through the platform, down the steps, through the tunnel, up another flight of steps, through a dirt track for twenty metres, across the railway tracks to the next platform, turning around every now and then, to grin at me, to tell me to hurry up.

I am on the verge of dying but dare not, because this 52-year-old mama, pint sized, carrying a thirty-kilo suitcase on her head, will not let me.

Anyway, in the event, we miss the train, and I break into laughter. She gives me a resigned, "Oh, well," grin. We help her lower her bag and make her sit down and rest. It is a cold night.

At the hotel, I give her a hug before we part. I know I am going to miss her. Tainie Mundondo, Africa's book ambassador, is one amazing woman.

Fiction by **Shih-Li Kow**

Jubilee

THE night is ripe with heat. The ceiling fan whirs frantically and fails to cool, brushing heavy air over his skin like a piece of flannel. He scratches himself and listens to the neighbourhood dogs' distant barking, from one to another across fences and walls.

His cat slips into the room through his bedroom door left ajar, a white shape in the semi darkness. As silent as a little ghost, it curls up into a pale patch on the rug.

He raises his body on his elbows, trying to move in freeze frame motions to keep the old bed from creaking. A shoulder joint pops into place.

"Can't you sleep?" his wife says, not even half awake.

It could have been asked of a lover in her dream. Sighing, she turns on her side to face the wall. The mattress heaves and settles. He catches a breath and holds it in his ribcage until she is still again, unreachable in the private depths of her sleep. Her hair is the darkest shadow on the pillow.

He stands and takes the three steps from his bed to his desk. He finds the power button on his computer easily but stops himself from pushing it, reminded of the electronic beep it makes booting up.

Sealed in the room by the windows and drawn curtains is the quiet of the night and the remnants of sleep, almost tangible, like a gas.

He opens one window, stretching his arm through the security bars into the coolness outside. The silence escapes the room like a freed animal. Sporadic night noises rush in to fill the void; the metallic clang of someone's gate, a dog's coughing bark, the broken scale of a revving engine somewhere.

Outside, rows of houses strung on a ribbon of road spiral down the hill he lives on, pinned in place by streetlamps. The neighbourhood has seen better days, the trees are big but tired and the rooflines lurch and flatline from uncontrolled renovations and home improvement whimsies.

All is as it should be except for something moving slowly up the street. Something that excites the dogs.

It is a party of two – a person and an animal of some sort too big to be a dog. He wonders and guesses, maybe a cow or a horse, and watches as the pair come closer. It cannot be but there is no mistaking the stumpy legs, the bulbous head and the incongruous trunk. It is a baby elephant.

The sight makes him laugh to himself, the way a private joke or a surprise birthday party would.

He rushes downstairs, vaulting three steps at a time with both hands on the banisters. When he opens his front door, the elephant is passing his house. Its keeper looks at him and raises a hand in greeting.

And it is a party of three, not two – a child in a tutu is asleep on the elephant. Her shiny skirt froths around her as she rests, folded forward with her head on the elephant's.

"Where are you going?" he asks the man with the elephant, breathless.

"To the circus," the man replies, smiling. His teeth shine white in a dark face. The

elephant swings its trunk and seems to smile too, with its upturned mouth. A baby kind of smile. It moves its head from side to side and fans the child on its back with its ears.

The sleeping girl is small and weightless on the elephant's back, her legs dangle. The tiny soles of her feet are black with dirt.

"Where's the circus? There's no circus here. There's nothing here except houses," he says. He has to shout because they are moving away. The elephant's tail swishes against its rump.

A light comes on in his neighbour's window. That brown dog two houses away yips without stopping.

"Oh, there's always a circus, my friend," says the man, looking over his shoulder. "You just need to find it."

Our man with the house on the street hesitates but only for a while, long enough to pull his running shoes on and lock his door.

His cat is scratching the doormat, excitedly digging its claws into the jute fibres.

His wife, he believes, sleeps upstairs and is again filling the room with fragments of her dreams, lingering echoes and images invisible to him which thicken the air.

In the shadowy hour between sleep and wakefulness, he follows the elephant and its keeper. He rings every doorbell along the way, light-footed and strangely jubilant as though touched by the magic of an improbable circus. As though chosen.

