



SELANGOR JOURNAL

Virtual success

THE Selangor International Business Summit 2020 (SIBS 2020) recorded an overwhelming turnout despite being held online and in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, giving the state government the motivation to hold it again this year.

The annual global business and trade expo that was scheduled to run for four days from Oct 14, 2020, saw a three-day extension due to its popularity.

With a more diverse audience and a total of 286 exhibitors and 51 speakers, the summit yielded 282 matched businesses.

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The people's welfare a priority, says Ruler

SHAH ALAM - Sultan of Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah Alhaj wants the state government to identify the problems faced by the people and to work hard towards helping those who are severely affected by Covid-19.

In a statement via the official Facebook of Istana Selangor, the Sultan said he is concerned about the welfare of his people, especially their economic problems.

"I always remind Selangor Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari and his government to delve into the people's problems and find ways to overcome their

economic problems.

"As the Selangor Sultan, I also feel the suffering of the people and always want the wellbeing and prosperity of my people to be safeguarded," he said in conjunction with his 75th birthday celebration on Dec 11.

Sultan Sharafuddin expressed hope that the people will continue to be patient and remain calm in the face of challenges and that he would pray for difficult times to be over and for things to return to normal.

His Royal Highness also expressed his appreciation to doctors, nurses, hospital

staff and the frontliners who have been working tirelessly to manage Covid-19.

"I really appreciate all your sacrifices and I pray that Allah will always take care of the health of the frontline workers so that they can continue with their duties and efforts.

"Therefore, in appreciation of the services and sacrifices of those who died while on duty, I have agreed to award them with the state's awards and medals."

The Sultan also expressed his gratitude to Allah for being able to celebrate his 75th birthday.

"With the country facing Covid-19, I have decided not to hold any ceremony for my birthday celebration this (last) year.

"However, the investiture ceremony will be held on a date to be set depending on the Covid-19 situation," he said.

Sultan Sharafuddin reminded the people of Selangor to remain vigilant and to strictly comply with the standard operating procedures as they go about their daily lives.

"I hope the risks from Covid-19 can be reduced and soon be eliminated in our country," he added. - Bernama

SELangkah now works faster to test, trace, treat

By SHEEDA FATHIL

SHAH ALAM - The SELangkah community screening portal has been refined to ensure better and faster access to information.

SELangkah Ventures Sdn Bhd chairman Dr Muaz Omar said the portal is now an integrated digital solution, not just for quick screening and contact tracing, but also provides diagnoses, reports, as well as monitoring.

"The integration process is crucial in efforts to reduce the number of tests collected especially when there is a spike in cases within a community.

"The new technological solution would ensure that individuals who have been traced and are at risk would be prompted for testing, which would help in the screening process," he said.

The portal was activated on Dec 2 during the state government's mass screening programme in several residential areas in Meru, Klang, where the

people registered a day before the portal was launched via the website screening.selangkah.my.

With the enhancements, a total of 44.2 per cent of the residents screened were tested within five hours and the results were made available within 24 hours.

The initiative received a positive response, with village heads and state representatives spreading the word to the public.

To streamline the delivery of reporting, the results collected by SELangkah are shared with the Health Ministry through the Public Health Laboratory Information System.

The public has been advised to register with SELangkah to receive notifications on the state government's free screening programmes that will be held from time to time.

For further information visit www.selangkah.my or get updates from its social media platforms on Facebook and Twitter.



A lady checks in with SELangkah at a supermarket in Shah Alam. The easy-to-use application has been enhanced to provide diagnoses and reports



New guidelines for workplaces

SHAH ALAM - The Selangor Task Force for Covid-19 (STFC) has introduced a programme that aims to prevent the spread of Covid-19 at workplaces.

Its chairman Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkafly Ahmad said the 'Preventing Outbreak on Ignition Sites' (Poise) voluntary programme brings together the efforts of the

state government, employers and NGOs.

"STFC would plan out several steps including diversifying the standard operating procedure (SOP) as well as speeding up the initial screening procedure.

"The SELangkah system will also be improved to include intermediate system integration for

contact tracing, quick screening, diagnosis, reporting and integrated monitoring," he said in a statement on Dec 11.

The former Health Minister added that the programme will enable the state administration and the Selangor State Health Department to help NGOs trace the virus in hotspot areas.



The Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah Alhaj, grants an audience to Tan Sri Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz, daughter of the late Royal Professor Ungku Abdul Aziz Ungku Abdul Hamid, on Dec 31, 2020, to convey his condolences as well as the decision to rename the iconic Jalan Universiti in Petaling Jaya after her late father. MORE ON PAGE 10

Tracing tool's use extends beyond Covid-19

BY SHEEDA FATHIL

SHAH ALAM - The SELangkah (Step In, Safely) contact tracing system has received a positive response, recording 6.4 million users within the first month it was launched.

Its project director Dr Helmi Zakariah said this indicates a general compliance with the standard operating procedure put in place to curb Covid-19.

"The public does not need to worry about the data shared on SELangkah as it is a lot safer and less risky than writing the information manually on paper," he said on *Media Selangor's* Bual Bicara talk show on Dec 28.

Also present was Selcare Management Sdn Bhd (Selcare) director Muhammad Azfizam Hamzah.

Dr Helmi said the data shared with SELangkah is not permanently stored and is deleted according to a 30-day policy to avoid abuse.

"The data is only used for health purposes in the Covid-19 contact tracing process and will then be deleted.

"That is why individuals scanning the SELangkah QR code will have to re-enter their information (each time upon checking in) as the previous data is no longer available," he said.

SELangkah is the first Covid-19 contact tracing system in Malay-

sia. The system was developed by the Selangor Task Force for Covid-19 (STFC) and has since been enhanced to feature inclusivity, taking into consideration non-smartphone users.

Meanwhile, Muhammad Azfizam said the application does not only function to trace close contacts but is also useful for other purposes.

He said the latest features also allow the public to receive information regarding programmes by the Selangor government.

"If the Covid-19 pandemic ends, SELangkah can also benefit the people by helping them to access state government programmes such as Kasih Ibu Smart Selangor (Kiss), where they only need to use the QR codes while shopping as compared to using (the) existing cards. It is easier.

"Also, through this application, the state government would also be able to keep track of the list of purchased items and if they buy things they should not be buying, we can cancel the transaction. At the same time, we know where the funds are being channelled to.

"I think it can also be developed into (something in the vein of) 'Selangor Grab' or 'Selangor Facebook' where the public can access anything and everything around them through a single (integrated) system."

STFC: Expect high number of cases till mid-year

SHAH ALAM - Covid-19 cases in Selangor are expected to remain high until the middle of this year as the state has recorded the highest daily infections in the country for 13 consecutive days.

Selangor Task Force for Covid-19 chairman Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said the



number of daily new cases is not expected to come down any time soon.

"We foresee that this will be the trend going forward until the foreseeable future perhaps till the middle of 2021. Hopefully, we will get to see the Covid-19 vaccine in the first quarter," Dzulkefly told

The *Malaysian Insight* on Dec 29.

Commenting further, Dzulkefly said the surge in cases is anticipated following the Human Resources Ministry's mandatory screening of foreign workers.

"Selangor being the most industrialised state, by way of both factories and construction sites, would naturally be the hotbed for cluster outbreaks," he said.

No symptoms for 80 pct of infections

SHAH ALAM - The mass community screening initiated by the Selangor government has shown that almost 80 per cent of the individuals tested positive for Covid-19 were asymptomatic.

This makes the screening process instrumental in curbing the spread of the virus, especially among high-risk groups, said SELangkah project director Dr Helmi Zakariah.

"It is highly crucial for us to

know about our health status, thus, the need to do personal screening or the targeted community screenings," he said on *Media Selangor's* Bual Bicara talk show on Dec 28.

Dr Helmi said the public can also log into the SELangkah website at screening.selangkah.my and pre-register if they need health officers to carry out community screening at their residential area.

"Detailed information can be

filled, after which the Selangor Task Force for Covid-19 (STFC) will determine whether an area requires community screening or not," he explained.

The state administration has previously carried out Covid-19 community screenings which include the drive-through method as well as door-to-door operations.

Selangor is reported to be the first to implement drive-through screenings.

Job fairs well received, more to come

SHAH ALAM - The 'Jelajah Selangor Bekerja 2020' (Selangor Jobs Exploration 2020) will be continued in 2021 after receiving positive feedback from the public, says state executive councillor for youth development Mohd Khairuddin Othman.

He said the state government has applied to the National Security Council (NSC) for the number of participants allowed at each venue, due to strict social distancing rules.

