



I am deeply saddened and shocked by the mosque shooting in Christchurch, New Zealand. In such times, voices of moderation need to stand together to denounce violence fuelled by militancy. Extremism has no place in our society.

Amirudin Shari
Selangor Menteri Besar




SELANGOR JOURNAL



RUMAH SELANGORKU SCHEME ON THE RISE Page 4

In today's economy, affordable housing is without a doubt one of the top priorities for homebuyers. As such, the Selangor Housing and Real Property Board (LPHS) introduced a scheme called Rumah Selangorku in 2014 as a means for the people of Selangor to be able to own their very own property.

6 Advantages for the Selangor Woman Page 7



The Royal Secret on Selangor's Coast Page 8

High Number of Expensive Homes Unsold Page 12

Hate Speech Threatens Our Humanity Page 13



Over 2000 Victims Treated for Effects of Pasir Gudang Chemical Pollution Page 15



Sultan of Selangor Urges People to Maintain Harmony and Prosperity

Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, the Sultan of Selangor, spoke at the opening of the second term of the 14th session of the Selangor State Legislative Assembly on 18 March 2019.

[Page 3](#)



Selangor Acts Against Foreign Immigrants with Illegal Businesses

BANGI – The state government will continue to take action against foreigners who have set up illegal business premises in several locations around Selangor.

Selangor Menteri Besar, Amirudin Shari, said enforcement will be carried out more firmly throughout the year, and hopes the community will continue to channel information to the authorities on the matter.

“At the moment we will monitor state-

owned premises, we have discovered that most of our cases involve locals working hand-in-hand with these immigrants, thus enabling them to trade in such premises,” he said.

“This cannot continue, and I hope that the relevant complaints will continue to be channelled so this matter can be resolved as soon as possible,” added Amirudin.

The Selangor Menteri Besar said this

during the Sustainable Journey Dialogue Session with the community leaders of Hulu Langat District at the Hulu Langat District Office on 16 February.

Also present were Entrepreneur Development, Rural Development, Village and Traditional Village EXCO Rodziah Ismail and Health, Welfare, Women and Family Empowerment EXCO Dr Siti Mariah Mahmud, as well as State Financial Officer Dato’ Nor Azmie Diron.

Prior to that, Kajang Municipal Councillor (MPKJ), Thiagarajah Rajagopal, during the question-and-answer session said that enforcement officers in Hulu Langat found an increasing number of foreigners in various types of business premises.

He said the locals had complained that there were foreign immigrants running a barbershop and eateries in the area, adding that they might not have a valid license to do so.

“Because of this, locals stay away from these businesses. However, this situation gives rise to other issues as it gives the impression that the area has become overrun by a particular immigrant group.”

“I hope the state government will address this issue as soon as possible,” said Thiagarajah.

LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS TO RECEIVE TNB REBATES

SHAH ALAM – A total of 8,836 heads of low-income households (B40) in Selangor are eligible to receive the monthly RM 40 Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) rebate that is to be implemented soon.

Selangor Menteri Besar, Amirudin Shari, said the implementation was based on the approval of the Ministry of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change (MESTECC).

“Those eligible to receive this rebate are heads of households from among the hardcore poor and the underprivileged listed and certified in the e-Kasih system.”

“The eligible recipients will receive a rebate of RM 40 per month in 2019,” he told a media conference after chairing the Selangor Economic Action Council (MTES) meeting at the MTES Room of the SUK building on 28 February.

Also present were the State Executive Councillors.

He said that of the total number of eligible households, 6,416 have yet to have a TNB account, or are renting homes and using an account under someone else’s name. “However, the state government will try to aid recipients, especially in the service centres, to help change the accounts so that they will have the opportunity to enjoy the rebate provided,” said Amirudin.

Meanwhile, 2,262 others were additional recipients based on the latest data received this year.

“For data on the head of households without electricity accounts, MESTECC will coordinate with the state government through the office of the State Assemblyman,” said Amirudin further.

Selangor Cleans Klang Pond

Residents of Taman Eng Ann in Klang, Selangor, need not panic and evacuate their homes amid reports of chemical waste contaminating a section of Sungai Klang near their housing estate.

Selangor Menteri Besar Amirudin Shari assured the locals that state agencies began working to contain the contamination since the previous night, two hours after he was informed at 6 p.m. on 14 March of an oily substance in a pond that feeds off Sungai Klang.

“I advise residents around Taman Eng Ann to stay calm and not panic because of this incident,” he said in a statement. “This morning, a contractor was appointed to begin the clean-up, which is expected to take two days to complete,” he added.

He said the Selangor Water Management Authority (LUAS) had taken samples of the chemical waste for further investigation.

“I understand that LUAS initiated the containment and mitigation process at 8 p.m. yesterday and the clean-up operation commenced this morning,” Amirudin said in a statement.

He said the Selangor State Disaster Management Unit had been instructed to monitor the situation and to cooperate with LUAS, the Klang Municipal Council and the Selangor Department of Environment to resolve the case.

Yesterday, LUAS director Hashim Os-

man said they received information on the dumping of the waste, believed to contain chemical substances, in the Klang River about 6 p.m.

The Menteri Besar said a police report has been filed on the incident and promised that action will be taken against the polluters. “Further investigations will be made to identify the irresponsible parties who dumped the chemical waste into this pond,” he said.

Similar dumping of chemical waste that contaminated a river in Pasir Gudang, Johor, earlier this week has resulted in a health hazard forcing 111 primary and secondary schools in the district, as well as 94 nurseries and preschools, to close.

Over 2,000 people in the district have been reported to have sought medical treatment as far away as Johor Bahru. Nine cases are reportedly critical.

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“

We must stop the division among us. We must stop factionalism. We must embrace unity; we must embrace working together, because if we are divided, we will not be able to win in 2019.

Cyril Ramaphosa

”





Leadership

- Sultan Sharafuddin reminded leaders to always go to the ground to hear people's complaints, open their eyes to see current situations, and to be open-minded to find solutions to the problems faced by the people.
- Programmes such as the Joint Progress Programme implemented by Selangor Menteri Besar and the State Executive Council should be emulated and developed in order to stay close to the people as a whole.
- Sultan Sharafuddin said that unity and multiracial harmony is a state asset that must be maintained to ensure the stability and well-being of the country.



Local Authorities and Waste Management

- The Sultan reminded government officials to continue to work diligently, with integrity and high commitment to the task entrusted.
- Local authorities have to ensure systematic and effective management of solid waste. There should be no uncontrolled waste dumping that can cause odour and illness.
- The local authorities should also monitor and take strict action on restaurant and food shop operators who do not keep their premises clean.
- The implementation of a comprehensive waste disposal and treatment system that utilizes Waste to Energy (WTE) technology is timely.
- Worldwide Holdings Berhad has signed an agreement to develop the largest Waste to Energy facility in Malaysia with an investment value of RM 1 billion. Such technology will treat waste and turn it into clean energy. This facility is to be built in Jeram in two phases.



Water in Selangor

- Water use in Selangor is higher than the national rate. The Sultan called for the State Government together and agencies such as Selangor Water Management Authority (LUAS), and Water Management Selangor Sdn. Bhd (Air Selangor), to focus on educating the people about the importance of water.
- The Selangor State Water Resources Master Plan, which ensures the continuity of water supply until 2065, was applauded by the Sultan.

Sultan of Selangor Urges People to Maintain Harmony and Prosperity

Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, the Sultan of Selangor, spoke at the opening of the second term of the 14th session of the Selangor State Legislative Assembly on 18 March 2019.



Selangor's Economic Development

- Selangor is a major force in Malaysia's economic development, with positive growth recorded in sectors such as services, manufacturing and construction. This is due to the harmony of its people and the integrity of its administrative system.
- A total of 241 manufacturing projects were approved in 2018—an increase of 19 per cent over the previous year, and the highest in the country.
- The total value of approved investments in 2018 was RM 18.947 billion compared to RM 5.592 billion in 2017. This indicates a 238 per cent growth, and the highest growth in the state's history.
- A total 9166 job opportunities were opened up in the state, due to the high number of manufacturing projects. Companies that chose Selangor for their investment include IKEA, Sony, Toyota and Hartalega.
- Foreign direct investment (FDI) showed an increase of 400.7 per cent over the previous year, showing the confidence of foreign investors.
- Sultan Sharafuddin applauded Invest Selangor and its newly-developed Selangor Talent Portal Application, which can function as a platform and reference for investors to source a skilled workforce, and for fresh graduates to find jobs relevant to their qualifications and skills.
- The Selangor State Legislative Assembly approved the 2019 Budget tabled by the Menteri Besar. Amounting to RM 2.56 billion, the budget introduces a new strategy to drive the state's economic progress through clusters. Ten clusters have been identified for inclusion in the integrated development plans.
- The Sultan thanked the federal government for providing a total of RM 2.6 billion for 39 new and 274 existing projects in the state. RM 485 million has been allocated for Phase 2 of the Klang Third Bridge project.
- 74 new projects on Selangor's "wish list" are being discussed between Ministry and agency executives at the Federal level and the Selangor state government. Projects include the Sungai Aur River Bank Reinforcement Project in Klang, approved for implementation in 2019 at a cost of RM 15 million.



