



To elevate Selangor as a regional powerhouse is not only a dream, it is a mission. With Selangor Maritime Gateway and the Smart Selangor initiatives, we are progressing ever closer to making the Smart Selangor 2025 vision of becoming the Premier Smart State in ASEAN a reality.

*Amirudin Shari
Selangor Menteri Besar*



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Selangor delegates to AIM are optimistic about involving investors and build up the investment success achieved by the state last year.

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Increasing Home Ownership for Selangorians

For most of the people living in major cities across the nation, such as Kuala Lumpur and cities within Selangor, home ownership and affordable housing are major issues. Purchasing a dream home is no doubt a priority for most, however this has proven to be quite a challenge—particularly in today’s economic climate.

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MB Attends Dubai Investment Annual Meeting 2019

SHAH ALAM – Selangor Menteri Besar, Amirudin Shari attended the Annual Investment Meeting (AIM) 2019 in Dubai on 8 April.

Amirudin, via Facebook, said AIM is the main platform for attracting Foreign Direct Investments (FDI).

He said it is an initiative by the UAE's Ministry of Economy under the auspices of the UAE Vice President who is also Dubai's Prime Minister and Superintendent, Sheikh Mohammed Rashid Al Maktoum.

"AIM is home to the largest global investors, among them are corporate leaders, policy makers, businessmen, regional and international investors, entrepreneurs, academics and leading experts who are showcasing the latest information, strategies and knowledge to attract FDIs."

"It aims to connect businesses and countries that are willing to participate in sustainable partnerships with investors," he wrote.

Selangor delegates to AIM are optimistic about involving investors and

assessed officer," Amirudin said.

"This is because there are cases where officers rated scores exceeding 96 per cent or approaching maximum levels, and yet there is still plenty of room for the officers to improve their weaknesses and performance," he added.

"Every performance appraisal is made more objective and realistic to illustrate the actual performance of the officers based on the achievement of the work, knowledge, skills, personal qualities and contribution of the officers during the assessment year."

He said this at the 2018 Excellent Service Award (APC) Ceremony and the *Jasamu Dikenang* (AJD) Award 2019, which was held at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Perak Jubilee Banquet Hall on 15 April to recognize achievers from the Selan-

gor State Secretary Office (PSUK).

Also present were Selangor State Secretary, Dato' Mohd Amin bin Ahmad Ahyar; Selangor State Financial Officer, Dato' Nor Azmie Diron; Selangor State Legal Advisor; Dato' Masri bin Mohd. Daud and State Executive Councillors (MMKN).

At the same time, Amirudin reminded civil servants to practice and emphasize some of the basic principles of working such as timeliness, factual accuracy, meticulousness and being detailed in carrying out their duties.

"If the principle is practiced, I am confident that the Selangor State Secretary Office is capable of producing human capital and high-quality service delivery systems as well as world-class standards," said Amirudin.

build up the investment success achieved by the state last year. Previously, Selangor created history when it recorded the highest investment value for the last 30 years of RM 24.8 billion for 2018 through the manufacturing and services sectors.

The total investment value approved for the manufacturing sector was RM 18.947 billion, an increase of 238 per cent compared to RM 5.529 billion in 2017.

Meanwhile, the services sector saw Selangor successful in recording the highest total investment in Malaysia by RM 5.784 billion compared to RM 4.5 billion in 2017.

Amirudin, in a statement, said the state government will work hard to achieve the RM 10 billion investment target for 2019 and believes the current positive economic development will help to realize that goal.

The ninth edition of AIM carries the theme 'Mapping the Future of FDI: Enriching World Economies through Digital Globalization'.

The meeting discusses the impact of digital globalization, how policies can be set in place to encourage an innovative investment atmosphere, the need to create long-term investment opportunities, and how to attract and develop skilled talent from across the world.

Selangor announces RM 60 million to overcome traffic congestion in Bandar Saujana Putra

The state government has announced that they will be building a flyover in the Bandar Saujana Putra area in order to accommodate the sudden surge of heavy traffic in the area.

The project which will cost RM 60 million and is expected to ease the burden of residents in the area since the unexpected rise in traffic for the past few years.

Dato' Menteri Besar, Amirudin Shari, says, the project is to benefit around 65,000 residents in the area as well as users of the South Klang Valley Expressway (SKVE) and the North South Highway Express Link (ELITE), who are coming from the direction of Bandar Saujana Putra.

"We have discussed with the relevant parties" he added.

"Developer Seribu Baiduri Sdn. Bhd. has given their commitment in order to speed up the tender process and begin working on the construction of the flyover," he said during a press conference after visiting Surau Al-Ikhlis in Bandar Saujana Putra during his *Program Jelajah Maju Bersama ke Daerah Kuala Langat* on 12 April 2019.

Explaining further, Amirudin explained that pressure from council members as well as members of the State Legislative Assembly had been instrumental in speeding up the project.

"Residents no longer have to worry about the tender process as it is ongoing and the site work is expected to begin in July of next year and end in June 2021," he added.

MB on Work Visit to Kuala Langat

KUALA LANGAT — On 12 April, Selangor Menteri Besar, Amirudin Shari, began a work visit tour through the *Jelajah Maju Bersama* programme to the Kuala Langat district.

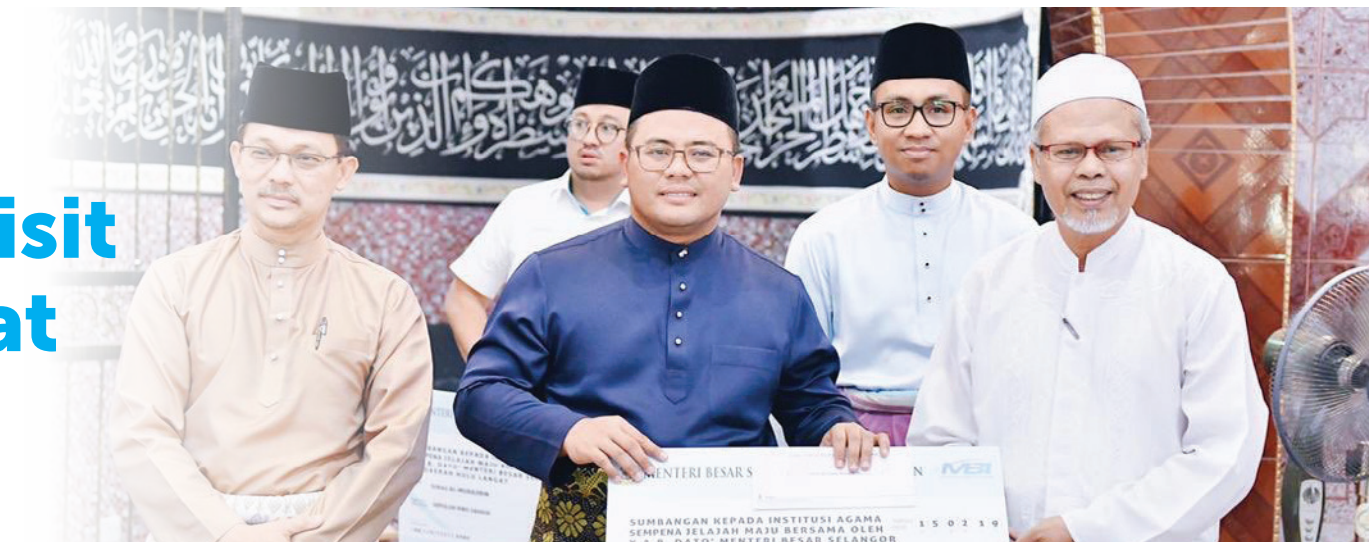
The programme started off with the Selangor Menteri Besar performing the dawn prayer with the locals at Masjid Jamek As-Solihin, Kanchong Darat.

He then kicked off a morning rally with civil servants in the Sri Jugra Hall, Telok Datok, before chairing the State Executive Councillor (MMKN) meeting, at the Kuala Langat District and Land Office.

The meeting was then followed by Amirudin performing Friday prayers at Masjid At-Taqwa in Banting before commencing site visits in several areas around Kuala Langat.

After the Friday prayers, Amirudin visited the paragliding site in Bukit Jugra to try out the sport for himself. In the afternoon, he continued with a visit to the Boh Tea Plantation in Cheeding Hill, Banting.

On the final leg of his visit, Amirudin addressed the issue of congestion



In the past 10 years, we have never reduced development in the state. Therefore, it is important for us to look for development with the presence of new investment values.



on Jalan Saujana Putra in Bandar Saujana Putra. Speaking at Surau Al-Ikhlis, he announced that the state government will be building a flyover in the Bandar Saujana Putra area in order to accommodate the sudden surge of heavy traffic in the area.

Later, in the evening, Amirudin held a townhall session with resident representatives to hear the people's problems in the area. During this session, he stated that the state government will focus on new investments that emphasize integrity and social values.

