



SELANGOR JOURNAL



Picking up the pieces

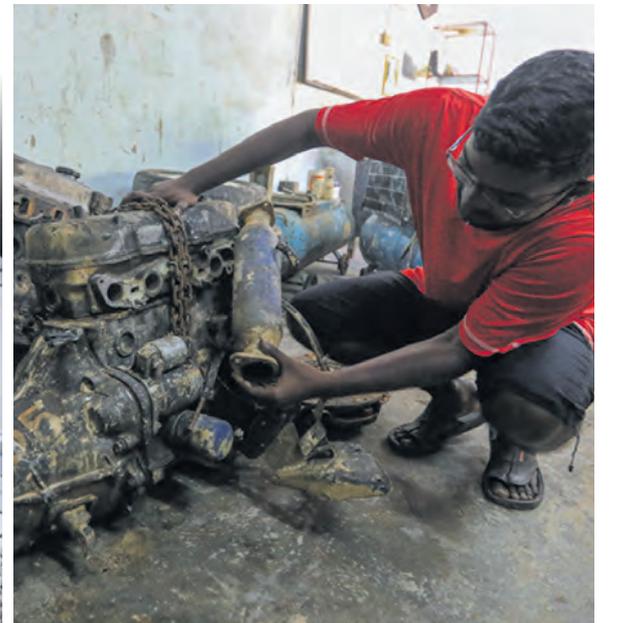


EVER since the devastating floods struck eight districts in Selangor late last year, the lives of some 47,000 residents in the state have been upended. Many of the victims have been left traumatised as a result of the huge losses they suffered.

In the days following the floods, the state government kept to its word in providing shelter, medicines and money to help the people refocus, repair and rebuild. It was also obvious that the administration had the heaviest load to bear, with cleanup efforts and infrastructural damage estimated to cost up to RM100 million.



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Residents want sirens that work

SHAH ALAM - Residents of Taman Sri Muda in Section 25 here welcomed the proposal by the Malaysian Meteorological Department to improve the country's flood management, especially the flood warning system in high-risk areas.

One of the residents, Asuwadi Ismail, 50, said the proposal could save lives and properties.

However, any such monitoring system would need to be periodically maintained to ensure that it works when most needed.

Asuwadi said that after a major flood in 1995, the authorities had placed a flood warning siren at the main bridge entering the park area at Taman Sri Muda.

He said the idea was really good, although he has never heard the siren come on, suggesting that it possibly does not work.

Among other improvement proposals submitted by the department at the Special Meeting of the North East Monsoon Disaster Post-Flood Management Task Force 2021/2022 chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob recently included a Centralised Flood Siren Warning System coordinated by the Department of Irrigation and Drainage and the installation of closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras at water-level monitoring stations so that residents can evacuate early.

Also proposed were the Numerical Weather Prediction programme and the Communication, Education and Public Awareness programme announced by the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia.

Bernama employee Chong Yinn Chuan, 64, who is also a resident of Taman Sri Muda, said he supports the proposal for a voice-warning system but that it needs to be located on higher ground to avoid getting damaged in flood waters.

"Aside from that, the sluice gates and water pumps in Taman Sri Muda must be repaired and not left neglected like what happened recently because the lives of the residents depend on them," he said.

The two residents also stated that they did not hear any flood warnings prior to, or on, Dec 18.

Selangor Irrigation and Drainage Department (JPS) deputy director (Development) Mohd Nazri Yasmin said his department would increase the volume of the flood alarm so that residents will not miss it in the event of noise disturbances during a disaster.

- Bernama

All proposals will be vetted: MB

By **MUSTAKIM RAMLI**

SHAH ALAM - Various short-term and long-term proposals to tackle flood issues in Selangor will be reviewed by the state government in February, says Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari.

He said the proposals are being compiled by state executive officer

for infrastructure Izham Hashim, and will focus on locations that are deemed critical such as Taman Sri Muda.

"We have received proposals to develop a smart tunnel and to review the budget allocation for managing our rivers. All the proposals will be assessed and tabled soon.

"We are also in discussion with the

Federal government," he said when met after the Post-flood Mega Clean-up Programme in Taman Sri Muda here, on Jan 8.

Amirudin added that the Drainage and Irrigation Department, the Selangor Water Management Authority and several private sector bodies are among those who have given their suggestions.

Website dedicated to flood relief

SHAH ALAM - Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari has been actively involved in Selangor's flood relief efforts since Dec 18 when the state experienced its worst case of flooding in decades.

He has participated in rescue missions and is regularly on the ground to make assessments and meet up with officers to determine the best forms of aid

to provide to the people.

He is also often seen ankle-deep in mud, helping volunteers from state agencies and non-governmental organisations with cleanup efforts.

Amirudin's hands-on approach has led to the setting up of a website where he shares many of his personal experiences and ideas relating to the floods

and flood relief work.

The website also serves as an archive for information and announcements relating to all state-sponsored programmes, like the list of recipients of the Bantuan Selangor Bangkit (BSB) initiative.

The website can be accessed at www.amirudinshari.com/banjir-selangor-2021.



KDEBWM to manage factory waste by year end

SHAH ALAM - KDEB Waste Management (KDEBWM) plans to take over the management of factory waste that is currently under the jurisdiction of the local councils in Selangor.

Its managing director Ramli Mohd Tahir said the plan, to be realised by the end of the year, aims to reduce incidents of illegal waste dumping that happens regularly in the state.

KDEBWM is currently managing two local councils, the Kuala Langat Municipal Council and the Kuala Selangor Mu-

nicipal Council.

"Illegal waste is being dumped everywhere in Selangor, and we do not want this to keep happening. Hence, we plan to expand our services to also manage illegal waste from factories," he said on the 'Bual Bicara' talk show that was broadcast live on *SelangorTV* on Jan 7.

Ramli added that the company also intends to buy more cleaning assets for usage during emergencies, especially floods.

A total of RM12 million had been spent to rent 10-tonne and 40-tonne lorries to collect solid waste following the Dec 18 floods.

"We had to rent lorries to collect solid waste from the affected areas," he said, adding that 500 Roll-on-Roll-off (RoRo) bins were also mobilised.

The state-owned company has been in charge of the post-flood cleanup since Dec 20, with 44,500 tonnes of waste transported out of the affected areas to date.



A road damaged from the December floods in Sungai Lui, Hulu Langat

RM40m reserved for urgent repairs

By NASUHA BADRUL HUZAINI

SHAH ALAM - The State Executive Council Meeting (MMKN) has approved an allocation of more than RM40 million for immediate post-flood repairs and infrastructural works, said Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari.

Out of the total, RM31.7 million has been allocated to the Selangor Public Works Department for projects which need urgent restoration.

"The projects include cliff slope clearance along Jalan Peras in Kuala Kelawang, Jalan Sungai Lui in Sungai Lalang, Jalan Ladang Caledonia in Batu Arang and Jalan Selayang in Kepong.

"The allocation will also be used for the replacement of the Sungai Jenderam bridge and for road restorations in Jalan Sungai Lui and Bukit Peras," Amirudin said during a post-flood update at the Selangor State Secretariat Building on Jan 7.

He added that an additional RM9.18 million has been approved for 13 projects related to the improvement of river banks which comes under the purview of the Selangor Irrigation and Drainage Department.

"The allocation will be utilised to strengthen the river banks, construct river bunds and also build a Tenaga Nasional Berhad platform.

"The money will also be used to purchase mobile gensets, as well as to improve the flood warning systems at selected hotspots.

"The approval by MMKN is for the ongoing works and upcoming restoration works, which will commence within a month," Amirudin said.

Torrential rain from Dec 17 to 19 last year resulted in severe flooding in eight districts in Selangor.

A total of 47,762 people from 11,273 families were affected, seeking shelter at 272 temporary relief centres across the state.

Eco-friendly microbes to the rescue

SHAH ALAM - The Selangor government will be using effective microorganism (EM) technology to disinfect flood-hit areas to prevent the spread of diseases.

Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari said the state administration is not only focused on clearing up the refuse left by the flood but also intends to disinfect the 11 waste transfer stations in the state.

