



“

*We are all Malaysians. This is the bond that unites us. Let us always remember that unity is our fundamental strength as a people and as a nation.*

Tunku Abdul Rahman

”

# SELANGOR JOURNAL

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# Merdeka Special: LOVING MY MALAYSIA

**L**et's be honest, whenever Merdeka Day comes around for most of us it is a celebration of yet another Malaysian public holiday. But for those in our military who have served our nation or who are still serving the country, Merdeka Day isn't a day that is taken lightly.

Story continues on **page 4**



# Housing Issues - Budget Roundtable 2019

**SHAH ALAM** - More than 100 participants from various housing-related backgrounds attended the Second Series Budget 2019 Roundtable Talk at Holiday Inn, Glenmarie.

With the theme 'Affordable Housing: 1 Family 1 Perfect Home', it was inaugurated by Dato' Menteri Besar, Amirudin Shari.

Through his speech, Amirudin explained the roundtable discussion was aimed at discussing, giving views, and opinions to the State Government to draw up the budget for 2019.

"I am pleased and would like to congratulate the Selangor State Treasury and Selangor Housing and Property Board (LPHS) for successfully organizing this discussion. The Budget Roundtable talks clearly show that the State Government is committed and has never stopped looking for the best formulas, including gaining insights and ideas from key players, particularly in the housing industry," said Amirudin.

He adds that the State Government has always been committed to continue the provision of quality affordable hous-

ing to meet the needs of the low and medium income groups (B40 and M40).

Amirudin also expressed hope that the final round of the 2019 budget table talks would generate good suggestions to assist the State Government in providing affordable housing for the people in the future.

"From April 2018 the improved housing policy is known as Rumah Selangorku 2.0, which gives emphasis on the provision of facilities and specifications in providing comfort to the residents. As of July 2018, a total of 49 affordable housing development projects involving 25,079 residential units have been built and occupied. It has also exceeded the target of 15,000 units set by the State Government for the period between 2015 to 2018," said Amirudin.

Also present at the roundtable were State Secretary, Dato' Mohd Amin Ahmad Ahya, Selangor Housing and Urban Living EXCO, Haniza Talha and State Assembly Speaker, Ng Suee Lim.

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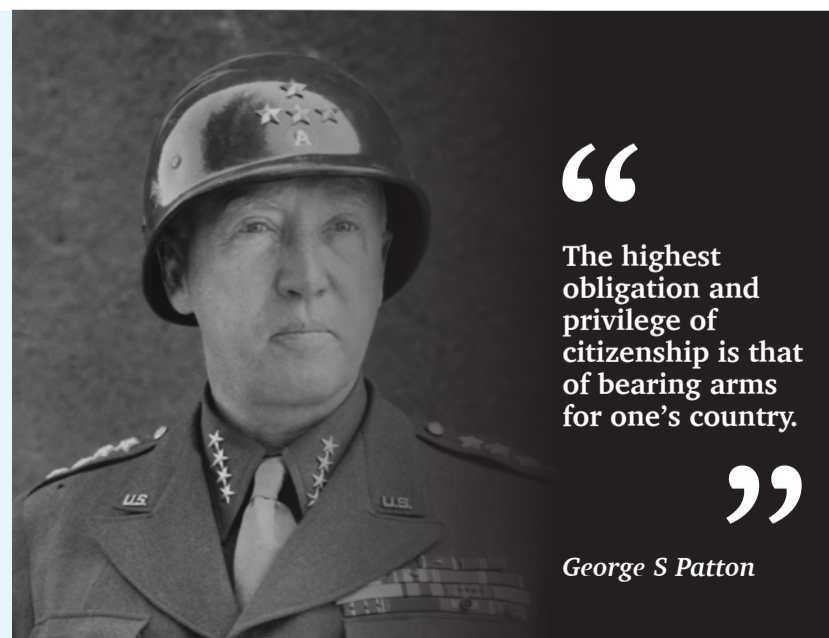
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“  
The highest obligation and privilege of citizenship is that of bearing arms for one's country.  
”

George S Patton

**KUALA LUMPUR** -Girl2Leader is an organization dedicated to training adolescent girls to become future political advocates.

Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin said that Malaysia was lagging behind as the number of women political leaders was still lacking compared to other countries.

"This should be changed as we approach the year 2020, when compared to the Philippines and Thailand, they are far ahead in involving women as state administrators. So in the new era of Malaysia, the Government wants to harness the potential of young women in the country's political arena," said Zuraida at the launch of Girl2Leader Malaysia in Hotel Corus, Kuala Lumpur.

Meanwhile, Girl2Leader president, Nurainie Haziqah, says the program involves teens and women aged from 16 to 25 years from various fields and races. She adds that all members would be the driving force of the community, society and country in the future.

"Various activities have been designed to empower young women with confidence and knowledge to meet global political challenges and homeland issues."

"I hope Girl2Leader will be the aspiration of every young woman in this country in creating a competitive, restored and respected community of women" says Nurainie.

Masdiana Muhammad, Chairman of the organisation and wife to the Menteri Besar of Selangor, says that great expectations are being placed on this Girl2Leader program as it will ensure that Malaysian women will no longer be left behind, especially from decision-making positions, political leadership, industry and society.

"Although Malaysia has seen a new era, there are many things we need to think about for girls in the country. Children, teenagers and young women



## Girl2Leader Creating New Leaders

should be given the opportunity and space to grow, so that their true potential can be achieved," says Masdiana at her opening speech during the launch of the program.

"Our task now is to change the perception of Malaysian society which is largely still seeing women as weak and unable to become leaders. Although it has been proven by the existence of female figures in the country, negative perceptions of women's leadership are still high and we are responsible for changing this perception," says Masdiana.

The girls involved with the program will meet with female leaders, wheth-

I hope Girl2Leader will be the aspiration of every young woman in this country in creating a competitive, restored and respected community of women

er MPs, ADUNs, NGOs and community leaders who will be mentors to them, says Masdiana, who thinks that this is a good step as they will gain knowledge from these leaders, thus allowing them to be a better leader for the future of the nation.

"I really hope that with programs like Girl2Leader, parents and guardians understand that their girls are gems that need to be polished. They are future leaders who need encouragement and guidance to make our country a developed, competitive and brilliant nation for all."

## SIBS 2018 Largest Business Conference



**SHAH ALAM** - The Selangor International Business Summit (SIBS) 2018 that is being held between 6 to 16 September will be the largest business conference ever organized, in the country.

Investments, Industry & Trade, Small

and Medium Industries (SMI) Exco, Dato' Teng Chang Khim said SIBS 2018 was organized by the State Government through Invest Selangor Berhad (Invest Selangor) for the second year, this time targeting a better participation rate with

a transaction value of about RM250 million.