"In the past 10 years, we have never reduced development in the state. Therefore, it is important for us to look for development that will bring in new investment value," he said.

The *Jelajah Maju Bersama* pro-



gramme is Amirudin's approach to becoming the eyes and ears to the issues faced by the people of Selangor, which in turn can lead to a complete solution to these issues.

The programme is part of the state government's endeavour to ensure that each district does not miss out any of the six existing smart clusters which are education, employment, housing, family, health and welfare.

Performance of Civil Servants Measured Through LNPT

SHAH ALAM – The State Government is adopting the Annual Performance Assessment Report (LNPT) as one of the mechanisms for measuring the performance of Selangor civil servants.

Selangor Menteri Besar, Amirudin Shari, said that through LNPT, the implementation to determine the performance of civil servants can be measured and evaluated more fairly and objectively.

"The scoring system is justified, reasonable, not too extreme and gives a true picture of the performance of the

Selangor MB: Re-aligned ECRL Route Saves Valuable Assets



BESTARI JAYA — The federal government's action to re-align the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project without involving Gombak quartz ridge has been praised by the Selangor state government.

Selangor Menteri Besar, Amirudin Shari, said he was relieved that the federal government has taken the state government's protest into consideration to save the state's valuable assets.

Amirudin said the state government will now lend its support to the construction of the ECRL, which had previously

been strongly protested by Selangor.

"The people of Selangor will still benefit from the construction of the ECRL, which begins in Port Klang, and it does not matter if there will not be [a stop] in Gombak as long as we are able to save environmental assets precious to Selangor and its people," said Amirudin.

"Not only [does this spare] the Gombak quartz ridge, the state government has also managed to save the homestay at the 12th Mile in Gombak, which would also be affected if construction were done there," he said after launch-

ing the Institution of Higher Education (IPT) Institutions Debate 2019 at Universiti Selangor (UNISEL) on 15 April.

Amirudin said this when he was asked to comment to the media on the issue regarding the federal government's announcement of the resumption of the ECRL project.

In July 2018, the Ministry of Finance had announced that the Selangor state government strongly opposed the completion of a railway track between Gombak and Port Klang.

The objection was based on the principle of the Selangor government's application to obtain UNESCO World Heritage Site status for the 16 km long Klang Gates Quartz Ridge, which is the longest quartz dyke in the world.

Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng also said that the completion of the ECRL connection from Gombak to Port Klang would certainly thwart the Selangor Government's efforts to list this area as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

However, on 12 April, the Prime Minister's Office, in a statement, announced that the suspended ECRL project will be continued with a cost reduction of RM 21.5 billion for the first and second phases.

In addition, the statement also said that the original cost was reduced from RM 65.5 billion to RM 44 billion after

Malaysia Rail Link Sdn. Bhd. (MRL) and China Communications Construction Company Ltd. (CCCC) agreed to sign an additional agreement.

It is understood that the Prime Minister's special representative, Tun Daim Zainuddin—who headed the talks on this issue—said the construction of the ECRL will see a new line. The new line will have stops at Kota Bharu, Mentakab, Jejebu, Kuala Kelawang, Bangi/Kajang, Putrajaya and Port Klang.

Plans to construct two other ECRL stations, in Gombak and Bentong, have been shelved.

Commenting further, Amirudin said he believed the new ECRL line was based on objections the state made previously.

"It is because it splits the Titiwangsa Range and will partially affect the Gombak quartz ridge, which is a valuable asset to the people of Selangor," said Amirudin.

"We are also gazetting the site as a National Geopark Site, [and] although this is slightly lower in prestige compared to the UNESCO World Heritage Site Award, the process remains time-consuming for gazetting," he added.

"Eventually the protest by the state was heard and the project has started again at a lower cost."

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Editorial
Team

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MANAGING EDITOR
Ameena Siddiqi

WRITERS
Batrisyia Jay
Muhaimin Merican

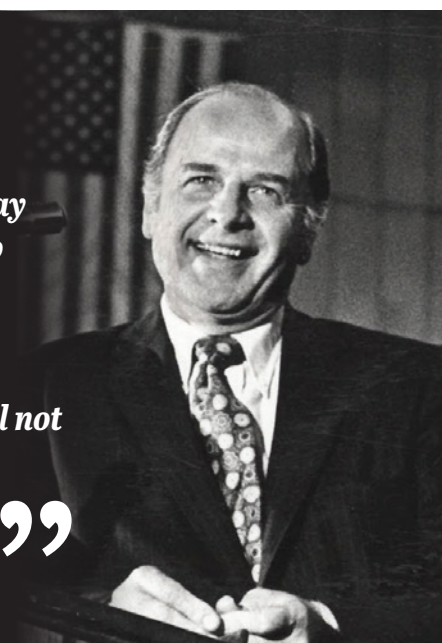
DESIGNER
Naquiduddin Muaz

Aras 2, Carlton Holiday Hotel & Suite, No 1, Persiaran Akuatik 13/43
Seksyen 13, 40100, Shah Alam, Selangor

Tel 03-5523 4856 Fax 03-5523 5856
Email info@mediaselangor.com

“
The ultimate test of
man's conscience may
be his willingness to
sacrifice something
today for future
generations whose
words of thanks will not
be heard.
”

Gaylord Nelson





Increasing Home Ownership for Selangorians

The Issue

On 22 November 2018, Minister of Housing and Local Government, Zuraida Kamaruddin, said that the government was aware of the difficulties faced by low-income groups in buying homes, although many initiatives were carried out for the B40 group (households earning a monthly income of RM 3,900 or less).

"As such, we are taking proactive measures to resolve these issues and have identified the four main problems, which are affordability, supply not meeting the demand, lack of innovation in the housing industry, and no integration to identify housing supply and demand," she said.

It was apparent that the ability to provide affordable housing to the masses is at the forefront of the issue. A house is considered affordable if an individual or a family can afford to occupy it without spending more than 30 per cent of their income. Nonetheless, housing prices in Malaysia have gone on a hike and housing has become unaffordable for most middle to lower income groups. According to the findings of the Khazanah Research Institute in 2015, housing in Malaysia had become severely unaffordable.

The institute found that houses were deemed unaffordable in Kuala Lumpur while in Selangor they were moderately unaffordable. One of the reasons behind this unaffordability issue was the imbalance between the huge demand, and supply of houses in the country.

Research also suggested that affordable housing issues particularly affect middle-income earners, as they are neither qualified for social housing nor can they afford private sector-supplied houses. Therefore, seeing as they are not eligible for low-cost and social housing, this group is not covered by the housing assistance programme, while at the same time the private sector's medium-cost housing, or even any of the medium-cost residential projects, remain out of reach for them.

Therefore, ever since the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010) was launched, the government has been highlighting the need to provide affordable and quality housing for Malaysians. It is continuously promoting affordable housing schemes and improving these from time to time.

LOCATION	MEDIAN MULTIPLE AFFORDABILITY (YEAR 2014)
KUALA LUMPUR	5.4
SELANGOR	4.0
MALAYSIA	4.4

*Source: Khazanah Research Institute (2015)

The Solution

Due to the steadily-increasing demand for affordable housing at a price of RM 250,000 and below, the Selangor state government launched the *Rumah Selangorku* scheme in 2014 as a solution to the affordable housing issue in the state.

Following the launch, the state government has been proactively reviewing the existing policy to ensure its continued relevance, based on the current economic situation of the state and the country.

The main objective of this scheme is to ensure that every individual or family in Selangor is able to own a good, safe and conducive home. With this in mind, *Rumah Selangorku* aims to offer housing at more value in terms of size, design and community, making it the perfect solution for lower- and middle-income earners to own housing at reasonable prices.

On 6 April 2018, the state government launched the *Rumah Idaman Rakyat Selangor* scheme. The scheme—implemented by the Selangor Menteri Besar Incorporated (MBI)—aims to further boost the construction of affordable housing in the state.

"The Selangor government, through the Menteri Besar Incorporated (MBI), Permodalan Negeri Selangor Berhad (PNSB) and the Selangor Housing Estate Board (LPHS) have developed a strategy to provide the best residential property solutions for the people of Selangor," said Selangor Menteri Besar, Amirudin Shari.

At the MBI level, we use the Selangor Housing and Real Estate Board (LPHS) policy that requires developers to provide home-based pricing units such as *Rumah Selangorku*. Hence, we use the concept to create the *Rumah Idaman* with no changes in terms of policy, and at the same time, boost affordable housing in the state.

— Soffan Affendi Aminudin, MBI's Chief Operating Officer

"Today, the Selangor government has introduced a comprehensive solution to affordable home ownership that will revolutionize the country's housing industry," added Amirudin. The Selangor Menteri Besar said this at the ground-breaking and launch of the *Rumah Idaman Abadi* units and at Bandar Teknologi Kajang on 6 April.