Environment

- The state government has allocated RM 2.5 million for efforts to inculcate public awareness on the importance of maintaining the environment. Sultan Sharafuddin feels that these should be strengthened by planting city trees and through landscape remedies around major cities in Selangor.
- A total of RM 3.15 million has been allocated for environmental conservation purposes on former solid waste landfills.
- Sultan Sharafuddin called upon the state government get more serious on river pollution, in light of the recent issues of pollution through solid and toxic waste. The Sultan also decreed watersheds and reservoirs to be well-maintained, so that the state's water resources will be sufficient in future.
- The government must ensure that no logging activities take place in forests around reservoir areas.
- Tree-planting programmes implemented should be extended to preserve the natural environment of the state.
- Selangor should prioritize the development of green and environmentally-friendly technologies, and encourage construction of more buildings with environmentally-friendly features and natural elements, such as indoor and outdoor plants.



Disabled Community

- The allocation of RM 3 million has been made for the early intervention programme of special children. Sultan Sharafuddin is pleased with the efforts of the state government to organize Special Children Skills training courses for nurseries throughout the state.
- The state government has allocated a total RM 500,000 as a special aid funds for special children of Selangor, for recovery costs, purchase of recovery equipment and other needs during an emergency. Sultan Sharafuddin noted that 80,000 people have registered as persons with disabilities (OKU) in the state.



Student Loans and Educational Institutions

- It is estimated that approximately 1,150 of the people of Selangor will receive benefits from the state government education financing programme this year.
- The Selangor State Scholarship Fund is an education fund aimed at helping students born in Selangor, especially those who are pursuing their studies at public and private higher education institutions.
- Among the education loan programmes implemented are the Internal and External Loans, the Selangor Brain Bank Special Programme (Bachelor's degree programmes to PhD); Sagong Tasi Scholarship for Foreign Children and the Special Scholarship of Dato' Menteri Besar.
- Sultan Sharafuddin is pleased with the programmes of the Selangor State Scholarship Fund which will be implemented with funds amounting to RM 16.6 million.
- There are a total of 15,000 tahfiz students in 263 private tahfiz schools registered with the Selangor State Islamic Religious Department (JAIS). Sultan Sharafuddin decreed that private tahfiz schools not registered with JAIS and without a modern curriculum and co-curriculum activities should be closed down.
- The state government has allocated RM 1,940,400 in tuition fees for seminars and student reference materials to be borne by the state government. Study sessions are held on Saturdays and Sundays for one year from January and ending in October in every school. Subsequently, the pupils will sit for the SPM examination at the registered examination centre in the same year.
- Under the 11th Malaysia Plan, the Development Plan includes the construction of religious primary schools, maahad tahfiz, Islamic complexes, mosques and surau. From 2016 to 2018, the implementation rate of these development projects reached 61 per cent, with a total allocation of RM 613.9 million. Built in Jeram in two phases.



Rumah Selangorku Scheme On The Rise

By
Batrisyia Jay

Recently, the Selangor state government confirmed that they are aiming to launch around 30,000 units of affordable homes under its Rumah Selangorku housing scheme over the next five years.

■ Affordable Homes for All in Selangor

A total of 24,869 units of Rumah Selangorku will be fully completed by 2025, said Selangor Menteri Besar, Amirudin Shari, thus proving that the State Government is committed to ensuring the well-being and socioeconomic position of the people of Selangor, and that they are guaranteed to have their own homes. As such, regular monitoring is often carried out to ensure developers comply with various requirements concerning the construction of Rumah Selangorku units.

“As I have stressed before, the state government will not hesitate to cancel the approval if the developer does not cooperate even though the negotiations have been made for 18 months after the approval has been granted. In fact, the state government believes that the problem of affordable housing can be overcome with the construction of Rumah Selangorku,” said Amirudin.

With strong support from the Federal Government, Amirudin is confident the implementation of the National Housing Policy 2.0 and the Affordable Housing Policy can be realized. “This policy will solve many housing issues, which will facilitate the loan approval process in addition to balancing the ratio of affordable housing and inde-

pendent pricing, which is very different today. Based on the records, construction of Rumah Selangorku units has surpassed the initial target of 15,000 units as set in 2018, while as of 31 August last year, 28,639 units were built, and 3,770 units were delivered.”

As of September last year, there are a total of 204 approved projects offering 104,460 affordable homes to eligible buyers, thus proving that the Rumah Selangorku scheme, which was introduced five years ago, has met with a good response.

■ A Revamped Policy

As of October 2018, the scheme was revamped and is now known as Rumah Selangorku 2.0. With this new scheme, the state government has refined the celebrated policy to achieve a win-win situation for both buyers and developers by adjusting the requirements as well as the selling prices of the homes.

For example, under the refined policy, which was introduced in February 2018 and implemented in April 2018, the minimum built-up size for a Rumah Selangorku unit has been reduced to 900 sq. ft from 1,000 sq. Ft, while the allocation of Rumah Selangorku units in a project has been reduced by up to 10 per cent.

In line with these changes, the state government is also looking into reducing the maximum price tag for the upcoming Rumah Selangorku units by RM 20,000 to RM 230,000, compared to RM 250,000 previously.



This policy will solve many housing issues, which will facilitate the loan approval process in addition to balancing the ratio of affordable housing and independent pricing, which is very different today.

– Amirudin Shari



“With the RM 20,000 reduction, I hope it will be easier for the buyers to own a house,” said Amirudin while stressing that although the price has been reduced, there are clear guidelines under Rumah Selangorku 2.0 with regard to building material selection and specifications to ensure that developers build quality homes at affordable prices.

Meanwhile, the Selangor State Development Corporation (PKNS) is also committed to building 864 units of Rumah Selangorku Idaman in Section 6, Selangor Cyber Valley (SCV) at affordable prices from RM 232,000.

The initiative is being praised

by the Selangor Menteri Besar, as PKNS is responding to the state government’s suggestion to provide affordable homes, thus providing low-income and medium-income families with their own home. Moreover, the Menteri Besar is confident that the Rumah Selangorku Idaman project by PKNS will improve the well-being of the people in Selangor.

“Interestingly, these 1,000 sq. ft houses also include four units for people with disabilities (OKU), which have various facilities to aid those concerned. With a unique and modern combination of architecture, this project is being built on 14.41 acres of land with two blocks; Block A (14 storeys) and Block B (15 storeys) are equipped with three bedrooms, two bathrooms and two car parks per unit,” said Amirudin when asked about the units.

The anticipated project is expected to be completed in December next year, while expectations for Certificate of Completion and Compliance (CCC) will be obtained in mid-2021.

“Among the advantages of this project are its management office, surau (prayer room), multipurpose hall, three units of shops, a burial preparations room, playground, kindergarten, elevator and four-storey parking lots.

■ The Starting Point

In 2014, the demand for affordable housing at a price of RM 250,000 and below was steadily increasing in Selangor. As such, the state government had decided to

launch the Rumah Selangorku scheme to fulfil the people’s needs. Ever since, the state government has proactively reviewed the existing policy to make it relevant to the current economic situation of the state and the country. As such, it has introduced Rumah Selangorku as part of the provision for low-cost, low-medium cost and medium-cost housing.

The main objective of the policy is to ensure that every individual or family in Selangor is able to own a good, safe and conducive home. With this objective in mind, the Rumah Selangorku scheme aims to offer more value in terms of size, design and community.

As one of the developers involved in Rumah Selangorku developments, LBS Bina Group Berhad Executive Director, Datuk Wira Joey Lim, has said that Rumah Selangorku is a brilliant idea as it really helps lower- and middle-income earners to own a house at a reasonable price.

“Since affordable housing is in line with the group’s as well as the state government’s commitment to build more affordable homes in Selangor, we are honoured and proud to support its efforts in realizing every citizen’s goal of owning a home at a good price,” he said.

Lim added that Rumah Selangorku realizes the dream for everyone to have a roof over their head, and has applauded the state government’s swiftness in ensuring that the people have a home – one of the basic necessities in life. Over the years, LBS has established a solid foundation in crafting high-quality built environment.

Things to Know Before Applying

Before applying for the Rumah Selangorku scheme online (lphs.selangor.gov.my), potential homeowners should take note that the Selangor Housing and Real Property Board has not only improved the application of registration system (SPPRS) and application of registration system for shops or affordable housing industry (SPPKI), but has also added the following registration requirements:



01

All applicants without a home who registered before 2008 need to re-register as new applicants if they are still interested in applying for the Rumah Selangorku scheme.



02

Applicants are allowed to choose only one type of property at the time of application - Type A, B, C or D.



03

The minimum salary for applicants for Rumah Selangorku Type B, C and D is set at RM 3,001 per month.



04

The validity period for each application registered in SPPRS and SPPK is two years. At the end of this period, data for pending applications will be removed from the system, and applicants must make a fresh offer if they are still interested in applying for Rumah Selangorku or affordable homes or commercial/industrial properties.



05

Applicants who have turned down an offer will be rendered INACTIVE for a period of two years. New applications can only be made after a period of two years.



06

INELIGIBLE application data will be maintained in the system. If there is an application update for INELIGIBLE applicants, such applicants must submit the relevant supporting documents for will be reassessment by the Selection Committee.



07

Effective January 2015, all applications for Rumah Selangorku Type B, C and D, as well as applications for affordable commercial/industrial properties must be submitted online. Note that any application via hard copy will not be accepted.

lphs.selangor.gov.my

08

The status of all applications can be checked via the LPHS website: <http://lphs.selangor.gov.my>.

