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SELANGOR JOURNAL

Year of hardship and hope

2021 was never slated to be easy. Reeling from the cruel pandemic and placed under multiple lockdowns, we suffered isolation, a loss of income, and lost time. We buried loved ones. We observed with helplessness the political instability in Putrajaya.

Our successes, however, cannot be overlooked. The promise of Covid-19 vaccines was made good by a near-impressive rollout of the shots. And things were looking up for Selangor before the great floods came. The state government's two installations of aid packages had provided millions of people with new ways to dream. None of that is lost.

The floods that ended the year have taught us that more must be done to hold back climate change. And importantly, it has shown us that we are strongest as a people when faced with adversity.

MORE ON
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State gears up for Omicron

SHAH ALAM - The state executive council meeting has approved a RM10.7 million allocation to continue and strengthen the management programme for Covid-19 Assessment Centres (CAC), said Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari.

He said the allocation will also be used to monitor patients undergoing self-quarantine via the SELangkah app.

"This is our preparedness in facing the possibility of a new wave, or the in-

crease of new Covid-19 cases since the discovery of the Omicron variant could cause it to spread.

"In response to the problems and constraints, the state government will also contribute equipment needed by CACs, including laptops, tablets, printers and oximeters, which are collectively worth RM298,988. The contributions will be channelled through the Selangor State Health Department," Amirudin said during a press conference at

the Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Building on Dec 7.

He added that approximately 618,980 patients have been recorded or are being monitored via SELangkah, as of Nov 26.

"Throughout its operation, the SELangkah system had identified 38,809 cases in which the patient's health declined while undergoing home isolation," Amirudin said.

Earlier on July 24, the Health Ministry

instructed asymptomatic Covid-19 patients to undergo home quarantine for a period of 10 days.

Deputy Health Director (Public Health) Datuk Dr Chong Chee Kheong said such individuals must report to the MySejahtera or SELangkah apps.

"Covid-19 tests prioritise symptomatic individuals. However all asymptomatic cases must be evaluated, be it physically at CACs or the relevant District Health Office, or online," he said.

A Message for the New Year from the Menteri Besar

Dawn will soon break in 2022. With each new year, resolutions are made in the hope that better days lie ahead, not just for ourselves but for our family, our friends and our nation.

And so in the spirit of new resolve and determination, we shall seek to better ourselves. Let us be free from all self-doubt as failure is not an option. Should we stumble, we will pick ourselves back up again.

In the final chapter of 2021, Selangor was dealt a bitter blow. The floods that engulfed so many areas in the state took with it years of hard work, cherished mementos, entire homes and precious lives.

Although criticisms were hurled at us, we kept our grit and continued with the massive work that was ahead. There is no denying our strength as a Malaysian people when we come together in unity regardless of the colour of our skin.

Our brave volunteers and civil servants are working together in the true spirit of camaraderie. Faced with great uncertainty and backbreaking toil, the goodness in their hearts has driven away any doubt that we can overcome our differences when faced with adversity.

I concede that in our rush to provide help, we were not always able to deliver the best. There is no excuse for any shortcomings on our part but it is my promise to keep doing better.

Taking the 'whole of society' approach, my administration will ensure that our offer of help to the people will be fulfilled, whether immediately or in the coming days.

We started the Selangor Bangkok flood relief fund on December 28, 2021 that promises RM1,000 for ev-

ery household that has been affected by the floods.

As of December 30, RM2.5 million has been handed out to the people in the state's nine districts.

We are also preparing other forms of aid like household essentials and loan deferments, and will continue to help in the cleanup of people's homes and neighbourhoods.

KDEB Waste Management has been tasked with the heavy job of removing all the refuse left by the floods, and has doubled up on its efforts to mobilise 3,023 Roll-On, Roll-Off trucks, 224 excavators and 35 rented lorries to transport the 13,000 tonnes of waste to 11 temporary landfills.

Our own volunteer groups Sukarelawan Selangor (SERVE) and Team Selangor have also brought together 2,500 fine individuals who have promised to keep serving.

Indeed, the floods of December 2021 have taught us that it is time for a paradigm shift.

How often the call to protect the environment and to halt the effects of climate change has fallen on deaf ears! For too long, humans have pilfered from nature, forgetting that the only way forward is to coexist in mutual respect.

From the harsh lessons we recently learned, my administration has decided to prioritise climate change in the upcoming First Selangor Plan.

With this, I would like to wish all Malaysians, and especially the people of Selangor, a very Happy New Year. May we dream bigger and better, and work harder in the coming year, God-willing.

Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari
Selangor Menteri Besar



MB hopes Putrajaya will rethink ECRL route

KUALA LUMPUR - The Selangor government hopes its Federal counterpart will someday reconsider its request to develop the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) via the southern alignment.

Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari said although Putrajaya is under no obligation to do so as the state government's agreement to accept the northern alignment did not come with any preconditions, Selangor would be grateful if Putrajaya could re-examine certain components.

"The state government intends to create a win-win situation in the issue of the ECRL alignment in Section C. We would be pleased if the Federal government gives consideration to constructing the project in the southern alignment in its future development plans," he said.