Meanwhile, MBI's Chief Operating Officer, Soffan Affendi Aminudin is of

the opinion that a house is a very basic necessity for everyone and a 'nucleus' for future economic development. "If the people get good housing, banking institutions will also run [well]," he said.

"At the MBI level, we use the Selangor Housing and Real Estate Board (LPHS) policy that requires developers to provide home-based pricing units such as *Rumah Selangorku*. Hence, we use the concept to create the *Rumah Idaman* with no changes in terms of policy, and at the same time, boost affordable housing in the state," said Soffan during a press conference at the Real Estate and Housing Developers' Home (REHDA) on 4 April, two days before the launch of the *Rumah Idaman* units in Bandar Teknologi Kajang.



▲ Selangor Menteri Besar, Amirudin Shari, together with PNSB's (Permodalan Negeri Selangor Berhad) Chief Financial Officer, Mohd Helmi Mohd Yusof in the midst of exploring a replica of the apartment units for the *Rumah Idaman* Selangor.

A Dream Home

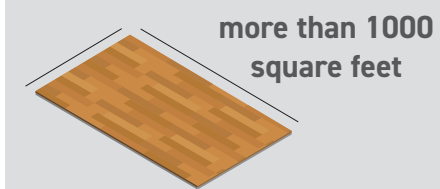
Rumah Idaman Selangor is a smart partnership between the state government and private sector using high-technology innovation and close collaboration with financial institutions. The scheme offers residential units of more than 1,000 square feet, with three bedrooms, two bathrooms and two car parks.

What is unique and interesting about these units is that each *Rumah Idaman* unit comes equipped with a television set, refrigerator, TV cabinet, kitchen cabinets, air conditioning in every room, as well as a water heater in the bathroom, making it a dream home for those of the lower and even middle-income groups.

All the *Rumah Idaman* units will be sold at a net price of RM 250,000 and will be built at the following locations: Kajang, Bangi, Ampang, Shah Alam, Cyberjaya, Dengkil, Setia Alam, Klang, Bandar Saujana Putra, Bandar Salak Tinggi and Kuala Langat North.

A Dream Home for All

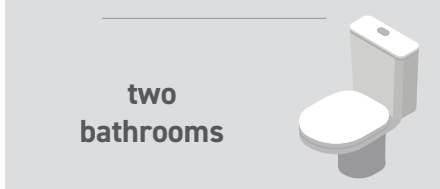
Below are the characteristics of the *Rumah Idaman* Units:



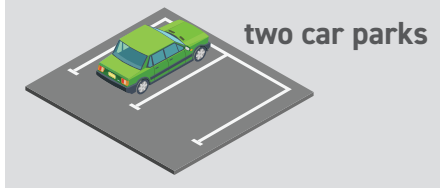
more than 1000 square feet



three bedrooms



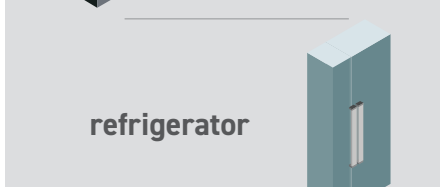
two bathrooms



two car parks



television set



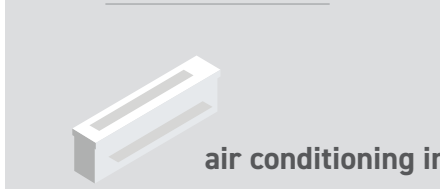
refrigerator



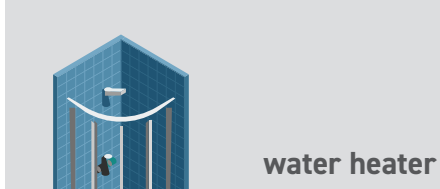
TV cabinet



kitchen cabinets



air conditioning in every room



water heater in the bathroom

Eligibility

Below are the eligibility requirements for the *Rumah Selangorku* Scheme:



Malaysian citizens aged 18 and above



Minimum income for *Rumah Selangorku* Type B, C and D applications is set at RM 3,001 per month.



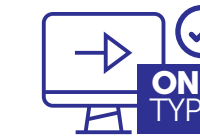
Household income (husband and wife) that does not exceed RM 3,000 per month is permitted for Type A application, while household income of RM 3,000-RM 10,000 per month is allowed to apply for Type B, C and D applications.



If the household income is not more than RM 3,000 per month, it is also possible to choose Type B, C or D. For household income exceeding RM 3,001 per month, Type A application is not allowed.



Applicants or spouses must have no other home, whether through government or private projects in Selangor.



The applicant is only allowed to make a choice of one type of house: either type A, B, C, or D when applying.



Purchasing a house to live and not to rent out.



Transfer of application is only allowed after 5 years from the Sale and Purchase Agreement with the permission of the state authority.



The validity period for each registered application is for 2 years. After that period, the application data which is still under 'listing' will be released from the system and applicants will have to make a fresh application if they are still interested in applying for a *Rumah Selangorku* unit.

<http://lphs.selangor.gov.my/>

For more information on the matter visit the LPHS website:

On 10 April, it was reported that more than 6,000 names have been registered for the purchase of *Rumah Idaman* since its release last year. The encouraging response came as a surprise to Soffan, who admitted that there has recently been a higher demand from the people of Selangor to have similar homes built in other areas.

According to Soffan, the housing loan formula announced by Selangor Menteri Besar, Amirudin Shari, had also boosted the purchase of homes by youth groups.

"In fact, we managed to mobilize the ecosystem where buyers, developers and funding agencies are keen to boost the construction industry [to build] affordable homes for the people," he said.

Meanwhile, Selangor Menteri Besar, Amirudin Shari, announced via Twitter that the number of people signing up for the scheme showed that the project was warmly received by the people of Selangor, proving that the *Rumah Idaman* units are indeed the solution to the people's home-ownership issues today.

By
Batrisyia Jay

SELANGOR JOURNAL

Continued from cover page...

As such, both the public and private sectors have stepped up their game and are involved in various housing programmes in Malaysia, with the aim of safeguarding the welfare of the lower-income group. The public sector aims to provide housing to the lower-income group and public employees. On the other hand, the private sector focuses more on the overall market demand.

Therefore, ever since the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010) was launched, the government has been highlighting the need to provide affordable and quality housing for Malaysians. It is continuously promoting affordable housing schemes and improving these from time to time.



PH Needs 6 Months to Remedy Issues Faced by Country

KUALA TERENGGANU — The Pakatan Harapan (PH) government requires another six months to repair the damage left by the previous government and fix the country for the better after taking over the administration in May last year.

Council of Eminent Persons chairman, Tun Daim Zainuddin, said during this period, PH had to face the people and give an accurate explanation if needed, particularly on economic-related matters, so that Malaysians would understand the current situation.

He explained that PH's defeat in the Rantau by-election on 13 April was part of the challenges that needed to be tackled, as the people were losing their patience.

"I think the government needs another six months to fix the situation, not only in terms of economic development but also in other issues. The people need to understand this," he said after attending the *Bicara Darul Iman* Programme on 14 April.

"The government has a lot of problems to think about... including national security, foreign relations and defence... if anything goes wrong someday, the people will blame the government," said Tun Daim.

"Yes, we can reduce the price of goods, we have conducted a study on how to do it... *Insyah-Allah*, the price will be reduced soon. I think a lot of things will be more stable in another six months."

“
Yes, we can reduce the price of goods, we have conducted a study on how to do it... *Insyah-Allah*, the price will be reduced soon. I think a lot of things will be more stable in another six months.”

Strong Economic Growth for Malaysia Despite Low GDP Outlook

KUALA LUMPUR— Moody's Investor Service cut Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) outlook to 4.4 per cent for this year, and 4.3 per cent for 2020.

This a further reduction from its January report, in which it had expected the country's GDP growth to slow down to 4.7 per cent and 4.5 per cent for the respective annum.

Be that as it may, Anushka Shah, the firm's vice president and senior analyst, said that Malaysia's economic growth is fairly strong.

"In Malaysia for example, growth had slowed last year and what we're expecting is that the trend will slow this year as well," she said.

"So, we're expecting 4.4 per cent growth in 2019, and a 4.3 per cent growth in 2020 for Malaysia."



"And that growth performance is still actually relatively strong when you compare it with similarly-rated countries," Anushka said, referring to Moody's A3 credit rating for Malaysia," added Anushka.

In its annual credit analysis in January, Moody's had projected Malaysia's real GDP growth to be at 4.7 per cent for 2019 and 4.5 per cent in 2020, after averaging around 5 per cent between 2015 and 2018.

According to the report, external headwinds from trade protectionism will weigh on trade activity, while a review of planned infrastructure projects and slowing public spending will further dampen economic growth for Malaysia.