■ A Strategic Location

Cyberjaya was established back in May 1997. Built on 2,800 hectares of mostly undeveloped land and located 40 kilometres south of Kuala Lumpur, Cyberjaya has since become a shining beacon of Malaysia's hope of having a smart city that will be a driver of the nation's economy. Also known as Malaysia's Silicon Valley, this tech hub has seen numerous developments since its humble beginnings with commercial, industrial and educational interests.

"Its location is within the smart city near major highways such as NKVE, LDP, SKVE, Elite and Mex. Travel distance to Putrajaya is 17 kilometers and KLIA is about 29 kilometers away," said the Selangor Menteri Besar when asked about the location of the Rumah Selangorku units in Section 6, Selangor Cyber Valley (SCV).

He said it is also close to various other facilities such as shopping malls like Shaftsbury, D'Pulze mall and educational institutions such as Multimedia University (MMU), Cyberjaya University College of Medical Sciences (CUCMS) and Limkokwing Creative University of Technology.

"Hence, I urge residents in Selangor who are not yet homeowners and who want to have PKNS affordable homes to register with the Selangor Real Estate Housing Authority (LPHS)."

Amirudin added that hundreds of applicants have already registered for purchases of units since the scheme was launched, thus proving that this scheme have already had a positive impact on the people of Selangor.

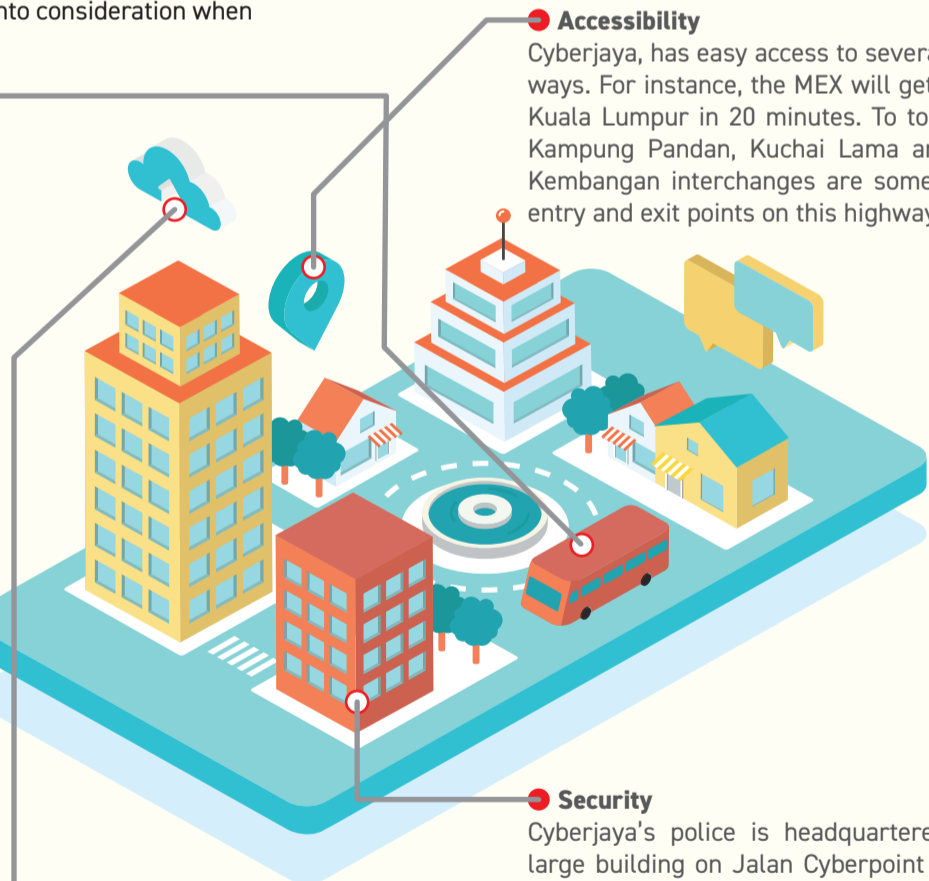
With the aim to provide a collaborative environment with many incentives, here are the amenities one should take into consideration when thinking of investing in property in Cyberjaya:

● Public Transportation

The KLIA Transit is the most reliable and efficient transportation mode to Cyberjaya. The journey from KL Sentral to Putrajaya Sentral station takes around 18 minutes, with trains every 20 minutes during peak hours and 30 minutes on off-peak hours. Once you arrived in Putrajaya Sentral Station, feeder buses by Nadi Putra (J02, J05) and RapidKL (U429) are available to ferry commuters from the station to the rest of Putrajaya and Cyberjaya. To get to KLIA airport, simply take the KLIA Transit that stops at stations in both Cyberjaya and Putrajaya.

Cyberjaya's Dedicated Transportation System (DTS) is managed by Cyberview Sdn. Bhd. and operated by Disitu Holdings Sdn. Bhd. The service runs 24 hours, 7 days a week, departing from nine locations daily. The DTS connects Cyberjaya to important hubs within an 80 km radius, covering the Klang Valley, Banting, Klang and Seremban.

The DTS buses are equipped with full Wi-Fi on board and state-of-the-art tracking and monitoring systems to help ensure punctuality and passenger safety. DTS buses use the Global Positioning System (GPS) and General Packet Radio Service (GPRS) which allows monitoring of passengers and movement of buses in near real-time. This will allow companies in Cyberjaya to track employees and ensure they are safe from the time they leave their office until they reach their destination. This service is open to all companies, universities, and colleges in Cyberjaya for a monthly fee of RM 250 per passenger.



● Accessibility

Cyberjaya, has easy access to several highways. For instance, the MEX will get you to Kuala Lumpur in 20 minutes. To top it off, Kampung Pandan, Kuchai Lama and Seri Kembangan interchanges are some of the entry and exit points on this highway.

● Security

Cyberjaya's police is headquartered in a large building on Jalan Cyberpoint 5. Furthermore, most residential areas are gated and guarded and equipped with CCTV all around.

● Internet Connectivity

As Malaysia's premier tech hub, Cyberjaya has an extensive telecommunications backbone known as the Cyberjaya Metro Fibre Network (CMFN) that runs primarily on fibre optics. CMFN is carrier-neutral, allowing major telco services to ride on its network, in turn providing their services to end users in Cyberjaya.

CMFN delivers fibre connectivity of up to 100 Mbps straight to most buildings under the concepts of Fibre-To-The-Building (FTTB) and Fibre-To-The-Home (FTTH). It offers full redundancy throughout the network, thus making Cyberjaya a choice location for system-critical business applications like data centres. Notable data centres already established in Cyberjaya include Malaysia's Central Bank, Telekom Malaysia, Shell, NTT MSC, BMW and DHL.



International Monetary Fund (IMF) praises Malaysia's resilient economy

The Malaysian economy continues to perform well despite external headwinds, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said.

The IMF commended the government for the resilient economic performance over recent years, noting that growth was solid without signs of infla-

tionary pressures.

The country's economic growth had averaged above five per cent over the past five years, leading to higher per capita income and reducing already low poverty.

"Economic growth is now moderating, and is estimated at 4.7 per cent in 2018, underpinned by robust domestic and external demand," the IMF said in its report after concluding its annual discussions with the government officials on Malaysia's economic development and policies.

The fund concluded that Malaysia's financial sector appeared resilient with sound profitability and liquidity indicators and low non-performing loans, and supported the broadly neutral monetary policy stance.

The IMF pointed that Malaysia's headline inflation had dropped from an average of 3.7 per cent in 2017 to an estimated one per cent in 2018 as domestic fuel price adjustment was suspended, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was zero-rated and replaced by the narrower-base Sales and Service Tax, and food price inflation declined.

The credit-to-gross domestic

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Economic growth is now moderating, and is estimated at 4.7 per cent in 2018, underpinned by robust domestic and external demand

– IMF

product (GDP) ratio was declining, while on the external side, the current account surplus was estimated at 2.2 per cent of GDP in 2018, the fund said.

The account surplus had gradually narrowed in recent years as growth drivers had shifted towards domestic demand.

The IMF expects Malaysia's GDP growth to stabilize this

year and over the medium term, with inflation picking up and the current account surplus continuing to narrow.

"Domestic demand will remain the main driver of growth. Given Malaysia's position in global value chains, the US tariffs on imports from China could reduce Malaysia's growth rate by 0.2 percentage points in 2019 via traditional trade channels and through financial and confidence effects, despite some trade diversion."

The IMF said Malaysia's household debt was elevated compared to regional peers, but declining.

"Total household debt stood at 83.2 per cent of GDP as of the third quarter of 2018. High household financial assets (twice the size of total household debt) help mitigate the vulnerability for all but the lowest income group (with income below RM 3,000 per month).

"Households in the second income group (earning between RM 3,000 and RM 5,000 per month) would face the largest cash flow shortages under income, interest rate, or cost-of-living shocks, according to Bank Negara Malaysia stress tests," the fund added.

Finance Minister: Malaysia Airlines Will Not Be Shut Down



Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng has given his assurance that the government will not shut down Malaysia Airlines Bhd.

Lim said the statement made in Parliament by Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad about the national carrier had been misunderstood and misinterpreted.

On 12 March, it was reported that the government was looking into ways to resolve Malaysia Airlines' financial issues with several options on the table, including shutting down the national carrier.

Dr Mahathir had said the matter was being discussed following heavy losses sustained by Malaysia Airlines since its privatization in 2014.

He had commented on suggestions by several experts on the need to sell or shut down Malaysia Airlines.

In an immediate reaction, Former Prime Minister Dato' Seri Najib Razak urged the government not to sell or shut

down the airline.