Amirudin was speaking during a press conference on the ECRL Project and the ECRL Section C (Northern Line) Document Submission Ceremony between MRL and China Communications Construction Company Ltd (CCCC) on Dec 2.

In attendance was Transport Minister Datuk Seri Wee Ka Siong.

On Dec 2, Selangor had agreed to accept the proposed northern alignment

for the construction of the ECRL and approved the Section C alignment that will connect Mentakab to Gombak, and Gombak to Serendah and downwards to Port Klang.

Last October, Selangor took a firm stand in choosing the southern alignment for the ECRL project that would have seen the route pass through Hulu Langat, Sepang and West Port.

On a separate matter, Amirudin expressed hope that the Federal government can look into the potential of Carey Island as a logistics hub in Selangor and put consideration into developing it.

"The state government hopes a joint development committee on Carey Island can also be established so that our desire to make the location the largest logistics hub can be realised.

"Developing Carey Island also serves to strengthen both the Federal and state governments' plan to ensure that we have a network of ports that is of international standard," he said.

Amirudin also hopes that Putrajaya will consider creating a rail network between the Klang Valley and Selangor with its proposed LRT line between Putra Heights and the Selangor Business Capital in Cyberjaya.

RM370m to fix damaged infrastructure

SHAH ALAM - Approximately RM369,501,257 will be needed to repair the state's infrastructure damaged by the recent floods.

Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari said the infrastructure that needs repair could be grouped into the categories of 'emergency', 'urgent' and 'for normal periods'.

"Emergency repair works require RM142,380,281, while urgent works amount to RM177,909,255. Repairs that can be done in the normal period total RM49,211,721.

"The total cost is RM369,501,257 and will be partially funded by the state government, while the rest will be requested from the Federal government so that repairs can begin immediately," he said during a hybrid press conference of the flood situation in Selangor that was streamed live on Facebook and Youtube.

Amirudin said the infrastructure are managed by Federal and state government agencies, including the Irrigation and Drainage Department, the Public Works Department, the District and Land Office, Pengurusan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd (Air Selangor), and the Selangor Water Management Board (Luas).

'We're ready for second wave of floods'

By **SITI ROHAIZAH ZAINAL**

SHAH ALAM - The Selangor government is ready for the possibility of a second wave of floods, says Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari.

The Menteri Besar said the matter was raised during the Disaster Management Committee meeting held on Dec 31.

"We learnt our lesson from what had happened and we are prepared. Additional assets will be provided for future preparations in the event of such floods.

"Support and assistance to other sectors such as education institutions, mosques, suraus, businesses and agriculture were also discussed at the State Executive Council meeting. However, we are currently focusing on the Bantuan Selangor Bangkit (BSB) initiative," said Amirudin when met at a religious event ushering in the New Year at the Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Mosque here, on new year's eve.

He said to date, more than 3,000 flood victims are recipients of the state initiative.

"Assistance through BSB is being actively distributed in every district and we are confident that it will reach all recipients by the end of January," he said.

Amirudin had on Dec 29 said at otal



of 11,194 families that were transferred to temporary relief centres (PPS) following the recent floods in Selangor will receive cash assistance from the state government by Jan 20.

Under the Selangor Bangkit initiative, the state government had begun distributing the RM1,000 cash assistance in stages to flood victims from Dec 28.

On Dec 21, the Selangor government announced a total allocation of RM100

million in funds under the Selangor Bangkit initiative, following major flooding in the state in mid-December.

Apart from infrastructural recovery, the initiative also includes RM10,000 in aid to the next of kin of those who have perished.

A RM1,000 cash aid will be distributed to the heads of families to help restore their homes. This initiative will benefit some 30,000 families hit by the floods.

Work begins at landslide areas

SELAYANG - An estimated RM46 million is needed for the permanent restoration of landslide areas in Selayang and Ampang Jaya, said Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari.

He said 11 critical landslide areas under the Selayang Municipal Council (MPS) and Ampang Jaya Municipal Council (MPAJ) have been identified, requiring immediate repair works.

"Areas damaged by landslides include the Teratai Apartment, and the state government will allocate RM1.6 million to fix the collapsed slope nearby which is expected to complete within two months at the earliest.

"The incident occurred on state government land, with two possible cases involving privately-owned land which will be resolved as well.

"We also will discuss with the Federal government on the fiscal amount, but the state government will carry out restoration works at the critical areas first," Amirudin said during his visit to the

apartment on Dec 30.

He added that 38 families in the neighbourhood have received their RM1,000 cash aid under the Selangor Bangkit initiative, and he will also provide zakat donation assistance.

"Even though the residents were unaffected by the floods, we will still put them in the recipients' list as they have to be relocated to a temporary relief centre (PPS) due to the landslide incident.

"Other than being transferred to the PPS, they can also choose to relocate to a relative's home or any other suitable location," Amirudin said.

After visiting the apartment in Bandar Baru Selayang the Menteri Besar proceeded to Persiaran 3 Jalan FT01 and Jalan Melati 20 in Taman Melati.