Master of Lollipops now in Malaysia

By **William Tan**

SUBANG JAYA: Durukan, an internationally renowned brand of Turkish lollipops, was officially launched at the Mydin Mall last week.

Sold in 57 countries, the "Master of Lollipops" is available at all Mydin supermarkets in the country.

"We aim to be the leading market leader of lollipops here in Malaysia and eventually, the whole of Southeast Asia," said Durukan sales manager Ozgur Biyikli.

He said there were three key factors that made their lollipop stand out. The company, established in 1976, specialises only in lollipops and uses innovation in their production and natural colouring.

Biyikli said even lollipop sticks were made of hardened paper instead of plastic. He added that Durukan was successful because it had invested a lot in its brand and image.

"Starting January next year, you will see us everywhere, on billboards, television, on the streets ... everywhere" said Biyikli.

He said they picked Mydin as their partner because it was Malaysia's only halal hypermarket. The company may also open their first factory outside Turkey in Malaysia.

Also at the product launch was Turkish ambassador Serap Ataay and International Trade and Industry Deputy Minister Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir.

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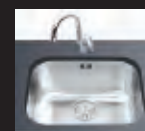
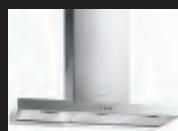
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Up till now, nobody ever went to Kepong without a good reason. But this has changed. LIN ZHENYUAN slips into Kepong and discovers a food haven in Happy City

A stranger to Kepong in search of food may find himself going in and out of side roads and back alleys without finding what he actually wants.

For a first-time visitor, it may be best to just drop by the Happy City Food Court which is located next to the Kepong Carrefour, near Jaya Jusco.

There are close to 50 stalls at this huge food court. The place comes alive after sunset. But lunchtime is also a good time to have a quick meal.

Since the predominantly Chinese areas of Kepong Baru and Jinjang are a short distance away, the Happy City food court caters mainly to non-halal customers.

I only learnt of this place a few years ago since I, too, had no good reason to venture uninvited to this township. In the past, Kepong wasn't the kind of place that outsiders liked to explore, unless one had relatives staying there.

But in recent years, Kepong has earned itself a fine reputation for having some of the best Chinese cuisine in the Klang Valley. If you are adventurous, you could actually keep going to Kepong on a regular basis over six months and still not finish sampling all its culinary surprises.

Those who know Kepong should gather a posse of friends and make a foray into the town after dark.

The most popular places tend to be the noisiest with the largest crowds. And so, Happy City is an appropriate name for my favourite glutton square in Kepong. It has all the right Chinese hawker fare that appeals to my taste buds.

On top of my gastronomical agenda is the pork belly stall which is probably the best within a five kilometre radius. The stall is operated by a slim, Mandarin-speaking woman who is not only gracious but is a fine chef.

To call her a hawker or a cook would only denigrate her status. All her noodles are hand-made. She tosses ribbons of noodles into the air after sprinkling them with flour and then multiplies the strands of

noodles with a few quick twists of her wrists.

After witnessing her in action on several occasions, I came to the conclusion that she possesses hands of steel.

The only minor issue I have with her is that she understands no Cantonese or English and I speak very limited Mandarin. Fortunately for both of us, my spoken Mandarin can be understood after five minutes of halting sentences.

The peppery soup or gravy is strong enough to fire up my throat. The "siow kow", whether deep fried or in soup, tastes delicious when dipped in vinegar and eaten with slivers of young ginger.

There are also stalls selling Teochew porridge, Sekinchan pork noodles, wantan mee, claypot chicken rice and mixed rice. There's even a stall that sells Hong Kong-style braised duck.

Television sets abound in the

Happy City Food Court. It seems to be a Malaysian way of life to watch the TV during a meal, regardless of the time of day. Mamak restaurants nationwide seem to have wised up to this trend, and now, almost every mamak shop you'd come across would have big, flat-screen TVs.

Mothers who frequent the Happy City Food Court during lunch hours are often seen bringing along their children to have their meals. Perhaps it is much easier for

mothers to have multiple choices of food on offer for their hungry children.

With rows of ceiling fans to dissipate the afternoon heat, customers don't have to worry about beads of sweat dropping on to their plates of food.