The former Prime Minister said Malaysia Airlines was the country's pride and joy and should continue to be the national carrier.

Lim, in defending his boss, further said: "The former PM issued a statement as if we are going to close down Malaysia Airlines. ... I hope we can look at what the PM said properly... we are not going to close down Malaysia Airlines. We want to give this assurance to the [airline's] employees."

It was reported that half of the RM7.3 billion impairments registered by Khazanah Nasional Bhd last year stemmed from sustaining Malaysia Airlines.

Meanwhile, commenting on Bloomberg news reports about the Malaysian economy, stock market and growth, Lim said that anything that happens in the stock market was beyond the government's control.

"It is beyond our control... it depends, as market fluctuations are normal," he

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The former PM issued a statement as if we are going to close down Malaysia Airlines. ... I hope we can look at what the PM said properly... we are not going to close down Malaysia Airlines. We want to give this assurance to the [airline's] employees.

– Finance Minister, Lim Guan Eng

said, adding that other statistics should also be taken into account when reporting.

The minister brushed aside the report and urged the media to look at other positive fundamentals of the Malaysian economy.

Asked how strong the Malaysian economic fundamentals were and if the Malaysian economy was resilient, Lim said: "Our fundamentals are sound. Our growth rate [and] exports are up, and trade surplus is RM120 billion, [which is] very encouraging."

Bloomberg had reported that the euphoria following Malaysia's historic election last May had faded, leaving its stock market as the only one in Asia in the red this year.

The benchmark FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI index has fallen more than one per cent so far in 2019, the only decliner in the region, while neighbouring Singapore has surged five per cent and Indonesia gained three per cent.



6 Advantages for the Selangor Woman

By
Batrisyia Jay

Selangor has always played a role in producing skilled women in various fields. As a result, Selangor is the only state that meets the quota of women making up 30 per cent of the decision-makers in its State Executive Council (MMKN). As a state that puts its women first,

Selangor has a series of programmes known as the Inisiatif Peduli Rakyat (IPR) in a bid to lessen the financial burden of women in Selangor.

Here are six things that will benefit you if you are a woman in Selangor:

01

Yearly Aid of RM5,000 for Disabled Children

The state government has set aside a fund of RM 500,000 this year to ease the burden of parents and caregivers with disabled children, especially as regards health screening.

This financial assistance, known as Bantuan Khas Anak Istimewa Selangor (AnIS), can be used to purchase special equipment for the purpose of rehabilitation of disabled children. Note that each family may apply for a maximum amount of RM 5,000 a year.

Among the conditions to be eligible for this special assistance is that the child must have a disabled persons (OKU) card issued by the Social Welfare Department (JKM).

Part of this fund from the state government will be channelled to several nurseries in every state assembly to train teachers who care for disabled children.

Applicants who have a disabled child under their care can complete the AnIS application form at the Community Service Centres at each of the 56 constituencies of Selangor, or visit www.selangor.gov.my for more info.

04

Mothers Can Get Basic Necessities Worth RM 200

To recognize the great sacrifices of mothers, the Selangor State Government has introduced a special welfare programme for mothers in the lower income group (Group B40) called Kasih Ibu Smart Selangor (KISS).

It aims to reduce the cost of living through financial assistance for the purchase of basic necessities. Participants of this programme can purchase basic necessities worth RM 200 monthly at registered shops and supermarkets.

To be eligible for this scheme you must meet the terms below:

- Must be a Malaysian citizen
- Born in Selangor or resident in Selangor for more than 10 years
- Registered voter in Selangor
- Married or single mothers who have children/dependents under the age of 21
- The household income must be below RM 2,000 per month.

02

Monthly RM 100 Nursery Fee

Through Skim Bantuan Asuhan Rakyat (ASUH PINTAR), eligible and qualified parents will receive TASKA or nursery fees of RM 100 per month. The assistance fee will be paid directly to the TASKA or nursery.

To be eligible for this scheme you must meet the terms below:

- Must be a Malaysian citizen.
- One of the parents must be born in Selangor and is currently residing in Selangor, or the child was born in Selangor and is currently living in Selangor, or the parents have resided legally in Selangor for at least five years. The residential status must be verified by the a Member of Parliament of Selangor, the Selangor State Service Centre, the Council of Local Authorities, a penghulu (village headman), chairman of a residential association or a mosque nazir (overseer).
- Overall household income must be RM 5,000 or below (basic salary).
- Both parents must be working full-time.
- The child must be sent to a day-care or nursery that is registered with the Department of Social Welfare (JKM).
- Limited to two children and they must be aged 4 and below.
- Both parents must be registered voters with EC (Election Commission of Malaysia) but do not necessarily need to vote in Selangor.

05

Free Mammogram Check-up

Through Skim Kesihatan Wanita: Mammogram Selangor (MAMMOSEL), you will get a free mammogram check. This is available for all women born in Selangor or with Selangor residency that are aged 35 years and above.

Below are the conditions to be met to be eligible:

- Must be a Malaysian citizen.
- Must be born in Selangor or with permanent resident status for up to 11 years.
- Must be aged 35 years and above.

03

RM 50 for Preschool Education

The Selangor government will help pay RM 50 for your child's pre-school education every month through the Skim Bantuan Tadika Selangor, or TUNAS. It will be given straight to the centres that are registered with Majlis Permuafakatan Tadika Selangor.

To check whether you are eligible, look at the conditions below:

- Must be a Malaysian citizen.
- One of the parents must be born in Selangor and is currently residing in Selangor, or the child was born in Selangor and is currently living in Selangor, or the parents have resided legally in Selangor for at least 5 years. The residential status must be verified by a Member of Parliament of Selangor, the Selangor State Service Centre, the Council of Local Authorities, a penghulu (village headman), chairman of a residential association or a mosque nazir (overseer).
- Must have a household income of RM 3,000 and below.
- Either parent must be working full-time.
- Only children aged 5 to 6 years old are eligible.

06

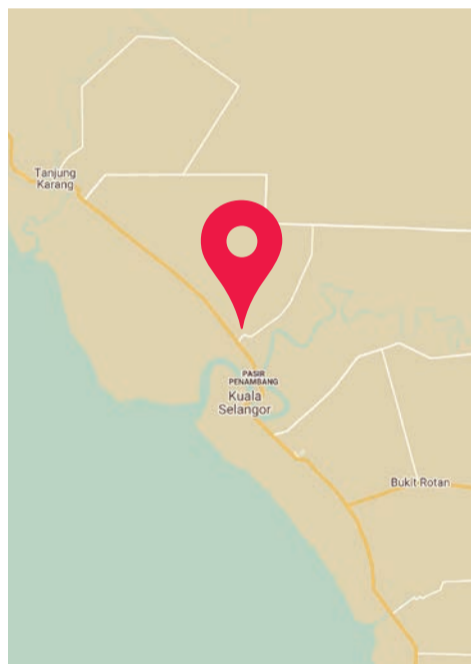
Free Tuition Classes for Your Kids

This free programme called Pusat Tuisyen Rakyat Selangor (PTRS) is aimed at helping students from the lower income group that are struggling academically by providing special classes that can supplement their education in schools. The list of subjects offered under this programme is Bahasa Melayu, English, Mathematics, Science and History. Note that only students from households in Selangor with a monthly income of RM 2,000 and below are eligible for this scheme.

Another programme under the same initiative, called Smart Education (Tuisyen Atas Talian), with the help of Selangor Public Library (PPAS) and iTTV Education Sdn.Bhd., provides students with the opportunity to review the desired subject through video learning. This can be accessed anytime as long as you have a computer, laptop or android mobile device and an internet connection. The list of subjects offered under this programme is Bahasa Melayu, English, Mathematics, Additional Mathematics, Science, Physics, Chemistry and History.

The Royal Secret on Selangor's Coast

By
Muhaimin Merican



Kuala Selangor
Selangor

The Kuala Selangor District is comprised of 9 *mukim* (sub-districts) which are Api-Api, Bestari Jaya, Hujung Permatang, Hulu Tinggi, Ijok, Jeram, Kuala Selangor, Pasangan and Tanjung Karang

Location and History

If you were to mention Kuala Selangor to someone not from the immediate area, their first thought would probably be related to either fireflies or the delectable seafood for which the district is popular.

However, the quiet district of Kuala Selangor offers more than meets the eye.

The Kuala Selangor District is comprised of 9 *mukim* (sub-districts) which are Api-Api, Bestari Jaya, Hujung Permatang, Hulu Tinggi, Ijok, Jeram, Kuala Selangor, Pasangan and Tanjung Karang

Most of the tourist attractions here centre on the town's rich history as the first capital of the Selangor state.

Believed to have existed since the 16th century, Kuala Selangor was inhabited and led by a woman named Opu Cendera Burung before five sons of a Bugis king arrived to rule the land.

At the heart of Kuala Selangor is Bukit Malawati and the fortress built on it to protect the kingdom. When Dutch attacked Melaka, Selangor came to its aid and made itself the target of the Dutch army. The Dutch came and conquered Bukit Malawati in 1784 before the Bugis Sultan wrested it back within a year.

Over the years, Kuala Selangor played a prominent role in our country's history.

During the peak of the Klang war between Raja Abdullah and Raja Mahdi, Kuala Selangor was heavily involved as it was one of the disputed districts. In fact, during one of the conflicts, forces supporting Raja Mahdi had retreated to Kuala Selangor to avoid attacks by the opposing faction.