Speaking to the press on 3 April, Anushka said that the local currency debt is also well controlled as a large portion of it is held by "very large and stable investors"—notably domestic institutional investors—adding that risks associated with the matter therefore are rather limited.

"So, we don't see Malaysia as particularly exposed if there are sudden changes in funding conditions, because it [Malaysia] doesn't rely on external funding," she added.

Anushka noted that the diversification of the country's economy is also a fundamental credit strength for Malaysia, adding that this would make the country more resilient to economic shocks.

Nation's Economy to Experience Moderate Growth

KUALA LUMPUR— The Malaysian economy is expected to experience moderate growth in 2019 due to challenging external factors, said Economic Affairs Deputy Minister Mohd Radzi Md Jidin.

According to Mohd Radzi, these factors include the United States (US) federal government's temporary shutdown which lasted for 35 days, from 22 December 2018, to 25 January this year—the longest government shutdown in US history.

He explained that the shutdown affected the economic growth of the US, which in turn affects world economic growth during the first quarter of 2019.

"Additionally, the uncertainties in the monetary policies of the US, the slowdown in China's economic growth and the ongoing trade tension between the US and China also affected the global economy and thus the nation's economy," he told the Dewan Rakyat on 8 April.

The Economic Affairs Deputy Minister was replying to a question from Datuk Shamsul Anuar Nasarah (BN-Lenggang) who asked about Malaysia's economic projection for the year and the ministry's economic buffering mechanism to avoid an economic crisis.

Mohd Radzi said that according to Bank Negara Malaysia's 2018 Annual Report, Malaysia's economic growth for 2019 will be supported by domestic growth—especially the demand from the private sector which continues to be the nation's main driver for economic growth.

He added that private consumption is expected to grow by 6.6 per cent while private investments are projected to rise by 4.9 per cent in 2019.

Meanwhile, the nation's main economic sectors are expected to record positive growth, with the service and manufacturing sectors projected to grow by 5.7 per cent and 4.8 per cent, respectively.

According to Mohd Radzi, the sectors remain the largest contributors to the nation's economy at around 79 per cent, adding that the Gross Domestic Product is expected to remain on a steady growth path, expanding between 4.3 per cent and 4.8 per cent this year.

Getting Familiar with Autism

By
Batrisyia Jay

No Two ASD Individuals are the Same

As explained above, ASD does not have a specific set of symptoms, as they are extremely diverse. For instance, a classic sign of autism in a child is flapping, spinning, and a difficulty focusing on a specific object or person. Nonetheless, there are also many children with autism who are bright, extremely verbal and well-behaved—which is why individuals with the disorder are never classified in one specific manner.

However, what every individual with ASD has in common is a lack of social interest that eventually disrupts and impacts their day-to-day functions. The lack of social skills and interest—added with inadequate social motivation—are what sets them apart from other children.

To commemorate Autism month, Selangor Journal would like to celebrate mothers who are caring for children with ASD. On that account, we invited Hasbe Zuraini Abu Bakar, mother to 10-year-old Luqmanul Hakim, who was diagnosed with ASD at the age of 10 when he failed to show good social skills at school and outside school, to share her experience with ASD.

Hasbe Zuraini Abu Bakar was born in Kuala Lumpur but was brought up in Petaling Jaya. She is now living in Kuala Terengganu with her family and has been there for more than 16 years. The 47-year-old mother to Luqmanul Hakim, who is fondly known as Luq, quit work to focus on her son's UPSR examination four years ago and is now a part-time drama and English coach.

The now 16-year-old Luq was diagnosed at the age of 10 with ASD when he failed to show good social skills at school and outside school. "He didn't have any developmental delays, so we dismissed his quirkiness and some of his weird behaviours," said Hasbe. As a result, Luq did not get the early intervention he needed. Upon diagnosis, Hasbe and her family quickly planned out his therapy and intervention programmes.

Hasbe would often sit down with her son to help him with his

There Are Many Factors Causing ASD

Many are often curious as to what causes autism. However, as is with a complicated disorder such as this, there are many factors that cause ASD in an individual. For instance, substances or medications that a mother takes during pregnancy, such as alcohol or even certain seizure medications, can lead to a child developing ASD as he or she continues to grow.

On the other hand, brain abnormalities—such as those impacting the structure of the brain or the function of the brain, like infantile spasms—as well as many other genetic abnormalities and syndromes play a vital role in triggering ASD in an individual. Vaccines are not part of the causes of ASD.

At the time, Luq's fine motor skills were still very low, so Hasbe and her family had to massage his hands and do therapy to help strengthen his muscles. "We had to create a more accommodating desk work environment for him so that he could focus on his homework. We sent him to a small private school so that he wouldn't get overwhelmed with socialising, and we would often talk to his teachers for strategies to help him at school and with homework."

Hasbe admits that she did not regret quitting her job in order to help Luq with his UPSR examination as he passed with flying colours. Luq was accepted to a local boarding school soon after his exam. Although some parents might be reluctant to part with a child who has autism, Hasbe said that Luq's experience at boarding school was very educational for them.

"It helped us to understand more about ASD and puberty as his puberty hit him quite hard. He was diagnosed with depression the year he was taking PT3 and to this day, I thank God for the wonderful support he received from the Principal, the teachers, the wardens and his classmates," said Hasbe. Luq once again passed his PT3 examination with good grades.

Hasbe is of the mind that the awareness level on ASD in Malaysia is still low. "Many are still confused at what autism is, as the majority still think individuals with autism are those with tan-



Adults with Autism are Able to Perform at Work

Unknown to many, most individuals with autism are able to develop much-needed workforce skills once they reach adulthood. Be that as it may, as awareness on autism is still lacking in society, the risk of these individuals being dismissed from their job is high as they will still have difficulties in socializing and might have developed certain repetitive habits that are out of the norm in society.

Thus, businesses, beginning with the government sector, should increase awareness about autism among employees, and incorporate autism-friendly rules into their policies, such as providing flexible working hours and a defined job activity, in order to benefit from the unique talents of these individuals.

Autism is Harder to Detect Among Women

One of the factors about ASD that many are unaware of is that it is harder to be detected among women compared to men. Girls and women who have ASD are oftentimes overlooked, as professionals tend to emphasize that the disorder affects boys and men more. As a result, these women are often left undiagnosed up until they reach adulthood—where the symptoms become more obvious.

Moreover ASD among girls and women often includes cases of high-functioning autism, the signs of which are very different from those in boys and men. For instance, girls with ASD might have fewer restricted interests and repetitive behaviours compared to boys with ASD. Oftentimes, girls with this disorder have more socially acceptable types of skills and interests, resulting in them being better at masking their autism compared to those of the opposite gender.

more, kids with ASD need a lot more therapy support in order for them to be able to achieve academic skills," Hasbe explained.

As a parent with an ASD teen, Hasbe feels that the community and the government can do much more to support these parents. "One of it is definitely [adding] facilities to help parents and their kids cope. Most kids with ASD can study and do well academically. However, they need more therapy time," said Hasbe.

"It would help if there are centres such as these close to the schools or better yet, an Occupational Therapist (OT) in schools to help them. OTs can help the kids to get settled again after going through overwhelming situations at school. They can help the kids get readjusted and learn well in the classroom."

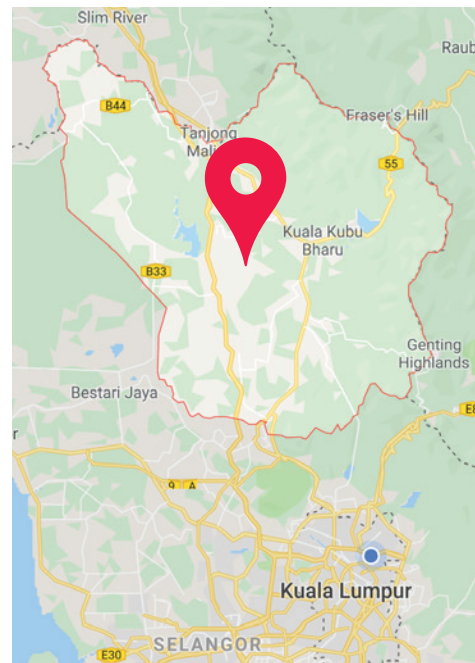
The community should play a big role in helping out when it comes to parenting for children with ASD. For instance, parents should talk to their children about their autistic friends and explain to them how to help these children adjust at school, and how to help them to socialise. "Embrace autism as a good thing. Embrace neuro-diversity," said Hasbe.

To parents of ASD children, Hasbe advises them to take one step at a time. "Cherish and celebrate each milestone your child has achieved. Don't get discouraged, as challenges are always there in our lives," said Hasbe.



Hulu Selangor: Where nature harmonizes with machines

By
Muhaimin Merican




Hulu Selangor
Selangor

Hulu Selangor is the largest of the nine districts that make up the state of Selangor. It covers a total of 1,740.46 sq. km in area and has a population of more than 189,000.