"Last year, SIBS recorded the participation of approximately 22,000 visitors with a total transaction value of about RM204 million. With this success, we are aiming for better participation of about 25,000 visitors with transaction value of around RM250 million. It will be the largest business conference ever organized by a State Government, in Malaysia," said Dato' Teng in a press conference, at Invest Selangor.

SIBS 2018 will be held at the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Center (MITEC), Kuala Lumpur, comprising of three events namely the Selangor ASEAN Business Conference 2018 (Sept 6 and 7); Selangor International Expo (September 6 to 9) and the Selangor Digital Economy & Smart City Convention (September 13 to 15).

Dato' Teng says it involves 60 per cent of investors and domestic entrepreneurs

and 40 per cent of internationals.

He says the participation of local and international investors and entrepreneurs in SIBS 2018 was the best combination in making Selangor an international trade hub.

"The idea for this purpose has been implemented over the past four years through the Selangor International Expo with the State Government which has been successful in achieving. We are confident that SIBS will be among the key events in the region, in the future," he says.

According to Dato' Teng, through the SIBS 2018, investors and traders will showcase their products to the outside world, ASEAN, Europe and Africa.

Also present were SIBS 2018 Project Director, Sven Schneider and Chief Executive Officer of Menteri Besar Selangor (Incorporated), Raja Shahreen Raja Othman.

# Loving My Malaysia

By  
**Cecelia Alphonsus  
& Batrisyia Jay**

Continued from cover page...

*Selangor Journal* had the honour of talking to four amazing patriotic Malaysians who shared with us a little about their experiences in the service and their hopes for the new Malaysia after the recent change in the political landscape of the nation.

While patriotism may be the idealistic reason why we think one would enlist in the army, the truth as we uncovered talking to our patriots is actually quite different. For Major Tan Pau Son, the prospect of free education was what attracted him to enlist.

“Education is the most important thing to Chinese people,” says Major Tan. “It is so important that my grandmother actually went all the way to Malacca from Johor Bahru to obtain my birth certificate so that I could go to an English-medium school.”



Major Tan Pau Son

When he was 15, Major Tan was selected and accepted into Form 3 of the Federation Military College (FMC) in 1959, now widely known as the Royal Military College (RMC). “Honestly speaking I had no idea what FMC was all about. They were going around recruiting people by saying they’ll be giving free education, free books, free exam fees and even a RM20 allowance, I was attracted by that,” Major Tan admits.

The FMC was established specifically to prepare young Malaysians to become Officers in the Malaysian Armed Forces and leaders in both the Malayan Civil Service and corporate sectors,” Major Tan explains. Therefore, it came as no surprise when he was selected for Officer Cadet training in 1963, and was then placed into the 7th Intake Regular Commission category. A year later, Major Tan was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Ordnance Corps or *Kor Lengkapan, Angkatan Tentera Malaysia*. In the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF), he served in Singapore, Sarawak, Pahang and the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF).

“Honestly speaking I had no idea what FMC was all about. They were going around recruiting people by saying they’ll be giving free education, free books, free exam fees and even a RM20 allowance, I was attracted by that,”



Major Harjit Singh Rendawa

For Major Harjit Singh Rendawa, enlistment was a less than voluntary affair and more of something he couldn’t object to. “I was working for RTM from 1969 to 1970, and my brother was in the Malaysian Air Force at the time, he asked me to join as a volunteer reserve. I did and then during the Emergency we were recruited to serve.” Major Harjit was soon selected for the Officers Training program at the Royal Military College (RMC) in 1973 and shortly after that selected for advanced training at the Royal Military Academy of Sandhurst (RMAS) in the United Kingdom.

“  
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While at Sandhurst, Major Harjit’s outstanding performance won him two awards. The first award, the ‘Nigeria Prize’, was for the best overseas student while the ‘Putra Feisal’ award, was awarded to the best student in the study of war and world affairs.

“I love the army, there’s no other institution that I would’ve worked for, and even if you had given me a second chance I would still choose to serve the army.”

To serve was essentially why Mohammed Khair bin Parlan or affectionally known as Major K enlisted. He recalls how as a young boy of seven, he saw the army swoop into his village in Sg. Kandis to help during a terrible flood. As the son of a *ketua kampung* service was already ingrained in him and he saw the army as a means to serve a greater good.



Major Mohammed  
Khair bin Parlan

“  
he saw the army swoop into his village in Sg. Kandis to help during a terrible flood. As the son of a *ketua kampung* service was already ingrained in him and he saw the army as a means to serve a greater good.”

During his service in the RMAF, Major K was part of the Rajang Area Security Command. He was also part of the unit that formed the 10th Parachute Brigade, or more commonly known as 10 Para. The 10 Para is an elite airborne brigade-sized unit within the Malaysian Army that is tasked with being rapidly deployed inside or outside the boundaries of Malaysia. 10th Para is the key element of the Malaysian Rapid Deployment Force or *Pasukan Aturgerak Cepat* (PAC).



**Lieutenant Colonel Carol Loo**

The trailblazer though is Lieutenant Colonel Carol Loo who was part of the pioneering batch of female army recruits. She quietly, without telling her family applied for the army out of curiosity after seeing an advertisement in a local newspaper. She was attracted to the pay and perks of the job. Her father objected when he found out just as she was about to be commissioned and ordered her to return home. But she refused as she had already survived the gruelling training and wasn't about to give it all up. Eventually she became the nation's first Chinese lady officer to be promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

"Everywhere I went, I was surrounded by men, every course I took I would be the only lady there, but life has to go on."

"I would always be given the highest position and the toughest job to do, but this is to test whether we ladies can take on the job and posts," says Lieutenant Colonel Loo. "We were the pioneers you see, if we can't do it, there won't be any hope for the subsequent batches of women."

When they enlisted it is likely that they didn't really know what was in store for them, not realizing that there could be incidents that would test their mettle or create memories that would forever be etched in their mind like this incident Major Harjit recalls when he was stationed in Sarawak.

"I had a friend who worked as a grass-cutter in the base, we would have drinks together daily while I would tell him of my day's work," says Major Harjit. "One day, our base was attacked by the Communist. We managed to kill a few of them and when the shooting ceased I was shocked to see my friend's dead body amongst those we shot."

"I had no clue that he was one of the communist party leaders." Apparently on the eve of the attack, his friend was trying to convince him to take the following day off. "He didn't want me to be in the crossfire you see, he really was a good friend of mine," he says sadly.

**“I would always be given the highest position and the toughest job to do, but this is to test whether we ladies can take on the job and posts,**

**”**

For Major K, his baptism of fire was when a soldier ran amok on the base shooting at everything in sight. While everyone else was afraid of approaching the armed soldier, Major K literally took the bull by its horns and calmed the soldier down and disarmed him.