"The refuse collected at the transfer stations has been there for more than 10 days, causing harmful bacteria to grow, which can cause diseases.

"We believe that EM can control the growth of bacteria and reduce the stench coming from the waste," said Amirudin after overseeing the post-flood rehabilitation programme in Kampung Padang Jawa here on Jan 8.

EM technology is a method that uses beneficial microorganisms to decompose organic matter and lower the carbon-nitrogen ratio of refuse.

Meanwhile, Batu Tiga state assemblyman Rodziah Ismail said that EM technology will also be used to help clean up around 10,000 houses that were recently flooded.

"The houses in Padang Jawa Petaling, Padang Jawa Klang and Kebun Bunga will be sprayed with an EM solution that will act as a disinfectant. The areas surrounding the houses, including the back lanes and alleyways, will also be disinfected.

"EM technology will not only remove the bacteria and stench but will also act as organic fertilisers that will be good for any crops planted there," she added.

Three-month target for second round cleanup

SHAH ALAM - State-appointed KDEB Waste Management (KDEBWM) is now aiming for the second phase of its cleanup operations in Selangor's flood-affected areas to be completed within three months.

Its managing director, Ramli Mohd Tahir, said the second phase which started on Jan 8 focuses on collecting waste leftovers and cleaning clogged drains and ditches.

He added that an estimated 3,000 tonnes of garbage is cleared every day and sent to disposal sites in Jeram, Tanjung 12 and Dengkil.

"The collected waste is immediate-

ly sent to the disposal sites and will no longer be placed at the temporary transfer stations as those will be closed," Ramli said.

Some 8,000 KDEBWM personnel, including lorry drivers and garbage handlers, are on duty for the second phase.

Work is carried out manually, with personnel digging drains and sucking up mud using the Catch Basin Cleaning method.

"Our focus is to clean every back and side of houses until we have succeeded in restoring the flood-affected area to its previous state," he said.



Step up booster shots, urges STFO

By NORRASIDAH ARSHAD

SHAH ALAM - The Covid-19 vaccine booster shot programme for the public should be intensified to match how the earlier vaccination programme was run.

Selangor Task Force Operation (STFO) director Dr Mohammad Farhan Rusli said the Federal and state governments should take proactive measures to ensure accessibility of the booster dose.

"Do it like what we did for the first dose. Go to each area to offer the shots. Previously, many senior citizens were reluctant to go to the vaccination centres for their first dose due to transportation issues.

"Therefore, do not take a step backwards this time. Spend some money to ease the process for the people because if they fail to get the booster shot, it will hurt the economy," he said during a live broadcast of the 'Bual Bicara' talk show titled 'Is a Fourth



Booster Needed?' on *SelangorTV's* YouTube channel and Media Selangor's Facebook on Jan 12.

Dr Mohammad Farhan added that both the Federal and state administrations must work closely to ease the process.

"Involve the state government as it

knows the needs and wants of the locals better.

"The state government also has the manpower (to carry out the job). It has local councils, state representatives, state assemblymen and council members who can facilitate the process. This is a must," he said.

Money back for unused coupons

CHERAS - From April onwards, all unused parking coupons can be redeemed at local council offices in Selangor.

State executive councillor for local government Ng Sze Han said the monetary amount of the coupons can also be credited into the Smart Selangor Parking (SSP) application.

"For those who want their money back, the redemption process can be carried out at local councils but we will provide more information on that at a later date," Ng said.

"As of now, the feedback we received on the use of the e-coupons have been good due to the pandemic, and for those who have yet to use up their parking coupons, we urge them to do so quickly," he added.

Selangor is phasing out the use of parking coupons and has enforced the use of e-coupons via its SSP app, which is available on the App Store and Google Play Store.

Some 1.7 million users have downloaded the app so far.

The public is allowed to use the scratch and display manual coupons for parking at all local councils in Selangor up until the end of March.

For further enquiries, contact 1-700-81-9612 or email sspsupport@ssdu.com.my.

Sungai Gong's water quality improves

SHAH ALAM - The bioremediation pilot project for Sungai Gong has shown satisfactory results in producing cleaner water, says Pengurusan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd (Air Selangor).

Air Selangor said the murky water in Sungai Gong is now cleaner due to a reduction in accumulated sediment.

Bioremediation is the use of microbial species to clean up contaminated water.

"The pilot project was implemented in an area managed by the Selangor

Water Management Authority (Luas) under the Raw Water Security Scheme (SJAM) initiative by the state government," said Air Selangor on Facebook on Jan 6.

"The water supply index in this area has recorded a positive increase following the production of natural oxygenated water.

"To ensure that we can continue to preserve and conserve this raw water source, let us work together to take

immediate action in the event of any pollution incidents in the future," it added.

The scheme was mentioned during the tabling of the 2021 Selangor Budget in October 2020 when Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari outlined several measures to resolve the issue of water supply disruption.

Following that, in December 2020, the Menteri Besar on Facebook said the state administration has come up

with four steps under SJAM to ensure the people of Selangor would receive a continuous water supply.

The four steps outlined include early treatment of water treatment ponds; monitoring and surveillance; construction of direct pumping infrastructure from Sungai Selangor's storage pond (end of 2022) and enforcement of the Selangor Water Management Authority (Luas) (Amendment) Enactment 2020.

ADVISOR: Editorial Advisory Board

GROUP EDITOR: Fathi Aris Omar

EDITOR: Ida Nadirah Ibrahim

ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR: Alang Bendahara

SUB EDITOR: Nur Anis Audrey Ong

JOURNALIST: Nasuha Badrul Huzaini

MARKETING & ADVERTISING:

Nadhrh Azlan nadhrh@mediaselangor.com

Syahir Khadri syahir@mediaselangor.com

PHOTOGRAPHER: Zakki Jilan, Hafiz Othman,

Raheemie Arifin & Fikri Yusof

GRAPHIC & LAYOUT: Graphics Department MSSB

Level 11, Menara Bank Rakyat, No. 1, Jalan Indah 14/8,
Seksyen 14, 40000 Shah Alam, Selangor
Tel : 03-5523 4856 Fax : 03-5523 5856 Email: info@mediaselangor.com

State's hiking trails reopen

SHAH ALAM - Hiking tourism activities at Selangor's permanent forest reserves (HSK) can resume once the prohibition period ends on Jan 31.

Sinar Harian quoted Hee Loy Sian, the state executive councillor for tourism, environment, green technology, and Orang Asli affairs, as saying that the forest reserves will be open to the public again on Feb 1.

Hee was responding to queries by hiking enthusiasts and sports organisers who wish to revisit the forests as weather conditions have improved.

On Dec 31 last year, the Selangor State Forestry Department announced that all hiking activities in the state's HSKs would be halted from Jan 1 for a month.





A guzheng performance and a lion dance act are on the cards

A celebration of culture

By **NASUHA BADRUL HUZAINI**

SHAH ALAM - Members of the public can stand a chance to win some cash in an online competition that will be held on Facebook in conjunction with the state's Chinese New Year celebration.

The celebration, to be broadcast live on social media, will be hosted by Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari's Mandarin Facebook page (@ami.mb-selangor) as well as Teng's Facebook page at 9pm on Feb 1.

Selangor Buddhist and Taoist special committee chairman Dato' Teng Chang Khim said to participate, contestants are required to submit a Chinese New Year greeting in any language in the comments section.

However, they must first listen to the

instructions given by the host and submit their greeting when a cue is given.

"Our panel of judges will evaluate the best and most attractive greeting, and the participants stand a chance to win the grand prize, which is a RM288 ang pow," Teng said during a press conference at the Selangor State Secretariat Building to elaborate on the celebration.

The competition will also offer consolation prizes in the form of a RM188 ang pow (to four winners), a RM68 ang pow (to 20 winners) and a RM38 ang pow (to 200 winners).

The state-level CNY celebration will only be held online this year, similar to last year's edition.

Teng said this year's programme will feature more diverse performances in the hope that it will attract viewers of all ages.

"I am sure the viewers will be impressed by the quality of the show. It will feature performances by artists from the 1970s through to the 2000s," Teng said, adding that television personality Yoke Chen and popular YouTuber Jym Chong are set to host.