More than just highway exits

If you pulled out a map of Selangor and focused on its northern part, you would see a big area bordering Pahang and Perak. This area is none other than the district of Hulu Selangor.

To many people, the towns of Hulu Selangor may be nothing more than names on the highway exit signs that they pass on the North-South Expressway. However, if you stop to look long enough at the district, which is made up of multiple towns, housing areas and villages, Hulu Selangor may just astound you.

Aptly named due to its geographical location, Hulu Selangor is where the Selangor River begins, high up in the hills surrounding the quaint little town of Kuala Kubu Bharu. Although Kuala Kubu Bharu is the main town for Hulu Selangor district, the district also has many smaller but prominent towns such as Serendah, Ulu Bernam, Bukit Beruntung and Batang Kali.

Hulu Selangor is the largest of the nine districts that make up the state of Selangor. It covers a total of 1,740.46 sq. km in area and has a population of more than 189,000.

Once known as Ulu Selangor, the district is made up of a total of 13 mukim or sub-districts which are Ampang Pecah, Batang Kali, Buloh Telur, Hulu Bernam, Hulu Yam, Kalumpang, Kerling, Kuala Kalumpang, Pertak, Rasa, Serendah, Sungai Gamut and Sungai Tinggi.

Resorts in Hulu Selangor

The major attractions of Hulu Selangor are the resorts that nestle in the greenery to give you an experience of a lifetime. Here are five resorts you can visit in Hulu Selangor to get in touch with nature again:

01

Sekeping Serendah Resort

Located in Serendah, the Sekeping Serendah Resort is surrounded by miles of lush greenery. This resort features chalets built on platforms and buildings incorporating modern and rustic industrial designs. A feature of this resort that is bound to shock most young people: there is no mobile phone coverage, Wi-Fi, air conditioning or television. This is in order to help maximise the outdoor experience for guests. This resort is only a 10-minute walk from the cool and quite of the Serendah waterfall.



02

Huda's Haven Resort

Promising a relaxing, tranquil and soothing experience, this resort is located in Kampung Ulu Rening in Batang Kali. Offering six different types of accommodation, this resort aims to provide their city guests with a kampung experience by the river but adding a hint of 'Glamping' with their well-equipped rooms. Some units are even equipped with personal jacuzzis.



03

Kalumpang Resort & Training Centre

Founded in 2005 and one of the earlier resorts to be established in the Hulu Selangor district, this resort is located among 17 acres of fruit orchard and greenery. The Kalumpang Resort & Training Centre features 70 chalets that have been built to incorporate the surrounding forests and the river that runs through it. The resort often allows visitors to conduct training activities there and they also provide hostels and camping grounds for peak periods when there is a high capacity of guests.



04

Sarang by the Brook

Resting in between Kuala Kubu Bharu and a million-year-old tropical jungle, Sarang by the Brook is a collection of private holiday chalets that aims to soothe visitors while they enjoy their getaway away from the city. The buildings are uniquely styled using shipping containers surrounding a special saltwater pool, all set in a beautiful garden.



05

The Sticks Eco Resort

Introducing 'Tendoks'—from the word 'tent' and the Malay word pondok, meaning 'hut'. With this unique accommodation concept, The Sticks aims to provide guests with an unforgettable rustic living experience amid nature. The resort offers activities such as paragliding, white water rafting and botanical walks for their guests to truly take in the surrounding atmosphere of nature. Don't forget to try their special home-cooked meals!



Industrial district among nature

Over the years, Hulu Selangor has been standing tall as a testament that nature and industrialization are capable of co-existing. Although the district is surrounded by hills, forests and well-preserved swamps, it also houses multiple industrial areas in the district, and has become synonymous with automotive development, since the quiet and serene Hulu Selangor is also where the automotive capital of Malaysia is located.

The industrial areas of Hulu Selangor have since attracted foreign investors wishing to spend their investment here.

These industrial districts help to power the economy of Hulu Selangor by providing job opportunities for the people living in the area. Moreover, the presence of international brands in the district also adds a new dimension to the economy of Selangor particularly in the aerospace, locomotive and automobile industries.

In the Serendah sub-district, you will find a factory operating under UMW Aerospace that produces the fans for Boeing 737 engines. And if you look right next to it, there is a factory manufacturing Perodua cars for the nation.

Among other big names that can be found in Hulu Selangor are SIRIM, which is located in the Rasa sub district, APM Plastics, and Ingress Technologies in Bukit Beruntung. The district also has a factory operated by Tan Chong Motors which is located near by the town of Serendah.

Transportation

If you decide to visit Hulu Selangor and its towns, there is no need to worry about transportation as there are many ways to get there. Located only about one hour away from Kuala Lumpur, the best way to get to Hulu Selangor is by driving. The easiest road to take, if you are driving down to Hulu Selangor, is definitely the PLUS North-South Expressway using any of the following exits: Bukit Beruntung, Bukit Tagar, Lembah Beringin and Tanjung Malim.

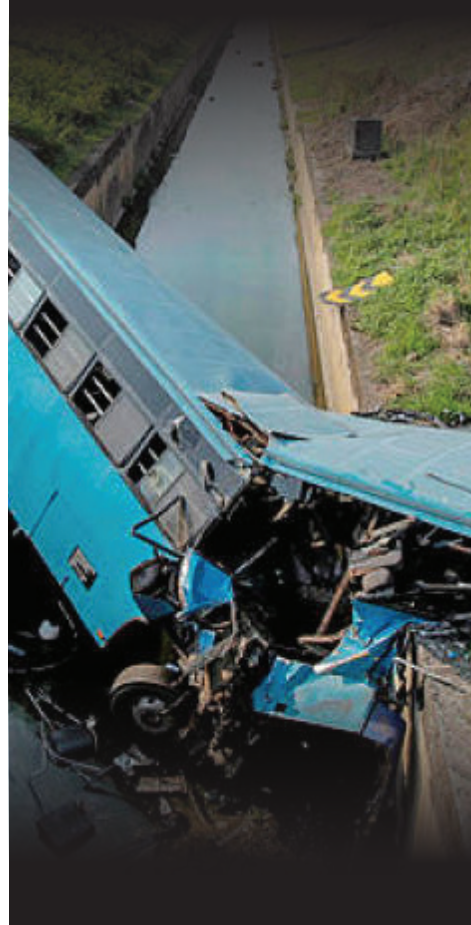
Moreover, because the district is landlocked and located in the middle of the peninsula, it is accessible from other districts as well as states. Roads that you could take to get to the different parts of Hulu Selangor are the Federal Road from Rawang (South); the Federal Road from Tanjung Malim (North); the Sungai Tua, Batu Caves-Hulu Yam Bharu roads; the Genting Highlands (Gohtong Jaya)-Batang Kali road; the Bukit Fraser-Kuala Kubu Bharu road; the Sungai Besar-Hulu Bernam road; and the Batang Berjuntai-Bukit Tagar road.

Alternatively, you could also take a KTM commuter train and hop off at any of the following stations: Serendah, Batang Kali, Rasa and Kuala Kubu Bharu. In addition to KTM commuter trains, public transport in Hulu Selangor is easily made accessible in the form of buses and taxis, which make frequent trips around the district.

SELANGOR QUICK TAKES

SELANGOR JOURNAL

12 dead after factory bus plunges into monsoon drain near KLIA



12 people were killed as the factory bus they were in plunged into a monsoon drain along Jalan S8 Pekeliling, near MAS Kargo, KL International Airport here on Sunday, 7 April. Eight foreign workers and the local bus driver were killed at the scene while another four succumbed to their injuries while receiving treatment.



Local strikers shine and secure crucial win for Selangor FC

Two goals apiece from Selangor captain Amri Yahyah and super sub Sean Selvaraj proved that local strikers can still deliver. The pair were the toast of the Red Giants as their contributions sank Melaka 4-3 in the Super League at the Hang Jebat Stadium on 6 April.



Shah Alam Photography Contest 2019 begins

The Shah Alam Fotografi 2019 contest titled "We Love Shah Alam" offers winners a cash pool of RM 21,000 and certificates. The competition will begin on 1 April and run until 30 August, and is open to all Malaysians above 18 years of age.

RM 300,000 for storm damage repairs

The Selangor government will award a total of RM 300,000 for the victims of storms in the Paya Jaras area a few weeks ago. The donation is expected to be made as soon as possible to those affected by the storms.

NATIONAL NEWS QUICK TAKES

SELANGOR JOURNAL



No two-thirds majority for bill to make Sabah, Sarawak equal partners

On 9 April, the Federal Government failed to get the nod from the Dewan Rakyat for the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2019, which sought to restore the status of Sabah and Sarawak as equal partners with Peninsular Malaysia, as enshrined in the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63). Out of 197 MPs who attended the Dewan Rakyat, 138 MPs voted for the bill, while none voted against. However, 59 others abstained from voting for the bill.

