

LocalNews

POLITICS

► Najib keeps promise to uplift Indian community

THE Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) has called on the Indian community to place its trust, confidence and hope in Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak, saying the prime minister is an empathic leader who always puts the needs of all Malaysians first. MIC secretary-general S Murugesan said Najib has never taken lightly the plight of the Indians in the country and has helped solve many longstanding problems faced by the community in such areas as personal identity documents, education and job opportunities in the government sector. The prime minister has kept his promise to give the Indians a fair deal in uplifting the community by laying the foundation in all aspects of political, economic and administrative transformation, he told *Bernama* in an interview recently. Since assuming the post of prime minister in 2009, Najib has been introducing various measures and initiatives, such as setting up a special committee to look into problems and ease the burden faced by the Indian community, he said. — *Bernama*

► Rally organisers should accept alternative venue if really sincere

HOME Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein has asked organisers of the planned public rally in the federal capital this weekend to use the alternative venue offered by the government and not hold it at Dataran Merdeka if they are really sincere in fighting for their cause. "We don't stop them from holding the gathering, but we are only rejecting their request to use Dataran Merdeka for it and we've offered them four alternative locations. "If they are really sincere about it (holding the gathering), why not think rationally and discuss properly with us rather than looking for excuses that are lame and ridiculous. Now they (organisers) are saying they don't have the time to change the venue. The public cannot accept such a ridiculous excuse," he told reporters after chairing a meeting with senior officials of his ministry at Menara 1, Bukit Aman, Kuala Lumpur yesterday. The government has offered the gathering organisers four alternative locations, namely Cheras Stadium, Merdeka Stadium, Titiwangsa Stadium and the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil, but the Opposition-backed organisers insist on holding it at Dataran Merdeka. — *Bernama*



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GENERAL NEWS

► Malacca to focus on culture and history for tourism

THE Malacca government will focus on the state's culture and history to attract more tourists to the state, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam said yesterday. He said more Malacca cultural and heritage-based destinations would be set up for the purpose. "Malacca is rich in history, not only on the history of the Malay Sultanate, but also of its culture which can be proven from the various artifacts that are found," he told reporters after opening a seminar on "Keris Taming Sari, a Legacy of the Malacca Malay Sultanate" in conjunction with Melaka's 750th anniversary at Seri Negeri yesterday. The one-day seminar, jointly organised by the Malacca government, Malaysian Institute for Research on History and Patriotism, Malacca Islamic University College and the Malacca Museum Corp, is attended by about 500 local and foreign participants. — *Bernama*

► 458 homeless registered under Anjung Singgah until February 2012

FOUR hundred and fifty eight homeless people have registered at Anjung Singgah until February, Women, Family and Community Development Deputy Minister Heng Seai Kie said. Heng said since Anjung Singgah was set up in April last year, it was able to integrate them into the society. "Due to its effectiveness, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Razak when tabling the Budget 2012, had announced the expansion of Anjung Singgah to Johor, Penang and Sarawak," she said when answering a question from Senator Datuk Mohammed Najeeb Abdullah at Dewan Negara in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Heng said the Community Development Department and ministry viewed the issue seriously by carrying out rescue operations periodically nationwide based on allocations under Section 3 of the Poor Persons Act 1977. — *Bernama*

► Committee needed to monitor halal certified medicines

A SPECIAL steering and implementing committee should be set up to ensure that halal certified medicines are prescribed to Muslims in the country, said academician. Universiti Sains Malaysia dean of the School of Pharmaceutical Sciences Prof Dr Syed Azhar Syed Sulaiman said the committee could ensure that the pharmaceutical industry in the country would be transparent and committed in responding to the needs of Muslim consumers who were sensitive over halal issue. He said the committee could work closely with monitoring agencies such as the Islamic Development Department in finding ways to resolve the halal issue in the pharmaceutical industry. "We should be ashamed of ourselves as the halal pharmaceutical industry in the country is still lagging behind that of non-Islamic countries like Thailand and Belgium," he said. — *Bernama*

MITI urges engagements with members of academia

Challenges in global economic environment warrants deeper collaboration, says MITI Secretary-General

by JOHN GILBERT

THE Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) is seeking more engagements with members of academia to enrich the curriculum which in turn will benefit the government, academe, students and the business community.

MITI Secretary-General Datuk Dr Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria said the ministry is conscious of the need to consult with industry, research institutions and experts in the respective fields.

"Public consultation and engagement is integral to our tasks at MITI and our doors are always open. We welcome feedback," she said in her opening speech at the "Succeeding in a Global Landscape of Accelerating Change for Emerging Business" forum in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The ministry has a cross-fertilisation programme with Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MICCI) and Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM), she added.

She said the challenges in the global economic environment warrants the deeper collaboration between the academic and business worlds, emphasising a broad sense to encompass economic and market analysts.