"He would have shot down his commanding officer if I hadn't done that. I wasn't thinking of myself or my safety, all that mattered was that the officer had to be tamed down."

Although they are no longer on active duty, our patriots are still very much involved in ensuring that younger generations of Malaysians continue to serve the nation through the armed forces.

"I am living proof that you can achieve great things in the army," says Major Tan. "All that I am today is because of the opportunities I had to study in the army, and what I am proud of the most, out of all my work, is the setting up of MACVA (Malaysian Armed Forces Chinese Veterans Association)." Major Tan wants nothing more than for the younger generations to be more exposed and open to joining the armed forces. He hopes that the new government and the media can play their part in reaching out to all Malaysians regardless of race to consider a career in the armed forces.

"We never experienced racism when I was in the army. I used to *makan nasi* from the same plate as my Chinese and Malay friends," says Major Harjit. "The army is built on customs and tradition, when you compromise customs and tradition, which is the backbone of the armed forces, it'll be lopsided." This is the unwritten rule, says Major Harjit, one that he feels should be ingrained within every Malaysian.

"For me, integrity and honesty are the most important fundamentals of a soldier."

Major Harjit currently serves as the Deputy President of MAFSVA

(Malaysian Armed Forces Sikh Veterans Association). "I was among the pioneer members of this organisation. The inception was on Remembrance Day in November 2015, when the British decided to honour the Sikhs who had made great sacrifices since World War One.

Major K hopes that the new Malaysia will now be a nation that is respected and our military to be multiracial and recognised by military forces of the world. "For this to happen, all races must work together to defend our country. We need to start working for Malaysia as Malaysians."

Lieutenant Colonel Loo also hopes that new government will appeal to the youngsters, especially the non-Malays, to join the armed forces. "As an officer who is responsible for recruiting young Chinese into the armed forces, I like to appeal to the parents. Come listen to our talks and be more open to encourage your children to join."

"Women are now moving into areas once monopolised by men. Push the negative thoughts aside, the military is a profession you will never regret."

***On this our 61st Merdeka, it is indeed a turning point for our nation and as our patriots have shared, it is high time we come together as bangsa Malaysia to ensure the continued freedom of our country. Not just from the invasion of foreign powers but from the invasion of elements such as racism that will rip the fabric of this nation if left unchecked.***

***When we are all finally just Malaysian, loving my Malaysia would be easy.***



# All in a Day's Work

By  
Syauqi Jamil



**M**erely a month after being sworn-in as the new Selangor Menteri Besar, Amirudin Shari is already knee-deep in fulfilling his promises to carry on his predecessor's illustrious legacy.

After succeeding Dato' Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali who relinquished the position to become the Federal Economic Affairs Minister, Amirudin has said that he wished to visit all corners of the state himself in an attempt to improve systems, services as well as the quality of life for the people of Selangor.

*Selangor Journal* managed to witness first-hand how Amirudin got his own hands dirty, as he went through his jam-packed schedule one by one without displaying even a hint of exhaustion.

The Sungai Tua Selangor State Assemblyman had conducted a work visit in Sungai Kandis constituency just a day before the by-elections nomination day there, spending his whole day attending to the problems brought up to him to fix.

The Sungai Kandis State Assembly seat had fallen vacant after the death of Shuhaimi Shafiei due to lymphoma. (It was subsequently filled by Mohd Zawawi Ahmad Mughni who won the by-election on August 4, 2018).

They say breakfast is the most important meal of the day. This is especially true if you are the Menteri Besar for a state like Selangor.

Amirudin started his day around 9.00am with a good old Malaysian breakfast of roti canai and a cup of teh tarik in Warung Ijai Roti Canai, joined by about a hundred of the locals as well as a few familiar faces.

He was sharing his table with Zawawi before they were surprised with an impromptu visit by Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister Xavier Jayakumar.

After spending some time with the locals for chats and a few selfies, Amirudin



IPR was meant to mobilize the people in the form of social plans, skills, knowledge and should not be simply seen as goodies handout.

then made his way to officiate 'Program Menyantuni Dan Semarak Inisiatif Peduli Rakyat (IPR)'.

At the program, a total of 180 people received aid through *Skim HIJRAH*, *Skim Mesra Usia Emas*, Selangor Young Entrepreneur Fund (DUMS) program and blueprint concessions among many others.

In his speech, Amirudin said that IPR was meant to mobilize the people in the form of social plans, skills, and knowledge and should not be simply seen as goodies handout.

He said such initiatives are vital for the people of Selangor so that none will be left behind as the state continues its rapid development.

Later, Amirudin arrived around 12.30 pm at Al-Muhsinin Mosque where a total of RM190,000 was donated to 10 Islamic institutions through a program called 'Majlis Ramah Mesra dan Penyampaian Baik Pulih Institusi Agama Islam Selangor'.

He encouraged the folks to utilize Islamic institutions such as mosques as a unifying establishment for the community, stressing that it should also be a place where the youth comes together.

He would later perform the Friday Prayer there before having a light lunch with the mosque committee afterwards.

At about 3.00 pm, the Selangor MB visited the Agricultural Research and Development Institute (Mardi), Klang office to hand over Malaysia Good Agriculture Practice (MyGAP) incentives.

He was later taken to a cornfield nearby to witness for himself the activities, as well as to have a taste of a sweet, freshly plucked, Selangor grown corn.

His day in Sungai Kandis did not end there. Amirudin continued on with a site visit to the Shah Alam-Banting Alternative Road project.

He was informed the progress of the RM43 million project is on track and is currently 79% completed. It is expected to be completed by December this year.

Besides widening the roads from two to four lanes, other upgrading works which include drainage upgrade, bridges, pedestrian walkway, and cross roads traffic lights are also being done simultaneously.

After giving his speech, Amirudin, accompanied by JKR officers walked through dirt, dust and mud around the construction areas to see for himself the problems as well as the progress in overcoming those problems, before finally ending his day there.

A wise American leader, Booker T. Washington once said; nothing ever comes to one that is worth having, except as a result of hard work.

This couldn't be any truer especially when it comes down to governing an economically stable, people-centric and transparent state like Selangor. But for the new Selangor MB, it's all just another day at work.

# Rising From Ashes of Moral Apathy

By  
**Cecelia Alphonsus &  
Batrisyia Jay**

**T**he nation's 61st Merdeka celebration is just around the corner, not only is it a day to celebrate it is also a day to reflect. To look how far we have progressed as a nation and as a community or have we failed?