The number of attendees is dependent on the size of the venue.

"If the programme is held in a stadium, the number of participants can be increased to 200 or 300 due to the larger space.

"This year's career fairs had offered 18,267 jobs with qualification requirements starting from Penilaian Menengah Rendah right up to university degrees, but the NSC does not allow a large number of participants," Mohd Khairuddin told *SelangorKini* on Dec 9.

The 'Jelajah Selangor Bekerja 2020' programme which was organised by the state government received 9,969 applications since its registration opened on Sept 15.

A total of 105 employers participated in its first series, touring the state on different dates starting with Kuala Selangor on Nov 15, Gombak (Nov 21), Sungai Buloh (Nov 22), Hulu Langat (Nov 29) and Shah Alam (Dec 5 and 6).

Among the jobs on offer were the positions of lecturer, Quran tutor, accountant, sales manager, research officer, technician, meter reader, call centre operator, terminal tractor driver, supervisor and storekeeper.

Measures in place to fight unemployment

By **KHAIRUL AZRAN HUSSIN**

SHAH ALAM - The Selangor government aims to create 15,000 employment opportunities in 2021, says Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari.

He said the measures taken in order to achieve this goal include organising the Selangor Careers Programme, the Selangor Automotive Technical and Vocational Education and Teaching (TVET) initiative, and the 'Jom Kerja' and Selangor Freelancers programmes.

"The Selangor Careers and 'Jom Kerja' programmes offer 10,000 job opportunities across various sectors.

"The state government will also assist graduates of automotive schools to secure jobs through job-matching programmes under the Selangor Automotive TVET," he said when met by the press after a visit to his Sungai Tua constituency on Dec 13.

He added the state government also assists graduates and retrenched individuals to generate income through various platforms.

On Oct 30, Amirudin said a total of RM76 million had been allocated to assist those who lost their jobs following the Covid-19 outbreak in the country.



Candidates attending an interview session in one of the Jelajah Selangor Bekerja 2020 (Selangor Jobs Exploration 2020) series

Experts sought for RM200m water project

SHAH ALAM - A RM200 million project to overcome the problem of pollution of raw water sources in Selangor was approved after consultation with experts.

Selangor Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari said the state evaluated and scrutinised all the proposals made to ensure the plan's effectiveness.

"The state government held several meetings with experts until we were satisfied with the proposals, among which included diverting the flow of polluted water to other areas before it enters the treatment plant," Amirudin told members of the press when met at the Selangor State Secretariat Building here on Dec 14.

On Dec 13, Amirudin said the initiative,

which includes four projects, will begin in January this year and will complete in 15 months.

He said nanotechnology will be used to clean the water naturally.

In the event of a pollution incident, Amirudin said the flow of water will be diverted to other areas without it entering the treatment plant. Water reserves from the Hybrid Off-River Augmentation System (HORAS) and the Off-River Storage (ORS) will be pumped into the treatment plants and sufficient for five days of use.

During the tabling of the 2021 Selangor Budget on Oct 30, Amirudin had outlined four measures to resolve the state's water woes.

The measures include:

- amendments to the Selangor Water Management Authority (Luas) (Amendment) 2020 Bill that impose heavier punishments for polluters
- a pilot project to rejuvenate the quality of Sungai Gong's water by using both biological methods and human labour
- 24-hour monitoring by the Luas Rapid Squad at the Sungai Selangor and Sungai Langat river basins
- implementation of the project to pump water reserves from HORAS and ORS directly

Affordable homes soon a reality

SHAH ALAM - The Selangor government aims to build 40,000 units of affordable homes under the Rumah Idaman project by 2022.

State executive councillor for housing Rodziah Ismail said to date, four projects involving 6,029 units are either under construction or at the development planning approval stage.

"We hope that the Rumah Idaman project would be able to solve the homeownership issue

for the middle (M40) and lower-income (B40) groups.

"Housing is an important aspect in creating a harmonious society as well as for the people's wellbeing, therefore the state administration is committed to providing the people with affordable homes," she told *SelangorKini* on Dec 12.

The Rumah Idaman units on offer have over 1,000 square feet of living space and are priced at RM250,000. They come equipped

with air conditioners, kitchen cabinets, wardrobes and water heaters. The projects under construction are located in Kajang, Bangi and Paya Jaras.

On July 13, Selangor Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari said the state aims for the housing project to have an economic value of RM12 billion and hopes that with it, the issue of house ownership among the bottom 40 and middle 40 groups will be addressed.

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State woos visitors with 7,000 vouchers

SHAH ALAM - The Selangor government has launched the Tourism Voucher Subsidy Redemption programme, where vouchers valued at RM200 each will be given to the people for spending at selected places of interest.

Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari said from Jan 8 onwards, 7,000 vouchers can be claimed via the Touch 'n Go e-Wallet and Lazada platforms, and can be used at participating hotels, homestays and theme parks.

"For e-wallets, the vouchers can be redeemed through the tourism packages listed on the platforms.

"Meanwhile, for the Lazada platform, the public can redeem the vouchers through the 'Nak bercuti? Pusing Selangor Dulu!' (Want to Travel? Explore Selangor first!) campaign link and these vouchers are valid until June 31, 2021," he said.

Amirudin said this at the

launching ceremony of the 'Pusing Selangor Dulu' campaign at the Selangor Economic Action Council (MTES) meeting room on Dec 17.

He said 43 industry players comprising operators of hotels, theme parks and homestays have joined the programme.

"We must not give up and life must go on. The state government continues to work hard to implement all kinds of initiatives to ensure all of us will be able to stand up again," he said.

A total of 3,000 tourism vouchers will also be given to the state's frontline workers by early this year.

On July 13, Amirudin announced the tourism voucher subsidy worth RM2 million.

In November, a total of 553 tourism industry players in Selangor consisting of licensed tour guides, homestay operators as well as community hosts received a one-off cash aid of RM1,000.

'Pusing Selangor Dulu' kicks off

SHAH ALAM - Tourism Selangor on Dec 17 launched the 'Pusing Selangor Dulu' (Explore Selangor First) campaign to encourage all Malaysians to visit the state.

The campaign was launched by Selangor Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari who also introduced actress Che Puan Juliana Evans as the Selangor Tourism Ambassador.

Amirudin said the campaign is focused on attracting domestic visitors through eco-tourism, agro sports, theme parks and shopping.

"Through Selangor's network of nine districts, a variety of unique experiences is available for tourists," he said.

He also highlighted six categories of interest for tourists that the state has to offer and the corresponding sites that people can visit. They are:

- Nature — Sky Mirror Kuala Selangor, Forest Research In-

stitute of Malaysia (FRIM), Kuala Selangor Nature Park, Kanching EcoForest Park and Broga Hill

- xtreme Sports — White water rafting in Kuala Kubu Bharu and ziplining at Gua Damai Extreme Park

- Homestays and Agro Accommodation — Sungai Haji Dorani Homestay, Sungai Sireh Homestay, Selangor Fruit Valley and Banghuris Homestay

- Heritage and Culture — Royal Klang Heritage Walk, Istana Bandar, Bukit Malawati and Jugra

- Theme parks — Sunway Lagoon, Kidzania, Bangi Wonderland, Jumpstreet Asia, i-City and District 21

- Shopping — Mitsui Outlet Park, Sunway Pyramid, GM Klang, One Utama, The Curve and SACC Mall



FAMILY VACATION... Selangor Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari is photographed with his family at the popular Sky Mirror tourist attraction in Kuala Selangor. Amirudin picked Kuala Selangor as his family's year-end holiday destination to promote the state's 'Nak Bercuti? Pusing Selangor Dulu' campaign. The Menteri Besar also shared on his social media photos of the other places he and his family visited, including the Bukit Malawati fort, the Fireflies Sanctuary and the Kuala Selangor Go-kart Circuit.

Tourists will come, says MB

By **ZAREEF MUZAMMIL**

SHAH ALAM - The Selangor government is confident that the state's tourism sector affected by the Covid-19 pandemic will rebound.

Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari said the various unique locations in the state will drive tourist traffic to Selangor.

"Selangor has many unique and attractive places to visit as evidenced by the 2019 statistics.

"Therefore the state government is very confident in boosting the tourism sector that was affected by Covid-19," he said on Dec 24.

He said Tourism Selangor recently launched the 'Nak bercuti? Pusing Selangor dulu! (Want to travel? Explore Selangor first!) campaign to encourage people

to come and visit the many interesting places the state has to offer.