He added that the state government has also introduced a CNY song titled 'Salam Tahun Baru', which will be performed by several artists including Chow Kam Leong, Chang Sang Teck, Lim Wen Suen, and Lee Elaine.

"The newly-composed song by the renowned composer Chow Kam Leong revolves around the CNY celebration. The music video was recorded at a village in Jenjarom, and viewers can watch it online through our social media platforms," he said.

The highlights of the online celebration include classical festive songs by Chow Kam Leong, Chang Sang Teck and Lee Elaine, a lion dance by the Hong Jing Lion Dance Association of Selangor, a dance performance by Dua Space Dance Theatre, an a capella performance of festive songs by Colour of Voices, and a guzheng (plucked zither) performance by Sara Heng.

Apart from that, other programmes include a Chinese drums performance by Hands Percussion, an electronic guzheng and LED diabolo performance by Sara Heng and the DiAbolition group, a performance by Lim Wen Suen, a performance by Gaston Pong & JE Pong, and a Chinese New Year speech by members of the Selangor state government meeting council.

PM admits to flaws in flood response

SHAH ALAM - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob has admitted that the floods that hit Selangor last year were beyond the capabilities of the State Disaster Management Committee (JPBN).

He said Selangor rarely faces floods of such scale and that the disaster was an unexpected event, despite the continuous weather warnings.

"For example, although the residents in Taman Sri Muda, Shah Alam, are used to facing flash floods due to heavy rains, they did not expect that the water levels would increase drastically and reach such a high level at the time.

"Rescue agencies had also faced difficulties in getting the residents to evacuate immediately," he said when tabling the papers on the disaster at the Special

Meeting of Dewan Rakyat here on Jan 20.

Ismail Sabri said many flood victims did not want to leave their houses for several reasons, including that the location of the relief centres (PPS) was too far away, that their homes might get broken-in, and the fear of being infected with Covid-19 at the PPS. This resulted in many residents getting trapped as floodwaters surged.

He said rescue efforts were also hampered by stranded vehicles on the main roads that blocked the access of rescue boats.

Other challenges include the need to get the services of guides to help rescue teams due to unfamiliar terrain and the loss of electricity supply to the worst-hit areas, making it impossible for victims

to get help.

Ismail Sabri also said that the government has identified three areas in its flood management that must be quickly addressed, including in the understanding of the National Security Council (NSC) Directive No. 20.

He said this is because there were weaknesses among all the agencies involved, including those at the national, state and district levels, as well as among those in the public sector and in non-governmental organisations, in understanding their roles and responsibilities under the NSC directive for the period before, during and after the disaster.

He said the government had also identified weaknesses in command and control, with the absence of the National

Disaster Management Agency (Nadma) at the state and district levels, making it challenging to coordinate relief efforts.

With this, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Special Functions) Datuk Abd Latiff Ahmad said that the government is thinking of setting up Nadma at the state and district levels.

He said this is in line with the Cabinet's decision on Dec 22 last year to review the current structure of Nadma to strengthen its role as the country's disaster management agency.

He said Nadma is also drafting a Disaster Management Bill, which, among others, will cover aspects of governance, enforcement, preparedness, disaster risk reduction (DRR), response, rehabilitation and redevelopment.



Photo REUTERS

SHAH ALAM - Malaysia's growth trajectory for 2022 is expected to be in the range of 5.5 per cent to 6.5 per cent, according to the *Malaysia Economic Outlook 2022* by the Finance Ministry (MOF).

The Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) said that on the supply side, four economic sectors are expected to grow, led by the services and manufacturing sectors, which account for more than 80 per cent of the GDP.

In its *Malaysian Economic Statistics Review* (MESR) published earlier this year, the department said that the normalisation of economic activity based on widespread vaccination is expected to enhance the services sector, particularly the wholesale and retail trade subsector, as well as domestic tourism-related activities.

It stated that the manufacturing sector's planned expansion is also in line with the expected gradual recovery in demand from export-oriented businesses.

"Overall, the projections of economic growth are based on further expansion in global and domestic economic activities, fuelled by progressive vaccination rates amid losses in the large-scale floods at the end of 2021.

"Nonetheless, the domestic demand recovery is also projected to continue in

Positive vibe will spur job market: DOSM

2022, anchored by private consumption, following the gradual improvement in the labour market and consumer sentiments.

"Stronger external demand, especially for electrical and electronics (E&E) products and major commodities, is expected to support the surge in exports," the report read.

With the lessening of Covid-19 containment measures that allow for the restoration of economic operations, DOSM said that a more determined outlook is expected in the near future.

DOSM stated that this is reflected in the Leading Index's (LI) positive performance, with the index level remaining above 100.0 points in October 2021.

"The LI's annual growth increased by 0.3 per cent to reach 109.5 points. In view of businesses, they are expect-

ing a strong business performance over the next six months (October 2021 to March 2022) as indicated by Business Tendency Statistics.

"The positive vibe is reflected by the overall net balance which jumped to +24.1 for the period October 2021 to March 2022 compared to -21.7 recorded for the period July to December 2021," it said.

However, DOSM said that the recent floods may have disrupted supply chains and resulted in considerable losses for firms in the impacted areas. This occurrence is predicted to have an indirect impact on productivity in the area.

Meanwhile, DOSM said that according to the MOF's *Malaysia Economic Outlook 2022*, employment would increase by 2.3 per cent to 15.5 million in 2022, while the unemployment rate will drop to 4.0 per cent.

However, it said given the large concentration of economy and employment, particularly in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, the recent severe floods that affected the country's central and east coast regions may contribute to a slower recovery.

"On the other hand, the WHO's warning about the increased number of new Covid-19 cases due to the Omicron form

could complicate recovery efforts," it said.

DOSM stated that since all states had transitioned to Phase 4 of the National Recovery Plan (NRP), more economic, social, and recreational activity had resumed.

It said the ease of interstate travel is expected to have a substantial impact on domestic tourism-related enter-

prises, such as the arts, entertainment, and recreation, as well as transportation activities, allowing them to reclaim lost ground.

In addition, a number of programmes and activities aimed at aiding the impacted groups have been implemented.

"Furthermore, the Malaysian government's Budget 2022, which among others focuses on rejuvenating the labour market, restoring business capabilities, generating and retaining jobs as well as increasing social protection, may support the businesses as well as employees, hence accelerating the recovery of the labour market.

"These positive developments have steered further resumption of economic activity in Malaysia, which may boost labour demand and lead to the creation of more job opportunities, hence laying the foundation for continuous labour market recovery," the report said.

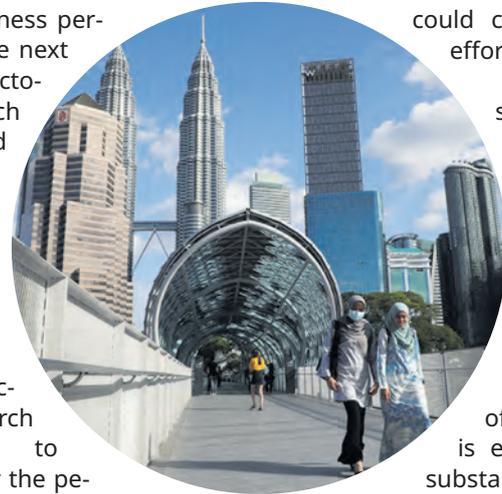


Photo BERNAMA

State readjusts investment target, errs on side of caution

By **NASUHA BADRUL HUZAINI**

SHAH ALAM - The state government has reduced its investment target for this year to RM8 billion from RM12 billion last year due to economic uncertainties.

State executive councillor for trade and investment Dato' Teng Chang Khim said the decision was made following the fact that the constantly mutating Covid-19 virus is yet to be fully suppressed.

"The new variants pose higher infec-

tion risks and as most of the countries in the world have yet to reopen their borders, we have decided to be more cautious and conservative in predicting the investment value for this year.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has hindered our efforts to explore the investment opportunities in other countries.

"Even though several trade missions have been planned for this year, the possibility of them being postponed or cancelled is high as air travel is still risky.

"Having said that, the postponement would definitely affect the value of in-

vestment in Selangor," he said during a press conference at the Selangor State Secretariat Building on Jan 21.