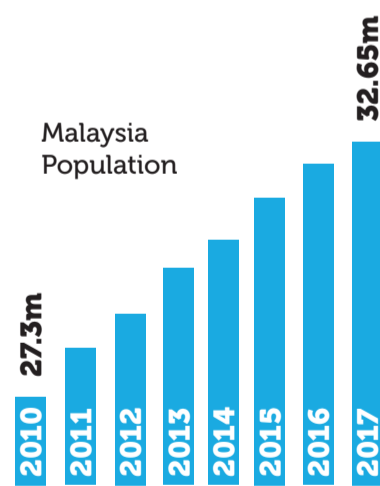
Amidst the skyscrapers and the labyrinth-like network of highways that snake around the city there is a growing sight that many choose to ignore. Homeless people – men, women and children dotting the panoramic vistas of our cities. The numbers have been growing rapidly over the past few years as more and more Malaysians fall below the poverty line and end up marginalised. Many of the homeless are also people who have been ostracized by society because of religious condemnation and harassment, forcing them to leave home and for some making it difficult for them to get jobs thus depriving them of their basic human right to work to take care of themselves.

The rate of homeless individuals of various age groups without a regular private space for sleeping, washing and going about one's daily activities in Kuala Lumpur is alarming. These individuals most often than not have no choice but to spend most of their time in public spaces such as in parks, on pavements, benches and even on the streets. But most of the time, during the day it is hard to notice them but when night falls and the city grinds to a halt, you will see them huddling in the dark in alleyways and pavements.

Various NGO's (non-governmental organisations) such as Kechara Soup Kitchen (KSK) and Mercy Malaysia, as well

as government bodies over the years have been trying to help these individuals, particularly since the total population in Malaysia has been on a steady incline, from 8.2 million people in 1960 to 32.1 million in 2017. With increased population and the migration of people from other parts of the country to Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, it is evident that policies need to change because we are not tackling the root cause of homelessness, we are only merely trying to soothe the effects of it.

According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), the most populous state is Selangor, with an estimated 6.47 million people in 2018.



This is precisely why the Selangor state government has been focused on people-centric programs to alleviate the cost of living for the B40s. Dato'Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali during his tenure as Menteri Besar was very focused on the welfare of Selangorians. Programs like *Skim Peduli Sihat* and *Kasih Ibu Smart Selangor* (KISS) are a resounding success as they ease the burden for families trying to make ends meet.

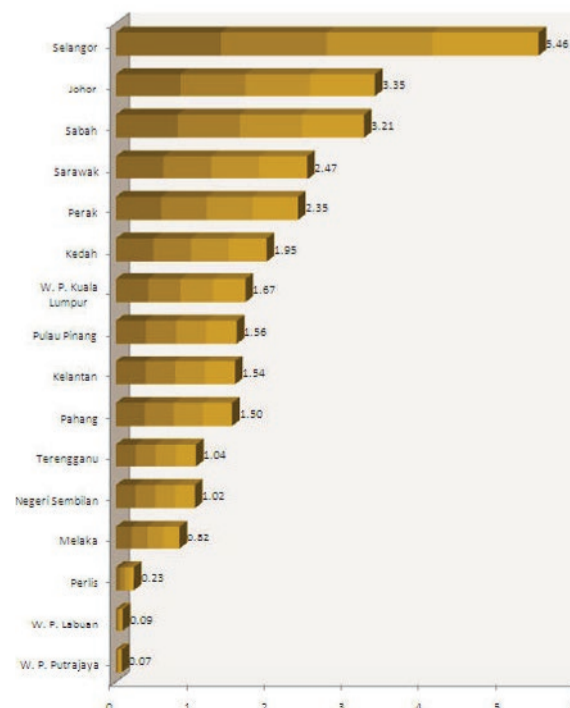


Volunteers at the Pit Stop Community Cafe



Volunteers at the Pit Stop Community Cafe

Population distribution by state, Malaysia, 2010







in the respective fields. Some have even been hired by the café because of their willingness to learn, work and serve.

We were astonished to discover that among the individuals who are homeless 90% were Malaysians. After much probing, we found that the percentage of Malaysians by far exceeds that of non-Malaysians amongst the homeless community in the country.



Volunteers at the Pit Stop Community Café

On top of those two programs as well as others like free water and assisted housing schemes there are numerous other IPRs or *Inisiatif Peduli Rakyat* that is continuing under the present Dato Menteri Besar, Amirudin Shari.

While the state government tries to do their part, the rest of us ordinary Malaysians should realise we all have a service to render to our country however small it may be. It can even be something that doesn't cost a dime but could have tremendous impact like refusing to judge or condemn a person who doesn't fit our map of the world. If eradicating prejudices is too difficult, then maybe we could start by educating ourselves about the world around us beyond our material addictions.

The *Selangor Journal* team recently experienced first-hand the plight of the homeless at the Pit Stop Community Café in KL. Located in Jalan Tun HS Lee, or more commonly referred to as the 'Bangkok Bank Area' by citizens of KL, the Pit Stop Café is a commercial eatery by day and a soup kitchen by night.

The café was founded by dynamic duo Joycelyn Lee and Andrea Tan back in 2016. After more than two years of feeding the homeless and the urban poor, the minimalistic café has now become a known place of refuge and respite among the community.

Dinner is served 5:30 pm onwards daily and serves around 200 homeless or poor. Distri-

bution of dinner for the individuals is carried out in an unorthodox way, as Lee and Tan refuse to just hand out packets like other soup kitchens. "We give them an empty bowl and ask them to choose their food. Newcomers are baffled as to what they want because they're so used to having food packets. They get a sense of dignity when they're able to choose instead of just having to accept handouts," says Lee.

Besides giving out free dinners which are sometimes sponsored in full by individuals or corporations as part of their CSR programs, Lee and Tan also organise skill programs. Among the programs are English language training, basic culinary skills, and even kitchen management. These set of programmes are open to anyone willing to learn with hopes that they can be placed in jobs

“The one thing that had us befuddled on that day was the fact that 90% of the individuals we had served were Malaysians.”

Malaysians are undoubtedly a patriotic bunch, each with our own way of showing patriotism come the month of Merdeka. For this year, alongside flying the Jalur Gemilang and having it attached to your car or hung on the front of your house door, why not portray your patriotism beyond just a day by committing to help hungry Malaysians?

Instead of reinventing the wheel and trying to organise your own "feed the homeless" ad hoc program, contact people like Joycelyn and Andrea at [www.pitstopcafekl.com](http://www.pitstopcafekl.com) and find out how you can volunteer or better yet how your organisation can help support financially the people on the ground who do this day in and day out come rain or shine.

Quite often the good intentions of people go awry because they do not understand the "mechanics" of feeding the homeless and food is wasted, food containers litter the streets and worse cause food poisoning for our street friends.

Ralph Waldo Emerson had once said, "The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honourable, to be compassionate, to make some difference that you have lived and lived well."





MERDEKA STORY

# Lay Me Down

by  
**Cecelia  
Alphonsus**  
Chief Editor  
Media Selangor



A house isn't necessarily a home and a home, not always a house.