The 38 families living at Teratai Apartment were ordered to evacuate their homes following soil erosion at nearby slopes. MPS has since covered the area with canvas to prevent the situation from worsening.

On Dec 29, it was reported that a total of 121 landslide incidents were reported nationwide by the Department of Mineral and Geoscience Malaysia (JMG),

In the Northeast Monsoon Landslide Incident report issued by the JMG on Dec 26, 46 landslide locations were reported in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, with nine of them categorised as critical.

The nine landslides occurred in two locations, namely Kampung Palimbayan in Sungai Penchala and Taman Duta in Seri Duta.

Other areas affected in Selangor are Taman Nusa, Subang; Teratai Apartment, Selayang; Jalan Bunga Anggerik, Taman Melawati; Jalan Melati 7, Taman Seri Melati; Kampung Sepakat, Batu 16, Rawang; Jalan Saidina Hamzah, Kampung Bukit Sungai Puteh, Ampang; and Jalan Haji Abdul Latif, Kampung Bukit Kapar.

JMG has carried out assessments and is continuously monitoring the affected areas. Relevant local authorities have also taken action at 36 locations, includ-

ing the nine critical areas.

Other affected areas include Zooview Park; Riverdale Park Apartment; Taman Melur Ampang; Kampung Sungai Kelambu, Banting; Jalan Wangsa 1, Ulu Klang; Jalan Selayang-Rawang; Jalan Banglo and Batu Arang, all of which are in Selangor.

Meanwhile, leading geologist Prof Ibrahim Komoo said on Dec 25 that the chain of geological events that contributed to the recent floods involved prior landslides.

In a commentary on the Environment and Sustainability Facebook group, Ibrahim said that the floods in the Klang Valley were a combination of landslides in Sungai Pencala, the flow of debris upstream of the Sungai Lui, the flood of debris in the valley of Sungai Lui, and massive floods in most low-lying areas in Shah Alam and Klang.

Ibrahim said the incident in Sungai Lui is similar to that in the upstream of Sungai Kelantan, which led to the major floods in that state in 2014.

Selangor taps into soaring drone market



By **NASUHA BADRUL HUZAINI**

SHAH ALAM - The state government will jointly work with other regulatory bodies to determine potential drone paths deemed safe to be used for delivery services, including to transport necessary items and for emergency purposes.

State executive councillor for trade and investment Dato' Teng Chang Khim said the establishment of a drone port will also be included along the paths.

"Recently, the state government through the Selangor Darul Ehsan Aerospace Industry Coordination Office (S-Daico) organised a drone regulation sharing session, with participation from the aerospace industry regulatory bodies, local authorities, the state government's subsidiaries and higher education institutes.

"It provided in-depth information and discussion about the drone industry, as well as some insights from the industry players.

"We concluded that by having a specific drone path, it would further strengthen the development of the drone industry in Selangor including the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) and Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV) segment," he said during the State Legislative Assembly here, on Dec 6.

Teng was responding to a query from Banting assemblyman Lau Weng San on the state's potential to attract high technology investment in flying car and drone manufacturing.

He added that through the Selangor Aerospace Action Plan 2020-2030, the state government has identified drone technology as one of the segments that can be ex-

plored to empower the aerospace industry.

"Bear in mind the drone industry's scope is broad, and not merely a device nor photography equipment. The functions of drones have become crucial and expanded into surveillance technology and data mapping, as well as being used in the delivery sector, among others.

"Based on an infographic on Drone Market Size 2020-2025 issued by DRONEII, the global compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) for the drone sector is estimated to increase to 13.8 per cent in 2025.

"In Asia, the CAGR is estimated to reach 17.89 per cent in 2025, compared to 8.62 per cent in 2020. The vast potential which the sector holds thus justifies the state government's decision to seriously venture into it," he said.

E-commerce awards makes record sales

KUALA LUMPUR - The sixth edition of the Malaysia Top E-Commerce Merchant Awards (Top ECM) 2021 broke its previous record during its 14-day online sales contest that generated RM47 million, with 358,609 orders received.

Selangor state executive councillor for industry and trade Dato' Teng Chang Khim said this is the highest figure since the event was launched in 2015.

"This (RM47 million in sales with 358,609 orders) is a 28 per cent increase from last year's (2020's) sales at RM36.6 million and 264,284 orders.

"It has also surpassed the initial target of RM40 million in sales and has definitely demonstrated the strong growth of e-commerce in Malaysia with a 30 to 40 per cent increase in the past one year," said Teng in his opening speech at the Top ECM 2021 Awards Ceremony here on Dec 4.

He said the 2021 edition of the competition — being the only one of its kind in Malaysia — saw 213 merchants applying to join. A total of 181 entries were eventually selected.

"Since the first awards in 2016, Top ECM has typically received between 100 and 125 entries. This year's number of submissions (2021) is a 31.5 per cent increase from the previous years' records of 162 submissions and 123 shortlisting.

"I am glad to see that many merchants are taking up all available opportunities to level up their businesses and come back stronger through the many initiatives provided by the state government."

Teng said most of the event's participants had come from the Klang Valley, with 56.4 per cent from Kuala Lumpur followed by 31.5 per cent from Selangor, thus indicating how it caters to national-level participants.