Teng, however, said Selangor would remain focused on five clusters which have become the biggest contributors to investment in the state.

"The clusters are the electrical and electronics (E&E) industry; the life sciences industry; the machinery industry; the food and beverage industry and the transport equipment industry. All of these sectors are already being included in the Selangor Industrial Master Plan,"

he said.

Teng added that the state government will also reconsider its participation in the Dubai World Expo which is expected to be held in March.

"During the State Executive Council Meeting (on Jan 19), we discussed whether to proceed in organising the Selangor Week programme at the Malaysian pavilion, or to cancel the event.

"As of now, the decision is to reduce the state's entourage but we will continue to monitor the progress of the event before making a final decision."

Selangor records highest growth in exports

KUALA LUMPUR - Selangor recorded the highest increase in exports in November 2021, contributing RM6.3 billion to the country's total exports growth of 32.4 per cent to RM27.5 billion in the month, according to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM).

Chief statistician Datuk Seri Mohd Uzir Mahidin said Johor and Penang took the second and third places with exports expanding by RM5.3 billion

and RM4.4 billion, respectively.

Malaysia's total trade for November 2021 amounted to RM205.5 billion, up 34.9 per cent year-on-year, with exports of RM112.2 billion and imports worth RM93.3 billion.

Mohd Uzir said the other states that posted growth in exports included Sarawak (RM3.1 billion), Kedah (RM2.1 billion), Sabah (RM1.8 billion), Pahang (RM1.6 billion), Kuala Lumpur (RM1.2 billion), Melaka (RM904.8 mil-

lion), Labuan (RM692.5 million), Perak (RM254.0 million), Negeri Sembilan (RM245.8 million), and Perlis (RM11.2 million).

"However, a decline in exports were recorded by Terengganu (RM346.6 million) and Kelantan (RM42.5 million)," he said in a statement on the Exports Imports Statistic By State for November 2021 that was released on Jan 13.

Meanwhile, the five states that dominated Malaysia's exports were Pen-

ang (28.2 per cent), Johor (20.6 per cent), Selangor (19.0 per cent), Sarawak (7.6 per cent), and Kedah (4.0 per cent).

He said these five states accounted for 79.4 per cent of Malaysia's total exports in November 2021.

As for imports by state, Mohd Uzir said Penang registered the highest import figures with an increase of RM6 billion, followed by Johor (RM5.6 billion), and Selangor (RM4.7 billion). - Bernama

Sidec extends digital lifelines to SMEs

KUALA LUMPUR - In its aim to lead Selangor's digital transformation and make it the Asean digital hub, Selangor Information Technology & Digital Economy Corporation (Sidec) has been actively developing digital-native talent and providing support to businesses in recent years.

Despite the importance of digitalising, many businesses and small-medium enterprises (SMEs) are still struggling to embrace the digital world due to a lack of knowledge, skills and experience to pivot away from traditional business models.

With 98.5 per cent of business establishments in Malaysia being SMEs, they represent the backbone of the country's economy. Of these states, Selangor has the highest number of SMEs, constituting 19.8 per cent of the total.

Between 2015 and 2020, Sidec has enlisted 650 companies onboard the Online 100 & Brands 100 programme, achieving RM650 million in gross merchandise value. Since 2018, the agency has nurtured a total of 120 startups through its Selangor Accelerator Programme (SAP).

In addition, through the Selangor E-Bazar Campaign, some merchants were reported to have recorded a spike in sales ranging from RM2,000 to RM3,000 in a month, to RM12,000 to RM30,000, via e-vouchers.

Since April 2021, the Selangor government, through Sidec, has channelled RM5 million to 1,048 SMEs via the Selangor SME Digitalisation Matching Grant.

By last October, 1,048 SMEs had been able to digitalise their businesses, with many of them witnessing improved sales and minimised operational costs.

Sidec continues to improve its programmes, including the Selangor Online 100 and Brands 100, E-Commerce Class and Masterclass as well as the SAP. An accelerator programme focusing on the fashion and gaming industries is also in the pipeline.

The upcoming SAP will focus on financial technology and AI. The agency hopes to discover and cultivate more talent within these fields as Selangor strives to become a leading Smart State in Southeast Asia by 2025. - Bernama



By NASUHA BADRUL HUZAINI

Bent but **not** broken

A month has passed since the unprecedented floods that hit eight districts in Selangor late last year threw into disarray the lives of 47,000 people in the state.

The devastating event that started on Dec 17 claimed 25 lives by the time the waters subsided. It led to the opening of 227 temporary relief centres for those who had to flee their homes, many in the middle of the night.

The large-scale flooding had caused significant damage and losses, leaving many of its victims distraught and traumatised.

No one can ever imagine the amount of pain they had to endure upon seeing their belongings get washed away in the blink of an eye.

Many people in the Klang Valley had come together to offer relief in ways big and small. Temporary kitchens were set up to cook hot meals for distribution to those who were stranded on the upper floors and roofs of their homes.

Dried food rations, clothing and other basic necessities poured into the offices of non-governmental organisations, and into mosques, temples, churches and gurdwaras through various donation drives.

In the early hours of the floods, the state government rushed to mobilise boats and manpower to transport people to safer ground. In the difficult days that followed, it provided shelter, cash aid and medical assistance to everyone who needed.

A RM100m initiative

On Dec 21, Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari announced an allocation of RM100 million in funds under the 'Ikhtiar Selangor Bangkit' initiative to kickstart the state's recovery process.

Out of the total, some RM20 million was allocated for cleanup and recovery operations, while the remaining RM80 million was dedicated to rebuilding damaged infrastructure.

Funds were also set aside for the victims. The families of those who perished in the disaster were promised, and given, RM10,000 each. Others whose houses were damaged by floodwaters were given RM1,000 in cash under the Bantuan Selangor Bangkit (BSB) programme to help them rebuild and buy new items.

Within 11 days of the flooding, distribution of the RM1,000 cash aid had already begun. As of Jan 20, approximately RM41.037 million has been handed out to the people, benefitting 40,917 families.

On the Federal front, a total of RM1.4 billion was spent on post-flood assistance. Like the Selangor government, Putrajaya also handed out cash aid to affected families.

This includes for each household, the Bantuan Wang Ihsan (BWI) cash aid of RM1,000, the Bantuan Keperluan Harian of RM2,500, full exemption from electricity bills and a RM500 rebate to purchase electrical appliances, among others.

As of Jan 20, the Federal government has channeled over RM125 million to the states affected by the floods.

Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Abdul Aziz said since Dec 27,

1 Amirudin helps to clear mud left over from the flood in Taman Sri Nanding, Hulu Langat



2 Fakhrurazi hands out aid to the residents in Taman Bayu Meru



3 Gunarajah loads up a truck with essentials to be distributed to flood victims in Taman Sri Muda



4 Teng hands over basic necessities to flood victims in Taman Klang Utama



5,6&7 Volunteers and various agencies come together to clean up the flood-ravaged neighbourhoods



75,000 heads of families had received the aid with total disbursements amounting to RM75,000.

A massive cleanup

As soon as the floodwaters receded, state-owned solid waste management company KDEB Waste Management Sdn Bhd (KDEBWM) stepped in. It wasted no time in mobilising all its machinery and equipment to the flood-stricken areas and did not hesitate to rent more cleaning

trucks and bulldozers to speed up the job.

The first phase of the cleaning process, which began on Dec 20, was successfully concluded on Jan 8, 2022. Over 78,000 tonnes of bulk waste was cleaned up in collaboration with local authorities and other agencies.

As for the KDEBWM operation alone, a total of 48,589 tonnes of waste were collected during the 20-day operation. Its managing director, Ramli Mohd Tahir, said over 2,000 workers were assigned to the cleanup sites with 500 compactors and 600 Roll-on-Roll-off bins brought there to ramp up the cleaning process.

Currently, the company is carrying out the second phase of its operations in Selangor, and the process is expected to be completed within three months.

Ramli said up to 8,000 KDEBWM workers will focus on collecting waste leftovers and cleaning clogged drains and ditches.