One of the milestones of life that society has ingrained in us is that to be "someone" in society you have to own your house and have several investment properties to boot before you are considered as an up-standing member of society.

For many this remains only a dream, the luckier ones are renters but for those who cannot afford rent on top of utilities and food, they find themselves on the streets, sleeping on cardboard boxes on pavements and park benches. Some manage to hold on to a job but the odds are stacked against them when they are living on the streets, straddling between the Kuala Lumpur we know and the Kuala Lumpur that slowly emerges from the dark underbelly of the city when the last of the city workers have returned to the comfort of their homes.

I have walked the streets of KL in the wee hours of the morning before, careful not to trip over an outstretched leg or arm while straining my eyes on the horizon in a calculated attempt not to make eye contact with the eyes that I can feel boring holes in me as I walk past.

I have assisted groups to pack and distribute food to the homeless, efficiently forming a human chain to pass packs of food to volunteers who then

thrust those packets into eager out-stretched hands. I bet they too focused on the hands and not the eyes.

We avert our eyes because it is truly impossible to stare into the eyes of a person living on the streets and not acknowledge them as an individual human-being. You can't look at their eyes and not feel the grief, disappointment and frustration that fills their soul.

I couldn't and I didn't until I met Uncle Ramlee (not his real name) at the Pit Stop Community Café, thanks to Joycelyn Lee, one of the founders of this oasis of warmth in a desert devoid of humanity in the heart of KL.

## Uncle Ramlee

Uncle Ramlee shatters whatever stereotypes you might have of homeless people. Neatly dressed in a clean shirt and pants, sporting a cotton French beret that had my stomach in a knot because it was just like the one my late father used to love wearing.

Clean shaven with impeccable manners and speaking in fluent English, this gentleman in his late sixties cut a more impressive figure than some of my dates. For some reason, I decided not to sit across the table from him and I asked if I could sit next to him instead.

I wanted to look at him, really look at him. Not like an object or a curiosity but to really see him, his eyes, the lines on his face, the missing teeth, the way he clenched his lips when he speaks and I wanted to listen, intently to him.

And when I started listening, that is when my heart, despite the shattered mess that it was already in, continued to crack into a million tiny pieces.

Uncle Ramlee has been living on the streets since 1973, the year that I was born. For my entire existence on this planet,

he had been moving from state to state, from Johor right up to Penang until he finally settled near the Bangkok Bank area in KL almost 30 years ago.

"This area here," he tells me "was my home. I was comfortable here with my friends. It was easy to find a meal and by 2am the city will be quiet and we could sleep."

"What happened then? Why did you move?" I asked.

"They came for us. The authorities."

"In the middle of the night, when we were fast asleep, they woke us up with their sticks, shouting and yanking us by the scruff of our necks, pushing and

elders and for people in general."

I replied that the police are usually gruff and lacking in the manners department. He gave me a wry smile and told me that some of the worst abuses he has seen and endured was at the hands of officers from government departments tasked with ensuring their welfare.

A lump formed in my throat and I wondered what kind of species of animal would man-handle elderly homeless people?

Uncle Ramlee continued his story and told me about how he was thrown in jail and that it was thanks to Joycelyn and her "lawyer friends" that he got out.

"I knew I couldn't stay here anymore, even though it was home to me, I know the authorities would not leave me in a peace. I lost most of my belongings in the raids and had to start over. I moved further out of the city centre, closer to the outskirts of the city. It is more difficult to find a meal but at least the authorities haven't started to chase us away there."

## Hope For The Future

As it was almost August when I met Uncle Ramlee, I asked him if he remembered Merdeka Day in 1957.

I could see his eyes travel back to a happier time in his life as he recounted how excited he was standing in the stadium clutching his father's hand.

"I was just about six years old," he chuckled "and I didn't really know what was going on except that it was something important."

"I could sense that the people around me were very excited but at the same time there was a nervous air of apprehension."

"Similar to what we felt on May 10th recently?" I asked cheekily.

He threw his head back and laughed heartily, with a

“  
**You pick  
the place...  
to lay me  
down where  
peace is  
prevalent  
and hate  
can't be  
found**  
”

prodding us into trucks. They didn't care that most of us were old, they shouted at us, not bothered that some of us can't even walk properly."

My eyes filled with tears as he recounted the horrors of that night.

"You know girl, they don't have respect anymore. Malaysians have lost respect for their

smile he said "this change is good isn't it?"

"I guess it is. What are your hopes for this new Malaysia?"

"Freedom."

Gazing at what was quite possibly a puzzled expression on my face, Uncle Ramlee went on to explain that what every homeless person wanted was the freedom to live their lives with dignity. They didn't want to be herded into cells where their freedom was restricted.

"All we need is a place to sleep at night and the opportunity to work or to ply a trade. We have talents, we have experience, I myself was once a golf caddy. Do not treat us like we are nothing or worse, criminals to be under lock and key. We have skills that we can share with others but no one takes the time to find out how we can contribute to society. I have ideas on how we can eradicate homelessness but no one wants to listen to me. They just treat us like animals."

I look at him in silence, wishing I could give him a place he could call home. I couldn't help but see my father in his face and I shuddered wondering if would he end up dying all alone and the tears just rolled down my cheeks.

Joycelyn grins at me like a Cheshire cat, knowing full well the emotional symphony that was playing out within me as the peaceful atmosphere of the café was broken by the excited hustle and bustle of the dinner service for her street clients.

Uncle Ramlee can't wait for dinner to be served and told me he was already drooling because Joycelyn had cooked *labu masak lemak*, a typical Malay dish that he hadn't tasted in a long long time.

I felt a stab to my heart again as I tried to compose myself.

This was home to Uncle Ramlee. A place he was treated with love, surrounded by friends, walking the streets he called home, always knowing that a warm, tasty meal was there for him to fill his stomach. But after 30 years, he was driven yet again away from his home, this time by the "authorities". How many years he has left, I don't know.

He told me he is tired, walking further and further each day, carrying a heavy knapsack filled with the only earthly belongings he has, to evade getting caught by over-zealous enforcement officers.

Uncle Ramlee may not have a property deed in his name but he has heart, he has soul and to me he is an eminent person. **"You pick the place... to lay me down where peace is prevalent and hate can't be found."**



# SELAMAT MENYAMBUT HARI KEBANGSAAN

The first Merdeka celebration that I can remember was when I was in Standard 1. We were told that the school will be holding a Merdeka Day Celebration a week before. It was a joyous occasion as we got to wave the Jalur Gemilang and sang patriotic songs together. As a 7 year old at that time, Merdeka to me was all about waving the Jalur Gemilang and singing Negaraku together with my schoolmates.

### On childhood Merdeka tradition

Merdeka Day is all about getting together to understand the sacrifices of our forefathers and knowing the importance of safeguarding the sovereignty of our country. We usually celebrate Merdeka together with the whole family. No specific tradition but my father usually will make us understand the significance of August 31st. We watched the Merdeka parade on television up until I went to university.