The event is organised by Selangor Information Technology and Digital Economy Corporation (Sidec).

It features four award categories: the Top E-Commerce Merchant Awards, the Online 100 & Brands 100 Merchant Awards, the Selangor E-Bazaar Merchant Awards and the Affin Bank Rising Star Awards.

This year's prizes total RM40,500 in cash and other attractive accolades. The three main winners also got to participate in the event's first-ever Live-stream Marathon on Dec 12 to showcase their products and services on Sidec's Facebook page, with the live streaming costs fully sponsored by Sidec.

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Highway maintenance goes hi-tech

SHAH ALAM - Drones and sensors are methods used by the Smart Road Asset Management System (SRAMS) to ensure that the maintenance work it carries out meets the required standards.

State executive councillor for infrastructure Izham Hashim said the system used by the state government's subsidiary company Kumpulan Semesta Sdn Bhd enables vital information relating to potholes, repair dates, and expiry dates to be communicated with all parties involved.

He said the cost to maintain the drones and sensors can reach up to RM1 billion annually but more importantly, they provide accurate

data to the state government.

"So we use the latest technology such as drones and sensors to monitor (public infrastructure), while contractors are obligated to put the data into the software every time they carry out maintenance works.

"We focus on this so that the public can have good highways," Izham said after officiating the highway contractors' development seminar on Dec 13.

The executive councillor added that thus far, SRAMS is only used to monitor state roads under the supervision of the Public Works Department and will be expanded to other places in the future.

Age of candidacy lowered to 18

SHAH ALAM - The Selangor State Legislative Assembly has passed the Selangor State Government Body (Amendment) Bill 2021, which will reduce the age limit for qualified citizens to become representatives from 21 to 18 years old.

The amendment was passed following unanimous support from all assemblymen during the voting session.

Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari thanked all the assemblymen and Speaker Ng Sze Lim who were responsible for supporting and accepting the amendment.

"Thank you Speaker and the assemblymen who debated throughout this time to amend Law-Article 63 on the age limit of voters and the electees in the next election.

"If we do not amend, the federation has the ability to maintain in implementing this law. But for the sake of solidarity, it is the responsibility of all to support and accept this amendment, which has been accepted by nearly all states as well," he said during the State Legislative Assembly sitting on Dec 6.

Following the sitting, Ng said the amendment is a new page for Selangor and its youths will be recognised and allowed to contest in the next general election.

"We have heard the voices of the youth, and we will ensure the participation of as many (of them) as possible, in line with Undi18.

"There may be some who are not ready, there are different perspectives but in the Assembly, it seems we all agree, be it by the government or Opposition. Everyone was unanimous," he added.

Thousands of traders given digital help

SHAH ALAM - As of November 2021, 7,258 micro-entrepreneurs in Selangor have been guided on how to digitalise their business.

State executive councillor for trade and investment Dato' Teng Chang Khim said the hawkers and retailers were given guidance by the Selangor Digital Partner (Rakan Digital Selangor or RDS) ambassadors.

"The RDS ambassadors have also managed to identify a total of 20,919 potential businesses to be registered for the Selangor Platform (Plats)," he said during the Selangor State Legislative Assembly sitting here on Dec 2.

The Bandar Baru Klang assemblyman was representing Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari, who was unable to attend the sitting, to answer an oral question from Banting assemblyman Lau Weng San on RDS.

Teng said an RDS ambassador's task is to assist micro-businesses in registering their businesses with Plats, which is a promotional platform and digital directory developed to move the economy of Selangor's hawkers and retailers.

"A total of 1,000 youths were appointed as RDS ambassadors, going down to the ground to provide guidance and lead the target group. They ensured that small businesses are not left behind during the modernisation and digitalisation era so they can face clients from the digital generation," he said.

Teng added that a total of RM3 million was allocated in the 2021 Selangor Budget for the RDS programme.

"This programme will be continued in the 2022 Budget, and intensified by Permodalan Negeri Selangor Berhad," he said.

Nine-point plan to pull investors

By **NASUHA BADRUL HUZAINI**

SHAH ALAM - The Selangor government will focus on economic development through high-impact investments, in line with the advancement of the high technology industry, said Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari.

In relation to this, he said the state government has outlined nine strategies to promote investment opportunities readily available in the state.

Among these strategies is updating and providing a comprehensive investment guidebook for potential investors.

"The guidebook will help investors and can be used as a reference point for them to better understand the state's economic landscape.

"In addition, the state government through the Selangor Information Technology & Digital Economy Corporation (Sidec) will develop the State Agriculture Technology Industry, via the Selangor Accelerated Programme.

"The new focus in the sector has become key to Selangor's economic recovery through digital transformation and the enhancement of technology adoption in businesses," Amirudin said in response to a query from Gombak Setia assem-

blyman Muhammad Hilman Idham during the State Legislative Assembly session on Dec 8.

