Moderate Merdeka celebration

> Event scaled down out of respect for plane tragedy victims

BY ***ADRIAN PHUNG***
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KUALA LUMPUR: With the nation shrouded in grief following two air tragedies, this year's Merdeka celebration will be held on a very moderate scale.

Disclosing this yesterday, Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal said the celebration, to be held at Dataran Merdeka on Aug 31, will proceed as planned but not in grandeur. "We will go ahead with the celebration on a moderate scale. We have to respect those affected by the two tragedies," he told reporters at the the Felcra Berhad Aidilfitri celebration.

He said the Merdeka celebration, although held moderately, will be a good one as it is an important event to mark the nation's independence and nationalism. "The sense of nationalism must be instilled in everyone regardless of age and race as it is one of the core principles or main factors that ensures the continuation of peace and stability being enjoyed by all," he added.

Shafie said preparations for the celebration are going smoothly with the cooperation of both the public and private sectors.

At the event, Felcra chairman Datuk Bung Mokhtar Radin announced that the company would now bear all the medical costs of its staff and their family members regardless of position, apart from building 600 low-cost houses on a 10-acre site the company recently bought, and the possibility of a six-month bonus for all staff.

Dayabumi walkway open to public

BY ***MUHAMMAD HANIFF RAHMAT***
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BERNAMAPIX

Tengku Adnan (centre) and Ahmad Phesal (left) being briefed on the walkway projects by Hashim yesterday.

KUALA LUMPUR: The 237-metre covered pedestrian walkway between Kompleks Dayabumi and the Pasar Seni LRT station was opened yesterday.

Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor who officiated at the opening said it was constructed under the government's Economic Transformation Programme of the Greater Kuala Lumpur National Key Economic Areas initiatives, with one part of the pedestrian link project undertaken by KLCC (Holdings) Sdn Bhd (KLCCH).

The "comprehensive pedestrian network" project, which aims to encourage people to use public transport when travelling around the city, was executed in collaboration with Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL).

The RM100 million project, funded by Petronas and the partnership between DBKL and KLCCH, saw the completion of more than six kilometres of walkways throughout the city.

These include the links from KLCC to Bukit Bintang (565m), Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre to Suria KLCC (108m), Jalan Sultan Ismail to Jalan Bukit Bintang (650m), Lot 10 and Grand Millennium and Crossing Canopy at Jalan Bukit Bintang to Jalan Sultan Ismail (210m) and Bukit Nenas Monorail Station to Jalan Raja Abdullah junction (1000m).

Tengku Adnan said some 50,000 people use the KLCC to Bukit Bintang pedestrian link and expressed hope that many more will use the others.

"All these are done for the public," he said at the signing ceremony of the maintenance services agreement for the walkways between KLCCH and DBKL at Kompleks Dayabumi.

Also present were KLCCH chief executive officer Datuk Hashim Wazir and Kuala Lumpur Mayor Datuk Seri Ahmad Phesal Talib.

He said there are also plans to construct another 1.4-kilometre walkway under the RM100 million Petronas fund.

ZULFADHLI ZAKI/THESUN

Muhyiddin and Abu Bakar checking the fit of the device on Khairul Azreen Mohd Jasni, 21, during the event yesterday.

New device to aid visually-impaired

BY ***ELLY FAZANIZA***
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KUALA LUMPUR: A device resembling a pair of spectacles that has built-in sensors has been created to aid visually-impaired people gauge the distance of objects.

The device, called "My Second Eye", was conceptualised three years ago by a group of researchers from Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UteM) and it is the first to be used by 10 visually-impaired individuals chosen from both the National Council for the Blind and the Society of the Blind.

UteM vice-chancellor Prof Dr Shahrin Sahibuddin said apart from being a sensory gadget, the device is capable of a 360-degree scan and detect any obstructions above the upper body level.

"It will warn the user of any obstacles by producing a beeping sound, informing them of the obstacles in order to guide them. It is powered by a battery which is rechargeable with a USB cable," he said, adding that the participants will undergo a trial run in the next few months and their feedback used to enhance the device. The device is expected to cost about RM500 each.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin launched an event yesterday to present the devices to selected recipients, including Malacca Society of the Blind chairman Hashim Ishak.

Positive results in war on dengue

PUTRAJAYA: Government initiatives to fight dengue have showed positive results.

Three weeks since the "Ops Mega" and "All Out War Against Aedes" campaigns, the number of dengue hotspots in Selangor have been reduced from 92 to 86.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the joint operation and campaign involving various ministries and agencies saw deployment of 267 personnel to conduct dengue control in the Klang Valley and Seremban.

"The home ministry has also deployed 528 personnel, which consisted of 246 from Rela, 190 from the Public Service Department and 92 police personnel," he said after chairing the national committee meeting on dengue at Perdana Putra here.

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