### Significance of Merdeka

I first started to realise the significance of Merdeka when I read about the history of our country in my high school years. The sacrifices made by Tok Janggut, Datuk Bahaman and Lieutenant Adnan and not to forget the struggles lead by Tunku Abdul Rahman to fight for our country's Independence.

Learning History in school made me understand the importance of safeguarding our Kemerdekaan. The significance of August 31st each year goes beyond the parade and patriotic songs and is a reminder to each citizen of the challenges that awaits in the future and also the responsibilities to protect and defend our Constitution.

### Sharing the love

My children are so fascinated with Malaysian history. Knowing that their father's day to day job is managing the state, they have always asked me how it feels like to be holding so many responsibilities. I have always made it a point to tell them the history of Independence and ask them about what they learned in school about Merdeka.

It's good to let our children understand the history of our country at a young age. This will help them to grow as a responsible and loving citizen who treasures each aspect of our history.

Merdeka this year is a bit special because of what happened on the 9th of May. Malaysians stood up united against corruption and kleptocracy. It is also a testament of our love for this nation and its Constitution. The people of Malaysia should be proud that they are a part of history.

As the Menteri Besar of Selangor, I am grateful that the state is blessed with peace and prosperity. Selangor is the golden state of Malaysia and a model state which has become an example to others. Our people-centric policies have become the foundation of our success. It is our obligation to maintain and preserve the harmony between different religions and cultures which have become the hallmark of Selangor. It is my hope that the people of Selangor will always benefit from the state's wealth and at the same time contribute to the economic growth. My sincere wish is that Selangor will continue to strive for excellence in every aspect and become the main actor in the South East Asia region.



**BLOCONOMIC**  
Blockchain Economic Summit  
**2018**

# Bloconomic Malaysia 2018 Smashing Success

by **Cecelia Alphonsus**

**KUALA LUMPUR** – The inaugural Blockchain Economic Summit 2018 concluded with a resounding success recently as participants and speakers from around the world congregated at what was hailed as a stimulating platform that brought together a thousand over people from the blockchain sphere.

The 2-day event on the 16th and 17th of August saw active networking between participants, speakers, exhibitors and sponsors which according to event organizer, Boey Kwa Jian “was a rare opportunity to meet so many international participants at an event in Malaysia.”

Over a thousand participants and seventy speakers packed the Connexion Conference and Event Centre where issues on regulations and ICOs were discussed, new projects pitched and most importantly insight into how blockchain is disrupting the world as we know it.

Boey, who is the Secretary of the Malaysian Blockchain Association and a Director at Alphacap Berhad started planning for the summit in April this year and travelled all over the world curating the top names in the industry to speak and exhibit at the summit.

“I wanted to organize a summit where people could see how blockchain technology can be applied to the economic ecosystem. I wanted to organize a summit here, at the heart of South East Asia to stimulate innovation and create possibilities in this part of the world.”

The summit drew active tech media participation from all over the world including China, Taiwan, Korea, Vietnam, the United States of America and Europe as well as solutions-based companies and tech providers.

## Partnerships and applications

Speaker and exhibitor, Anthony Davie, CEO of Invech Group, said blockchain technology can be a disruptive force across industries. According to Davie, Invech Group is the first blockchain solutions entity to be licensed by a government.

“We were awarded licenses in the blockchain and cryptocurrency framework by the Timor Leste government to assist

the government in building a blockchain service consisting of Artificial Intelligence, Cloud Services and Decentralised Applications creating a digital government with digital infrastructure and secure digital identities.”

With licenses awarded in the banking system, export and import, civil engineering development, renewable energy development, raw material mining and detonation, hotels and casino industry, as well as solid backing from the government of Timor Leste, the country is poised to become the world’s first fully functioning blockchain nation.

“Clearly, all this is a lot for one company to handle and we are looking for partners and expertise to contribute towards this project,” he added.

“Blockchain is the future and the future is digital.”

Sankalp Shangari, founder and CEO of LaLa World, a fast-growing Asian technology company using blockchain to create a connected financial ecosystem for the unbanked, migrants and refugees around the world, said that “one of the opportunities in the next decade is with the two billion unbanked people around the world.” LaLa World wants to create a financial ecosystem that would cater to their needs and improve their lives.

Earlier this year, LaLa World announced a strategic partnership with blockchain-powered remittance company Rebit.ph (“Rebit”) to expand its payment networks. With the partnership, LaLa World will bring increased access to financial services for the unbanked in the Philippines, a major step towards its goal of global financial inclusion.

According to Shangari, Malaysia has the potential to earn millions if not billions in

the short-term if it finds its niche in the blockchain sphere soon as how other countries in the region like Vietnam has done.

In a recent online article, Forbes predicts that Vietnam may very well be South East Asia’s blockchain innovation hub. With a projected growth rate of 6.7% as reported by the World Bank, Vietnam still has much room for improvement citing that only 31% of Vietnamese adults have bank accounts while smartphone ownership is on the rise with 40% of the population expected to own one by 2021 creating a sizeable opportunity for app-based blockchain financial services for the unbanked.

## Time to regulate

A recent 242-page report “Tailoring Malaysian blockchain regulations for the new digital economy” by University Malaya urges the Malaysian government to provide a relaxed yet effective regulatory environment for blockchain technology to flourish. The report noted that adoption of blockchain technology is crucial to the country’s economic and technological development, and the legal issues concerned must be further explored and addressed.

Ironically, Kuala Lumpur is now home to international technology developer NEM Foundation which recently opened its new Southeast Asian HQ here, a 11,000-square-foot-facility that NEM claims is the biggest blockchain focused facility in Asia. It will serve as a learning centre, incubator and accelerator for blockchain related startups. However the legality of crypto-currency trading in Malaysia remains in a grey area as it isn’t declared illegal but remains unregulated.

Recently on July 4th, the Maltese Parliament passed 3 bills into law, establishing the first regulatory framework for blockchain, cryptocurrency and DLT (Distributed Ledger Technology). This tiny island in the Mediterranean is now at the forefront of innovation in the blockchain sphere making it the first country to offer holistic regulatory framework for DLT operations. In a Forbes interview, Silvio Schembri, Malta’s Junior Minister for Financial Services, Digital Economy and Innovation, commented that the Maltese government is focused on the technology behind blockchain and what it can offer in the long-run.

## Project PAI; New Era of Artificial Intelligence

One of the captivating presentations at Bloconomic 2018 was the introduction to Project PAI. It is a decentralised platform for intelligent avatars made from online personalities called Personal Artificial Intelligence or PAI.