"The cleaning is done manually, with personnel

digging and sucking up the mud from drains using Catch Basin Cleaners. Our focus is to clean every back and side of houses until we have succeeded in restoring the flood-affected area to its previous state," he said recently.

Meanwhile, the country's garbage collector, Solid Waste Management and Public Cleansing Corporation (SWCorp), stated that it had collected 85,134 tonnes of flood waste in six states as of Jan 15.

Deputy Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ismail Abd Muttalib said the cleanup effort involving the states of Pahang, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Kuala Lumpur and Selangor is 98 per cent completed while in Johor it is 90 per cent completed.

A total of 438 tonnes of flood waste was cleared, involving 112 units of machinery and 354 employees under the supervision of SWCorp, Alam Flora Sdn Bhd and E-Idaman.



"Given the huge amount of money that needs to be disbursed daily, we are very cautious as we need to take the government officers' safety into account. I estimate the total amount of the BSB cash aid to reach RM70 million"

Teng Chang Khim

Bunga, and in the interiors of 10,000 houses that were standing in water, to prevent harmful mold and bacteria from forming.

More to be done

A few of Selangor's state representatives have been on their toes attending to the needs of their constituents since the first day of the floods. After all, it is their duty as state representatives to channel help where most needed.

Bandar Baru Klang state representative Dato' Teng Chang Khim said that he had increased the number of BSB recipients from 500 to 2,000 a day.

Over 4,000 applications for the state-sponsored RM1,000 had come in from his constituency, he said.

"The distribution in my constituency has yet to be concluded because the application for the assistance is still open until Jan 31. So far, the process has been smooth.

"Given the huge amount of money that needs to be disbursed daily, we are very cautious as we need to take the government officers' safety into account.

"I estimate the total amount of the BSB cash aid to reach RM70 million, benefitting around 70,000 families," he said in an interview on Jan 21.

Meanwhile, the Sentosa state assemblyman, Dr G Gunarajah, said his constituency had spent over RM50,000 on post-flood assistance in the form of food baskets, daily necessities and mattresses to 2,000 flood victims.

He said currently, there are still applications for the BSB that have yet to be processed.

"Due to an overwhelming response, we will try our best to help those who have yet to receive any help," he added.

As for Meru state representative Mohd Fakhrurazi Mohd Mokhtar, he had to rope in members of the public to help during the evacuation process in his constituency.

Recollecting the incident on Dec 17, Mohd Fakhrurazi said he had no choice but to rent a few lorries to ferry the stranded flood victims with the help of The People's Volunteer Corps (Rela) and Meru volunteers.

"Thank God no lives perished when the disaster struck Meru. Some of the victims thought they would succumb to the floods because of the delay in getting rescued. However, we managed to help all of them," he said.

He added that he is now working hard to ensure that all flood victims will get the cash aid of RM1,000 from both the state and Federal governments.



Flood victims receive donations from the Tzu Chi Foundation at Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (C) Khe Beng in Section 31, Shah Alam, on Jan 15

“Tzu Chi is no stranger to disaster events. Our long history in Malaysia has helped us to be prepared for any disaster, especially flooding”

Sio Kee Hong



Tzu Chi understands the importance of cash aid in difficult times

All hands, all heart

By **NASUHA BADRUL HUZAINI**

On the rainy morning of Dec 18, Sio Kee Hong's usually quiet weekend routine was disrupted when his mobile phone started ringing incessantly. Sensing that something was amiss, the deputy chief executive officer of Taiwan Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation Malaysia (Tzu Chi) checked his Whatsapp, to find it filling up with messages and pictures of flooded houses. Many parts of Selangor, it seemed, were metres deep in water. He wasted no time, contacted his fellow Tzu Chi members and got to work.

Founded in 1966 by Dharma Master Cheng Yen in Taiwan, Tzu Chi is an international non-governmental organisation that bases its belief on altruistic love and has conducted humanitarian missions across the world whenever there is a call for help.

It has 507 branches in 57 countries and executes missions through joint efforts with local communities.

Flood aid

“Tzu Chi is no stranger to disaster events. Our long history in Malaysia has helped us to be prepared for any disaster, especially flooding. That is why, on Dec 18, we started mobilising our resources and manpower to prepare and cook hot

meals for distribution in Klang, even before the floods received proper coverage by the media.

“We managed to distribute around 40,000 packs of food to people who were stranded in their houses and were not able to cook. That was one of the first forms of assistance we delivered to the flood victims,” Sio said in an interview with *Selangor Journal*.

Recollecting his experience in being on the ground in Taman Sri Muda — one of the worst-hit areas — Sio said the mission was very challenging as the location was heavily populated and crammed with stranded vehicles.

“Compared to flood incidents in Kelantan and Temerloh, Taman Sri Muda was logistically inaccessible as water suddenly surged to unimaginable levels, making it risky for our volunteers to go in as we were not trained for that.

“We decided to engage small boat operators and experienced fishermen to help us. Within a short time, we managed to secure 10 boats for the evacuation process,” he said.

During the interview, Sio was joined by Serdang Tzu Chi community leader Koh Yean Ping, who spoke of how victims were left traumatised by the ordeal. Koh, who has been involved in volunteerism for 15 years, said: “I encountered a few victims who told about how hopeless they felt after being stranded in their own homes

for two days with no food and water. I felt their pain but could do nothing much except to comfort them and assure them that we are always there to help.

“Imagine, a house belonging to a senior citizen who is taking care of her grandchild was submerged in water for six days. Who is able to clean the house if not for the volunteers? This is why as soon as the water receded, we quickly started the cleaning up process and this helped to lessen the worries of many of the victims,” she said.

From Dec 24 to 26, Tzu Chi had organised a mega cleanup programme at Taman Sri Muda and Taman Sri Nanding in Hulu Langat with the help of over 8,000 volunteers. Berjaya Corporation founder Tan Sri Vincent Tan and actress Michelle Yeoh were also on-site to assist in the post-flood effort.

Knowing that many victims would need to rebuild and repair their homes, Tzu Chi also distributed cash aid of RM1,000 to nearly 20,000 families under their ‘Bantuan Wang Ihsan’ programme.

Pandemic response

As Covid-19 continues to rage through its fast-spreading variants, Tzu Chi too, is not letting up on its efforts to ease the burdens of affected families.

Koh said Tzu Chi recently launched a short-term assistance program by giving

between RM500 and RM800 in cash aid to underprivileged families for a period of three months to help relieve them of their financial burdens.

“Some of the recipients used this money to pay their outstanding rental fees while others used it to buy food items. The recipients were not only from the B40 group but also the M40. Indeed, everyone is struggling now regardless of what car they use and what kind of house they live in,” she said.

On a larger scale, Tzu Chi has spent over RM26 million from its 2021 Malaysia Solidarity Covid-19 Fund to purchase medical equipment that was donated to 56 hospitals and health institutions nationwide.

Other assistance programmes carried out by the foundation since the onset of Covid-19 include the e-caring initiative which helps to provide gadgets and computers to students for online learning as well as conducting free tuition under its e-learning programme, covering the core subjects of Mathematics, Science and Bahasa Melayu.

Dharma Master Cheng Yen was once quoted as saying: “It is not the rich who hold the right to helping others, but those who are sincere.” Standing by this philosophy, Tzu Chi volunteers have been trained to help all humans in need, regardless of their religion, race or citizenship.

In perfect symmetry

By ALANG BENDAHARA

Before the days of automation, the ancient art of paper cutting was done by hand, with a pair of scissors, a knife and a needle as tools.

With machines now taking over the tedious task, paper cutting looks like child play and is fast becoming a lost art.

One man in Klang, however, still keeps the tradition alive.

Each year before the Chinese New Year takes place and a new zodiac animal replaces the old, retired Mandarin language teacher Lim Cheng Hock, 64, would craft beautiful and intricate designs to give to his friends and relatives.

Persistence

"I did this to preserve my culture, as during my time as a teacher in a private Chinese school I discovered that whenever the Chinese New Year came by, people would only do *ma-kan-makan*.

"During the Chinese New Year celebration in 1987, the principal of the Hin Hua High School in Klang where I was teaching asked me to showcase the paper cutting art for the students. From that year onwards, I would do demonstrations and classes whenever Chinese New Year drew near," said Lim, who also taught music and was a school counsellor before he retired.