Kuala Selangor was the capital of Selangor until the royal family moved to Klang. Later, the state capital was changed to Shah Alam whilst Klang remained as the royal town for the state.

Economy of Kuala Selangor

Interestingly today, the economy of Kuala Selangor is driven by two major industries: local fisheries and tourism.

The fishing industry is a direct result of the district's strategic geographical location at the mouth of the Selangor river where the rivers meet the sea. It has a unique variety of freshwater and saltwater fish that is present at the river basin.

The fishermen in Kuala Selangor offer some of the freshest seafood available and their catch is often shipped and delivered throughout Selangor on the same day that they are brought in from the open sea. The freshness and quality of its seafood brings in visitors from all over Selangor and because of this, the fishing villages of Kuala Selangor are dotted with seaside restaurants.

Kuala Selangor also hosts the Fresh Water Fish Aquarium, a large freshwater fish park which was developed by the Kuala Selangor District Office as one of the initiatives to boost tourism. The development of the park was begun in 2004, and the park began operations on 1 January, 2009. The Kuala Selangor Freshwater Fish Aquarium covers 5 acres of land and is located in the Taman Alam Forest Reserve.

The Freshwater Fish Aquarium boasts of at least 1,500 fish representing 60 species, such as the Alligator Gar Fish (Ikan Buaya), Giant Snakehead (Toman), Tor Tamba (Kelah), Golden Arowana (Kelisa), Walking Catfish (Keli) and many more. Most of the fish on display here are endemic species from the Selangor River.

Transportation

Located about an hour away from Kuala Lumpur, Kuala Selangor is accessible to tourists and people who are not locals to the area by both bus and car.

If you intend to visit Kuala Selangor by bus, it is a little adventurous but the view would be very much worth the



journey. Visitors who want to take the bus to Kuala Selangor can board Selangor Bus No. 100 from Medan Pasar Bus Hub in Kuala Lumpur. The bus departs half-hourly from Kuala Lumpur between 6.30 a.m. and 7.30 p.m., and takes 2 hours to reach the bus terminal at Bandar Malawati, Kuala Selangor. (The last bus for the return trip from Kuala Selangor to Kuala Lumpur is at 7.00 p.m.) The one-way fare is RM 9.00.

As an alternative, visitors can take any bus to Klang from Kuala Lumpur (these buses run more frequently). From Klang, take the Cityliner bus to Kuala Selangor/Bandar Malawati.

If you intend to travel by car to visit Kuala Selangor, the journey would take approximately 80 minutes. Make your way towards Sungai Buloh exit on the North-South PLUS highway and follow the road signs towards Kuala Selangor. Alternatively, if you are starting your journey from Klang, you can drive towards Kapar and head straight from there to Kuala Selangor.

During the holiday season, Kuala Selangor can get packed with city folk driving down from Kuala Lumpur and Shah Alam to discover the quiet of this coastal district. On a regular day, it's relatively quiet and the perfect serenity of the town can be enjoyed.

If you make a trip to Kuala Selangor, there are a few beautiful places where you could spend your day. Here are some of the favourite tourist spots in Kuala Selangor that you can visit to capture the essence of the town and its past:



Bukit Malawati

An ideal place for pursuing and tracking the historic trails of the First and Third Selangor Sultanate. Among the historical remains are the poisoned well (Perigi Beracun) and Batu Hampar – a traditional execution stone with a disputed history. Bukit Malawati also houses a Royal Mausoleum and the famous Kuala Selangor Lighthouse, which guided ships through the Straits of Malacca in the past. If you reach the top of Bukit Malawati, you'll notice the ancient canons that are remnants of the fort that protected the town in the 17th Century. Other notable attractions include the large groups of silver leaf monkeys or Lutong that can only be found in the estuary jungles of Selangor and Perak and the panoramic sunset view over the Straits of Malacca. More than 140,000 tourists visited Bukit Malawati in 2018.



Kampung Kuantan & The Fireflies

Take a cruise on a traditional rowing boat down the Selangor River to experience the beautiful and unique display of fireflies. Although the population of fireflies in the area has since shrunk due to light pollution, the remaining endemic species of firefly and their nests amongst the roots of mangrove trees still remain a sight to behold.



Sky Mirror

A rare phenomenon that only occurs for six days every month according to the Lunar calendar. The sky mirror is a phenomenon that occurs when a mirror-like view is created when the sky reflects on the sand bar. The Sky Mirror in Kuala Selangor is so popular that even the Duli Yang Maha Mulia Tengku Permaisuri Selangor Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin once paid a visit to it and took pictures at the attraction.

Nature Park

A nature trail that includes large areas of mangroves and hosts thousands of migratory birds from September to March.



Pantai Remis

One of the most beautiful beaches in Selangor. Enjoy kite-flying and fresh seafood along the coastal lines.



SASARAN Arts Sungai Buloh

Art installation featuring painting and sculptures from local and international artists.

Selangor Fruit Valley

Located in Bestari Jaya, this is an agro-tourism centre that offers a lush and green landscape which features various local fruits and how they are planted.



Sungai Sireh Homestay



Located in Tanjung Karang, this homestay offers a chance to live the authentic Malaysian *kampung* experience complete with buffaloes, rivers and paddy fields.



SELANGOR QUICK TAKES

SELANGOR JOURNAL



Shah Alam Stadium to Host Sultan of Selangor Cup Once Again

Selangor's chances look rather good in retaining the Sultan of Selangor Cup as the 18th edition of the tournament this year sees the Shah Alam Stadium once again being the venue come 24 August this year.



Selangor Only State to Have 30% Women in Executive Bodies

Selangor is the only State with 30 per cent participation of women in executive bodies, namely in the State Executive Council, in line with the theme of International Women's Day this year. #BalanceforBetter



Sultan of Selangor Worried Over Threat to Islam

The Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, 3 March expressed worry over numerous threats that could defile the sanctity and nobility of Islam, and weaken Muslims in Selangor and the country. Sultan Sharafuddin said he was informed that up until December 2018, the Selangor Mufti Department had identified 45 deviant teachings, and called for unity among the people in order to combat threats related to the harmony of the country.



More Free Bus Routes for Selangor

Selangor residents will soon enjoy more free bus services around Klang and Shah Alam when new routes are added this year. The state government has allocated RM 30 million to maintain and operate all the bus routes in the state.



Selangor Aims For 100% High-Speed Internet Penetration By 2025

Selangor is aiming to achieve 100 per cent high-speed Internet penetration by 2025 from the current 60 per cent. The development of the State's Internet infrastructure will be accelerated, especially in rural areas and places without connectivity, in line with the vision for Selangor to become a 'Smart State' by 2025.

NATIONAL NEWS QUICK TAKES

SELANGOR JOURNAL



Over 2000 Victims So Far In Pasir Gudang Toxic Pollution Case

A total of 2000 victims poisoned by toxic fumes in Pasir Gudang has been recorded since 8 March, 2019. Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said no fatalities have occurred. The victims, he said, were treated at the Sultan Ismail Hospital, Sultanah Aminah Hospital and Permai Hospital

Women's Day March Organizers Probed for Sedition

The organizers of the International Women's Day march on 9 March, which saw members of the LGBT community call for an end to violence based on gender and sexual orientation, are being probed for sedition. The 2019 International Women's Day Committee said they had been summoned by Dang Wangi's criminal investigation unit and told that they were under investigation.

Squash Queen Nicol David to Retire In June



After rocking the glass court for more than two decades, national squash queen Datuk Nicol David has announced that she will retire from the sport when the current 2018/19 Professional Squash Association (PSA) season ends in June. The 35-year-old Penangite, who helmed the world ranking for a record nine years, said she had contemplated retiring for quite some time and had decided earlier that this would be her last playing season.



New Parliament Sitting Begins

The Yang Di-Pertuan Agong, Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah, opened the Dewan Rakyat session on 11 March. The lower house of Parliament will sit for 20 days until 11 April, while the Dewan Negara will sit for 12 days from 22 April to 9 May.



Three Claim Trial for Murder of Cradle Fund CEO

The widow of Cradle Fund Sdn. Bhd. CEO Nazrin Hassan and two teen boys pleaded not guilty in the Shah Alam High Court on 12 March to the charge of murdering Nazrin in June last year. Samirah Muzaffar, 44, a former senior executive at Intellectual Property Corp of Malaysia, and the two boys, aged 13 and 16, entered the plea after the charge was read out separately to them before Judge Datuk Ab Karim Ab Rahman. Samirah, the two teenagers and Indonesian national Eka Wahyu Lestari, who is still at large, were charged with the murder of Nazrin, 47, at a house in Mutiara Homes, near Shah Alam, between 11.30 p.m. on 13 June, 2018, and 4 a.m. on 14 June 14, 2018.

50 Dead in New Zealand Mosque Attacks



50 people have been killed and at least 46 injured in shootings at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, in the nation's deadliest attack. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern described it as a terrorist attack and called it one of New Zealand's "darkest days". A gunman identifying himself as an Australian live-streamed the rampage at Al Noor mosque on Facebook. He had earlier shared racist, anti-immigrant views. Police say a man in his late 20s has been arrested and charged with murder. Two other men and one woman were also detained in connection with the incident.



High Number of Expensive Homes Unsold

KUALA LUMPUR – Malaysian property developers face the challenge of having more expensive houses remaining unsold even as demand exceeds the supply of affordable housing.