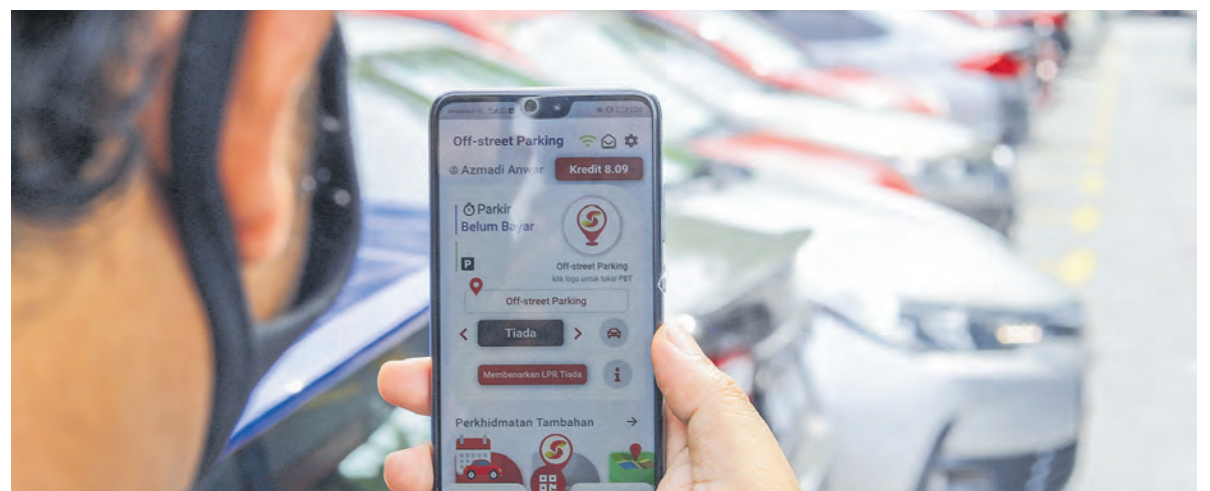
Other investment strategies include carrying out branding and promotion of potential industrial areas through print or electronic media, assisting industry players in resolving arising issues related to investment, as well as providing strategic planning for the industrial sector.

Others include enhancing promotional activities in other countries, forming a networking session with related agencies, establishing strategic partners from related agencies, and encouraging the opening of new industrial areas with involvement from the state's subsidiaries.

The Menteri Besar added the state government intends to spur economic growth in Selangor, so that the revenues generated can be dispersed evenly to the people.

"We are always on the lookout from time to time for new revenue streams, based on the collectible sources of revenue.

"Among the new policies currently being planned under the State Government Revenue Policy include introducing a special permit for temporary usage of agricultural land, and a proposal for new office fee rates for the registration of land/lot transfers, among others," he said.



Parking payments go online

SHAH ALAM - Local authorities (PBT) in the state will begin to fully use the digital payment method for parking charges via the Smart Selangor Parking (SSP) mobile app starting on Jan 3.

In a Facebook post on Dec 15, SSP said road users will need to use the e-coupon in its app, which can be downloaded from Google Play Store and Apple App Store.

From Jan 3, payments for street parking using coin machines or scratch and display manual coupons will no longer be accepted.

Through the SSP app, users only need to fill in their car registration number, and pay the required amount based on their parking period.

In addition, payment can also be made through authorised physical e-coupon agents located near the parking areas. Just look out for the SSP logo or stickers that say "e-Coupon Sold Here" (eKupon Parkir Dijual Di Sini).

Top-up credits for the e-coupons can also be purchased at convenience stores including 7-Eleven, 99 Speedmart and MyPOSPay.

In March, state executive councillor for local government Ng Sze Han said Selangor will implement digital parking payments through the SSP app, and end the use of manual coupons from January 2022.

For more information, visit Smart Selangor Parking on Facebook or call 1700-81-9612.

Bold steps to spark the economy

By **NASUHA BADRUL HUZAINI**

IT has been two years since Covid-19 was first discovered in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. The health crisis that quickly escalated into an economic one has left no country unscathed. Two years, however, has also been enough time for making small recoveries. Vaccine access and supportive economic policies have allowed many nations to start picking up the pieces.

Although the situation is still volatile — with Malaysia's ministers declaring in early October 2021 that we were ready to transition into the endemic phase, and then recalling the move by December due to the threat of the Omicron variant of the virus — by and large, the people are out and about again, crowding markets, food outlets and department stores.

As the backbone of Malaysia's economy, Selangor took the lead in embracing the challenges of the new norm. Through its investment arm, Invest Selangor, it organised two major events, the Selangor International Business Summit 2021 (SIBS 2021) and the Selangor Aviation Show 2021 (SAS 2021), in a span of one week, proving to many investors that it is a regional economic heavyweight in the process of waking up.

SIBS 2021

For the first time ever, SIBS 2021 was organised in a hybrid manner. The physical event took place at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre from Dec 18 to 21, while the online edition was launched on the Selangor

business portal.

Comprising six main events and three parallel events, SIBS 2021 has been recognised by Malaysia's Book of Records as the biggest of its kind in the country. The annual summit also recorded 25,410 visitors throughout its run, ranging from business owners, traders, wholesalers, distributors and retailers to members of the public.

