



ZULKIFLI ERSAL/
THESUN

FLAG BEARERS ... Participants clad in red, blue, yellow and white T-shirts representing the colours of the Jalur Gemilang during rehearsals for the joint Malaysia Day and Merdeka Day celebration which is set to be held at Dataran Merdeka on Sept 16.

PAS wants pre-Merdeka history rewritten

BY HEMANANTHANI SIVANANDAM
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KUALA LUMPUR: PAS is urging the government to form a cabinet committee to rewrite the nation's pre-independence history. Party vice-president Salahuddin Ayub said if the government is sincere in acknowledging the historical facts and recognising freedom fighters of the nation, then it should form the committee.

"If (Prime Minister Datuk Seri) Najib (Razak) is sincere, he can form a cabinet committee to rewrite the history of the country pre-independence.

"They can call representatives from all sides to participate in the committee," said Salahuddin at a press conference yesterday. Also present was PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu, PAS secretary-general Datuk Mustafa Ali and PAS information chief Datuk Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man.

Salahuddin was referring to Mohamad Sabu, better known as Mat Sabu, who came under fire for his speech in Tasik Gelugor, Penang, recently which some quarters claimed glorified the communists.

Mat Sabu was quoted by Malay daily *Utusan Malaysia* as saying insurgent Mat Indera, who led the Communist attack on the Bukit Kepong police station in 1950, was the real hero of Bukit Kepong, and not the police personnel defending the station.

Mustafa said while the party strongly rejects the communist ideology, it stressed that all the nation's freedom fighters should be duly recognised for their contributions.

"We're not saying that Tunku Abdul Rahman or (Datuk) Onn (Jaafar) did not play a part but there are also others such as Datuk Maharajalela, Tok Janggut and Dol Said who had contributed to the nation's independence as well," said Mustafa.

He said more acknowledgement should also be given to other leaders from parties like the Malay Nationalist Party such as Dr Burhanuddin Helmy, Ahmad Boestamam and Ibrahim Yaakob, who were jailed by the British for agitating for independence.

Meanwhile, PAS said the party will send a formal invitation to Umno for its deputy president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who is also deputy prime minister, to debate the Bukit Kepong incident with Mat Sabu.

"We will send the letter to the Umno information chief (Datuk Seri Ahmad Maslan) by the end of the week," said Tuan Ibrahim.

He said Muhyiddin is the best person to debate on the matter, instead of Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin, who has offered to debate the issue.

"He (Muhyiddin) keeps saying that I should repent, so it would be good for me to face him, to learn from him," said Mat Sabu.

Aerobridge issue goes to cabinet

> Kong to raise NGOs' request at today's meeting

BY AZRIL ANNUAR
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PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia Airport Holdings Berhad's (MAHB) controversial decision not to install aerobridges at its new low-cost carrier-terminal (LCCT) KL International Airport 2 (KLIA 2) terminal will be discussed in the cabinet today.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Kong Cho Ha agreed to raise the matter in cabinet after meeting with 11 representatives from disabled groups here yesterday.

"I would like MAHB to reconsider and review their decision. In my opinion, the disabled community's request for an aerobridge is a very rational request ... it is important to consider the mobility of the disabled. MAHB should listen to them.

"It is not like the old days where the disabled are not as mobile as they are now. Not only that, it is actually a very good idea to install aerobridges because they can cater to the elderly, the infants,

pregnant women as well," said Kong who was very sympathetic to the concerns of the disabled representatives.

He said KLIA is renowned worldwide as a first-class airport, which means it should have "first-class facilities and not third-class facilities".

"It is actually cheaper in the long run for MAHB to install aerobridges in KLIA 2 terminal. The calculated cost per passenger is around 25 sen and you don't have to maintain it, unlike the proposed ambulifts replacement for the aerobridges. In the long run it will be beneficial for everyone," said Kong.

Non-government organisation (NGO) Barrier-free Environment and Accessible Transport (BEAT) president Christine Lee, who met with Kong, hit out at MAHB for citing economic and financial reasons for not providing the aerobridge.

Lee, who is wheelchair-bound, said installing aerobridges is a one-time investment and will benefit the country for years to come, besides acting as an added incentive to foreign

pensioners thinking of settling down here as part of the government's Malaysia My Destination programme.

In July, MAHB announced its decision not to install aerobridges at KLIA 2, adhering to AirAsia's requirements and business model. Its chairman Tan Sri Aris Othman said the total cost for 80 aerobridges is around RM104 million.

The RM2 billion KLIA 2 is expected to be completed in the second half of this year with an annual capacity for 30 million passengers.

