



#SaySomethingNice ends on hopeful note

PETALING JAYA: A fun project launched on Merdeka Day to make Malaysians rise above negativity drew to a close on Malaysia Day yesterday with a trip down the cultural lanes of the nation at Tropicana City Mall, Petaling Jaya.

The #SaySomethingNice campaign by Zubedy, an organisation with a social cause, closed with an invitation to a "rumah kampung" at the shopping mall, where visitors could pick up traditional games such as "congak", "batu seremban" and "teng-teng".

They were also served local delicacies while singer Amirah Ali delivered a self-composed song titled *Unity*.

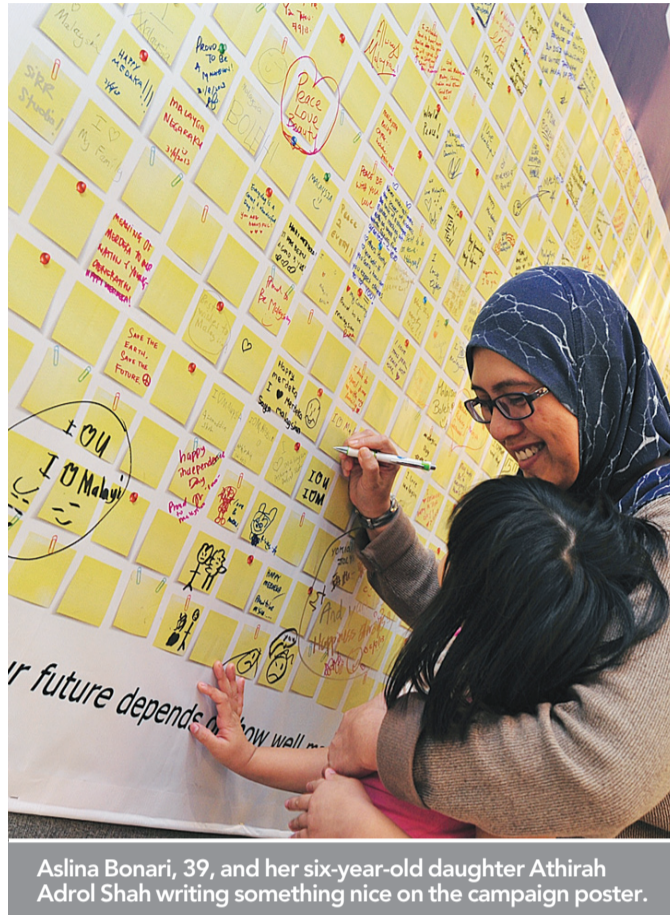
The brainchild of Anas Zubedy, the nationwide campaign hosted by Tropicana City Mall was mooted to showcase the best of Malaysia as well as to encourage people to always be positive and to say something nice.

The initiative revolved around the action "say" as that was the simplest of actions, and writing it out on the campaign's free posters hung on display.

"We should celebrate the many colours that make up the country's outlook," said the Zubedy managing director.

"Our leaders of the past chose to integrate the many ethnicities of the country instead of following the examples of assimilation by our neighbours like Thailand and Indonesia."

He hopes that in a decade, this initiative would grow exponentially to attract tourists to Malaysia to witness the display of unity and positivity.



ASHRAF SHAMSUL/THE SUN

Aslina Bonari, 39, and her six-year-old daughter Athirah Adrol Shah writing something nice on the campaign poster.

A journey shared

> '50x50 My Malaysia' celebrates Malaysian kinship through conversations and stories

BY **DOROTHY CHENG**
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KUALA LUMPUR: A group of patriots travelled through 13 states in 15 days to glean stories that celebrate the 50th Malaysia Day.

The *50x50 My Malaysia* initiative, the brainchild of former journalist Niki Cheong, involves "stories" from people interviewed on their journey and from contributors.

"From the uncle whose traditional medicine shop is about to close down in Penang to the humble Terengganu fisherman who wakes up at three in the morning for the first catch, these stories are all uniquely Malaysian.

"It's the little things that really capture our hearts. The whole point of hitting all 13 states was to talk to the locals and hear their heart-to-heart everyday stories," Cheong said yesterday at the Pavilion shopping mall, where photographs and stories from the journey are on exhibition on Levels 5 and 6 from now to Sept 22.

Contributor John Lai, 27, lived and worked in New Zealand for over 17 years, but said Malaysia has always been home.

"My parents are Sarawakian Chinese and whenever I visit them in Kuching, my father refuses to speak to me in English," he joked.

He returned to Malaysia because he said the digital industry is booming with opportunities and he wants to contribute and help the nation grow. After 17 years overseas, the one thing that caught him off guard about Malaysia is the

traffic situation in Kuala Lumpur.

"It's a busy, bustling metropolis, and I love it," he confessed, adding that he's still getting used to driving in the city.

Syefri Zulkefli is known to his friends and colleagues as the "Harimau Malaysia Guy". For the event, he was wearing the yellow and black Harimau Malaysia jersey, a get-up he said people are used to seeing on him.

"I love the national football team. I travel to different countries for my job and I always make sure to pack my Harimau Malaysia jerseys and jackets with me so wherever I go, people know I'm Malaysian," he said.

His jerseys sparks conversations with foreigners where he seizes the opportunity to tell them all about Malaysia's colourful history and sites.

He is proud that he owns at least one piece of Harimau Malaysia clothing for every day of the week.

Another contributor, Abby Latif, said as a Malaysian, "one finds family everywhere you go in the country, no matter where you're from".

"My story is that I'm a nomad. My father was a senior officer in the army and we moved around a lot. I've been to seven different public schools and lived in nine different states," she said. She has five siblings, all of whom were born in different states.

As the one born in Kuching, Sarawak, she does not identify only as an East Malaysian.

"I find a sense of belonging in every state; I identify as a Malaysian," she said.

Seeing hope for change in Sarawak 50 years on

KUCHING: As the nation celebrates the golden anniversary of Malaysia, Sarawak Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) chief Baru Bian finds hope in the changes he sees in the people.

"Events of the previous few years and particularly the past few months have shown that despite the attempts of those with vested interests to divide the people of various races and religion, the ordinary citizens have not taken the bait," he said in his Malaysia Day message.

In other words, they are taking a real interest in the future of this country and its governance, he said.

It is thus appropriate

to reflect on the meaning of Malaysia Day, and to look squarely at the lot of Sarawakians today, he said. "Thirty per cent of rural Sarawakians still have no access to electricity and treated water, while infrastructure such as roads, hospitals, clinics and schools are sorely lacking, and those that exist are sub-standard," he said.

They also live in real fear of being dispossessed of their lands by big companies engaging in logging and dam-building activities backed by those in power, he revealed.

In Penang, Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng has a similar message, stressing that the Merdeka promise of a prosperous and just nation can only be realised by reducing income inequality rather than creating more millionaires.

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