In total, SIBS 2021 recorded RM217.6 million in potential negotiated sales, nearly reaching the sales record of the physical event of SIBS in 2019, which was RM247 million.

Officiated by His Highness Tengku Amir Shah Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah Alhaj, the physical event of SIBS 2021 aimed to revive the industrial and services sectors affected by the pandemic.

In his opening remarks, Menteri Be-

sar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari said Selangor is aggressively embarking on plans to rebuild its economy to maintain its stature as the country's economic powerhouse.

"The state had developed several post-pandemic initiatives to revitalise its economy and industries.

"We are preparing to rebuild the economy with a range of short- and long-term recovery initiatives to build on effective pandemic relief measures.

"SIBS 2021, a key annual initiative by Selangor, is a major networking avenue to introduce Asean and international businesses to find out the opportunities available in the state," he said.

SIBS 2021 successfully assembled 494 physical exhibition booths and 623 virtual ones. A total of 30 buyers from four countries participated in business-matching sessions held at the ven-

ue, while 164 buyers from 31 countries registered and participated in the online version.

Since its inception in 2016, SIBS has been a platform for international businesses to use Selangor as a springboard to tap into the broader Asean market, home to over 600 million consumers and over 200 of the world's largest companies.

The fifth edition of SIBS 2021 showcased the following events:

- **The 7th Selangor International Expo (Food and Beverage) 2021**

The latest products, technology and updates in the Food & Beverage industry were featured, with participation from Indonesia, The Philippines, Vietnam, India, Tajikistan, Taiwan, The Netherlands and Australia.

- **The 5th Selangor Asean Business Conference (SABC)**

The conference was attended by economic leaders from the region, including government delegations, high-profile industry players, trade associations, members of business chambers and international investors to discuss the next trends in business and society.

- **The 6th Selangor Smart City and Digital Economy Convention (SDEC)**

The convention gathered key opinion leaders with the vision to spark conversations and ideas regarding the digital transformation rapidly taking place around the world.



- **The 2nd Selangor Research and Design and Innovation Expo**

This expo paved the way for participants to showcase their latest inventions and ideas to investors, manufacturers, and marketers in the Asean region and beyond.

- **The Selangor International Expo (Medic)**

This expo focused on Selangor's robust Life Science Core Cluster which has become a central aspect of daily life.

- **The Selangor Industrial Park Expo (Spark)**

This was a platform for local and international investors and stakeholders to seek opportunities and gain more insight into the state's initiatives, industrial parks and industry ecosystem.

- **The Selangor International Culinary Festival**

A second edition featured the World Chefs' Endorsed Culinary Competition — the SICF2021 Culinary Challenge and Gastronomic Master Class, the Malaysia Chefs' Forum and two new components, the Malaysia Chefs' Village and SICF TV.

- **The Malaysia-China Entrepreneurs Conference**

The conference highlighted the topics of Trade and Investment, Logistics and Transportation, Comprehensive Healthcare & Cultural Tourism, Entrepreneurship and Digital Transformation.

SIBS 2022 is expected to be held at the same venue this year from Oct 6 to 9.



SAS 2021

The inaugural Selangor Aviation Show 2021 (SAS2021), held at the Sky-Park Regional Aviation Centre in Subang from Nov 25 to 27, recorded 4,987 visitors over the three-day event.

The first in-person post-pandemic aviation event with a total allocation of RM2 million had attracted 43 local and international exhibitors, including Brazil, France, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States.

Eighteen aircraft went on display at the show, including an E195-E2 re-

gional commercial jet from Embraer, a T625 GÖKBAY from Turkish Aerospace, a Piaggio P-180 Avanti EVO from Piaggio Aerospace and an AS350 Écureuil owned by Airbus Helicopters.

Thirteen memorandums of understanding were also signed between the participating aerospace companies and the Selangor government, its subsidiaries and other Selangor-based companies to mark sub-sector collaborations.

The collaborations will be on vocational workforce development for the aerospace industry, the establishment

of the Selangor Drone Centre of Excellence, providing simulator training hubs, creating a one-stop Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul centre for drones and the development of a sea-plane manufacturing facility.

State executive councillor for trade and investment Dato' Teng Chang Khim said the aviation show would become a staple event within the state's aerospace industry.

"This is our first aviation show, and we have had many challenges in bringing this event live and in-person, primarily due to the pandemic restrictions.

"We had not put high expectations on this maiden air show, yet the event became a success," he said in his speech during the show's closing ceremony.

Realising the potential of the aviation show to the aerospace industry in Selangor, the state government has approved RM5 million in funds for the event next year.

"We are already planning to host a more prominent and bolder event in 2022 with the increased allocation approved for the coming year. With the extra RM3 million, it would help the state government to plan for a larger-scale event," Teng said.

The second edition of SAS 2022 is slated to be held from Sept 8 to 11 in Subang, and reservations can be made through Invest Selangor's aerospace division, the Selangor Darul Ehsan Aerospace Industry Coordination Office (SDaico).



By ALANG BENDAHARA

An unexpected rainfall that started on Friday, Dec 17 and continued for three days wreaked havoc when it flooded both urban and rural areas in Selangor.

Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari said it was the highest rainfall the state has ever recorded, affecting eight out of nine districts in the state.

"Selangor Department of Irrigation and Drainage informed that rainfall had exceeded 380mm, which is more than twice the highest recorded rainfall for Selangor. In addition, high tides in the affected areas exceeded 4.5m," said Amirudin after chairing the State Disaster Management Unit meeting on Dec 18.

The first wave of shock came in the evening of Dec 17 when motorists traversing the major highways in the state's capital of Shah Alam were trapped by rising floodwaters. Blocked by stretches of roads that resembled rivers, dozens of residents in Setia Alam and Bukit Raja and Meru in Klang were forced to sleep in their vehicles for the larger part of the night while waiting for a safe route out.

In Setia Alam the next day, on the main roads connecting Meru to Bandar Bukit Raja in Klang, two-to-three-metre deep waters also caused many office workers to be stranded and unable to reach home.

Aside from Shah Alam, the rains battered Klang and Hulu Langat. Overnight, as many as 40,000 people were displaced, seeking refuge at 205 temporary relief shelters (PPS) that sprung up across eight districts in the state.

Selangor took swift action by putting 93 pumps into full gear to speed up the flow of water to the river drainage system. This eased the flooding in five districts. However, 134 floodgates had to be closed due to high tide over fears that water may overflow into nearby residential areas.

In the Klang Valley, in an effort to lessen the impact of flooding in the downtown area of Kuala Lumpur, the SMART Tunnel activated Mode 4 of its operations, allowing a diversion of five million cubic metres of water at 7.45pm on Dec 18. It was the first time the tunnel was used in this manner for more than three hours since it was built in 2007.

Unexpected weather

Selangor and Kuala Lumpur were not the only places affected. Widespread flooding was also seen in Pahang and Melaka, while Terengganu, Kelantan, Negeri Sembilan and Perak experienced heavy rains.

The once-in-a-lifetime phenomenon affected over a hundred thousand people nationwide, said Environment and Water Ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Zaini Ujang.

"The annual rainfall in Kuala Lumpur is 2,400mm and this means the total rainfall on Dec 18 had exceeded a whole month's average. It is something beyond expectation and only occurs once every 100 years," he said in a media conference on Dec 19.

"This is an exception because, during the monsoon



A deluge that stunned a state

season, only states in the East Coast receive heavy rain," he said. "But this time, the entire peninsula, especially the central east coast and northern peninsula regions received continuous heavy rain."

Landslides were also reported in several areas, among them, in Karak, resulting in scores of road users becoming trapped. They were saved by a search and rescue team.

The floods also turned a resort in Janda Baik into a disaster zone after it was hit by a water surge. Two occupants at the resort were found drowned and another is still missing.

As of Dec 27, 48 deaths were reported while five people remain missing from the nationwide floods.

Immediate assistance

Selangor's focus on digitalisation has proved to be an asset, as all its rescue, assistance and relief efforts

were coordinated at quick speed at the 24-hour Smart Selangor Operations Centre located at the Selangor State Secretary Building in Shah Alam.

Utilising the state's existing know-how in handling the Covid-19 pandemic, every flood victim seeking shelter at the PPS were first screened for the virus. Those who were tested positive were relocated to separate shelters.

State-owned water operator Pengurusan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd (Air Selangor) also deployed its water tankers to the PPS.

The state was also able to mobilise volunteers to sign up for service with Team Selangor and Selangor Volunteer (SERVE). Both movements sprang into action, first to assist in evacuating victims and later, in relief efforts. After the floodwaters receded, the teams also helped to clean the homes of those affected.

On Dec 18, the Raja Tun Uda Library in Section 13, Shah Alam was among the first to open its doors to

flood victims seeking refuge.

"The Raja Tun Uda Library service is still open tonight. If you are stuck in the vicinity, come to our library for shelter and rest. The library café is also still in operation," a message on Perbadanan Perpustakaan Awam Selangor's Facebook page read.

On Dec 19, four residential colleges and the Al-Wathiqu Billah Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin Mosque at Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Shah Alam were also transformed into PPS for its affected students and staff, and members of the public.

Aftermath

On Dec 19, several areas in Petaling, Hulu Langat, and Kuala Lumpur were hit by unscheduled water cuts due to the emergency closure of four water treatment plants (Semenyih 2, Sungai Langat, Langat 2 and Cheras Batu 11) following increasing water levels.

The National Water Services Commission (SPAN) said the floods had caused damage to about 200 sewage treatment plants maintained by the national sewerage company, Indah Water Konsortium Sdn Bhd.

Among the damaged sewage treatment assets were equipment, electrical panels, fences, barrier walls, pipes, sewerage manholes, and access roads.

State executive councillor for infrastructure Izhah Hashim had on Dec 25 said a total of 284 Federal and state roads in Selangor were affected by the floods. Thirty-eight cases of landslips and landslides were reported by the Shah Alam City Council, the Selayang Municipal Council, the Ampang Jaya Municipal Council and the Klang Municipal Council.

On Dec 27, Amirudin said approximately RM369,501,257 would be needed to repair damaged state infrastructure.