Lim said that as an educator, he is thankful to have been given the chance to instil the love of paper cutting in his students. But he has never given classes outside of school.

Thankfully for paper cut enthusiasts, Lim came out with a book in 2018 that details his passion and showcases his most exquisite pieces.

"Nowadays, paper cutting is so easy to learn, not like in my time where I had to find a master to teach me. In the digital world, anybody can pick it up from Youtube or social media platforms.

"The key to mastering it is patience and persistence, as well as creativity," he said.

Lim is saddened that not many people are showing an interest in



the art.

"It might be because there is not much to be made from it, and it is painstaking work. Many people prefer calligraphy, as a few fast masterful strokes of the brush can fetch a much higher price."

Window flowers

Jianzhi is a traditional style of paper cutting in China that originated from the Han Dynasty (206 BC to 220 AD). The Chinese first used these intricately patterned paper to decorate their doors and windows during festivals, thus cementing its name as *chuang hwa* or 'window flowers'.

Lim said the delicate cut-outs

are most often in red to symbolise good fortune and happiness and displayed on auspicious occasions like weddings and births.

"I like to incorporate elements like flowers, fruits and objects that symbolise love, longevity, peace and happiness," he said.

In 2009, Chinese paper cutting was included in Unesco's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Captivated

"At the age of 15, I started to take an interest in papercutting when my elder brother learnt it at school. It was beautiful. Yet I only dabbled in it as an amateur.

"In 1977, I went to the National Taiwan Normal University to further my studies in Chinese literature. It was during this time that I bought many books on paper cutting from Taiwan and China.

"However, it was only in 1984 when I went back to Taipei to learn singing that I met a paper-cutting master from whom I learned all the techniques," said the jovial father of two who also loves planting fruit trees in his Taman Bayu Perdana home.

Although Lim's lessons with the master were just for a few days, it was enough to fuel a lifetime of work.

Simple tools

Paper cutting is not an expensive art to learn.

"Although there are so many techniques, I choose to use a pair of scissors and the easily available segmented 'snap-off' blade. The red paper just cost 60 sen a piece," he said.

To do a human torso-sized paper cut takes three to four days to complete if Lim spends about four hours a day on it.

He said the trick is to visualise the outcome before drawing the design. The paper can be folded just once or up to six times. Then the cutting begins, after which the paper is unfolded to display the full magnificence of the symmetrical patterns.

An artist's life

After his retirement in 2006, Lim found joy in singing and in being a choir teacher. But when each New Year draws near, he would bring out his tools again, sometimes creating close to 300 pieces of paper cuts.

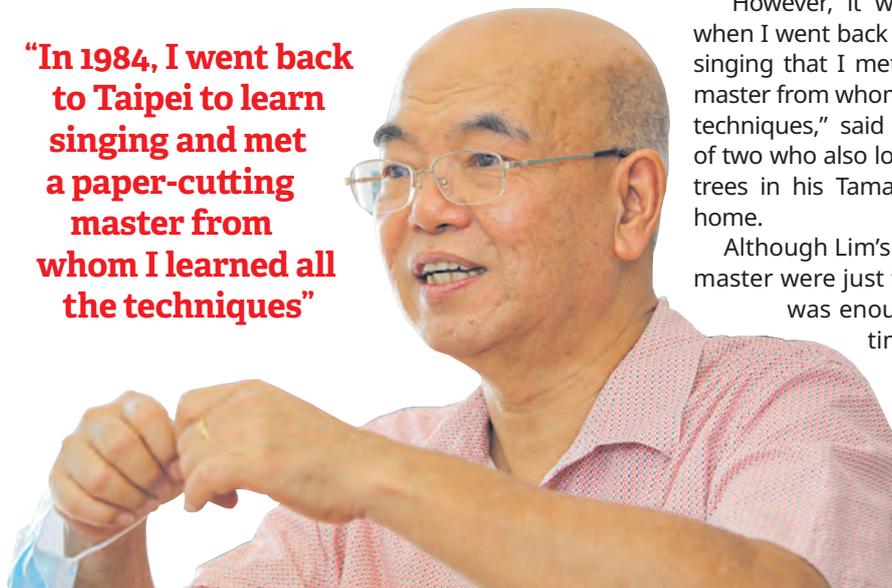
This year, however, he has produced only 70 pieces, focusing on the tiger.

"These days, I prefer to keep all my designs and enjoy them on my own," he said with a laugh.

Yet, he still entertains calls to do demonstrations at shopping malls leading up to the Chinese New Year.

"When I was young, my family was very poor. With proper education, we now live well, but my heart is forever rooted in my culture, which is why I love Chinese paper cutting and want more people to know about it," he said.

"In 1984, I went back to Taipei to learn singing and met a paper-cutting master from whom I learned all the techniques"



Happy Chinese New Year

The year 2022 is the year of the Water Tiger, which brings promises of new beginnings. Our celebrations may not be as lively as those in the years before Covid-19, but we can now breathe a sigh of relief as we have transitioned into a phase where we are again able to meet face-to-face with our beloved friends and family.

With the Federal's PICK and Selangor's Selvax giving us the shield of protection that we need, it is hoped that we can all be safe in each other's company, provided we adhere to the standard operating procedures.

The Tiger (虎) symbolises strength, competitiveness and self-confidence. It is also considered the King of the Jungle. These qualities are reflected in the state government's aspirations through its 2022 Budget. Apart from continuing with the Sidec SME Digitalisation Matching Grant that has been a stepping stone for many startups and small businesses, we have also made a bold move to establish the Selangor Digital School and give a significant allocation of RM1.2 million to e-sports.

Our industries are also expected to benefit from our budget's preliminary allocation of RM5 million to develop a

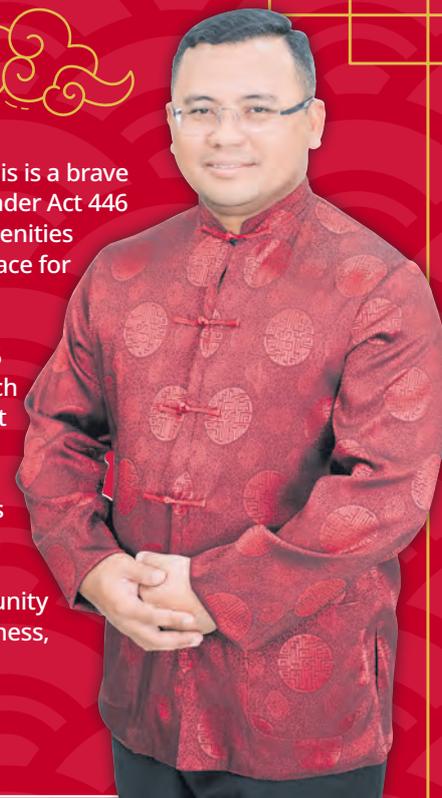
workers' housing complex on 145 acres of land. This is a brave and correct step towards meeting the provision under Act 446 (Workers' Minimum Standards of Housing and Amenities Act), which promises a more comfortable living space for our foreign help.

The same commitment is evident in our RM65 million allocation for public health and our RM27.5 million for the Skim Mesra Usia Emas, both of which have been improved, as well as the RM1 million set aside for the Independent Living Centre that will surely bring relief to many.

Let us together multiply the good work that has been put in and rebuild the state and country with confidence and commitment.

Happy Chinese New Year to the Chinese community in Selangor. May the new year be filled with happiness, prosperity and good health for all.

Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari
Menteri Besar



Happy Chinese New Year 2022. May the blessed year of the Tiger bring new hope to the country and the people! Pray that we will be protected from all disasters and achieve prosperity and harmony among the races.

Ng Suee Lim
Speaker of the Selangor State Legislative Assembly

After two years of facing challenges from Covid-19 and recently, from the flood that was one of the worst in the history of Selangor, I hope that this coming new year we will be in good health and be able to strive together to build Selangor.

Happy Chinese New Year.