On another note, Kong also voiced his sadness at the 20% increase in road accidents recorded during the just-concluded *Ops Sikap 24*.

He said the government has tried its best to inculcate a culture of road safety in Malaysia, as studies show that 80% of accidents are caused by human errors.

"The nation is suffering because of road accidents. Our losses amount to around RM9 billion when you factor in insurance coverage, property damage, loss of lives and loss of the ability to work after an accident," he said.

Govt studying number of varsities needed

BY HUSNA YUSOP
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PUTRAJAYA: The government is conducting a study to find the optimum number of universities - public and private - needed by the country in order to produce the desired number of graduates.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Khaled Nordin said the purpose of the study is to maintain the quality of Malaysian universities and strengthen the position of Malaysia's higher education sector.

He said any decision to build new universities or foreign university branch campuses here

should benefit the country in producing human capital and contributing to economic growth.

The ministry is studying how many universities and foreign branch campuses we actually need to be an international hub for higher education, he said.

"While welcoming foreign branch campuses, we also want to see the growth of local universities at the international level. All these we will take into consideration.

"We do not want every Tom, Dick and Harry branch university campus to be set up here offering programmes which may not be relevant to our country," he said at the ministry after presenting HELP University College with a letter

upgrading it to university status.

The ministry's plan is to enrol 150,000 international students in Malaysia by 2015, and 200,000 by 2020. As at April, the figure stood at about 86,000 students.

The ratio of university to population in Malaysia is at around 1:400,000 compared with 1:200,000 in the US. However, the accessibility to higher education in Malaysia is around 40% compared with between 60% and 70% in the US.

There are 20 public universities and 52 private institutions of higher learning - comprising 25 universities, 22 university colleges and five branch campuses - in the country apart from over 400 private colleges.

Volunteers should be trained to survive: Red Crescent

BY ALYAA ALHADJRI
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PETALING JAYA: Organisers of humanitarian missions should ensure that their participants have received adequate survival training and that measures are taken to minimise their risk of getting injured, Malaysian Red Crescent honorary secretary Norbaini Baharudin said.

Commenting on the death of BernamaTV cameraman Noramfaizul Mohd Nor, who was shot dead while covering the Putera 1 Malaysia Club's humanitarian mission to Somalia, Norbaini said the organisers could have made more preparations.

"Judging by the current situation

in Somalia, volunteers should have been given bullet proof vests to protect themselves," she said.

Noramfaizul, who was part of a 15-man media team, was hit by a stray bullet on Friday while returning to his hotel in a 4WD.

His death had turned the spotlight on preparations made by organisers of such aid missions and the training given to volunteers.

Norbaini told *theSun* all individuals who are interested to volunteer with the Red Crescent are required to undergo at least two weeks of training in various fields.

"The courses not only cover the ways in which a volunteer can assist victims of a tragedy, but also to

ensure that they can survive the often harsh conditions in the affected regions," said Norbaini.

The Malaysian Red Crescent through its in-house training institute offers classes in, among others, first aid, international humanitarian law, psychological support programme, disaster management and simulation.

Norbaini also stressed on the importance of a volunteer being physically and mentally fit to handle all situations. "We can't have a volunteer going to offer aid, but who ends up falling sick instead."

Besides the Malaysian Red Crescent, other NGOs which has been actively organising aid mis-

sions include Mercy Malaysia.

According to its website, all Mercy Malaysia volunteers are required to undergo a volunteer induction programme and basic mission training sessions before being allowed to participate in any humanitarian aid efforts.

Mercy Malaysia had also sent a three-man assessment team to Somalia on Aug 25, led by its vice-president Assoc Prof Dr Mohamed Ikram Mohamed Salleh. The team has since come back and Mercy Malaysia is expected to reveal findings from the trip today.

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Insurance firm to pay RM50,000 from Noramfaizul's policy

KUALA LUMPUR: Bernama chairman Datuk Abdul Rahman Sulaiman said RM50,000 would be paid out by the insurance company where Bernama had taken a term life insurance policy for its late cameraman, Noramfaizul Mohd Nor.

In a statement yesterday, he said the term life policy covered death and also partial or total permanent disablement, and the next of kin of the insured would receive a maximum of RM50,000. "In the case of our late Noramfaizul, the insurance company has agreed to the payment of RM50,000 not only as a matter of honouring the policy but also in full compliance with it," he said.

Abdul Rahman said Bernama provided two types of 24-hour worldwide insurance coverage for its employees - term life policy and group personal accident policy.

As for the group personal accident policy, he said, it also covered death, partial and total permanent disablement and had similar exclusion clauses like the term life policy. - Bernama