

BERNAMAPIX

PATRIOTIC SPIRIT ...

With Merdeka Day being more than a month away, members of the four-day Explore Pulau Pinang Kayak Expedition waved the Jalur Gemilang upon ending their journey at Teluk Kumbar yesterday.



Open air movie screening at George Town fest

GEORGE TOWN: Nine short movies specially selected from the world's largest film festival, the Tropfest of Australia, will be screened in open air for the public as a closure to the month-long George Town Festival.

The films will be shown on a giant screen placed at the Padang Kota Lama field on the Esplanade, from 9.30pm on Sunday and entry is free.

Festival director Joe Sidek said the screening is organised to give Penangites and tourists the opportunity to enjoy quality international arts projects. The public are encouraged to bring along their mats.

Tropfest has also held international screenings in cities like Bangkok, Beijing, London and Toronto. Founded in 1993 by film director John Polson, the Tropicana Short Film Festival as it was originally known started as an informal short film screening at the Tropicana Café in Sydney.

Today it is hosted in Sydney with live satellite links to major Australian cities, attracting a national audience of more than 150,000 people a night.

For details, visit www.georgetownfestival.com

Proper deal for evicted villagers

> Penang govt helping to secure better compensation for 320 families

BY **HIMANSHU BHATT**
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GEORGE TOWN: About 320 families who are being evicted from the Kampung Cross Street enclave in Seberang Perai for a development project are getting a helping hand from the state government to intervene on their behalf for a proper compensation deal.

The mainly Chinese residents of the village in Permatang Pasir who have stayed there for more than 50 years have been asked to vacate the area by a Kuala Lumpur-based company that recently bought over the land.

The residents yesterday met Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng to discuss their predicament as the current offer of between RM15,000 and RM20,000 is not sufficient to meet their needs.

Also present at the meeting at Lim's office was Permatang Pasir assemblyman Salleh Man, who is also Penang PAS commissioner, and Padang Lalang assemblyman Tan Cheong Heng.

Lim told the press later that he would meet

with the developer in a few days to work out a more amicable deal of between RM30,000 and RM40,000 for each household.

"I will convey their concerns to the developer so that the matter can be resolved," he said.

The developer has yet to submit an application for the project, he added.

Lim noted that there are several other village communities in the state who are facing similar problems despite the projects not being approved.

He said as a valid landowner, a developer has the right to ask for vacant possession, but the state wants to ensure that the long-time residents receive a proper deal.

Before this case, the state had helped to resolve the eviction crisis involving eight urban kampung, including Kampung Pokok Asam.

The state has also been grappling to help 200-odd mainly Chinese farming families at Kuala Jalan Bharu, Balik Pulau, who are affected by a new housing project at their site.

Platform for youth on politics, public policy

BY **PAULINE WONG**
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THE youth are interested in politics and public policy, but it is almost always just coffeshop talk, as the absence of a formal platform for them to voice their thoughts has meant their opinions rarely leave the table.

This was what drove Michelle Ng, Louis Chuo and Ng Eng Wee from the International Council of Malaysian Scholars and Associates (ICMS) to provide that much-needed platform - in the form of the Malaysian Public Policy Competition (MPPC).

Chuo, 21, the co-founder of the ICMS, modelled the MPPC after the Singapore Public Policy Competition which was held earlier this year in London.

He felt the competition was just what Malaysian youth needed. "Whenever we discuss politics, it ends at the table. We don't have serious solutions to



Ng



Chuo



Eng Wee

the problems we talk about," he said.

Organised by the ICMS and sponsored by UCSI University, the competition is aimed at creating an awareness among students on the intricacies and processes of public policy making. It is a case-based competition, giving students both local and abroad a taste of the policy-making process in the real world context.

The competition could not have come at a better time, said Chuo. "Malaysia is at a crossroads now," he said describing

the increasing awareness among the youth of the changing social political landscape, especially in the advent of new media.

The competition will provide the youth a formal platform to air their views and to be taken seriously.

"The young need to take an interest in the policies that affect their daily lives," he said, adding that this competition will open their eyes to the never 'black-and-white' process of decision and policy-making.

Participants are required to submit a maximum 300-word

preliminary essay based on a question found on the registration form. Forms can be downloaded from "Malaysiapublicpolicycompetition.blogspot.com". Registration closes on July 31.

A total of 16 teams will be shortlisted to enter the residential challenge.

In this part of the competition, participants will be expected to propose policy recommendations and implementation stages, with analysis on effects on government popularity, economic resilience, citizen mood at large and so forth. The best three teams will proceed to the final stage.

The competition will feature policy-makers, legal eagles and academicians as judges and speakers, including Pemandu Anti-Corruption National Key Result Areas director Ravindram Devaganam, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) director Datuk Seri Abu Kassim Mohamed, LoyalBurok's Edmund Bon, and Selangor State Assembly Speaker Datuk Teng Chang Kim.

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Govt to spend RM686,000 in drain repair, flood mitigation

BY **BERNARD CHEAH**
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GEORGE TOWN: In efforts to reduce flash flood occurrence within the George Town inner city, the Penang Island Municipal Council (MPPP) will spend about RM686,000 in drainage repair works and flood mitigation projects.

Local Government Committee chairman Chow Kon Yeow said about RM36,000 will be used to rebuild damaged underground drains between Lebu Campbell and Lebu Cintra; Lebu Chulia and Jalan Pintal Tali; Lebu Cintra and Lebu Kimberley; Lorong Pitt and Lebu Chulia; and Jalan Kedah and Jalan Transfer.

"The repair works will be carried out until the end of September," he said at a press conference yesterday.

Chow said the irrigation system within George Town, including areas near Jalan Pintal Tali, Jalan Kangasar and Jalan Lim Eow Thoon would also be improved.

"This flood mitigation measure is done to direct the surface runoff into the drains, and not onto the streets," he said.

The flood mitigation projects are expected to commence in September and are expected to be completed by March next year.

Chow said these short and medium-term solutions, which were presented to the council this month, aim to improve the image of George Town.

He also said the council will soon announce a new street and drain cleaning routine to ensure cleanliness in the city.

"The council will beef up its enforcement to ensure eateries and restaurant set up grease traps so that these oils and soups do not solidify and clog up drains," he said.

Despite efforts taken by the authorities, Chow admits the challenge is to change the perception of the public towards cleanliness in their homes.

"Penangites in the inner city and business district need to be civic-minded and not throw rubbish into the drains," he said. "They need to have a sense of pride and ownership of the city."

"Many people throw rubbish into the drains like it is their rubbish bin," he said.

CRASH PROBE EMBARGO

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