Dato' Teng Chang Khim
Investment, Industry and Trade, Small and Medium Industries; and Co-chairman of the Standing Committee on Non-Islamic Affairs

In light of the Tiger year, we hope the Chinese New Year will give birth to more resilient, competitive and sustainable entrepreneurs. Wishing you all Gong Xi Fa Cai, Wan Shi Ru Yi!

Rodziah Ismail
Housing and Urban Wellbeing; and Entrepreneur Development

Greetings everyone! According to Chinese astrology we are entering the year of the Tiger. Chinese New Year, also known as the Spring festival, marks the end of winter. The beginning of spring sets the stage for starting things afresh. We wish for luck and positivity, and the ability to prosper. Happy Chinese New Year!

V Ganabatirau
Socio-economic Development, Social Welfare; Workers Empowerment; and Co-chairman of the Standing Committee on Non-Islamic Affairs

I would like to wish the Tiong Hua community and all Malaysians a Happy Chinese New Year and Gong Xi Fa Cai! May the year of the Tiger give us strength to face all the challenges ahead, and provide political stability as well as good interracial relations, to ensure growth in the economy.

Izham Hashim
Infrastructure and Public Amenities; Agricultural Modernisation and Agro-based Industry

Chinese New Year is approaching. The year 2022 is the year of the Tiger, according to the Chinese zodiac. May we all be resilient and brave like tigers in

the face of all challenges. Happy Chinese New Year. Xin Nian Kuai Le.

Ng Sze Han
Local Government, Public Transportation and New Village Development

Wishing you a Happy New Year 2022 and Gong Xi Fa Cai. May this new year bring you new hope, prosperity and good fortune.

Despite being multiracial and of different religions and cultures, may we live in peace and harmony so that our state can prosper.

Dr Siti Mariah Mahmud
Public Health; and Unity, Women Empowerment and Family

Everyone is anticipating the coming Tiger year to bring wealth and a great harvest. The tiger, the king of the animals, is a symbol of strength. On behalf of the state government, I wish Happy Chinese New Year to all, may our lives be full of prosperity.

Hee Loy Sian
Tourism, Environment, and Green Technology; Orang Asli Affairs; and Co-chairman of the Standing Committee on Non-Islamic Affairs

Wish you all a Happy Chinese Year. May this beautiful year inspire us to preserve peace, keep united, and move forward confidently and bravely like a tiger.

Gong Xi Fa Cai and Happy New Year.

Mohd Khairuddin Othman
Youth, Sports Development and Human Resource Development

I would like to wish all my friends, and especially the people of Selangor, a Happy Chinese New Year! May this celebration bring prosperity and joy to all!

Borhan Aman Shah
Rural Development and Traditional Village, Malay Customs, Culture, and Heritage

The Sungai Kandis team and I wish Gong Xi Fa Cai, Xin Nian Kuai Le to the Tiong Hua community in Selangor, especially those in Sungai Kandis.

May the Chinese New Year in 2022 with the Water Tiger theme be a symbol of strength and bravery, and inspire us to rise together.

Mohd Zawawi Ahmad Mughni
Islamic Religious Affairs, Consumer Affairs and Halal Industry



Lanterns to welcome the Tiger

By **ALANG BENDAHARA**

IN a few days, we will bid farewell to the Metal Ox, an animal that can be said to represent our year of hard work and diligence in our efforts to rebuild our pandemic-hit economy.

Up next on the zodiac animal calendar is the Water Tiger, which Chinese geomancers believe will usher in a time that is best for building relationships — both with family and friends — and a time to do what's best for others and not just for ourselves.

Thus it comes as no surprise that the Fo Guan Shan Dong Zen Temple has chosen 'Fearless in Life and Peaceful Coexistence' as the theme for its famous 2022 Chinese New Year Lantern & Flora Festival.

Elaborating on the theme, the temple's chief abbot, Ven Jue Cheng, said in its long-form the Chinese characters also mean 'May All Beings Live Without Fear and Coexist in Peace'.

"This year is the Year of the Tiger. We must be as powerful and as spiritually and physically strong as the tiger," she said.

"This is to encourage everyone to face all difficulties with a fearless spirit this year and to learn to coexist peacefully with the virus, natural disasters and each other."

19-year event

The temple's festival is well-known for its elaborate kaleidoscope of digital lights, lanterns and flotillas that illuminate its grounds during the annual Chinese New Year celebrations.

The whole place is transformed into a glittering wonderland of red lanterns, digital lights and illuminated gardens that both children and adults would take delight in.

Aside from being a tourist attraction, the temple, which sits on 24 acres of land in the sleepy town of Jenjarom Happy Village in the Kuala Langat district, is also an important cultural and educational centre for Buddhists.

The temple has been running the annual festival for 19 years, and it has become somewhat of a staple on Selangor's events calendar. Before the pandemic, admission to the festival was always free, drawing nearly a million visitors each year.

In 1999, the temple was listed as a religious tourist attraction by the Tourism and Culture Ministry and in 2003, was the recipient of the Outstanding Scenery Award from Selangor's Tourism Development Board.

Fo Guang Shan is the largest Buddhist order in Taiwan, established by Master Hsing Yun in 1967. Branches have been set up all over the world, and it aims to promote Buddhism through

its educational programmes and good deeds.

A safe space

Last year, due to restrictions posed by the Covid-19 pandemic the festival went fully online on the temple's official website www.fgs.org.my.

"This year, the celebration is in hybrid mode, and visitors are again allowed but in smaller numbers. People can watch our virtual reality presentation on the lantern show every night on our website," said

Ven Jue Cheng, adding that the temple will also be disinfected and sanitised before receiving visitors.

The 15-day festival will begin on Jan 28 and run till Feb 15, but the lanterns will only be lit for 11 days (on Jan 28 and 31, Feb 1-6, 12, 13 and 15).

On other days, visitors are still welcome to come and pray and look at the other displays.

As part of the standard operating procedures, only fully vaccinated visitors are allowed entry. They need to first be tested for Covid-19 using rapid test kits provided by the temple administration for a small fee.

The temple only allows 1,000 visitors

a day — 500 for its morning session and 500 in the evening. Those interested need to register on the temple website to get a QR code.

Tiger tales and legends

The temple's chief abbot said that some of the highlights this year are the main lantern display, the Lumbini Garden, 33 forms of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, an art gallery, the Dong Zen education exhibition, the main shrine and the Tranquility Eco-Farm.

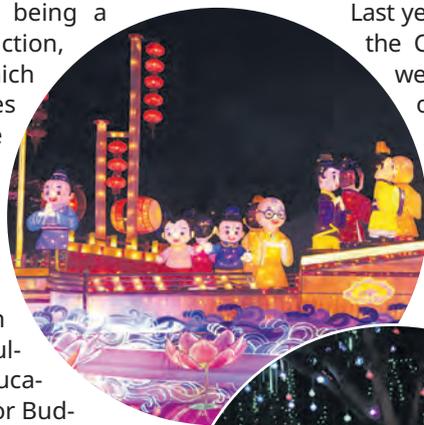
There will also be 10 attractions to help visitors learn more about the legendary tiger.

Among them is an adorable-looking tiger lantern that stands as tall as the main lantern at the shrine, which will serve as an ideal photo opportunity for children.

There will also be lanterns in the Lumbini Garden that will tell the story of Taming Tiger Arhat. According to Buddhist folklore, an arhat (one of 18-spiritually enlightened elders) once subdued a ferocious tiger with kindness and love. The story signifies that all Buddhist practitioners are able to conquer their own feelings of anger and hate by self-cultivation and meditation.

For those who cannot make it to the festival, the temple has collaborated with the Kuala Langat Municipal Council (MPKL) to stage a mini lantern show at Dataran Banting from Jan 13 to Feb 21.

This first-ever collaboration will provide Malaysians of all backgrounds with an opportunity to learn more about and appreciate Chinese culture.



Balakong's unique tourism plan

By NASUHA BADRUL HUZAINI

Anyone visiting Balakong today would not guess that just 30 years ago, it was a cowboy town surrounded by rubber plantations. Located in the south of Cheras, the rapidly expanding township is now bustling with malls and a vibrant food and beverage industry that serve its mix of urban and village communities. With over 62,000 registered voters, Balakong has chosen Wong Siew Ki to represent its voice. *Selangor Journal* reaches out to Wong to find out more about the potential of this industrial gem.