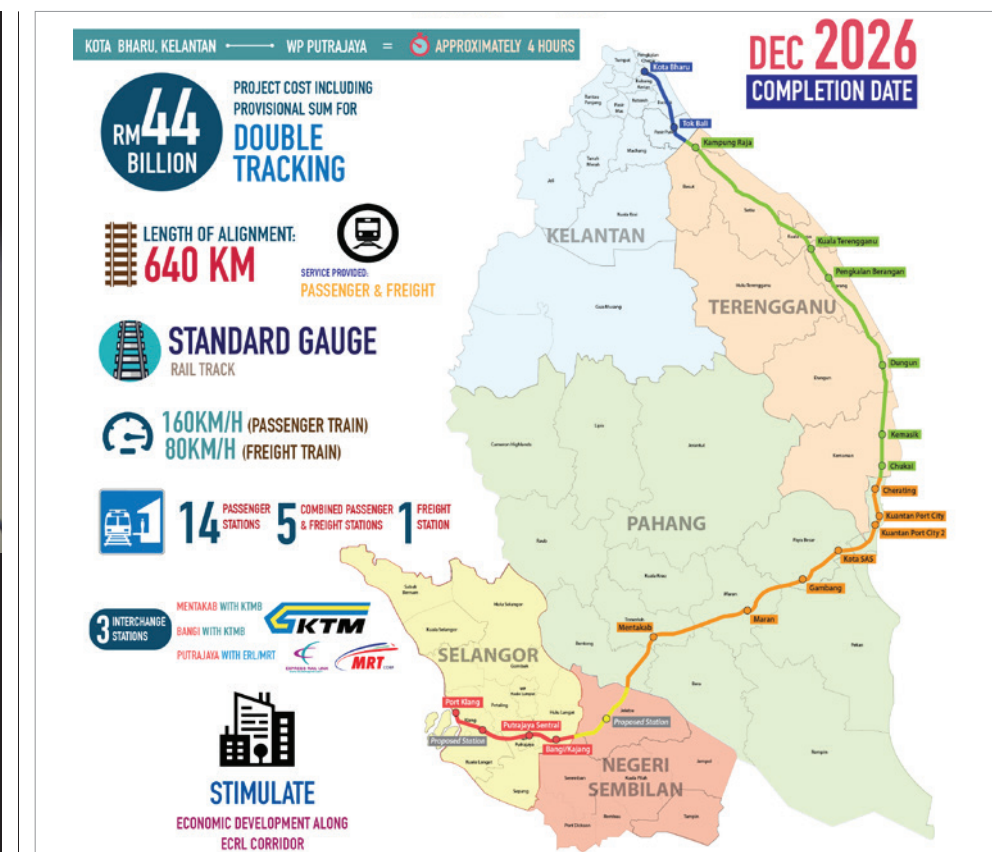
Almost all bosses adhering to RM 1,100 minimum wage



Almost all employers in the country have complied with the minimum wage policy of RM1,100, says Datuk Mahfuz Omar. The Deputy Human Resources Minister said the Labour Department conducted statutory inspections to see if employers were adhering to the minimum wage order. "They conducted 7,695 inspections between January and February and found that 98 per cent adhered to the minimum wage order."

Johor has a new Menteri Besar

Datuk Osman Sapian tendered his resignation as Johor's Menteri Besar, he has been replaced by Johor's executive councillor (exco) and Bukit Kepong assemblyman Dr Sahrudin Jamal who was sworn in as the state's 17th Menteri Besar (MB).



Malaysia to continue with ECRL

Malaysia has managed to bring down the construction cost of the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project by RM21.5bil, which is almost a third of the original cost. The agreement also saw slight changes to the route from Kota Baru in Kelantan to Port Klang in Selangor, with the length cut by 40km to 648km.



Public to Cooperate in Rejuvenation Project

PUCHONG - Puchong's Bandar Puteri 1 and two other commercial areas are facing a few issues that are proving to be a hassle for residents. Among the issues are double-parking, dirty back lanes and illegal structures.

The Subang Jaya Municipal Council (MPSJ) hopes to solve these issues once it begins a rejuvenation project in the area.

The project, which involves 12 back lanes and 799 business premises, is the third of its kind to be launched by MPSJ after the sprucing up of the Kenari commercial area in Puchong Jaya and Sunway Metro.

To ensure that the project runs smoothly, MPSJ firstly met with business owners in a town hall meeting to identify their problems and priorities.

The town hall meeting at the Puchong Financial Corporate

Centre, Bandar Puteri Puchong, drew more than 100 people who were briefed on the council's plans before they broke into discussion groups.

State Local Government, Public Transport and New Village Development Committee Chairman Ng Sze Han called on business owners to cooperate with MPSJ to ensure the success of the project.

"Bandar Puteri is a business hub and we can even call it the

“Bandar Puteri is a business hub and we can even call it the Central Business District of Puchong but it does not reflect the image of a CBD.”

Ng Sze Han



Sports-Themed Residence Unveiled in Old Klang Road

PETALING JAYA - Platinum Arena, a sports-themed mixed development project located in Old Klang Road with an estimated gross development value (GDV) of RM 421 mil, was unveiled as the latest development of property developer Platinum Victory Sdn. Bhd.

"It was an exclusive soft launch last week. We plan to officially launch Platinum Arena sometime this April," said Platinum Victory Senior Manager of Branding and Marketing, Vincent Seow.

Platinum Arena is situated on 2.9-acres of leasehold land and will feature 728 serviced apartments in two 36-storey blocks. The built-up area of

the units ranges from 650 sf to 1,008 sf with an average price of RM 620 psf.

The sports-themed serviced apartment is accessible to major interchanges such as Jalan Klang Lama, Jalan Puchong, Lebuhraya Shah Alam (KESAS) and New Pantai Expressway. Nearby shopping malls include Mid Valley Megamall, Plaza OUG, and Pearl Shopping Gallery.

The project also features 36 shop-lots in its commercial block for the convenience of residents. Piling works began early this year and the project is expected to be completed in about three years' time.

Its unique design concept, inspired by the development's location adjacent to Sentosa Sports Arena, aims at encouraging residents to keep an active lifestyle.

Two of the blocks are named Armstrong and Boris, a tribute to former American cyclist Lance Armstrong and German tennis star Boris Becker.

The residence's facilities include a gym, swimming pool, viewing deck, sports hall for basketball and badminton, playground, yoga deck, rooftop garden, library, BBQ area, games and AV rooms.

“Our build-before-sell strategy sets us apart in the market. Buyers are able to see what they are buying and save on loan interest during the construction period.”

Vincent Seow

"Our build-before-sell strategy sets us apart in the market. Buyers are able to see what they are buying and save on loan interest during the construction period," said Platinum Victory executive director Gan Yee Hin in a media release following the soft launch.

"People are more willing to purchase a property nearing completion," he added.

Call for Single Agency to Handle Projects



Datuk Mohamed Fadzill Hassan, President of the Malaysian Malay Contractors Association has called on the government to revert to the previous system whereby a single agency handles all government projects.

Mohamed Fadzill said that while the association supports the government's present system, they still have their reservations.

"Our problem is that projects are being handled by the respective ministries or departments and agencies under them, making it difficult for us contractors," he said.

"We hope a central agency will be put in charge of this." A centralized system would

Central Business District of Puchong but it does not reflect the image of a CBD," he said.

"We need to turn Bandar Puteri 1 and 2 into a financial and commercial hub that we can be proud of."

Ng added that cleanliness and maintenance within the commercial area is to be a top priority.

"We can keep playing the blame game but it will not solve the problem. Everyone must cooperate."

He also reminded business owners that back lanes are public spaces and not meant for personal use.

According to MPSJ President Noraini Roslan, the project aims to transform Bandar Puteri 1 and 2 into a sustainable, advanced, healthy and clean area. This is in line with MPSJ's target of achieving city status by January 2020.

not only ensure transparency, it would also eliminate lobbying by individuals and groups wanting to clinch certain government projects.

"We also hope the government will carry out an open tender system to award projects to contractors and ensure those who have been awarded one are not given another project for at least a year," said Mohamed Fadzill.

"This will give others a chance to get a contract," he added.

Previously, the Implementation and Coordination Unit (ICU), under the Prime Minister's Department, gives out and supervises all government projects before it was replaced by a new system.

Pak Belang: Our pride, identity and failure

By
Muhaimin Merican

If you asked anyone to name an example of Malaysian wildlife, one of their first choices would probably be our pride and national symbol, the Malayan tiger. Affectionately dubbed 'Pak Belang' by the locals, which roughly translates to 'Mr. Stripes', the Malayan tiger is a ubiquitous icon for our great nation.