The state government has also implemented a Tourism Voucher Subsidy Redemption programme where people can claim vouchers valued at RM200 to use at selected tourist spots as an added incentive.

Amirudin also announced that last year Selangor recorded the highest number of domestic visitors in Malaysia at 33.6 million people.

According to him, the 2019 Domestic Tourism Survey report shows that the state surpassed Kuala Lumpur (22.6 million visitors), Sabah (22 million), Perak (21.1 million) and Sarawak (19.8 million).

He said the statistic shows that Selangor has many unique



Selangor has many unique and attractive places to visit as evidenced by the 2019 statistics

AMIRUDIN SHARI
Selangor Menteri Besar

and attractive places to visit, which gives the state administration confidence in revitalising the tourism sector that was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

SIBS proves a hit in first virtual meet

SHAH ALAM - The virtual version of the most prestigious annual business event, the Selangor International Business Summit 2020 (SIBS 2020), received an impressive turnout of 170,974 digital audiences.

The state-led Virtual SIBS 2020 which was held from Oct 14 was originally scheduled for four days but was extended by another three to allow the 'large crowd' to have more opportunities to create, connect and collaborate with top brands and industry players globally.

It garnered over 2,618 registered users.

Audiences were from 54 participating countries including Japan, Indonesia, India, Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines, according to a post on the Selangor International Business Summit Facebook page.

Running into its fourth year, Virtual SIBS was catered for a larger and more diverse audience last year, attracting a total of 286 exhibitors and 51 speakers. It also yielded 282 matched businesses worth RM1,093,457.

This came on the back of a (public relations) value of RM9,445,733.77 despite the worsening Covid-19 developments in the country.

In his virtual address while launching the event on Oct 14, Selangor Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari said his administration will continue to use SIBS to promote and strengthen the state as a commercial hub in the Asean region.

"The administration through Invest Selangor Bhd will continue to organise the Virtual SIBS 2021 with an allocated sum of RM11 million.

"A conducive economic ecosystem on the back of infrastructural convenience and investor-friendly policies have always been Selangor's exceptional criteria," said Amirudin.

Meanwhile, Selangor Investment, Industry and Commerce and Small and Medium Enterprise Committee chairman Dato' Teng Chang Khim in a statement said the Virtual SIBS 2020 was a success, built on insightful knowledge sharing by high-calibre speakers and with boundless cross-border networking opportunities, hence enabling companies to expand into new markets in a new norm.

"The summit successfully reaffirmed the smart state's status in leading the adoption of digital technology in doing business and at the same time, assisted entrepreneurs to reboot and rise in this time of crisis," he said.

"Offering borderless (opportunities), Virtual SIBS has been successful in bringing together global brands and congregate industry players from around the world to help business players reset and reboot while providing valuable knowledge-sharing, networking and business matching sessions catered to all visitors."

Teng said that SIBS is part of the state government's efforts to transform Selangor into a global trading hub, emphasising on the region as a market with over 640 million population and home to some 200 of the world's largest companies.

He expressed his confidence that Selangor would continue to offer the best value proposition and an ideal home for companies penetrating the Asean market.



Organised by Invest Selangor Bhd with the endorsement of the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade), the Virtual SIBS 2020 hosts exhibition, conference and webinar series in a virtual networking business platform called the Selangor Business Hub (SBH), featuring three main components, namely:

1 The Selangor International Expo (SIE), an F&B trade expo featuring exhibitors from countries like Indonesia, Philippines, India, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Spain, Singapore, New Zealand, Italy and Malaysia

2 The Selangor Asean Business Conference (SABC), which brought together prominent speakers, business leaders, trade-related associations as well as trade policy developers from multiple and diverse

backgrounds and economic sectors from Asean and its partner countries

3 The Smart City and Digital Economy Convention (SDEC), which saw the Startups Showcase 2020 where SMEs and corporations took the opportunity to combine and discover new strategies and solutions in order to grow investments. The Top E-Commerce Merchant Awards is a prestigious award that seeks to reward the most successful, creative and innovative home-grown e-merchants. The winners were announced on Nov 3

Virtual SIBS 2020 will continue in 2021, to allow entrepreneurs to utilise the platform longer than the event's official duration of seven days.

The state government is planning to return to the event with more excitement on Oct 7.

Selangor a vital partner, says Japanese envoy

SHAH ALAM - Selangor is a key destination for Japanese investments, said the country's ambassador to Malaysia, Hiroshi Oka.

He said almost half of all Japanese investments in Malaysia are located in the state.

"Selangor is very important for Japan, (this is) where we can find the largest number of Japanese companies, with 600 out of 1,500 Japanese companies operating in Selangor.

"We consider the relations with Selangor state very important," he said.

Oka was speaking at the fourth session of the virtual Selangor Asean Business Conference 2020 webinar series themed 'Asean's Growing Economies: Maintaining Regional Prosperity Amidst Crises' on Dec 15.

It was moderated by Selangor Investment, Industry and Commerce and Small and Medium Enterprise Committee chairman Dato' Teng Chang Khim.

Other panellists were the Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia Andrew John Lech Golezinski and Singaporean High Commissioner to Malaysia Vanu Gopala Menon.

The session discussed the current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic and plans for collaboration between Selangor and Japan, Australia and Singapore.

"The Covid-19 situation in Japan has more or less stabilised. This year has been a challenging year," Oka said, adding that

he hopes the Covid-19 situation in the country will flatten so that economic activities can resume.

Japan, he said, is also Malaysia's fourth-largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) with one-third of the investment coming into Malaysia originating from the island country.

Japanese FDI in Malaysia for 2019 rose by 3.1 per cent to RM31.7 billion from RM30.7 billion in 2018, according to the Department of Statistics of Malaysia.

Klang River the next economic hub

SHAH ALAM - A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between Landasan Lumayan Sdn Bhd (LLSB) and Sungai Klang Link Sdn Bhd (SKL) to implement a connectivity network project along Sungai Klang.

The MoU was signed by LLSB managing director Syaiful Azmen Nordin and SKL managing director Nazri Ismail, and witnessed by

state executive councillor for infrastructure Izhah Hashim at the Selangor Economic Action Council meeting room here on Dec 24.

Izhah told the media that Sungai Klang will become a new economic hub in Selangor in the future.

"The implementation of the Selangor Maritime Gateway (SMG) will restore the glory of Sungai Klang and will also bring an

impact to the development of Selangor and Malaysia.

"This area will be known as a location for community activities and eco-tourism in line with the vision of the state government to create a sustainable tourist area," he said.

The SMG project is a state government initiative that focuses on the rehabilitation of Sungai Klang. It will cover an area of

35,612 hectares.

The project is operated by LLSB which is a subsidiary of Menteri Besar Selangor Incorporated (MBI). The company's three main areas of focus are cleaning, conservation and development.

SMG is expected to revitalise the hotel, trade, tourism, housing and services industries along Sungai Klang.

Selcare to set up own test lab

By SHEEDA FATHIL

SHAH ALAM - Selcare Management Sdn Bhd (Selcare) is in the midst of forming its own laboratory to process samples taken from Covid-19 screenings.

Its director Muhammad Azfizam Hamzah said the lab will be set up in collaboration with Universiti Selangor (Unisel).

"We have been given a place at the Unisel campus in Shah Alam (Section 7), called the Selcare Healthcare Centre, which will have a lab and a clinic.

"When we have our own lab, the results from the screening operations can be obtained faster, more accurately and systematically," he said during *Media Selangor's* Bual Bicara talk show on Dec 28.

Muhammad Azfizam said previously, Selcare had to sub-

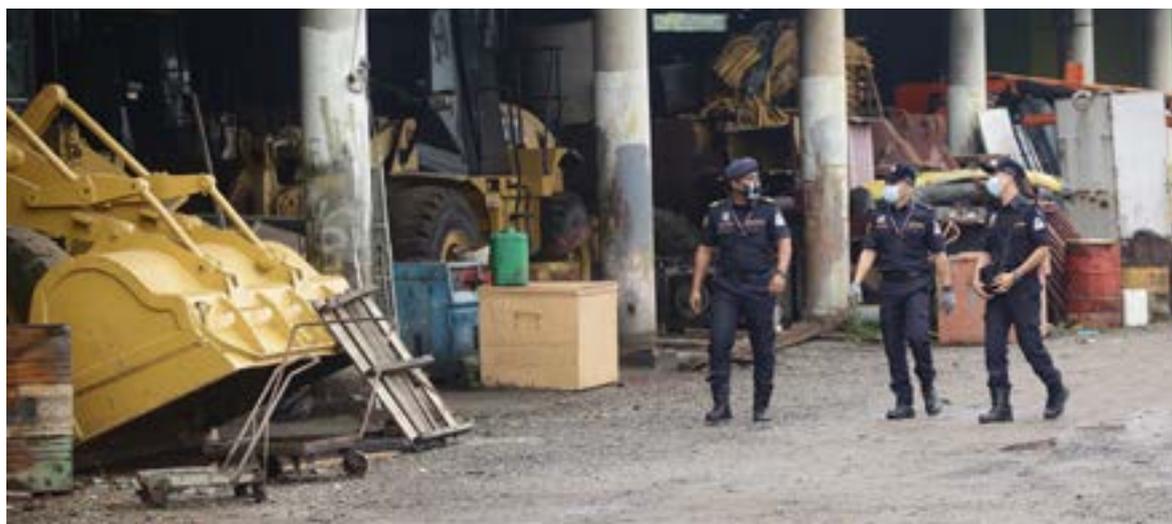
mit the samples to a third party to get the results.