Another discovery is the large number of Myanmar nationals working as waiters at this place. They are all young, energetic and efficient, and they understand Cantonese!

Since this is a hawker centre, your wallet is in no immediate danger of being emptied. Everything sold here has a price but it is all affordable. RM10 will take you a long

way, and there might still be some change left over.

Customers who are sensitive to the outside heat in spite of the ceiling fans may saunter over to the Carrefour hypermarket to cool down.

But one thing is assured. You won't leave Happy City Food Court hungry. Of course, you can't eat everything sold under that big roof. You'll just have to make repeat visits to sample all the other dishes that you couldn't consume in one sitting.

Don't forget to bring along a few friends. Make one or two of them pay for your meal because you would have let them in on the secret of one of Selangor's biggest, yummiest hideouts.



Activity slows down in the afternoon but picks up after dark.

Happiness is a full belly

“Television sets abound in the Happy City Food Court. It seems to be a Malaysian way of life to watch the TV during a meal, regardless of the time of day. Mamak restaurants nationwide seem to have wised up to this trend, and now, almost every mamak shop you'd come across would have big, flat-screen TVs.”



Mothers bringing their children for their afternoon meals.



HORSING AROUND: Children enjoying pony rides at the Selangor Ria carnival from Dec 18-26 at the Shah Alam Stadium.

A stall keeper proudly showing off his wares at the Selangor Ria carnival from Dec 18-26 at the Shah Alam Stadium.



From left: Shah Alam Music Academy's Gilbert Wong and Aswara's music faculty director Shamsul Kamal Abd Rahman handing over a mock cheque for RM10,000 to SACC general manager Shuhainie Shamsudin on Tuesday. In line with the "Spiced Up Countdown 2011", SACC will hold a fundraising for victims of natural disasters by contributing RM1 for every combo package sold at SACC tonight.



Selangor state executive councillor Dr Halimah Ali (left) presents the Anugerah Tokoh Ilmuwan award to ophthalmologist Prof Dr Muhaya Mohamad for her achievements and contributions to society on Tuesday. Dr Muhaya is a lecturer at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and chairman of the Malaysian Medical Association Ophthalmological Society.

Member of Parliament for Petaling Jaya Utara Tony Pua (centre) and Kg Tunku assemblyman Lau Weng San (right) giving away souvenirs to children at a Christmas and New Year dinner for 200 residents of Kg Cempaka on Tuesday.





Malaysian Art in 2010

It's been an eventful year in dear old Malaysia: 100-storey towers and price hikes; PERKASA- and headmistress-style racism; cops that rob, punch and kill. You've read your share of year-end, top-news-stories lists.

What follows is something you wouldn't have seen: a summary of the year 2010 in Malaysian art. Yes, seni is still alive and kicking!

The National Visual Arts Development Board Bill 2010

An example of how easily arts and culture can be forgotten, politically -- even by artists, themselves.

The National Visual Arts Development Board (NVADB) Bill was mooted as early as 2008, and got its first reading in the Dewan on 11 October this year. But it wasn't until the latest parliamentary session that artists sat up to take note: realising, among other things, that the NVADB would be replacing the National Art Gallery Act 1959. By then, however, it was too late to do anything: the bill was passed, close to midnight on 15 December. Tweets from

Parliament revealed a bored, hungry House itching to get things wrapped up.

What's new in the NVADB? As its name suggests, this new legislation focuses on developing the visual arts as an industry. It widens the scope from "Peninsular Malaysia" to "Malaysia". It allows the National Arts Gallery -- already a statutory body -- to open businesses and franchises. It specifies that at least a quarter of the 13-member Visual Arts Development Board be comprised of practising artists or academics. Potentially far-reaching changes for practitioners.

Don't be blindsided again, people! Pay attention!

Community- and Issue-based Art Projects

The idea of making art in -- and for -- local neighbourhoods and communities isn't new; we remember 2002's Taman Medan Community Arts Project, or the ongoing efforts of Penang's Arts-Ed programmes. But 2010 saw a remarkable blossoming of efforts to merakyatkan seni.