Known as *harimau belang* in Malay, tigers are often portrayed as symbols of bravery and the epitome of regality. They are featured everywhere, from the national coat of arms to the logo of Proton, our national car. Our Malaysian Bank, or Maybank, also adopted the beloved face of Pak Belang for their logo. In addition to that, our nation's football team is also affectionately referred to as 'Harimau Malaya', and their matches on the field have proved them to have spirit that is as tough and relentless as that of our tigers. Moreover, in 2017, the tiger was chosen to be the mascot when Malaysia played host to the 2017 SEA Games.

Our folklore and mystic beliefs are full of stories about Pak Belang. There is also a variation or form of the Malay art of self-defence, called Silat Harimau, which is inspired by the tiger's natural movements for its self-defence moves.

It can be said without a doubt that Malaysians love their Pak Belang. We use every single opportunity to highlight our tigers on the world stage. However, as a nation, are we doing enough to protect them from extinction? Do we really feel the pride and joy for our tigers, or is our love only so superficial that we are willing to allow poachers to drive our beloved national symbol to the point of extinction?

Malayan tigers: a subspecies

Up until 2004, there was no Malayan tiger. Our breed of tigers were simply classified as the Indochinese Tiger, *Panthera tigris corbetti*. Then, with DNA testing, it was proven that our tigers were a separate subspecies. A scientific name was coined, *Panthera tigris jacksoni*, to classify our tigers as a separate subspecies.

The Malayan tiger's orange fur, with

black striping and white face and undersides, gives the animal its unmistakable appearance.

Male Malayan tigers average approximately 2 to 2.5 meters in length, with the females generally being much smaller. The weight of the Malayan tiger may vary between 78 kilogrammes and 150 kilogrammes, depending on the sex of the animal.

The diet of Malayan tigers includes deer, wild boar, gaur, tapir, sun bear, and even elephants.

The Malayan tiger can only be found in the jungles of Peninsular Malaysia and Southern Thailand. While other tiger species prefer densely forested areas, Malayan tigers are usually more content with open woodland. This could be due to the abundance of prey in the open forest. However, due to the rapid deforestation of our jungles, Malayan tigers have been venturing into agricultural areas, and this has caused conflict between them and humans.

Malayan tigers today

Today, it is estimated that there are about 250 Malayan tigers left in the wild, and they are estimated to go extinct within 10 years if this pattern continues, according to Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister, Dr. Xavier Jayakumar.

While thousands of tigers once roamed throughout the dense, forested interior of the Malaysian peninsula, they are now mainly confined to three protected areas: Belum-Temengor in the north, Taman Negara in the centre and Endau-Rompin in the south.

Forested corridors, which had once been used by tigers to move between major jungles, have also been destroyed. Another factor that has helped poachers to reach once-inaccessible areas is logging roads.

In July 2018, six Vietnamese poachers, believed to be part of a network targeting tigers, were arrested in a raid by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks in Pahang. The presence of foreign poachers in our forests shows the urgent need for Malaysia to step up wildlife protection efforts.

Along with degradation of the physical environment, poachers continuously hunt these tigers for their pelts and body parts. Traditional Chinese and Vietnam-

ese medicine relies heavily on tigers, and it is now thought that organized crime is behind local poaching, making the problem even more difficult to eliminate. Villagers also eat tiger meat, perhaps in the mistaken notion that they will absorb some of the tiger's power by eating the animal's flesh.



Today, it is estimated that there are about 250 Malayan tigers left in the wild, and they are estimated to go extinct within 10 years if this pattern continues.

Saving Pak Belang

We have now reached a critical point with our tigers. If we do not act now to save our tigers, we will never get the chance again. The World Wildlife Foundation believes that there is still a chance for us to save our national animal, and the answer is: Nepal.

Nepal recently announced its success in doubling tiger numbers. It also achieved 365 days of zero poaching for rhinos, elephants and tigers in 2013 and 2014. This was possible due to collaborative and focused efforts between enforcement agencies and regulatory bodies such as the National Tiger Conservation Committee and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, under the Nepal police force. These bodies were set up to address poaching and illegal wildlife

trade from an enforcement perspective. Nepal's success has given other tiger range countries a clear direction.

In addition to a greater presence of authorities in our jungles, some NGOs have been working with prosecutors and investigative personnel in order to stop poaching with harsher punishments.

Fines for wildlife crime were increased under the previous government—to a maximum of RM 100,000 and/or a three-year prison term.

An uncertain future

At this point, we are faced with a daunting task to see how far we will go to save our one and only national animal. We could follow the footsteps of countries like India and Nepal, who, through political will, have rehabilitated the numbers of their tigers. If Nepal and India, nations struggling with social issues and strife, can manage to save their tigers and have their numbers bounce back tremendously through military intervention, Malaysia should not have a reason to allow our Pak Belang to be driven to extinction. It is no longer merely a question of our morality to save our Malayan tigers, it has become a question of our national identity, and it is our responsibility to protect them.

The next generation may not know of Malayan tigers save for pictures of them and through geography and history lessons. We have our tigers on our national coat of arms, and we name our football team after them. If we lose our Malayan tigers, what will happen to our pride and identity? Do we just replace our national animal with other animals and wait for them to become extinct too, due to our recklessness and inability to act?

Will we suffer the fate of countries such as the Maldives and Moldova, whose national animals, the Dodo and Aurochs respectively, have gone extinct? Do we want to keep allowing poachers to rob us of our national symbol? Or do we actually care and take enough pride in our tigers to actively take steps and protect them.

Only time will tell.

Govt to Give RM 6.23 billion to FELDA



KUALA LUMPUR - The government has agreed to allocate RM 6.23 billion into the Federal Land Development Authority (Felda) in stages through grants, loans and government guarantees as needed to sustain the authority's future.

Announced by Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali during his tabling of the White Paper on Felda in Parliament on 10 April, the allocation will give the development authority a needed injection of funds, following its poor financial position.

The White Paper showed that Felda's liabilities as at 31 December 2017 totalled up to RM 14.4 billion, of which RM 12.1 billion or 84 per cent of total liabilities are due to the group's debts to financial institutions.

Meanwhile, non-current assets and current assets totalled up to RM 25 billion in 2017. Debt after tax from 2007 to 2010 increased from RM 1 billion to RM 1.1 billion.

Following Felda Global Ventures' (FGV) initial public offering (IPO) in 2012, Felda recorded losses from 2013 to 2017. Felda had RM 3.9 billion cash in 2011 but in 2017, this was reduced to only RM 0.4 billion.

The main reason for the RM 4.9 billion loss in 2017 was deterioration in revenue from the Land Lease Agreement (LLA), as well as non-strategic investments and corporate takeovers.

Investment impairments in FGV totalled up to RM 2.1 billion. Moreover, fair value loss on the investment in PT Eagle High Plantations Tbk amounted to RM 1.6 billion in 2017, including foreign exchange losses.



Axiata Confirms Nepal's Supreme Court Written Order

According to Axiata, the order stated that the Large Taxpayers Office should determine the outstanding tax amount to be paid in relation to the transaction within three months from the date of receipt of the order, and that the responsibility to pay the tax lies with Ncell and Axiata.

In a filing with Bursa Malaysia on 10 April, the company said that it is not a party to the litigation.

The court also indicated that the distribution of dividends and any sale of Ncell shares by anyone should not be granted until the tax obligation was satisfied.

"Axiata and Ncell are reviewing the decision of the Supreme Court," said Axiata, adding that both companies had dutifully and responsibly complied with all relevant regulatory and legal requirements in relation to the transaction, and acknowledged the order without prejudice to their remedial rights.

It is reported that the companies have made significant contributions to the socio-economic development of Nepal, and that Ncell directly and indirectly supported over 93,800

Axiata and Ncell are reviewing the decision of the Supreme Court.

jobs and connected over 16.3 million customers across its networks.

"We remain committed as long-term investors in the country to further enhance digital connectivity and to improve the lives of all Nepalis," said Axiata, adding that the company was Nepal's largest taxpayer, contributing NPR 125.68 billion (RM 4.68 billion) in taxes since 2014.

Indonesia, Malaysia and Colombia Urge EU to Drop Discriminatory RED II



KUALA LUMPUR - Indonesia, Malaysia and Colombia, through the Council of Palm Oil Producing Countries (CPOPC), are once again urging the EU to refrain from legislating a ban on palm biodiesel.

Senior government officials from the developing countries Indonesia, Malaysia and Colombia—under the common platform of CPOPC—gave evidence that the EU-delegated regulation was "scientifically flawed" as it discriminated against palm oil for the benefit of developed nations' soy oil and European homegrown oil crops such as rapeseed and sunflower.

Malaysia, Indonesia and Colombia collectively supply about 67 million tonnes or 95 per cent of the world's palm oil.