"Before this, we handed over the samples to the lab in Universiti Malaya, so the processing of the results depended on them, which could cause delays," he added.

Selcare is a subsidiary company under the Selangor State Development Corporation (PKNS) and was formed in 2017 to provide organisations and companies access to healthcare services through a panel of registered private clinics and hospitals.

Selcare now has 17 clinics in operation in Selangor and three in Kuala Lumpur.

The agency has also carried out several programmes and initiatives by the Selangor government such as the Peduli Sihat scheme, Kasih Ibu Smart Selangor and the Covid-19 targeted mass screenings.



Factories built on state land to go

RAWANG - The Selayang Municipal Council (MPS) has identified more premises illegally built on state-owned land to be demolished in the near future.

Its president Shamsul Shahril Badliza Mohd Noor said factories that have failed to vacate their premises after being issued a notice will be torn down.

"At the moment, MPS and the Gombak Land and District Office (PTD) are doing a survey on all the factories, workshops or buildings that were constructed on state-owned land.

"Priority is on the ones built on

state-owned land as that is not allowed. Therefore, more premises will be issued notices and there will be more enforcement operations," he told members of the press after witnessing a heavy machinery workshop, a recycling factory and a cattle-breeding farm in Kuala Garing, here, being torn down on Dec 8.

The operations began at 10am, led by the Gombak PTD along with the police and enforcement officers from Tenaga Nasional Berhad and the Drainage and Irrigation Department.

Shamsul Shahril said since

Nov 24, six out of eight illegal premises built along the Sungai Rawang riverbank have been torn down through joint operations.

He said no incidents of river pollution were reported after the operations were held and added that regular surveillance is carried out to prevent encroachment.

"MPS, Gombak PTD and JPS will continue monitoring to ensure there is no encroachment into the areas and would also take necessary action if there are premises that breach the rules."

Air Selangor makes RM35b, 30-year plan

SHAH ALAM - Pengurusan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd (Air Selangor) will allocate an estimated total expenditure of RM35 billion in the next 30 years to improve the quality of its water.

Its chief executive officer Suhaimi Kamaralzaman said the allocation will be used to repair old pipes, for water treatment plants, for water storage tanks as well as the construction of new treatment plants.

"Air Selangor is the largest operator in Malaysia and supplies water to 8.4 million users in Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, and Putrajaya.

"Therefore, we have to plan and improve on the efficiency of the operations and at the same time ensure that there is enough quality water supply," he said in a talk show on *Astro Awani* on Dec 6.

Suhaimi said on average, Air Selangor supplies 5 million litres of water per day



We have to plan and improve on the efficiency of the operations and at the same time ensure that there is enough quality water supply

SUHAIMI KAMARALZAMAN
Air Selangor chief executive officer

(MLD) to its customers and this amount equals the combined supply for consumers in Johor, Penang, Terengganu and Perak.

Air Selangor has 34 plants that channel water to users via pipes that stretch 79,000 kilometres in length.



Events that shaped 2020

JAN 1 The smoking ban imposed by the former PH government comes into effect after a year-long grace period.

The Australian bushfires of 2019 continue into the new year, killing nearly 500 million animals.

JAN 16 The impeachment trial of United States President Donald Trump begins in the US Senate. He gets acquitted on Feb 5.

JAN 25 The Federal government confirms the country's first Covid-19 cases involving three Chinese citizens from Singapore.

JAN 30 The World Health Organization (WHO) declares the novel coronavirus outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

JAN 31 The United Kingdom and Gibraltar formally withdraw from the European Union, starting an 11-month transition period.

FEB 11 The WHO names the coronavirus disease Covid-19.

FEB 23 The 2020 Malaysian constitutional crisis, also dubbed the Sheraton Move, takes place. Several ruling and opposition lawmakers meet at the hotel in Petaling Jaya to plan a change in the country's leadership.

FEB 24 Former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad resigns as the 7th Prime Minister. He is reappointed by the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong as the interim prime minister. The Cabinet is dissolved and the PH government collapses.

FEB 27 Dr Mahathir announces an Economic Stimulus Package worth RM20 billion to counter the early effects of Covid-19.

FEB 29 The Royal Palace releases a statement on the appointment of Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin as the 8th Prime Minister.

MARCH 1 Muhyiddin swears in as Prime Minister. This leads to the setting up of an ad hoc Perikatan Nasional (PN), consisting of Bersatu, BN, PAS and GPS.

MARCH 2 PH's Melaka Chief Minister Adly Zahari announces that he is no longer the state leader and Melaka falls to PN.

MARCH 5 The Selangor government disassociates itself from Bersatu, culling an executive councillor from its administration.

So much happened in 2020, with a majority of events stemming from, or tied to, the Covid-19 pandemic in some way. Nations across the world have had to adapt to new norms, be they for social or economic situations. In Malaysia, the year saw a sudden

change in the Federal government, which brought a ripple effect across other states. Although Selangor suffered a few political defections, the state remained strong under the Pakatan Harapan (PH) leadership. Here's a look back at some of the events that took place last year.

MARCH 11 The WHO declares the Covid-19 outbreak a pandemic.

MARCH 15 Covid-19 cases increase from 242 to 428, with most of the infected coming from the Seri Petaling Mosque gathering.

MARCH 16 Putrajaya announces the movement control order (MCO).

MARCH 17 Malaysia reports its first two deaths from Covid-19.

MARCH 18 The MCO is imposed nationwide.

MARCH 20 Selangor Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari announces the first phase of the Selangor Cares Package with a total fund of RM127.8 million.

MARCH 23 Selangor records its first Covid-19 fatality.

MARCH 24 The International Olympic Commit-

tee and Japan agree to postpone the 2020 Olympic Games, which was set for July 24, and the Paralympics, for Aug 25.

MARCH 25 Muhyiddin announces the extension of the MCO until April 14.

APRIL 1 Phase 2 of the Selangor Cares Package is tabled with a total allocation of RM272.5 million.

APRIL 2 The number of Covid-19 cases worldwide passes the one million mark.

APRIL 11 Selangor launches its first targeted mass screening operations for locals.

APRIL 23 Muhyiddin announces the extension of the MCO until May 12.

APRIL 28 Malaysia records its 100th Covid-19 death.

MAY 1 Muhyiddin enforces the conditional movement control order (CMCO), which allows almost all econom-

ic sectors and businesses to reopen under strict conditions, beginning May 4 till June 9.

MAY 4 Selangor introduces the country's first contact tracing application, SELangkah.

MAY 7 Four-term assemblyman for Chini, Datuk Seri Abu Bakar Harun (Umn), dies.

MAY 12 Another PH-led government, Kedah, falls to PN.

MAY 26 The killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor in the US by members of the police spark the Black Lives Matter demonstrations and riots across the world.

JUNE 7 Muhyiddin replaces the CMCO with the recovery movement control order (RMCO), which takes effect from June 10 to Aug 31, easing restrictions.

JUNE 13 Wanita PKR deputy chief and Sementa assemblyman Dr Daroyah Alwi leaves the party with 48 others.

JUNE 28 Lembah Jaya state assemblyman Haniza Talha is expelled from PKR.

JULY 4 PN wins the by-election in Chini on a BN ticket.

JULY 13 The third phase of the Selangor Cares Package, which carries a total of RM55.85 billion in economic value, is tabled.

JULY 15 Four-term assemblyman for Slim, Datuk Mohd Khusairi Abdul Talib (BN), dies.

JULY 28 Former Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak is found guilty of all seven charges in the first of five trials on the 1MDB scandal. He is sentenced to 12 years' jail and fined RM210 million.