Between 2016 to March 2018, only a quarter of homes

launched nationwide cost under RM 250,000, and for the first time in a decade the overall House Price Index fell on a quarterly basis last year.

In Kuala Lumpur, home prices on average have hit RM 773,000 and RM 497,000 in Selangor by the third quarter of 2018, making them over 100 and 80 per cent higher, respectively, than in 2008.

The Index dipped from

193.1 to 192.1 between the second quarter and third quarter of 2018. Even though last year's overall prices are still expected to be higher than in 2017, home prices are expected to drop further this year.

In 2016, nearly 15,000 homes remained unsold for as long as nearly nine months after completion. Homes costing over RM 300,000 – beyond the reach of most buyers – account-

ed for 60.6 per cent of the total.

By the third quarter of 2018, the number of unsold units stood at over 30,000, with 'unaffordable' homes now making up 65.4 per cent of this figure. This number excludes some 10,801 serviced apartments and small office/home office units built on costly commercial land that remain unsold.

As a result, developers are sitting on RM 27.4 billion worth of completed but unsold homes throughout the nation.

For the first half of 2018, Bank Negara's Financial Stability Review indicated that the mismatch between housing demand and supply is exerting upward pressure on house prices.

This resulted in some 146,196 unsold units by June, including uncompleted units that have since been launched, where over 80 per cent of these cost above RM 250,000.

More Rent-To-Own Schemes for Penang

GEORGE TOWN – The state authorities are planning to increase the number of rent-to-own schemes in Penang as the number of applicants for affordable homes keeps rising.

This is in consideration of all 999 housing units under the People's Housing Project (PPR) scheme being launched recently.

State Housing, Town, Country Planning and Local Government Committee chairman Jag-

deep Singh Deo said in a media conference last week that there are many applicants who have been waiting for quite some time for their PPR units, with some still waiting after 11 years.

"As such, the state government has decided to have more of the rent-to-own schemes, especially for this group," he added.

"There are several public housing projects that have PPR units in the state."

"But among the eligible occupants, there are those from George Town who are not keen on staying in Balik Pulau or the mainland and vice-versa. And this is among the hiccups we are facing."

"But there will be more PPR units in the future, with several projects located in Jelutong, Balik Pulau and Bukit Minyak

“But there will be more PPR units in the future, with several projects located in Jelutong, Balik Pulau and Bukit Minyak on the mainland. This would help solve the [issue of] 1,137 applicants on the waiting list,”

Jagdeep Singh Deo

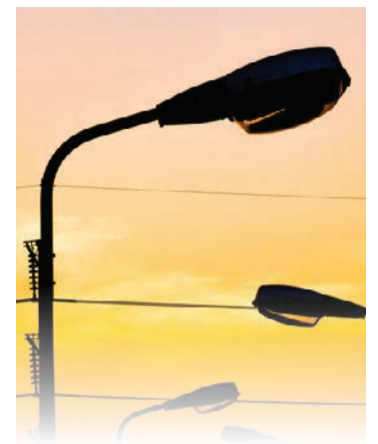
on the mainland. This would help solve the [issue of] 1,137 applicants on the waiting list," Jagdeep told an English daily.

He added that the state would ensure that only those who are eligible for such units are entertained on this matter.

PPR homes in Penang came under media scrutiny when ineligible tenants from Taman Manggis were evicted and ended up protesting against state authorities at Komtar.

On 8 March, Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin stated that there should be firm enforcement over regulations on the administration of PPR units.

"When enforcement action is not taken, then the people will not know that there are laws and guidelines that they must adhere to," she said.



TTDI Residents Want Adequate Street Lighting

KUALA LUMPUR – Taman Tun Dr Ismail (TTDI) residents have asked for better street lighting along Jalan Abang Haji Openg. Some residents who walk along the road to get to Taman Persekutuan Bukit Kiara stated that the single row of street lamps opposite the park is not sufficient.

"There are some faulty lights in the vicinity that have not been repaired."

"I don't feel safe using this road. It is very dark when I leave about 8 p.m.," said Michael Tan, 35, who frequently visits the park.

Juliet Kweh, 38, added that the poor lighting made the area unsafe.

"One or two street lamps are out of order and that stretch of road is dark."

"It has always been like that and the street lamps on one side of the road are not enough," she said.

A spokesman of the Kuala Lumpur City Hall responded, saying they would address the problem of faulty lamps in the area.

"Residents who notice any faulty street lamps can lodge a complaint via our hotline at 1800-88-3255," he said.



RM 600 Million Balik Pulau Township Project Does Not Exist

GEORGE TOWN – The proposed RM 600 million GDV township development in Balik Pulau does not exist because no planning permission application has been received from the developer, said the Penang Island City Council (MBPP).

"The proposed project does not exist as far as the city council is concerned," said MBPP Mayor Datuk Yew Tung Seang at the official opening of the city council's MakerSpace @ Balik Pulau on 7 March.

"We did not receive any ap-

plications or plans from the developer," Yew added in response to questions on the proposed project.

On 31 January, Ark Resources Holdings Bhd. had entered into a joint venture agreement with Koperasi Kampung Melayu Balik Pulau Bhd. (KKMBPB).

The 80:20 joint venture would entitle KKMBPB, comprising mainly legal owners of land in Kampung Melayu Balik Pulau, to 20 per cent on the GDV, equivalent in value to the minimum sum of RM 120 million, comprising RM 45 million in cash and the balance in the form of units or lots in the development.

Residents in Balik Pulau had

raised concerns over the proposed development.

It was reported that they were unhappy with the development of a new 10.2 km road by the Rural Development Ministry along 1,000 ha of oil palm land, shrimp ponds and mangroves, and had questioned whether the road was meant to cater to the new mixed-use project by the public-listed developer.

It has been reported that the developer had earlier specified that plans for the project were subject to the extension of the land lease, re-categorizing of land use, and approval of building plans.



Hate Speech Threatens Our Humanity

By
**Jomo Kwame Sundaram,
M. Nadarajah**

BHUBANESWAR, India and KUALA LUMPUR, Feb. 26 (IPS) – Do politicians' words matter? Since becoming US President, Donald J. Trump has dismissed his opponents and others he does not like as evil, stupid or both. He has referred to undocumented immigrants as "animals", and to poor countries as "shitholes".

■ Fostering Culture of Hate

Around the world, such harsh words have become normalized as part of the rhetoric of leaders, against perceived and manufactured enemies, to mobilize the intended 'imagined community' against 'the other'.

Such rhetoric, increasingly emulated by political, religious and community leaders the world over, has contributed greatly to the growing climate of resentment and hatred of the 'other', the 'outsider', the 'stranger'.

Hate words and speech have become widespread globally. They have become part of dominant cultures, spreading meanings, worldviews and beliefs, all with considerable impact. When dominant, they are amplified by authority and power – political, economic, social, and cultural, increasingly recognised as 'soft' power.

The rhetoric of hatred has been echoed and thus amplified by traditional as well as social media, including the increasingly vicious culture online, as rivals compete to outdo one another, vying for attention.

But often, even more aggressive and vicious is the hate rhetoric of the rising cultural populists, as they manufacture new language to outdo one another and the incumbents, while trying to unify their 'imagined communities' behind them.

■ Cultural Populism for Imagined Communities

Ethno-populists, jingoist nationalists, other chauvinists and their enablers try to convince their followers that they are victims facing threats from exaggerated or even imagined dangers, such as conspiracies by enemy 'others' of which they are ignorant due to obfuscation by fake news.

Around the world, they use cultural ignorance, unfamiliarity, suspicions, prejudices, animosity and fear-mongering to mobilize their followers, typi-

“Both science and history suggest that people will nurture and act on their prejudices in the worst ways when these people are put under stress, pressured by peers, or receive approval from authority figures to do so.”

cally with 'half-truths', rather than less credible, outright fabrications.

In the era of fake news, fake alerts and 'post-truth', such half-truths have become more effective, and hence, more dangerous in abetting the power to demean, displace and destroy, especially when driven by ambition seeking greater influence and power.

The recent popularity, mainstreaming and legitimization of ethno-populism and jingoism in the West, as well as other parts of the world, demand attention to how cultural analysis, social psychology and neuroscience can help us better understand the effects of such rhetoric.

■ Normalizing hate speech

Unsurprisingly, continuous or frequent exposure to hate speech is known to increase prejudice, resentment and animosity. Such influences desensitize people to verbal and even other forms of aggression, by 'normalizing' actions and behaviour which might otherwise be socially condemned. The culture of hate seems to thrive in the human 'ecosystem'.

Leaders who inspire prejudice, anger and fear among their supporters stimulate surges of stress hormones, such as norepinephrine and cortisol, affecting the amygdala - the brain centre for threat. Threatening language directly stimulates the amygdala, making it difficult for humans to 'wind down' their passions and emotions in order to 'think' before acting.

One does not have to be mentally defective or unstable to be 'inspired' to aggression and violence by such rhetoric. Most of us are susceptible to such 'motivational' speeches, especially when conditions are conducive.

■ Legitimizing Violence Against Others

A study led by Princeton psychologist Susan Fiske has linked anger and violent impulses to distrust of 'outsiders' or 'others', especially when economic difficulties encourage viewing

them as competing 'unfairly' for better opportunities.

By inducing or exaggerating a sense of external threat by the 'other', they can be thought of not only as different but even as threatening. It is generally easier to think of outsiders as less than human, and hence undeserving of empathy or compassion; both are cultural and socio-psychological conditions conducive to hate, aggression and violence.