"We are very well aware of the pressures that impact our business community and the decisions it makes in the global arena, whether in Asean, Asia-



Pic by Shahrin Yahya

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia International Business School Programme chairman Tan Sri Dr Zulkefli Hassan (left) and Dr Sta Maria at the launch of 'Succeeding in a Global Landscape of Accelerating Change for Emerging Business' forum in Kuala Lumpur

Pacific Economic Cooperation or the World Trade Organisation as well as in domestic policy formulation which will impact business.

"In this context, we would be pleased to collaborate with members of academia in enriching the curriculum to the benefit of government, academe, students and the business community," she said.

Dr Sta Maria said similar offers have also been made to members of the media. She welcomes the research that would assist in policy development.

MICCI executive director Steward Forbes emphasised there was "an absolute need" for businesses to have sustainable growth.

"There is a need for radical

change and commitment to holistic fundamental structural change, and the challenge of global impediments is real, particularly the competitive environment meaning that old formulas for trade and investment inducement will no longer be good enough," he said.

"In the case of Malaysia there are a number of factors that define our unique approach and differentiate our experience from those of others and which if not addressed can undermine or even derail the positive work being carried out, of these, I believe one of the most insidious is complacency," he said at the same event.

He said it is a major challenge for the government to address, on how to balance necessary af-

firmative action with the stimulus needed to strengthen themselves to compete in the open market.

"For the private sector, understand the importance of the public sector input in creating the 'right' environment while for the public sector, foster public/private partnerships by embracing confidence and trust in the private sector in a transparent manner," he added.

The seminar, to be led by former lead economist from World Bank professor Govindan Nair, brought together practitioners, industry experts, public sectors and academics to explore in-depth issues and opportunities within the emerging markets and to become dynamic global players.

NCIA secures 2 committed reinvestments from Japan

NAGOYA • The Northern Corridor Implementation Authority (NCIA) has secured two committed reinvestments during the two-day trade and investment mission to Kyoto and Nagoya, Japan.

Its chief executive, Datuk Redza Rafiq, said one of the deals would be signed between Aichi-based MRT Japan Co Ltd and Malaysian company, JPB Asia Pacific, in July in Kagoshima.

Later, a joint venture (JV) company would be set up to facilitate its operation in Malaysia, he said. MRT Japan,

which is involved in marketing fruits, vegetables and horticulture, had invested RM35 million in two green cultivation houses of rock melons, chillies and Japanese pumpkins in Kuala Kura (Kedah) and Ara Kuda (Penang).

Redza said the company would invest another RM100 million to cater to strong demand for its products, especially from the Japanese, globally.

"The investment will be spread over three years and the project will be developed with local partners," he told

Malaysian reporters after a seminar on "Business Opportunities in Malaysia", held in conjunction with the mission.

The mission, from April 23-24, was led by Deputy Minister of International Trade and Investment, Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir.

Redza said the production expansion was expected to create 250 jobs and 100 business opportunities.

"Using the best technology from France and Japan's know-how, the cultivation of greenhouse projects could generate

a potential income of RM5,000 for the locals involved," he said.

Meanwhile, Global Outreach Energy Sdn Bhd and its Japanese partner, Useful Person Co Ltd, would invest an additional RM107 million to expand the light-emitting diode (LED) facility by 20,000 sq ft-30,000 sq ft facility from the current 8,000 sq ft.

The LED lighting products produced in Penang will soon be exported to the Philippines, Thailand and India. Currently, they are only exported to Japan. — *Bernama*

Canon targets RM3m sales from showcase

CANON Marketing (M) Sdn Bhd expects to rake in RM3 million in sales from its Eye on Canon showcase launched yesterday. The showcase, held at Mid Valley Megamall, will end on April 29.

Simon Wong, director of imaging communication products division of Canon Malaysia, said the company achieved a remarkable RM2 million sales last year from the event.

"We believe that sales in

this showcase could reach RM3 million this year," he said at the launch of the showcase yesterday.

Wong added that with the variety of products including new products on display in the showcase, coupled with offers of price discounts, the company was optimistic in achieving the sales target.

One of the highlights of the showcase was the newly launched digital compact camera range namely Canon

IXUS 240HS and Canon IXUS 510HS. He said the company is targeting more than 10% revenue growth for its digital single lens reflex (DSLR) camera this year. Currently, it commands a 62% share of the DSLR camera market.

In conjunction with Canon Malaysia's 25th anniversary celebration this year, there are offers galore at the showcase with discounts, instant cash rebates of up to 25% on selected models and lucky draws with

prizes of Canon products worth RM10,000.

In addition, Wong said RM10 from each camera sold at the showcase will go towards Yayasan Sunbeams Home, to support and help the orphaned, abused, neglected and abandoned children from broken families.

Meanwhile, the Eye on Canon showcase will be making its second wave at Gurney Plaza, Penang from May 1-6. — *Bernama*