AUG 10 Former Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng is charged at the Sessions Court with abusing his power to obtain a RM3.3 million bribe in connection with the Penang undersea tunnel project.

AUG 28 The RMCO is extended until Dec 31.

AUG 29 BN wins all districts in the Slim by-election in Perak.

SEP 26 The Sabah state election is held after 14 days of campaigning. The Gabungan Rakyat Sabah pact (PN, BN and Parti Bersatu Sabah) wins.

OCT 2 Sabah's Batu Sapi MP, Datuk Liew Vui Keong (Warisan), dies.

OCT 17 New Zealand's Jacinda Ardern wins a landslide second term in office.

OCT 30 Amirudin tables the 2021 Selangor Budget with a total allocation of RM2.32 billion.

NOV 6 Muhyiddin tables the Federal 2021 Budget with a total allocation of RM322.5 billion.

NOV 7 Putrajaya imposes the CMCO in a majority of the Peninsular states and Sabah due to a spike in Covid-19 cases.

In the US, Joe Biden is elected the 46th US President.

NOV 15 The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is signed by 15 Asia-Pacific countries to form the world's largest free-trade bloc, covering a third of the world's population.

NOV 18 The King makes a Proclamation of Emergency for the Batu Sapi parliamentary constituency, cancelling the by-election for that seat.

DEC 6 CMCO is terminated in most states except Sabah, Kuala Lumpur, most of Selangor, and part of Johor, Negeri Sembilan, Kelantan and Perak.

DEC 15 Academician and economist Royal Professor Ungku Abdul Aziz Ungku Abdul Hamid, dies.

DEC 24 Confirmed Covid-19 cases in Malaysia pass the 100,000-mark.

DEC 27 Confirmed Covid-19 cases worldwide reach 80 million.

DEC 28 CMCO for Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Sabah and several areas in other states is extended to Jan 14, 2021

DEC 31 Malaysia records the highest number of daily Covid-19 cases at 2,525.

The transition period following the United Kingdom's exit from the EU Union on Jan 31, 2020, expires.



In honour of a Royal Professor



Awards received

- Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from France
- The Grand Cordon of the Order of the Sacred Treasure (Japan)
- The Tun Abdul Razak Foundation Award (Malaysia)
- National Academic Award in 2006
- National Merdeka Award in 2008
- Various honorary degrees from universities worldwide

The Selangor Ruler, through his private secretary Datuk Muhamad Munir Bani, in a statement on Dec 31 said Jalan Universiti in Petaling Jaya will be renamed after renowned academician Royal Professor Ungku Abdul Aziz Ungku Abdul Hamid, who died on Dec 15 in Kuala Lumpur.

The name change for the road is to recognise the late Royal Professor's services and contributions in the field of economy and education.

The significance behind renaming the 3.2-kilometre stretch is its location leading to the main entrance of three institutions of higher learning, namely Universiti Malaya (UM), International Islamic University Malaysia and MAHSA University.

According to Mohamad Munir, Ungku Abdul Aziz was a lecturer at Universiti Malaya (Singapore) from 1952 to 1961, before he was made the Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Administration, Universiti Malaya (Kuala Lumpur) from 1962 to 1965.

Jalan Universiti is a major road in Petaling Jaya that links to Kuala Lumpur and was the first dual-carriageway road built in Malaysia since its independence.

Several other places have also been named after the late academician. They are SMK Ungku Aziz (SMKUA) in Sabak Bernam, the Balai Ungku Aziz, Faculty of Dentistry in UM, and the Ungku Aziz residential college in UM.

Immense contribution

The late Ungku Abdul Aziz played a long and

The following are some of Ungku Abdul Aziz's achievements:

- ❖ The first Malaysian to become the vice-chancellor of University of Malaya from 1968 to 1988. There, he taught economics and was also the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and then the Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Administration
- ❖ General director of the Council on Language and Literature of Malaysia from 1956 to 1957
- ❖ Consultant to several specialised UN offices — the International Labour Organization, Unesco and the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East

important role in contributing to nation-building.

His idea to merge economics with social science led to the establishment of Tabung Haji, which was formed to provide funds for Malaysian Muslims to go on the Haj pilgrimage. It also birthed the national cooperative body Angkasa, with the late Royal Professor serving as its president from its inception in 1971 until 2008.

Born into the Johor royal family on Jan 28, 1922, in London, England, Ungku Abdul Aziz had a distinguished academic career, with over 50 books and monographs on social and economic issues under his name.

His alma mater include the English College in Johor Baru, Raffles College in Singapore and Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong awarded him the rank and title of Royal Professor (Profesor Diraja) on June 17, 1978, making him the sole Malaysian to hold the title today.

Hopes for a new beginning

Alhamdulillah, all praises and gratitude be to Allah for giving us the gift of life and the strength to continue fighting the good fight.

Amid all the chaos brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, I pray that the people of Selangor will continue to be protected by the Almighty.

I understand that the rapid increase in Covid-19 cases, especially in the very state we so cherish, has given rise to feelings of anxiety and concern among us all.

However, we must still continue with life and with work, to accrue knowledge and build ties with one another, albeit, through new norms that conform to the standard operating procedure because at the end of the day, our health is in our hands.

I would like to acknowledge that there are many among us who are going through a distressing time. There are those who have been laid off and there are those who have no choice but to shut down their business operations.

In realising this matter, the state government has organised multiple initiatives in order to assist the people who have lost their sources of income, to help them rise back up again and continue their lives with dignity.

Starting with the first phase of the Selangor economic stimulus package, the Selangor Cares Package, up to the third, a few immediate measures, as well as some for the long-term, have been drawn up to uplift the people's lives.

A few types of taxes have been deferred, while a few others were given some relaxation with the state government bearing the extra costs.

All these were drafted with the hope of lightening the

people's burdens.

A few programmes were also planned in the Belanjawan Selangor 2021 (2021 Selangor Budget) to encourage entrepreneurial activities as well as to spur the entirety of the 'job creation' initiatives.

One of the main programmes was the Niaga Darul Ehsan (NaDi) initiative that provides business loans of as low as RM1,000 for the Selangor people to start a business.

Other programmes include the Selangor Kerjaya (Selangor Jobs) initiative which aims to create 10,000 jobs for the Industrial 4.0 businesses through the development of new skills and through upskilling and reskilling; as well as the Selangor Freelancers programme for those who require flexibility in search of alternative income sources.

The state government is also vigorously preparing a few platforms to enable Selangor people of all races, ages and genders to take part in the gig economy by organising the e-Kitchen with Grab and e-Bazaar with Shopee.

Also assisted were those who wished to work with e-hailing companies but did not own a motor licence — we provided them with the Roda Darul Ehsan (RiDE) initiative.

In our bid to encourage more people to embrace the digital shift, the Selangor government is offering a few innovations that will soon make life easier.

For business owners participating in the Workforce Management Digitalisation Programme (Prodtk), a management system which is set to propel them towards IR 4.0 will be soon introduced.

Also new is the Rakan Digital Selangor (Selangor Digital Friends) that has appointed 1,000 ambassadors to

help the people throughout the state be more digitally savvy.

These are all important because, then, we will be more prepared to face any kinds of challenges or economic obstacles in the future, especially when the war on Covid-19 is not yet won.

Despite the downgraded Fitch Ratings on Malaysia's sovereign rating to BBB+ from A- as well as the decisions by several tech giants such as Tencent, Google and Amazon to pull out their investments from our shores, Selangor will continue to mobilise all our efforts to drive the fintech, modern agriculture, film and cyber-gaming sectors to continue staying competitive. This will be carried out via a large state investment initiative known as the Selangor Innovation Fund.

A RM100 million grant from there will benefit startup operators as well as entrepreneurs, setting in motion a string of benefits like employment opportunities for all layers of the society.

To that end, the Selangor government wishes to create 'unicorn' companies that will yield billion-dollar returns and propel our nation into the global arena.

It is with hope that the year 2021 will herald an abundance of blessings, good health and prosperity for all the people of Selangor, with not a single soul left behind.

To Allah we extend our hopes and prayers.

Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari,
Menteri Besar of Selangor

A happy new year to all

The state executive councillors would like to extend their wishes to everyone for a Happy New Year! Let us hope that 2021 will bring good tidings, sustenance and renewed faith. And let us continue to embrace the new norms and keep up the fight against Covid-19 that has taken away so many precious lives.

The diversity of faiths and culture forms the basis of our strength if we wish to build a country that is respected and admired in all fields. Have a Happy New Year 2021!