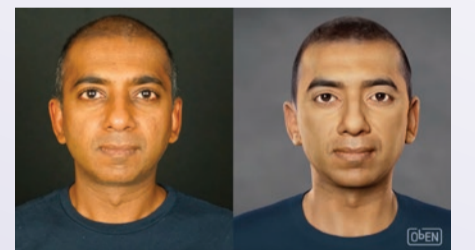
Founded on the belief that every person should have their own digital avatar, one that speaks, thinks and behaves just like their self, this verified intelligent 3D avatar that looks like you and sounds like you can also perform tasks on your behalf.

As owners of our own PAI, the avatars can be managed anywhere online. A unique blockchain protocol for PAI creates a decentralized platform where PAI are stored and interacts with decentralised applications meant for PAI-centric uses in everyday life.

Now you can have your very own virtual assistant to do tasks like shopping. Too busy to try on clothes? Easy, your PAI learns your dressing style, tracks latest designs and styles and tries on digital outfits. Pull up your PAI on your mobile device, watch it wearing various digital outfits using AR, select your favourite ones and then purchase them yourself.

Wish you could ask your doctor a zillion questions but too shy? PAI is a bridge to better care between doctors and patients as well as to represent you in the healthcare space. The possible uses of PAI are endless especially in the social networking, entertainment and media space. Coupled with AR, the branding and marketing opportunities are set to ignite the industry.

Project PAI is working alongside AI company ObEN to develop the PAI Network and blockchain protocol.



For more information on this project visit [www.projectpai.com](http://www.projectpai.com)

# Evolution of Blockchain



While Bitcoin gave us the original blockchain, Blockchain 1.0, a simple ledger that records transactions in sequence, and the entire chain is distributed, with verification happening across multiple nodes to confirm a transaction.

We then saw this evolve to something which could include logic to perform all manner of tasks. The first Blockchain 2.0 implementation was the Ethereum Network, and the added code was called Smart Contracts. This second genera-

tion blockchain brought the explosion of ICOs (Initial Coin Offerings) and decentralized applications.

The business community is now taking notice of blockchains however public blockchains as they are now are not enterprise ready with issues of privacy and security. When looking at using blockchain in the enterprise world, the very safeguards that ensure the integrity of public blockchain networks bring about scalability problems. For example, the public Ethereum Network has an average processing

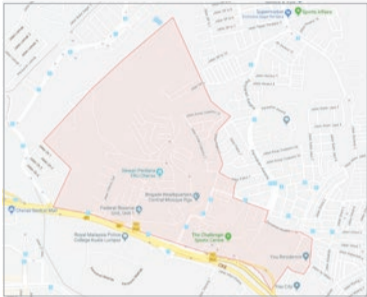
rate of 15 transactions per second, with a typical transaction latency of around 10-20 seconds. By contrast, the Visa credit card processing system averages 2000 transactions per second.

Therefore the industry believes that Blockchain 3.0 will be the emergence of a cloud-driven, enterprise-ready blockchain platform that has data interoperability between different types of blockchains with the ability to perform up to 10,000 transactions per second.

# Home Where Love Resides

By  
**Batrisyia Jay**

## Taman Cuepacs



Taman Cuepacs is a housing development in Batu 9 Cheras

The name 'Cuepacs' is derived from 'Congress of Union of Employees in the Public and Civil Services'.

**Developed in**  
**1980**

was amongst the first few housing developments in the Selangor-Kuala Lumpur border

**Square feet**  
**1650**

**Bedroom**  
**4**

**Bathroom**  
**3**

The community spirit at one of Selangor's oldest residential areas, Taman Cuepacs is one to be admired as it shines through despite lacklustre facilities in the neighbourhood. Residents comprise of families who have lived there for generations where like in the popular TV show Cheers, everyone knows your name. However lately, residents are concerned with the dip in property prices which they believe are in part due to the poor maintenance of amenities in the neighbourhood.

Taman Cuepacs is a housing development in Batu 9 Cheras. The name 'Cuepacs' is derived from 'Congress of Union of Employees in the Public and Civil Services'. Developed in 1980, Taman Cuepacs was amongst the first few housing developments in the Selangor-Kuala Lumpur border. Properties in this area are designed with a modern touch with an array of sizes.

A typical 2-storey terraced house in Taman Cuepacs costs

Pricing trends for properties in Taman Cuepacs have been on a decline over the past five years.

"If there are some positive changes, the place will look nicer and better in terms of landscaping and facilities, so the property value will increase," says Davidson Abishegam, a long-time resident of the area.

According to Davidson, safety is the biggest issue as the area has been in disrepair for ages. "The drains and fences, all broken down and rusty, and the drains are not sealed properly which means you can fall straight into it."

What is irksome for Davidson is the fact that the housing areas around Taman Cuepacs, such as Alam Jaya and Taman Cuepacs phase 2, appear to be better taken care of. "There's an obvious difference between our *taman* and the other *tamans* around it," says Davidson.

According to him, the housing area was 20 to 30 years old, and there were many old problems which needs to be sorted out one by one. He explains that the residents are upset



RM590, 000, with a RM2, 420 monthly mortgage. These 1650 square feet sized houses have four bedrooms and three bathrooms, complete with a balcony on the upper storey.

Capital gain, which is the profit one earns on the sale of a real estate asset, stands at 2.29%, which has been annualised over five years. It results in capital gain when the selling price exceeds its purchase price. Capital loss will be on the rise when the purchase price is higher than the selling price.

with the fact that the authorities are not resolving the many problems in the neighbourhood such as clogged drains and poor road condition. "We want solutions but there doesn't seem to be any."

Amongst the top issues battled by the residents are the development and construction being carried out on a slope adjacent to their housing area, small drains and narrow roads, a field and playground that is in poor condition and badly maintained, wild animals roaming



Amongst the top issues battled by the residents

“  
**Home is where love resides, memories are created, friends always belong, and laughter never ends**

”

around as well as an absence of youth development or engagement complex. Residents are also worried about the lack of pedestrian walkways as children and senior citizens have to walk on the streets as there are no proper walkways for them, thus exposing themselves to danger.

As the saying goes, 'Home is where love resides, memories are created, friends always belong, and laughter never ends'. Despite the poor condition of their neighbourhood field, Davidson and long-time residents of the area have banded together to clean and repair the condition of the field at their own cost so that they can play a friendly football match on Merdeka Day.

# THE UBIQUITOUS GERMS

adapting to nearly every environment on earth. Bacteria is everywhere, on the soil, air, ocean, even on us right now (both inside and out), in trillions. They become a part of an important earth ecosystem. Despite having this unbelievably huge number of bacteria on our body, why are humans able to survive?