There was the Pudu

Community Art Project and Chow Kit Kita!, both designed to map the history and peoples of those two urban townships, facilitated by artist-types working closely with locals. There's the monthly Pekan Frinjan, a festival for fringe subcultures in Shah Alam, which gets a lot of curious, non-insider attention.

Other groups are less geography-specific. The Seksualiti Merdeka festival, into its third year in 2010, accrues solidarity for, and awareness about, alternative gender and sexuality issues. The Buka Kolektif has been organising performance art events, with the overt goal of introducing clueless audiences about the form. The Bar Council's MyConstitution campaign has been working on *Radio Demokratika*, a compilation of indie music themed on democracy and election rights, set for an early 2011 release.

All these point to the growing realisation of a no-brainer: art shouldn't be just about artists.

The Ebb and Flow of Cultural Space

With so little official support, the rise and fall of art institutions are de rigueur in this town. 2010 opened discouragingly: with the 8th BOH Cameronian Arts Awards in April, venerable arts and culture journal *Kakiseni.com* shut its virtual doors. Valentine Willie Fine Art, the most influential commercial gallery in Malaysia, reduced its KL floor-size from two Bangsar shoplots to just one.

But things are definitely on the up. New physical spaces like the ambitious Map KL megaproject got started this year, to encouraging -- if unspectacular -- reception. The Actors Studio@ Lot 10 and Jaya One's PJ Live Arts are coming into their own. Neighbourhoodly venues like PJ's Small Talk With The Moon gallery and Ampang's Gudang Noisy gig space are blossoming up all over.

And, though somewhat modified, *Kakiseni.com* is back ...



COMPILED BY ZEDECK SIEW

INTERVIEW



Post-rock music -- a genre that appropriates the trappings of rock to push sounds in weird and wonderful directions -- has a penchant for grandiloquent nomenclature. Take, for example, Tortoise's *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, or just Godspeed You! Black Emperor. Furniture, Malaysia's most notable post-rock-like outfit, is no exception. Their 2005 album, *Twilight Chases the Sun*, was a critically acclaimed piece of shoegazing emotronica -- how about the tinkling xylophone, scratchy percussion and existential meandering of tracks like "Why Is Adam King?"

Furniture releases its sophomore effort, *They Made Me Out of Dreams You've Forgotten*, digitally on 1 January 2011; hardcopies arrive the same month. Frontman Ronnie Khoo -- bit of trivia: he created the "What Would Zaid Hold?" Facebook group -- talks about the new album, his band's influences, and why they're self-publishing.

What are the band's influences? How would you describe Furniture's music?

As musicians, we should consider the merit in any sort of music, and not get too caught up in the politics of the "mainstream versus underground" debate. If I was forced to generalise, I'd say Furniture, as a band, listens mostly to the kind of music that is sought out, rather than the kind that gets shoved into the collective consciousness.

Our music has been built up ambitiously from a pop foundation. It's melodic and catchy, and we try to see what noisy spin we can give it.

Tell us about the new album. Any unifying themes or concepts?

They Made Me Out of Dreams You've Forgotten was conceived over a period of five years. We wanted to work with a more song-based structure, which is why there is a lot more singing now. Looking back, I think the new album covers a period when my angst was running dry, so I was looking for new things to fuel the songs. "Monuments", for example, was in part inspired by the shifting sands of our city's landscape.

A lot of Malaysian indie musicians, like Furniture, are self-publishing. Why is this the case? Is it a good or bad thing?

The music business is currently in flux; we haven't settled on a new working model. It's exciting because we get to try and figure it out -- but, at the same time, us small-fry, DIY musicians are not going to get any help from investors, because they're holding on to their money and waiting. I think it's a great thing, because it forces us to take on roles beyond just being musicians -- we have to be entrepreneurial, as well.

What about the Malaysian music industry which you would like to see changed?

I think many aspects of Malaysian life, not just the music industry, could do with a bit more freedom. Currently, there's too much legislation and red tape; it's very stifling. The other day, when we were going to shoot a music video for our new album, I discovered you need a permit to film. I always thought I could go out with some friends and make a short film if I wanted to -- but now I know I actually need to apply for permission from the authorities, just to have some fun. What a killjoy.

Digital copies of *They Made Me Out of Dream You've Forgotten* are available from furniture.bandcamp.com.



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