Dato' Teng Chang Khim

Investment, Industry and Trade, Small and Medium Industries

Let us hope that the year 2021 will bring hope to all of us. Stay prudent in spending and make an effort to have emergency savings for the future. As the saying goes, 'sediakan payung sebelum hujan' (get ready your umbrella before it rains).

Rodziah Ismail

Housing and Urban Wellbeing, and Entrepreneur Development

Welcome 2021! Together we keep adhering to the SOPs to put an end to Covid-19.

Izham Hashim

Infrastructure and Public Amenities, Agricultural Modernisation and Agro-based Industry

As 2021 approaches, it is hoped that all our ef-

forts will run smoothly and be eased.

Ng Sze Han

Local Government, Public Transportation and New Village Development

The arrival of 2021 will certainly bring forth new challenges to the people of Selangor. With the spirit of the new year, let us all renew our ambitions to achieve greater success. Practise a healthy lifestyle and comply with the SOPs.

V Ganabatirau

Socio-economic Development, Social Welfare, and Workers Empowerment

Have a happy new year and hope that 2021 will bring shine and renewal to our lives and may all our troubles be eased.

Dr Siti Mariah Mahmud

Public Health, Unity, Women Empowerment and Family

Hope 2021 will be better for all and we must stay united. Continue to adhere to the SOPs so that we will all be free from the Covid-19 pandemic!

Hee Loy Sian

Tourism, Environment, and Green Technology, and Orang Asli Affairs

All that we've been through in 2020 will only make us stronger in the new year. Here's to achieving our best for 2021!

Mohd Khairuddin Othman

Youth, Sports Development and Human Resource Development

Let's continue to pray that the ties that bind us as Malaysians continue to last. May we always respect one another for the betterment of all.

Borhan Aman Shah

Rural Development and Traditional Village, Malay Customs, Culture, and Heritage

May 2021 will bring us new hopes. Keep up the good work in adhering to the new norms. It will only serve to protect everyone.

Mohd Zawawi Ahmad Mughni

Islamic Religious Affairs, Consumer Affairs and Halal Industry



Selangor steadfast amidst political crises

2020 was a political coming-of-age for many of the country's voters. The sudden fall of a popular government after only 22 months at the helm, MPs switching alliances, state governments collapsing, and a parliament in fragments. In just 12 months Malaysia had become so different from when the year began.

Amidst the political turmoil, however, one state stood out.

Selangor was not without its woes, but under the stewardship of Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari it had chosen to steer through the most troubled waters, promising to the people already reeling from Covid-19 that it would uphold the voters' mandate.

The following timeline is a look back at some of the power struggles in 2020 that have shaped the country's landscape.

- ◆ **Feb 21** Arguments break out during Pakatan Harapan's presidential council meeting about when Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad would make way for Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to become prime minister.
- ◆ **Feb 23** Members of the press catch wind that party leaders from Umno, Gabungan Parti Sarawak, Bersatu and PAS have gathered at the Sheraton Hotel in Petaling Jaya to meet with several Parti Keadilan Rakyat MPs headed by Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali. News is rife that a coalition of sorts is taking shape during the event dubbed the 'Sheraton Move'.
- ◆ **Feb 24** The nation is shocked when Dr Mahathir resigns as Prime Minister and pulls Bersatu out of the PH coalition. The Cabinet is dissolved, ending PH's 22-month rule of Malaysia. The octogenarian leader stays on as the interim PM until a successor is named, Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah announces. On the same day, PKR sacks Azmin and Zuraida Kamaruddin for their involvement in the 'Sheraton Move'. This leads to the resignation of nine other PKR MPs.
- ◆ **Feb 25** The Palace announces that the King will meet all 222 elected MPs before deciding on the next step for the country.
- ◆ **Feb 27** Covid-19 makes its way to our shores, and Dr Mahathir announces a RM20 billion economic stimulus package to cushion the impact of the pandemic.
- ◆ Also on this day, the Johor Palace announces the fall of the PH-led state government following the exit of Bersatu from the coalition.
- ◆ **Feb 29** The King names Muhyiddin as Malaysia's next PM, on grounds that he has gained the majority support of the MPs.
- ◆ **March 1** Muhyiddin is sworn in as Malaysia's 8th Prime Minister. This leads to the setting up of an ad hoc Perikatan Nasional (PN), consisting of Bersatu, BN, PAS and GPS that forms a Bumiputera-dominated coalition. On the same day PKR sacks Gombak Setia assemblyman Hilman Idham.
- ◆ **March 2** PH's Melaka Chief Minister Adly Zahari announces that he is no longer the state leader and Melaka falls to PN.
- ◆ **March 5** The Selangor government disassociates itself from Bersatu after taking into account the dynamics at the Federal level. The fallout leads to the removal of the Selat Klang assemblyman Datuk Abdul Rashid Asari from his executive councillor post.
- ◆ **May 7** Four-term assemblyman for Chini, Datuk Seri Abu Bakar Harun (Umno), dies.
- ◆ **May 12** Another PH-led government falls to PN. This time, Kedah is the casualty.
- ◆ **June 13** Wanita PKR deputy chief Dr Daroyah Alwi, who is Sementa assemblyman, leaves the party with 48 others.
- ◆ **June 28** Lembah Jaya state assemblyman Haniza Talha is expelled from PKR.
- ◆ **July 4** PN wins the by-election in Chini on a BN ticket.
- ◆ **July 15** Four-term assemblyman for Slim, Datuk Mohd Khusairi Abdul Talib (BN), dies.
- ◆ **July 29** Former Sabah Chief Minister Tan Sri Musa Aman claims a simple majority to form a new multiparty government for the state, seeking an audience with the Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Johar Mahiruddin.
- ◆ **July 30** Johar consents to dissolve the Sabah state assembly after meeting Chief Minister Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal and pre-empting Musa's attempted takeover. A state election is called. Also on this day, Umno exits the informal PN coalition, seeking instead to strengthen its Muafakat Nasional pact with PAS, MCA and MIC.
- ◆ **Aug 7** The Registrar of Society approves PN's application, formalising the coalition.
- ◆ **Aug 29** BN wins all districts in the Slim by-election in Perak.
- ◆ **Sept 23** Anwar makes the claim of possessing a two-third majority in Parliament, enough to form a government. His request to meet the King is quashed when His Royal Highness falls ill.
- ◆ **Sept 26** The Sabah state election is held after 14 days of campaigning. The Gabungan Rakyat Sabah pact (PN, BN and Parti Bersatu Sabah) wins.
- ◆ **Oct 2** Sabah's Batu Sapi MP, Datuk Liew Vui Keong (Warisan), dies.
- ◆ **Oct 12** Anwar is granted an audience to see the King, but in a statement the next day Istana Negara says Anwar did not furnish the names of the MPs who supported him. The palace asks Anwar to respect the process of law.
- ◆ **Nov 16** Perak's Gerik MP, Datuk Hasbullah Osman (Umno), dies.
- ◆ **Nov 17** Sabah's Bugaya assemblyman, Manis Musa Mohd Darah (Warisan), dies.
- ◆ **Nov 18** The King makes a Proclamation of Emergency for the Batu Sapi parliamentary constituency, cancelling the by-election for the seat.
- ◆ **Dec 4** Animosity between Umno and Bersatu leads to the fall of the Bersatu-led Perak government. Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu resigns after failing to get support for a motion-of-confidence.
- ◆ **Dec 10** BN's Kota Tampan assemblyman, Datuk Saarani Mohamad, takes oath as the 14th MB of Perak.
- ◆ **Nov 6** Muhyiddin faces his biggest test of approval in parliament, in the form of the tabling of the 2021 Budget.
- ◆ **Dec 15** With 111 MPs voting aye and 108 saying nay (and one absentee), the Budget gets passed. The PM narrowly escapes a fall from grace.
- ◆ **Dec 16** The King consents to an Emergency in Gerik and Bugaya, citing Covid-19 as the reason, and allows the postponement of the two by-elections originally set for Jan 16.
- ◆ **Dec 31** The year comes to a close.

Year of managing a pandemic

No one was ready for 2020. Right from its start, Covid-19 was so fierce in its reach that within months it had upended and taken lives across the globe, devastated healthcare systems and brought economies to their knees.

Declared on March 11, 2020 as a 'pandemic' by the World Health Organisation, the virus has to date (December 2020) infected more than 80 million people and taken 1.76 million lives since the first case was detected in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

Despite the move by Chinese authorities to shut Wuhan's borders as early as possible, the virus had already made its way into other countries by asymptomatic travellers. The world watched in helplessness at the speed in which it spread and infected humans.