A Harvard psychologist co-author of the study reportedly noted, "When a group is put on the defensive and made to feel threatened, they begin to believe that anything, including violence, is justified."

■ Dehumanizing Others

Cultural chauvinists also encourage antagonism to and violence against others by demonizing and dehumanizing them as sub-human or even non-human, so that they are not deemed worthy of treatment and consideration as fellow humans.

Earlier, Fiske and a colleague had found that their study subjects were so un-empathetic to images of drug addicts and the homeless that they could not imagine how they felt or thought; the brain regions required to empathize with them as human beings deserving of 'moral treatment' could not be activated.

Instead, the brain region associated with feelings of disgust was activated. As Fiske has argued, "Both science and history suggest that people will nurture and act on their prejudices in the worst ways when these people are put under stress, pressured by peers, or receive approval from authority figures to do so."

Thus, when a politician or some other socially influential person dehumanizes others, they are being put beyond the range of empathy, depriving them of moral protection and legitimizing inhuman treatment against them.

In another famous 1960s study by Yale psychologist Stanley Milgram, most study subjects were willing to obey an authority figure's instructions to give electric shocks to other participants, not knowing that the shocks were fake.

65 per cent - almost two out of three - did as told, delivering the maximum shock, which could have been fatal, if real. Clearly, people can easily be influenced by authority to terribly harm others. Followers thus follow the leader in dehumanizing others.

■ Positive Agenda Needed Too

People are being continuously influenced by hate speech. But as dehumanization becomes the norm, tolerated and sustained not only by individual actions but also by a socio-economic culture promoting - even needing - dehumanization, then the culture of hatred, including hate speech, becomes normalized.

Hence, it is necessary to take measures to deter, delegitimize and even disallow hate speech in view of its likely consequences and the normalization of hate it thrives on and contributes to.

These threaten not only to undermine social solidarity, peaceful coexistence and mutual respect, but also to do far more damage, not only for international relations but also for social peace, especially in multicultural societies.

As hate becomes part and parcel of our 'way of life', it becomes increasingly difficult to reverse these processes to recapture our lost ability to build reason, empathy and compassion.

While difficult but necessary, this is hardly sufficient as we revisit, mobilize and augment our remaining cultural resources for a positive agenda to rediscover the best in our common humanity, drawing on mutual respect and the universal ethos underlying our rich cultural diversity.

While the current culture of hate has a supportive 'ecosystem' of sorts in some aspects of neuroscience, human biology and social psychology also recognize our 'compassion instinct', an orientation of mind that recognises pain, the universality of pain and suffering, and the 'instinctive' need, indeed desire to help others.



Jomo Kwame Sundaram, a former economics professor and United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, was a member of the new Malaysian Government's Council of Eminent Persons.



M. Nadarajah is Chair Professor, Xavier Centre for New Humanities and Compassion Studies, Xavier University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India.



Turning Malaysia into a Global Finance Services Hub

By
Batrisyia Jay

A global, science-led biopharmaceutical business company with innovative medicines used by millions of patients worldwide, AstraZeneca has recently announced that they will be investing more than RM 500 million in Malaysia over the next five years. The move demonstrates a strengthening commitment on the company's part towards patients, innovation and talent development in the country. AstraZeneca endeavours to roll out robotic and cognitive technology designed to improve efficiency and drive productivity across the company's global operations.

■ A High-Tech Global Business Hub

The investment includes new headquarters for AstraZeneca Malaysia in Nucleus Tower, Mutiara Damansara. Set in Kuala Lumpur, the location houses both local and global business operations across a wide variety of functions such as finance and procurement leadership for the region. Setting up their own headquarters here in Malaysia is part of AstraZeneca's ongoing commitment to boost high-value skills and employment as well as bringing in new science and innovation to help patients across the nation.

As such, a new Global Business Services hub will be equipped with cutting-edge robotic technology and automation to support financial, accounting and business services for the company's operations in the Asia Pacific region.

At this hub, a Robotic and Cognitive Centre will deliver a 'digital disruption' in day-to-day operations, thus bringing greater efficiency and improving productivity that will be scaled across global operations using Robotic Process Automation, which mimics human actions

“A Robotic and Cognitive Centre will deliver a 'digital disruption' in day-to-day operations, thus bringing greater efficiency and improving productivity that will be scaled across global operations using Robotic Process Automation”

by performing repetitive rules-based tasks across multiple applications.

Moreover, the hub is one of AstraZeneca's three shared service hubs globally, the other two being located in Costa Rica and Poland, and builds on the growth of the global business services sector in Malaysia valued at around USD240 billion in the Asia Pacific region in 2014.

■ A Pact Made

At the inauguration of the new HQ on 12 March, AstraZeneca signed a Memorandum of Agreement with InvestKL co-signed by Mr Allen Patino, Country President of AstraZeneca Malaysia, and Datuk Zainal Amanshah, CEO of InvestKL, in a bid to collaborate on innovation, talent development and partnerships from 2019 to 2023. In line with its strategy for improving access to healthcare, AstraZeneca aims to improve disease prevention, awareness and treatment by building capacity in areas with limited infrastructure and improving affordability for patients. This initiative is supported by the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) under the MSC status.

Deputy Minister of International

Trade and Industry, Dr Ong Kian Ming, officiated the inauguration, also witnessed by Mr Dag Juhlin-Dannfelt, the Ambassador of Sweden to Malaysia, and Mr David Thomas, the acting British High Commissioner to Malaysia. According to Dr Ong, the MOA signing between the two companies is in line with the Government's initiative towards preparing domestic industries to face the challenges of the fourth Industrial Revolution through the Industry4WRD initiative under the stewardship of MITI, which was launched by the Prime Minister on 31 October 2018.

“I understand that in the last five years, AstraZeneca has invested a total of USD 92 million in Malaysia. It is good to note that under the Investment Plans for the next 5 years, AstraZeneca is positioning Malaysia as the Global Finance Services hub catering for its operations in the Asia Pacific region by moving up the value chain to middle office financial, accounting and business services,” said Dr Ong.

■ Improving Malaysia's Economic Outlook

Our nation's economy continues to evolve and tap on the opportunities arising from global trade patterns and higher market integration. The government is keen to attract more quality investments from all over the globe. Thus, this investment demonstrates continued investor confidence in Malaysia.

“In 2017, Malaysia recorded approved investments amounting to RM 197.1 billion in overall economic sectors covering services, manufacturing and primary sectors. For the first nine months of 2018, the total approved investments stood at RM 139.3 billion, an indication that Malaysia continues to be one of the attractive investment destinations, including among foreign investors such as AstraZeneca,” said Dr Ong.

Despite the multiple challenges faced by the global economy, Malaysia remains a resilient nation, a result of a

well-diversified economy resting on the back of its solid economic fundamentals. With that in mind, Dr Ong is confident that with Malaysia's pro-business, prudent and pragmatic policies, the nation will continue to be the profit centre in Asia.

As a hub for Global Business Services, Malaysia aims to build a globally competitive outsourcing industry by attracting and retaining the best Shared Services and Outsourcing (SSO) companies in the world and increasing competitiveness of Malaysian SSO companies.

As such, up to RM 1.9 billion of overseas sales have been registered in Q3 2018, while recording RM 263 million of projected investments in 2017. Meanwhile, GBS recorded investment growth of RM 4.3 billion or an increase of 72 per cent from 2016. What is more promising is that a total number of new jobs created increased from 9,664 in 2016 to 10,441 in 2017.

Between the years 2014 and 2018, AstraZeneca conducted 18 clinical trials in Malaysia and partnered with non-governmental organizations and healthcare providers to improve diagnosis rates and treatment outcomes. Datuk Zainal Amanshah, CEO of InvestKL, expressed his pleasure that four decades on, AstraZeneca continues to place its confidence in Malaysia as a hub, seeing as Malaysia, particularly Kuala Lumpur, offers a strong proposition for global multinationals to create better value.

“With the MOA signing, AstraZeneca and my team are working together in shaping a stronger vendor collaboration to support and enhance product innovation. The team will also work with various universities in building the local talent pool to support AstraZeneca's business in the region,” he said.

Spread over 50,000 sq. ft space across five floors, the new AstraZeneca Malaysia HQ will serve as the primary hub for AstraZeneca Global Finances Services Management Reporting, providing additional support for Corporate Treasury Centre reporting, with Global Finance Office metrics reporting also being moved from the United Kingdom to Malaysia. The Analytics team in Malaysia also supports functions such as process mining, predictive modelling, natural language generation and cognitive automation.

Following the recent issue of illegal toxic dumping in Pasir Gudang, Johor Bahru, over 2000 people have now sought medical treatment while over 30,000 school children were forced to stay at home as a result of one of the country's worst environmental catastrophes. The chemical spill, which was due to the illegal dumping of toxic waste into the Kim Kim River, have federal and state agencies apprehensive as they strive to aid thousands of victims.

■ Poisoning of Children

The victims, many of whom were children and students exposed to the fumes believed to be methane, were reported to have been treated by emergency workers in the field. Many of the victims experienced suffocation, headache, dizziness and even loss of consciousness, all of which are symptoms related to methane poisoning. These students were largely from schools along the polluted river. However, the dry weather and heavy winds had pushed the toxic fumes to a larger area, thus creating alarm across the industrial town of Pasir Gudang, which is about a 30-minute drive from Johor Bahru.