Although some bacteria cause disease, many are helpful to us. We host thousands of different types of bacteria, at different body sites where they create a balanced and healthy environment. Most of them exist in our gut flora, and some on the skin. Example of a good gut bacteria is *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, commonly found in probiotic yogurt that may help digest food, produce vitamins and kill the bad bacteria. The good bacteria in our mouth may prevent fungal growth. Scientists are still studying the effectiveness of taking supplementation of probiotics on health issues like gastrointestinal and allergic disorders.

to take note that researchers found that those supposedly clean shoes are more than 90% contaminated with faecal material. My conclusion is, once it touches the floor, it will never touch my lips.

It is common sense that any material that is shared frequently in public are good surfaces for bacteria to adhere to and survive. There are hundreds of publications that report the presence of bad germs on banknotes and handphones. From this understanding, I shy away from stalls with sellers that touch food and money without using clean gloves, and those without running water. Now, one can no longer wonder why one has bad stomach aches after consuming that nice murtabak from the pasar malam.

## Germs are everywhere!

Bacteria are very diverse tiny living beings and have been around for billions of years,

## Clean Hands Save Lives

As a dermatologist, I have seen many examples of infections due to poor hand hygiene. Many patients with eczema frequently develop skin infection from a type of bacteria called *Staphylococcus aureus* which frequently colonizes the skin. This is exacerbated by incessant scratching and inoculation of the bacteria from the nails deep into the small cracks in the skin. They may get crusts, weeping erosions or blisters from this infection. This method of transfer by hand is by far the most common route to spread infection amongst children. So, what can we do to protect ourselves and our children?

Once a child is infected, it is just a matter of time before the others develop the same illness, unless important preventive steps are taken. One may prevent the transmission by avoiding close contact with an infected person. Those that have the disease must be kept away from the others and prompt cleaning of any soiled materials. Proper hand hygiene is the one of the most important, simplest and least expensive means of reducing infections and to reduce the spread of antimicrobial resistance. The Ministry of Health Malaysia has issued steps of effective hand disinfection technique when one is in contact with a possibly infected person, surfaces or material. So go ahead and wash those hands again, your health (and your family's) is in your hands!

“Once a child is infected, it is just a matter of time before the others develop the same illness, unless important prevention steps were taken.”

by  
**Dr Kartini Farah Rahim**  
Consultant  
Dermatologist and  
Internal Medicine



dles with bare hands, and prefer eating at home, where I can cook or re-heat bought dishes. My water-resistant phones have failed many times due to water seepage.

My obsession started after I had a severe bout of bacterial food poisoning few years ago where I needed intravenous fluid and was admitted to the hospital. I was so weak and dehydrated, and the pain in my stomach was excruciating. Food poisoning is most commonly caused by dangerous bacteria such as *E.coli* and *Salmonella*, leading to the hospitalization of millions yearly worldwide. Viruses and parasites can also cause food contamination.

## Hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) outbreak

It is not my intention to influence anyone to be obsessive about cleanliness; however the current epidemic of HFMD made me extra cautious. I see many of these cases in my clinic. Let's face it, the hospital is not the cleanest place on earth where sick patients are carriers of usual and unusual germs. If I suspect a patient has an infectious ailment, I will wipe down all surfaces with alcohol spray and change the sheets after they leave. Any bodily fluid on the floor must be mopped clean first before the next patient comes in.

HFMD is caused by enterovirus, a viral disease that occurs worldwide, sporadically but frequently epidemic as it is easily transmissible. Outbreaks are common among children who gather in groups as they are in direct contact with the nasal discharges and faeces of infected children or contaminated objects and surfaces. The illness is usually mild and self-limiting but young children may develop fever and blisters. Some may have complications with the more virulent types of enterovirus. There is no vaccine against this virus but one may develop immunity against it as a result of previous infection.

## The Five Second Rule

My mother believes in this universal rule that any food accidentally dropped onto the floor but picked up quickly within five seconds is still safe to be eaten. She will just blow on it and continue to eat it.. So, the question is how quickly does bacteria stick to our food? I had always resisted the temptation to spare any food that fell onto the floor, however clean it may look. Few research papers have shown that once the food is in contact with any surface, the contamination is immediate. It is more so if the food has high moisture content and has been trampled on by outdoor shoes. It is good

Let me reveal something here, I have an obsessive-compulsive disorder especially on cleanliness. Germaphobia is a fear of infection or contamination by any microscopic organisms, be it bacteria, viral or fungal. It is difficult living as me as I cannot stop myself from repeatedly questioning myself if I have washed my hands thoroughly. I will not reveal the lengthy process of my washing and bathing here. It is laborious until my hands and feet have developed eczema, having constantly been in contact with water, soap, detergent and bleach. Hence the choice of all my bags and shoes are made of washable materials. I have alcohol sanitizer spray in my handbag. I will never touch public toilet han-

There's no better way to end this fun-filled month than to celebrate our beautiful country's Independence Day. This year is extra special too, as we celebrate a new Malaysia and the bright future we have ahead of us.

**#sayangimalaysiaku**



### The Grind 22 Open Mic

[facebook.com/openmicmalaysia](https://facebook.com/openmicmalaysia)

Hosted by Open Mic Malaysia, this open mic takes place at Grind 22 in Bangsar's Lorong Maarof every Wednesday night. Kick back with a cuppa and enjoy a host of poetry and music performances slated to take place. For those interested in taking the stage, email [us@openmicmalaysia.org](mailto:us@openmicmalaysia.org).

📍 Grind 22  
 💰 Free  
 📅 23 August - 19 September 2018



### KL Journal Open Mic

[facebook.com/openmicmalaysia](https://facebook.com/openmicmalaysia)

Happening every Thursday at KL Journal is Open Mic Malaysia's open mic session, led by host Shaneil Devaser of rock band The Endleaves. For those interested in taking the stage, email [us@openmicmalaysia.org](mailto:us@openmicmalaysia.org) for a slot at the next open mic.

📍 The KL Journal  
 💰 Free  
 📅 30 August 2018



### Boyzone 25th Anniversary World Tour 2018

[facebook.com/events/271004140111335](https://facebook.com/events/271004140111335)

These 90s boys are back with a world tour celebrating their 25 years together as a band. It'll be their first time ever in Malaysia, so grab your tickets if you want to get into the Boyzone!

📍 Axiata Arena  
 📅 24 August 2018

## AROUND TOWN

August 2018 edition

**Hello!**

**My beloved readers.**

*I am sorry but in my Merdeka excitement Macik is on a break this month. I have always wanted to go on a cruise and was excited that the beautiful Equanimity has docked in Klang. Macik packed my syariah friendly bathing suit not a bikini ok! And am off for a holiday on the high seas! I do hope to catch a glimpse of the very tubby Malaysian or is it Taiwanese captain who I hear is buddy buddy with Ms Hilton.*

**Tata!**



## Macik Puan Sri

[instagram.com/macikpuan/](https://instagram.com/macikpuan/)