Indonesia's Coordinating Economic Minister, Darmin Nasution, urged the EU to drop the discriminatory delegated regulation supplementing Directive 2018/2001 of the Renewable Energy Directive II.

Darmin said this at a press conference in Brussels, which was chaired by Indonesia's Ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU, Yuri O. Thamrin.

According to Darmin, the win-win solution to this situation was for the EU Parliament to drop its unjustified plan to ban palm biodiesel.

Nonetheless, if the EU Parliament were to continue with enacting the Renewable Energy Directive II, Indonesia would be forced to formally file a complaint to the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) dispute settlement, said Darmin.

In 2013, the EU had imposed anti-dumping duties ranging between 8.8 and 20.5 per cent on Indonesian biodiesel shipments. Indonesia challenged the EU and the

WTO finally ruled in favour of Indonesia.

"If you recall, the EU had previously acted unfairly towards Indonesia," said Darmin.

"We've enough experience to fight the EU in the WTO. So, don't worry, we will fight at the WTO again, if need be."

Malaysia's Primary Industries Ministry secretary-general Datuk Dr Tan Yew Chong, who was also at the media briefing, echoed Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's message that Malaysia was not at war with the EU.

"Malaysia will not retaliate hastily. We're urging the EU to let vegetable oils trade be market-driven. Let's work together to let free and healthy competition prevail," said Tan.

Tan agreed with Darmin that the EU-delegated regulation was not based on environmental and scientific facts but was a deliberate and calculated economic strategy to remove Malaysian palm oil from the EU market.

Tan added that competing vegetable oil producers should cooperate and proposed that the global vegetable oils industry could benefit from healthy growth when EU businesses consider cooperation with palm oil suppliers to market complementary products for the world.

Colombia's Ambassador to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU, Felipe Garci Echeverri, reminded the EU that 85 per cent of the 650,000 ha oil palm-growing area in Colombia is worked on by smallholders.

Echeverri highlighted the irony of the EU contradicting itself when its own research showed zero deforestation in Colombia since 2016. Yet, at the same time, the EU sought to classify palm oil, a main export earner for Colombia, as driving deforestation.



Has Privatization Benefitted the Public?



By
Jomo Kwame Sundaram

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.

SELANGOR JOURNAL

KUALA LUMPUR - In most cases of privatization, some outcomes benefit some, which serves to legitimize the change. Nevertheless, overall net welfare improvements are the exception, not the rule.

Never is everyone better off. Rather, some are better off while others are not, and, typically, many are even worse off. The partial gains are typically high, or even negated by overall costs, which may be diffuse, and less directly felt by losers.

Privatized monopoly powers

Since many SOEs are public monopolies, privatization has typically transformed them into private monopolies. In turn, abuse of such market monopoly power enables more rents and corporate profits.

As corporate profits are the private sector's yardstick of success, privatized monopolies are likely to abuse their market power to maximize rents for themselves. Thus, privatization tends to burden the public, e.g. if charges are raised.

In most cases, privatization has not

closed governments' fiscal deficits, and may even worsen budgetary problems. Privatization may worsen the fiscal situation due to loss of revenue from privatized SOEs, or tax evasion by the new privatized entity.

Options for cross-subsidization, e.g. to broaden coverage, are reduced as the government is usually left with unprofitable activities while those potentially profitable are acquired by the private sector. Thus, governments are often forced to cut essential public services.

In most cases, profitable SOEs were privatized as prospective private owners are driven to maximize profits. Fiscal deficits have often been exacerbated as new private owners use creative accounting to avoid tax, secure tax credits and subsidies, and maximize retained earnings.

Meanwhile, governments lose vital revenue sources due to privatization if SOEs are profitable, and are often obliged to subsidize privatized monopolies to ensure the poor and underserved still have access to the privatized utilities or services.

Privatization burdens many

Privatization burdens the public when charges or fees are not reduced, or when the services provided are significantly reduced. Thus, privatization often burdens the public in different ways, depending on how market power is exercised or abused.

Often, instead of trying to provide a public good to all, many are excluded because it is not considered commercially viable or economic to serve them. Consequently, privatization may worsen overall enterprise performance. 'Value for money' may go down despite ostensible improvements used to justify higher user charges.

SOEs are widely presumed to be more likely to be inefficient. The most profitable and potentially profitable are typically the first to be privatized. This leaves the rest of the public sector even

less profitable, and thus considered more inefficient, in turn justifying further privatizations.

Elusive efficiency

It is often argued that privatization is needed as the government is inherently inefficient and does not know how to run enterprises well. Incredibly, the government is expected to subsidize privatized SOEs, which are presumed to be more efficient, in order to fulfil its obligations to the citizenry.

Such obligations may not involve direct payments or transfers but rather lucrative concessions to the privatized SOE. Thus, they may well make far more from these additional concessions than the actual cost of fulfilling government obligations.

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Thus, privatization of profitable enterprises or segments not only perpetuates exclusion of the deserving but also worsens overall public sector performance now encumbered with the remaining unprofitable obligations.

One consequence is poorer public sector performance, contributing to what appears to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. To make matters worse, the public sector is then stuck with financing the unprofitable, thus seemingly supporting to the privatization prophecy.

Benefits accrue to relatively few

Privatization typically enriches the politically connected few who secure lucrative rents by sacrificing the national or public interest for private profit, even when privatization may not seem to benefit them.

Privatization in many developing and transition economies has primarily enriched these few, as the public interest is sacrificed to such powerful private business interests. This has, in turn, exacerbated corruption, patronage and other related problems.

For example, following Russian voucher privatization and other Western recommended reforms, for which there was a limited domestic constituency then, within three years (1992 to 1994), the Russian economy had collapsed by half, and adult male life expectancy fell by six years. It was the greatest such recorded catastrophe in the last six millennia of recorded human history.

Soon, a couple of dozen young Russian oligarchs had taken over the commanding heights of the Russian economy; many then monetized their gains and invested abroad, migrating to follow their new wealth. Much of this was celebrated by the Western media as economic progress.

Excerpt: To ensure public acceptability, some benefits accrue to many in the early stages of privatization in order to minimize public resistance. However, in the longer term, privatization tends to enrich a few but typically fails to deliver on its ostensible aims.

AROUND TOWN

March 2019

Ning LIVE! at Zoo Negara

Ning LIVE! is a mini concert featuring Malaysia's Queen of Soul, Ning Baizura, who will be accompanied by an exclusive animal presentation at Zoo Negara. This concert is in aid of MYCAT (Malaysian Conservation Alliance of Tigers) to support their various operations in the tiger corridors of Taman Negara.

20 April 2019
Zoo Negara, Kuala Lumpur
Visit airasiaredtix.com for more info



HEAL OUR EARTH 2019

A noble mission in conjunction with Earth Day



Heal Our Earth 2019

Trees are crucial part of our eco-system. They are also the source of life force or prana or chi. They store chi from the sun, air and ground. They have excess chi or prana, which can be used by human beings to revitalize. With that in mind, the Pranic Healing Foundation of Malaysia has embarked on a mission to inculcate a culture of continuously sustaining balance on Mother Earth at all levels. The "Heal Our Earth" programme is specifically designed to achieve this mission.

21 April 2019
The KL and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall, Kuala Lumpur
Visit <https://docs.google.com> for more info

THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF SCIENCE

by J. D. Bernal

Book Reading & Discussion: The Social Function of Science

J. D. Bernal's important and ambitious work, *The Social Function of Science*, was first published in January 1939. This event will be facilitated by Wan Mohd Aimran, who is currently a PhD candidate at the Centre for Advanced Studies in Science, Islam and Civilization (CASIS) at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. The title of his research is "Carl Sagan and The Evolution of Astrobiology". He is also a lecturer in Astronomy and Astrophysics at the School of Applied Physics, Faculty of Science and Technology, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), where he has taught courses in Modern Physics, History and Philosophy of Science, and Ethics in Science and Technology. Join him as he discusses J. D. Bernal's work.

19 April 2019
Tintabudi Workshop, Kuala Lumpur
Visit www.eventbrite.com for more info



Film Screening x World Autism Month: Temple Grandin

In conjunction with World Autism Awareness Month this April, 'Your Own Story' and Lot'ng invite you to join a special screening of Temple Grandin, a film based on the true story of a woman with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) who overcame immense odds to become an animal scientist, author, lecturer and pioneering advocate for autism.

Throughout the event, Jolene, a clinical supervisor from Early Autism Project, will facilitate and encourage open Q&A/discussions about autism, including its characteristics, myths and treatments surrounding it from past to present. The discussion will also centre on the concept of love, particularly the unconditional love shown by those involved in the lives of individuals on the spectrum.

Proceeds from this event will go to The Hope Project, a non-profit initiative promoting accessibility of resources and services to all.

28 April 2019
Lot'ng, Subang Jaya
Visit <https://docs.google.com> for more info
www.autismmalaysia.com/the-hope-project/