Following the tragedy, the Taman Pasir Putih Community Hall had been turned into a makeshift treatment centre before the victims were transferred to hospitals. Furthermore, Malaysian Fire and Rescue Department (JBPM) officers in complete protective gear had been taking readings from the location impacted by the toxic dumping.

■ A Better Warning System Needed

Sultan of Johor, Sultan Ibrahim Ismail Ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar Al-Haj, had proposed that the state government develop an early warning system for air or water pollution. He clarified that such a system would let authorities issue an early warning to residents.

"At the same time, residents can also make preparations, while emergency teams or authorities can have a head start," Sultan Ibrahim told the Royal Press Office on 14 March, referring to the current air and river pollution situation in Pasir Gudang. The statement was also posted on his official Facebook page. Apart from the said system, he also wanted the special committee set up by Johor Menteri Besar, Datuk Osman Sopian, to draft standard operating procedures (SOP) to ensure that such incidents do not reoccur in the state.

"Therefore, I want the special committee to be established urgently and emphasize what I have already stressed," he said. Sultan Ibrahim had visited the Pasir Gudang fume inhalation victims in the Sultan Ismail Hospital (HSI) on 14 March.

He also pledged RM 1 million to aid the rescue of victims affected by toxic fumes in the area. The financial aid was offered after the ruler heard an audio recording of a man crying for help for his child, according to the Permaisuri of Johor, Raja Zarith Sofiah Idris Shah. The Johor government has allocated RM 6.4 million to clean up the 1.5 km stretch of the river that was affected and the operation is expected to take one week.

Over 2000 Victims Treated for Pasir Gudang Chemical Pollution

By
Batrisyia Jay

7 March

Around 2.43 tonnes of chemical waste was dumped into the Kim Kim River under a bridge in Kota Masai. The chemicals are also believed to contain traces of heavy metals.

The chemicals were washed downstream and polluted the air with toxic gas. Residents and students in two schools located in the Pasir Gudang area started vomiting and fainting after breathing in the strong fumes from the river. Following the incident, a total of 30 people were admitted to hospital. The schools, located some 500 metres from the dumping site, were ordered to close.

12 March

A total of 306 victims were admitted to hospital or sent to health clinics after being affected by the toxic fumes. The two schools that were first affected had initially reopened but were quickly closed once again. After students in two more schools suffered health issues from inhaling the gas, a total of 13 schools were instructed to close.

13 March

The number of victims rose to 506, and the number of schools ordered to close rose to 34. However, Johor Menteri Besar, Datuk Osman Sopian said the government would not declare a state of emergency for the area, adding that the situation was "contained and under control".

8 March

The number of victims hospitalized due to inhaling the toxic fumes rose to 79.

9 March

Five police reports were lodged on the chemical dumping, and police began investigating the case. Authorities said the chemical clean up would start on 11 March and would last for five days.

11 March

Three men were arrested in relation to the chemical dumping, including the owner of an illegal tyre recycling factory in Kulai and the owner of a waste processing factory in Pasir Putih.

14 March

The number of victims doubled to almost 1,000, including 30 students from a school located 6 km from the dumping site. Despite Osman's comments, the federal government passed an emergency motion and declared a state of emergency over the situation.

The Ministry of Education ordered all 111 schools in and around Pasir Gudang to close indefinitely, deeming the situation as critical. The Sultan of Johor pledged a donation of RM 1 million (US\$244,530) to assist with the clean-up, which Johor officials said would be used to buy equipment for rescue teams. One of the arrested suspects, the owner of the factory in Kulai, was expected to be charged. However, the prosecution postponed the case to collect additional information. The suspect faces a maximum jail term of five years and a RM 500,000 fine for breaching Section 34B of the Environmental Quality Act 1974.



■ Identifying the Toxic Chemicals

DOE investigators have identified the chemicals as marine oil waste, which is usually used to lubricate marine engines. The oil emits flammable methane and benzene fumes. According to Johor DOE director, Datuk Mohammad Ezzani Mat, Compounds such as acrylonitrile and acrolein, in addition to hydrogen chloride, toluene, xylene and limonene, were also reported to be identified as part of the chemicals. Energy, Technology, Science, Climate Change and Environment Minister Yeo Bee Yin was quoted as saying that authorities have identified at least eight of the chemicals based on their sampling, but there are still unknown chemicals present.

■ What Makes it Toxic

According to the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, exposure to high quantities of methane reduces oxygen levels in the body and can result in organ damage, including damage to the brain and heart. Methane gas can also irritate the eyes.

Acrylonitrile is extremely dangerous as it is highly flammable and toxic at low doses. The flammable material releases fumes of hydrogen cyanide and oxides of nitrogen. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classifies it as a Class 2B carcinogen, or "possibly carcinogenic".

Meanwhile, the United States' Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Benzene causes cell dysfunction. For example, it can alter levels of antibodies in the blood, thus leading to the loss of white blood cells, causing damage to the immune system and preventing bone marrow from producing enough red blood cells, which can in turn lead to anaemia. Both acrylonitrile and acrolein are strong irritants to the skin, eyes, and nasal passages, according to the CDC and Ullmann's Encyclopaedia of Industrial Chemistry.

As the number of victims of the illegal toxic dumping in Pasir Gudang increases over time, the public is advised to be extra careful on matters regarding health and safety and to take appropriate precautions.

Prevention is Better Than Cure

Here is how you can prevent from being exposed to these chemicals:



Do not enter the affected area and avoid taking part in recreational activities near the affected area, as the toxic chemicals can spread depending on the temperature, wind speed and weather conditions.



The Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia suggests the use of appropriate protective equipment. If one of your family members is affected, do not wash his or her clothes with those of the rest of the family, as the toxic chemicals can transfer to other clothing items.



Follow the instructions of the authorities and stay abreast of the latest information on the matter. Do not listen to sensationalised, false information.

If you experience any symptoms such as nausea, shortness of breath, eye irritation and chest irritation, get immediate treatment.

AROUND TOWN

March 2019



www.klibf.my

#MalaysiaMembaca

Kuala Lumpur International Book Fair

The Ministry of Education, Malaysia via the National Book Council of Malaysia (NBCM) is organizing the Kuala Lumpur International Book Fair (KLIFB) in collaboration with six Malaysian book industry associations.

A major annual event in the global publishing calendar since 1981, KLIFB has recorded more than 2 million visitors since 2013 to date, thus being the perfect venue for 'bibliophiles' or book-lovers to get both old and new publications.

Book launches, seminars and conventions are among the activities that will be held to cater to the needs of book-lovers from all walks of life.

23 March – 7 April, 2019
Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC)
Free Admission
www.klibf.my



Disney on Ice presents Mickey's Super Celebration

Grab your mouse ears and get ready for the ultimate interactive event honouring the 'True Original' in Disney On Ice's Mickey's Super Celebration. Join Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck and Goofy, and of course Mickey, on a journey to discover his favourite memory of all time.

For the first time in Asia, see fearless Moana LIVE on ice, as she displays the courage to save her island on a high-seas adventure with the greatest demigod that ever lived, Maui. Continue the journey with your family to the wintry world of Arendelle as royal sisters Anna and Elsa discover that true love is the most powerful magic of all, and experience the mysterious magic of Fantasia as a Sorcerer's Apprentice makes brooms come to life.

'Live Your Story' alongside Disney Princess as they use perseverance, determination and hard work to inspire Mickey and children around the world to celebrate their favourite Disney memories in this commemoration of 90 years of Mickey Mouse.

Stadium Melawati, Shah Alam
5 April, 2019 – 7 April, 2019
RM 308, RM 258, RM 208, RM 168, RM 128, RM 88
*Ticket prices shown above exclude RM 4 ticket fee & booking charges
www.prworldwidelive.com

Putrajaya's My Balloon Fiesta

MyBalloonFiesta (formerly Putrajaya International Hot Air Balloon Fiesta) is an annual event in Kuala Lumpur that really makes you sit up and take notice. A great way to snap some great travel photos, it is held in Desa Parkcity and is reminiscent of New York's Adirondack Hot Air Balloon Festival. Expect to see lots of colourful, teardrop-shaped balloons, as well as some outrageous, quirkily-shaped ones.

28 March – 31 March, 2019
Precinct 2, Putrajaya
Free Admission
myballoonfiesta.com



Ed Sheeran Divide Tour 2019 Kuala Lumpur

See Ed Sheeran live in concert this April here in Malaysia with your loved ones! Ed Sheeran's Divide Tour will rock our National Stadium in Bukit Jalil on 13 April 2019 (Saturday).

Stadium Bukit Jalil
13 April, 2019
Visit prworldwidelive.com for tickets
www.prworldwidelive.com



The Noise of Time – Readings on World Poetry Day

To celebrate World Poetry Day on 21 March, PUSAKA invites you to join them for a special night of poetry in many languages – English, Malay, Arabic, Persian, German, French, Spanish, Chinese, Tamil, Malayalam, and Japanese. With readings by poets, translators, and poetry lovers including Eddin Khoo, Pauline Fan, Hafiz Hamzah, Zahid M. Naser, Al-Mustaqeem M Radhi, Lilianne Fan, Guillermo Lauriano, Mwaffaq Al-Hajjar, Mohammad Amin Kamranimashhadi, Tay Cher Siang, and Kalash Nanda Kumar. The phrase 'The Noise of Time' is borrowed from the title of the memoirs of Russian poet, Osip Mandelstam.

All are welcome. Bring along your favourite poem.

Lit Books, Petaling Jaya
21 March, 2019
Free Admission
litbooks.com.my

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