On Jan 25, 2020, Malaysians awoke to the news that the virus had reached the country's shores.

The then Health Minister Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad announced the first Covid-19 cases — three Chinese nationals who were related to a man in Singapore who had tested positive for the virus.

February came, and the country saw a surge in cases, emerging from a religious gathering at the Seri Petaling Mosque. The Tabligh Cluster, as it is now known, had infected 3,375 people in total, and killed 34.

To prevent the coronavirus from spreading further, the Federal government had on March 16 announced the implementation of the movement control order (MCO) for two weeks from March 18

to 31.

On March 19, Malaysia recorded its first three-digit infections with 190 new cases. This led to extensions to the MCO every two weeks until it ended on May 4 and was replaced with the conditional movement control order (CMCO).

While the number of infections stabilised, the three-month restriction order left a significant dent on the nation's economy.

The most affected industries were aviation and tourism, with many of their workers losing their incomes completely.

The Department of Statistics Malaysia said 52.6 per cent of 168,182 respondents revealed to have been financially hit by the Covid-19 situation, with 46.6 per cent of self-employed individuals, particularly in the services, agriculture, and tourism industries, facing income loss.

To cushion the economic and social impact, Selangor Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari announced the first phase of the Selangor Cares Package on March 20, with a total fund of RM127.8 million. It outlined seven core initiatives, including providing assistance for licenced small traders and businesses.

The announcement of the stimulus

package was to complement the Federal's 2020 Economic Stimulus Package worth RM20 billion, revealed by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Feb 27.

Amirudin then tabled Phase 2 of the state stimulus package on April 1, with a total allocation of RM272.5 million. Among its 17 initiatives were the setting up of the Covid-19 Special Fund as well as salary cuts for the Menteri Besar, state executive councillors, state assemblymen, as well as the top officials of state government subsidiaries.

This was followed by the tabling of the third phase of the stimulus package on July 13, which carried a total of RM55.85 billion in economic value and included coordination with various levels of state agencies.

On Oct 30, Amirudin tabled the state's 2021 budget with a total allocation of RM2.32 billion, themed 'Shaping a New Reality: Strengthening Economic Dignity as the Foundation for the People's Resilience'.

The following are other notable efforts initiated by the Selangor government.

Mass screenings

Selangor was the first in the country to launch targeted mass screening operations for communities found to have a surge in cases.

On April 8, Amirudin announced a big-scale testing operation for all red zones in Selangor. Its initial house-to-house screening alone had test-

ed 5,433 individuals.

More mass testing was carried out from April 11 to 23 in Hulu Langat, Shah Alam, Petaling, Klang, Sepang, Hulu Selangor, Gombak, and the Selangor State Secretariat building.

Frontline workers went knocking on doors in residential areas. Drive-through testing was also offered.

After a lull in cases mid-year, Selangor faced a spike in infections in October. With many of the cases linked to travel from Sabah, free testing was again provided from Oct 4 to 11 to whoever might be exposed.

Similarly, after an upsurge in cases in Meru, Klang, on Dec 2, the people there were called up for testing, with those found to carry the virus sent to hospital for treatment.

SELangkah

When the MCO was replaced by the CMCO on May 4 and people were starting to go back to work, the Selangor administration launched the SELangkah contact tracing system to monitor people entering and exiting government and business premises, should a new cluster begin at one of these locations.

The far-sighted initiative has since expanded beyond Selangor and has been upgraded as an integrated digital solution that also provides diagnoses, reports and monitoring.

Other efforts

The e-bazaar initiative was introduced in April, in conjunction with the Ramadan period, which took place during the MCO, to create a platform for affected small businesses to generate income despite the restrictions.

The Selangor Agro Market was also introduced during the MCO to address the issues of oversupply of agricultural products as well as provide sufficient food supply to the people in Selangor.





Keeping Selangor's taps running

By SHERILYN PANG

Water supply disruptions in the state of Selangor are a recurring event that drives local residents up the wall.

The people's frustrations reached almost boiling point when, on Sept 3, 2020, an unscheduled water cut forced more than a million account holders of Pengurusan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd (Air Selangor) to go without supply for almost a week.

The cause — one of the state's main rivers, Sungai Selangor, had been contaminated with hazardous chemicals released from a nearby industrial plant.

The next hit came on Oct 19. Again, river pollution was the cause, leading to the shutdown of the state's main water treatment plants.

The people of Selangor were infuriated and demanded that those found guilty of committing crimes against the environment be put behind bars.

Then, in November, yet another pollution incident happened. This compelled the Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah Alhaj, to step in and make a decree that offenders be punished with heavier fines and a mandatory jail term.

After all, not only were the water disruptions a great inconvenience to the people, they came at a time when Selangor was grappling with hundreds of cases of Covid-19 and water was essential for sanitisation.



The owners of the factory that caused pollution at Gungai Gong were charged in court on Sept 3



Taking action

The Selangor government under the leadership of Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari was put to the test. The onus was now on the state administration to act on the people's concerns.

The state reacted. On Oct 31, 2020, it tabled the Belanjawan Selangor 2021 (2021 Selangor Budget) worth RM2.323 billion, of which RM200 million was set aside for water pollution solutions alone.

A multi-pronged approach to protect and preserve the state's most vital resource was drawn up.

Topping the list of priorities was the gazettment of the Selangor Water Management Authority (Luas) Enactment.

The Bill went through 11 amendments, and in its final form pushed for a minimum fine of RM200,000 and a maximum fine of RM1 million. It also included a mandatory jail term.

Also included in the amendment: polluters would now have to pay Luas for cleaning costs and a reward system for whistle-blowers was set up.

On Dec 8, the Sultan gave his consent to the amendments, signalling a major win in the fight against river pollution.

"Such a punishment will serve as a

Executive councillor for public amenities Izham Hashim takes a sniff at a water sample to check for odour pollution at the Air Selangor headquarters in November last year



deterrence to any parties (intent on) polluting our water sources," said Amirudin during his winding-up speech in the Nov 9 State Assembly.

Environmental criminals

On Sept 15, four company directors and a workshop manager were charged under Section 430 of the Penal Code and Section 25 (1) of the Environmental Quality Act 1974 in connection with the Sept 3 pollution incident at Sungai Gong.

On Nov 9, another four company directors, this time of a used palm oil processing plant, were charged with releasing waste into Sungai Kundang in Rawang.

Then, on Nov 23, two men including a director of a company, became the first individuals to be charged under the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act (Sosma) 2012 with committing sabotage on water services in Selangor. The two also faced five other charges under the Environmental Quality Act 1974 and the Water Service Industry Act 2006.

Justice finally was taking its course.

Upholding the people's mandate

Apart from the Luas Enactment, several strategic measures were immediately put in place under what is known as the Raw Water Security Scheme (SJAM).

Under the scheme, the RM200 million budget for water solutions will be channelled towards these efforts:

- a pilot project that uses nanotechnology — a product called aquaritin — to biologically treat water catchment ponds
- 24-hour surveillance at the Sungai Selangor and Sungai Langat river basins by the Luas Rapid Squad using high-tech drones that have the ability to capture video evidence for use in court

- increasing water quality telemetry systems at high-risk areas for early detection of pollution

- the construction of a pumping mechanism that will channel water directly from reserve ponds to users, bypassing any polluted river source

- replacing old pipes in the Klang Valley from now until 2022

- providing free water to selected users in 2021

- the Friends of Rivers programme that serves to create awareness in protecting our rivers.

In summary, these strategies take into account the need for the prevention of incidents, the preservation of our rivers and the continuous maintenance of our reservoirs and water systems to keep the people's taps running at all times.

The Selangor government's success in safeguarding our right to uninterrupted and clean water will only be possible through a concerted effort from all parties involved.

Selangor FC aims for Asian stage

SHAH ALAM - Selangor FC has set its eyes on returning to action on the Asian stage in 2022 after failing to grab tickets for the Asian Champions League and AFC Cup in the upcoming season.

Selangor FC chief executive

officer Dr Johan Kamal Hamidon told *Sinar Harian* that the target was made in line with the key performance indicators (KPIs) set by the team management for the season of 2021.

Therefore, he said, the Red Giants squad managers is cur-

rently actively hunting for the best players, including import talents, in an effort to realise the target.

"Apart from wanting to challenge for the Super League title next season, we also want to be eligible to play on the Asian

stage. Because of that, we strive to bring the best players to strengthen the team.

"We have already brought in Shahrel Fikri (Md Fauzi) to be paired with the existing import striker who is also the winner of the Golden Shoes award, Ifed-

ayo Olusegun.