Selangor Journal (SJ): What is the main industry in your constituency?

Wong Siew Ki (WSK): Balakong is best represented by its small- and medium enterprises (SMEs).

SJ: What is the main attraction in Balakong?

WSK: Balakong is a predominantly Chinese area that is growing at an extremely fast pace. Many famous local brands have chosen to set up shop here. Among them are old-timers Yu Ai Food Industries which is famous for its mooncakes, Benns Ethicoa Bean-To-Bar Chocolate Factory, Polar Ice Cream, Ligno Biotech and Mighty White.

We are trying to capitalise on the area's vast potential and have initiated a new programme this year known as Balakong Industrial Tourism to promote our small- and medium enterprises to the public.

Currently, we are conducting several test runs whereby selected media representatives and a few 'VIPs' get to experience industrial tourism by invitation. Once this initiative is up and running, the public can take part and visit our factories to see how they operate. The Balakong Industrial Tourism programme will feature a good mix of tourism, education, research and knowledge in trade. The programme is expected to be up and running in March.

The people of Kampung Baru Batu 11 are cheered by gifts of Mandarin oranges from Wong

Wong lends a hand to the residents of Taman Sri Indah, Hulu Langat

SJ: What are the concerns raised by your constituents and how do you address them?

WSK: One-third of the constituency consists of industrial areas, with SME players making a strong presence here due to easy access to the major highways. The downside of being a preferred location for industries is that we have a problem with illegal factories here, and these factories dump their waste around Balakong. The Pakatan Harapan government has been helping to solve many problems relating to these factories since the 2008 General Election. There is an improvement. I have also been working closely with the state government to encourage the factories to apply for a permit, and to get the help of KDEB Waste Management Sdn Bhd to overcome the illegal dumping problem.



SJ: What are your achievements so far in your constituency?

WSK: Since I took over the helm following the demise of the late Eddie Ng in 2018, I've worked hard to bring the idea of industrial tourism to Balakong. I want to see Balakong emerge as the first and leading industrial tourism location in Southeast Asia. As mentioned earlier, I am also very concerned about the issue of illegal dumping and have had multiple engagements with repre-

sentatives of the illegal factories to encourage them to get legalised.

SJ: What are some of your problem-solving methods?

WSK: I believe that whenever we encounter any problems, the most fitting solution is to go deep into their root cause. If we get to tackle a problem by identifying its root cause, the chances for that problem to be amicably resolved is higher.

State athletes warm up for Sukma

By ZAREEF MUZAMMIL

SHAH ALAM - Malaysia Games (Sukma) athletes in Selangor have started participating in several tournaments in preparation for the national-level sporting event that will take place in Kuala Lumpur this year.

Selangor National Sports Council (MSN) executive director Mohamad Nizam Marjugi said the tournaments, held between Jan 7 and March 26, in-

volve events such as archery, weightlifting, boxing, bowling, sepak takraw, rugby and squash.

"These tournaments are the best platform for us to evaluate the standard of our athletes and improve on their weaknesses.

"Therefore, we hope they can make full use of the tournaments to showcase their best performance," he said.

He also advised the athletes to undergo continuous training and to

avoid getting infected with Covid-19 to maintain their form.

On Oct 28, Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu said the Sukma games that were scheduled to take place in Johor would be postponed to 2024.

In a turn of events, the Sukma Supreme Committee then agreed to organise the games and Para Sukma Games in Kuala Lumpur in 2022, but no dates have been announced so far.

Tengku Amir Shah retains FAS presidency

KLANG - The Selangor Raja Muda Tengku Amir Shah Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah Alhaj has been retained as the Football Association of Selangor (FAS) president following the election of the association's executive committee members for the 2022-2026 session, here, on Jan 15.



Based on the results of the election at the 69th and 70th FAS Congress, Tengku Amir Shah will helm the association for the next five years, with Datuk Seri Shahril Mokhtar as the deputy president.

Datuk Abdul Rauf Ahmad, Datuk P. Sugumar, Mohd Yunus @ Iskandar Md Noor and R. Sekar Chandaran were elected vice-presidents.

FAS election council member Anas Shafiee said during the announcement of the results that all of those who were nominated have won uncontested.

In his closing speech at the congress, Tengku Amir Shah said that FAS would focus on several aspects, including upgrading Selangor's leagues in terms of their development and commercial value, and developing its junior and youth players as well as its coaches and referees.

"I hope we can continue to grow together. These changes cannot be done alone. Continue supporting us and provide us feedback and reminders," he added. - Bernama

Import players Baha' Abdel Al-Rahman (left) and Tazan Al Arab hold up the new Red Giants jersey, which was launched at the MBPJ Stadium in Petaling Jaya on Jan 16. The 'MKLK' slogan — Merah Kuning Lambang Kebanggaan — is highlighted on the reverse side of the jersey - Picture by Selangor FC Facebook



Malaysia keen to host 2027 SEA Games

KUALA LUMPUR - Malaysia has expressed an interest in hosting the 34th SEA Games in 2027, said Olympic Council of Malaysia (OCM) president Tan Sri Mohamad Norza Zakaria.

He said this was after the Southeast Asian Games Federation (SEAGF) contacted OCM regarding the possibility of hosting the Games following the withdrawal of Brunei, which was supposed to host the 2027 edition.

"The meeting today agreed to submit an expression of interest to SEAGF while the OCM would forward this information to the government and further discussions will be held in

due time.

"In the spirit of friendship with SEAGF, I think most likely we have a good chance to secure that (hosting rights)," Mohamad Norza told a media conference after chairing the third OCM executive board meeting for the 2021/2025 session here on Jan 11.

However, he said that OCM would look into the country's financial capability, apart from the Covid-19 pandemic issue, before deciding.

The Thai capital of Bangkok will host the 33rd edition of the SEA Games in 2025. - Bernama

E-sports challenge garners 1.6m views

KUALA LUMPUR - The Malaysia Esports Championship 2021/2022 not only saw an increased number of participants this year but also managed to garner a higher viewership compared to last year's edition.

According to Esports Integrated (ESI) chief executive officer Ahmed Faris Amir, the number of views on the Facebook platform @esportsintegrated exceeded the 1.6 million that was recorded in the 2020/2021 season even before the finals for the championship ended on Jan 9.

He said the championship also managed to attract over 10,000 participants this season in their pursuit of cash prizes

totaling RM100,000 as they competed in the four games — FIFA 22, DOTA 2, Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB) and PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) Mobile.

"Most of them aren't new participants as they are in the www.esukan.gg system, the e-sports platform managed by ESI and the Youth and Sports Ministry.

"For our third season (2022/23) we hope to obtain even more sponsorship to increase our prize money and to organise the championship on a larger scale," he told reporters during the prize presentation ceremony at a shopping complex here on Jan 9. - Bernama



The entire celebration lasts for 15 days

The peak time of the celebration is on the eve and the first day of the lunar new year.

The 15th day is called Chap Gor Mei, where lanterns are used to mark the end of the celebration.



The festival date changes every year

This is because it follows the lunar calendar, based on the movement of the moon. Usually, it falls on a day between mid-January and mid-February.

This year, the Chinese New Year will fall on February 1.



There are 12 animals in the Chinese zodiac

For the Chinese, each lunar cycle has 60 years and 12 years is regarded as a small cycle. Each of the 12 years is defined by an animal sign.

The animal representing the coming lunar year is the Tiger.



6 Fun Facts About the CHINESE NEW YEAR



One-sixth of the world's population celebrates it

In recent years, the celebrations in New York, London, Vancouver, Sydney and other cities overseas have spread out of Chinatowns.

Chinese New Year has become one of the world's most celebrated festivals.



Children receive red envelopes with money

Instead of wrapped gifts like those exchanged during Christmas, **children get red envelopes** stuffed with lucky money from grandparents, uncles, aunts and other married elders.



Decorations are mostly in red

Red in Chinese culture symbolises happiness, wealth and prosperity, and can ward off evil spirits and bring good luck.

Red decorations such as lanterns and paper cuttings are to the festival what Christmas trees are to Christmas.