"With the best players, I hope Selangor FC will aspire to emerge as a Super League challenger, and then qualify to play until the Asian stage in 2022," he said to the Malay daily on Dec 28.

Dinesh all set to dazzle

SHAH ALAM - Selangor FC is slowly but surely strengthening its Super League side ahead of the new Malaysia League (M-League) season, which begins in February.

Selangor FC, in a statement on Dec 15, confirmed its third signing of the season after inking a deal with Setapak-born left back R Dinesh, who had spent four seasons with Pahang.

The Red Giants had, in early December, signed up winger Shahrel Fikri Md Fauzi from Perak and German defender Tim Heubach.

Selangor FC technical director Michael Feichtenbeiner said that Dinesh is one of the players being considered for the left back position, which has been left

vacant following the release of 29-year-old K Prabakaran at the end of last season.

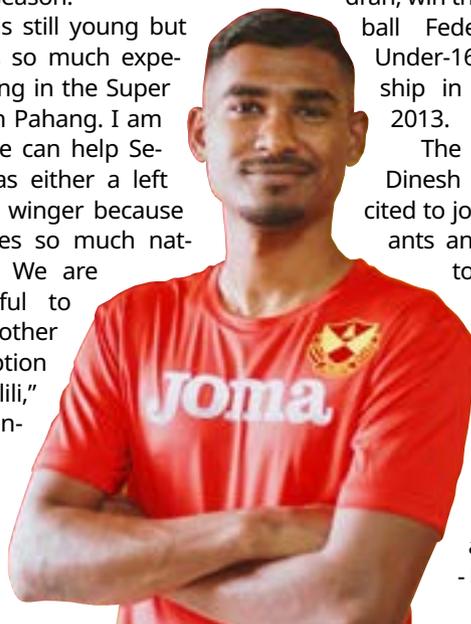
"Dinesh is still young but already has so much experience playing in the Super League with Pahang. I am confident he can help Selangor FC as either a left back or left winger because he possesses so much natural talent. We are also thankful to have another left back option in Zikri Khalili," Feichtenbeiner said.

Dinesh first made his name when he

helped the national Under-16 squad, under coach S Balachandran, win the Asean Football Federation (AFF) Under-16 Championship in Myanmar in 2013.

The 22-year-old Dinesh said he is excited to join the Red Giants and has vowed

to do his best to strengthen the team as well as learn as much as he can from his new teammates and coaches. - Bernama



Neitzel brings in compatriot Heubach

SHAH ALAM - After having secured the services of two German citizens as technical director and head coach, Selangor FC has now signed a German player for the Malaysian League 2021 which is scheduled to begin in February.

On Dec 12 Selangor announced the signing of 192-cm-tall Tim Heubach, 32, who played for Maccabi Netanya in the Ligat Ha'Al in Israel last season.

In a statement on its website www.selangorfc.com, the club said the defender had made 82 appearances and scored five goals in four seasons.

"Selangor FC is the first Asian club for him after having played for Borussia

Meanwhile, Heubach said he has never been to Asia before and wants to seek a new challenge here.

"When I was told by coach Michael Feichtenbeiner about Selangor FC, I was very excited and watched many videos related to the Red Giants team on YouTube as well as live matches. There's confidence for me to play for this team," he said.

Heubach added that he was informed that Karsten Neitzel would be the team's head coach next season and that he actually met Neitzel in Germany last October.

"That was our first meeting. I have never worked with Neitzel before, but we used to play against each other as opponents.

"During the meeting, we discussed the new challenges for the both of us in Malaysia. He also shared with me his plans and expectations." - Bernama



Review Sukma age limit, KBS urged

By **KHAIRUL AZRAN HUSSIN**

SHAH ALAM - The Selangor State Sports Council (MSNS) hopes the Youth and Sports Ministry will allow athletes who have passed the age limit for the 2022 Sukan Malaysia (Sukma) to compete in it.

MSNS executive director Mohamad Nizam Marjugi said the move will allow athletes who have been training for the past two years to take part.

"The athletes had to undergo a difficult training process due to the new norm and the standard operating procedure in order to maintain their fitness and performance.

"So we have to give those who have passed the age limit a chance, for them to use Sukma as the final platform to prove

their potential," he told *Selangor-Kini* on Dec 20.

However, Mohamad Nizam said they are ready for any possibilities including planning for a new training programme for their back-up athletes should KBS refuse to amend the age limit.

The age limit for participation in Sukma is 21 years. Events like gymnastics sets the limit even lower, at 15 years.

The 2020 Sukma and Para Sukma in Johor were supposed to be held from March 6 to 14 but were cancelled when the Covid-19 pandemic entered its third wave in the country.

KBS Minister Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican said Johor will still be the host for the 2022 edition as the state is already 99 per cent ready in its planning.

Cruelty-free shuttlecocks for the win

SUNGAI BULOH - Kumpulan Perangsang Selangor Berhad (Perangsang Selangor) has started another sustainable development and environmentally friendly initiative, which is to promote the use of synthetic feather shuttlecocks in badminton.

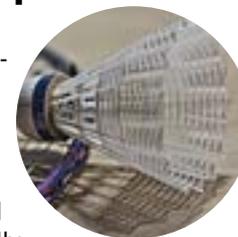
Perangsang Selangor associate director (Investor Relations and Strategic Communication) Mohd Fauzi Mohd Ghazali has urged tournament organisers and players to use synthetic feather shuttlecocks, which are more durable and cheaper, to put a stop to animal cruelty.

"To produce one dozen shuttlecocks, feathers from 48 geese

are plucked from the animal while it is still alive," he said.

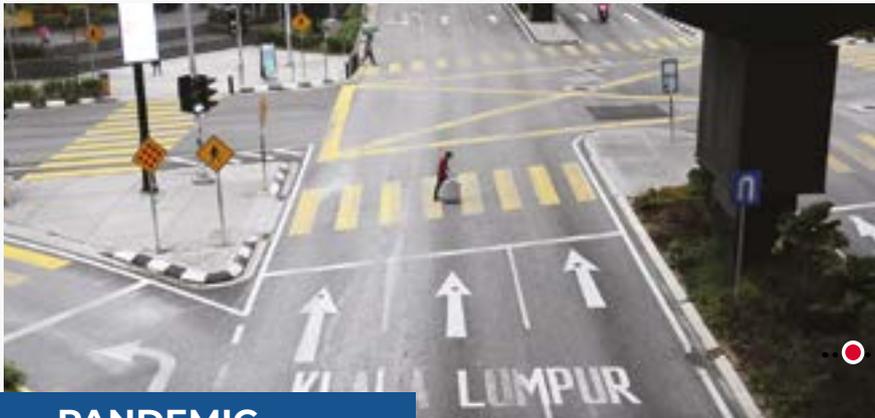
"These shuttlecocks are also about 40 to 50 per cent cheaper and can last longer. This is an opportunity for all involved in badminton to fight animal cruelty," he said after the launch of the campaign here, on Dec 13.

On average, about 24 shuttlecocks made from goose and duck feathers are used during a single tournament match. The Badminton World Federation hopes to reduce this figure by 25 per cent with the introduction of the synthetic version. - Bernama



2020 IN BRIEF

Malaysia, much like the rest of the world, had in 2020 faced challenges that revolved around three themes — the Covid-19 pandemic, stunted economic growth, and political turmoil.



PANDEMIC

The novel coronavirus impacted every aspect of human life across the globe, and by the end of 2020, some 80 million people had contracted the disease. Malaysia accumulated a total of 113,010 infections last year.

Many countries implemented measures to curb the spread of the virus, including imposing lockdowns and closing borders.

The Selangor government too, introduced a host of initiatives to keep Covid-19 at bay. A special task force was set up, the SELangkah contact tracing system was pioneered, and targeted community screenings became common practice.



ECONOMY

Due to travel restrictions and lockdowns, economic growth across the globe was stunted. Aviation and tourism suffered the biggest blow, being industries that relied on human movement. Unemployment hit an all-time high.

In Selangor, three stimulus packages were tabled to cushion the economic impact on its people.



POLITICS

In Malaysia, the 22-month Pakatan Harapan rule ended in February after several lawmakers mapped out the 'Sheraton Move' and defected, leading to the resignation of Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad. PH had not only lost its powers to Perikatan Nasional at the Federal level but saw the downfall of many of its state administrations as well.

Despite a number of attempted political manoeuvres, and the exit and sacking of MPs and assemblymen from PKR, Selangor remained strong under the PH-led government helmed by Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari.