"It will be partially funded by the state government, while the rest will be requested from the Federal

government so that the repairs can begin immediately," he said.

The infrastructure are those managed by Federal and state government agencies, including the Irrigation and Drainage Department, the Public Works Department, the District and Land Office, Pengurusan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd (Air Selangor), and the Selangor Water Management Board (Luas).

Amirudin also said that as of Dec 27, 13,699.55 tonnes of post-flood garbage and waste have been cleaned up and collected by KDEB Waste Management (KDEBWM), in an operation that has a financial impact of RM6,031,937.

To rise again

The Selangor government had announced on Dec 21 an allocation of RM100 million in funds under the 'Ikhtiar Selangor Bangkit' initiative to kickstart the recovery process.

Amirudin said out of the total, RM20 million will be spent on cleaning and recovery operations while the remaining RM80 million will be used to rebuild infrastructure.

"For cleaning and recovery, the fund will cover the costs for housing areas, damaged infrastructure, health assistance, solid waste collection, PPS management, and other related matters," he said.

Also, the families of those who perished in the disaster will be given RM10,000 each as compensation, while affected households will receive RM1,000.

Some 11,194 families that were housed at the temporary relief centres will receive the RM1,000 cash assistance by January 20.

Amirudin assured that every affected household would be given financial assistance, regardless of whether they had stayed at registered relief centres and those run by non-governmental organisations or had chosen to remain at home during the incident.

On Jan 1, Amirudin informed via Twitter that as of Dec 31, all PPS in the state have closed and the evacuees have returned home.

The state government has also agreed to waive water charges for one month for consumers affected by the incident and waive the repayment of loans taken under Yayasan Hijrah Selangor (Hijrah) for two months to help affected entrepreneurs.

Seven state councillors have been appointed to coordinate a committee to ease the ongoing process.

The councillors include Mohd Khairuddin Othman as the coordinator of youth associations, V Ganabattirau for welfare and charity assistance, Ng Sze Han for the cleaning process of flood areas, Izhah for infrastructure recovery, Dr Siti Mariah Mahmud for health assistance, and Rodziah Ismail for the coordination of PPS.

Furthermore, the state government has established the Ikhtiar Selangor Bangkit Fund, where donations from private companies, corporations, government-linked companies, and individuals are highly appreciated.

"As a start, I will donate one month of my salary as Menteri Besar to this fund," said Amirudin.



Reaching out in hard times



By **ALANG BENDAHARA**

IN the first half of this year, Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari announced two series of the Kita Selangor Package that was formulated to help the people in the state affected by the multiple Covid-19 lockdowns.

Designed as both assistance and stimulus-based in nature, the combined total of RM625.437 million allocated for both packages have benefited hundreds of thousands of people and businesses hurt by the movement control order (MCO).

After the first installation of the Kita Selangor Package was revealed by Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari on Jan 20, Opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim commended it as an example of a government initiative that prioritises its people.

Anwar described the assistance as holistic, especially the aid provided to frontliners battling the Covid-19 pandemic.

Worth RM73.877 million, the aid was announced following the reintroduction of the MCO earlier in 2021.

In this package, an effort was made to equip the people with their own tools to monitor their health status, should they contract the dreaded in-

fection. When people have a thermometer and an oximeter to self-monitor their temperature and oxygen levels, they are more unlikely to end up dead at home, the Selangor administration concluded.

And so, the SELangkah Home Surveillance Kit was sent to every Category 1 and Category 2 patient isolating at home.

Medicines are also included in each kit, and by using the SELangkah app, the patients will be monitored by medical officers for 10 days from an operations centre located at the Selangor State Secretariat Building.

Amirudin highlighted that RM6 million alone was spent on Covid-19 screenings for 50,000 Selangor residents. The programme focused on vulnerable groups such as senior citizens who are at higher risk, especially those at old folks homes and haemodialysis centres, people in the B40 category as well as Selangor-born students of higher learning.

Other initiatives that were announced include the following:

- RM3 million to provide food supply to 9,822 medical officers and 3,500 policemen and army personnel who had undertaken frontline duties during

the MCO

- Free transportation assistance via the Smart Selangor Bus to ferry low-risk Covid-19 patients to the Covid-19 Quarantine and Low-Risk Treatment Centre (PKRC) at the Malaysia Agro Exposition Park Serdang (MAEPS), to reduce the load of the Health Ministry (MOH) and cut down patients' waiting time
- RM100,000 given to all 56 state constituencies for the Mesra Rakyat Programme, which include the distribution of basic necessities such as rice, cooking oil, flour and canned food. Selangor MPs also receive RM50,000 each for the same purpose
- Exemption of rental payments for public housing projects (PPR), Council Homes and those under the Smart Rental Scheme from January to March 2021 that cost RM1.7 million and benefitted 2,361 PPR tenants. A three-month rental deferment that cost RM1 million also benefitted 450 tenant units under the Smart Rental Scheme for the same time period
- The loans of 762 Yayasan Selangor borrowers were written off, involving a total of RM7.177 million in financial implication to the state government
- RM1.3 million for food baskets containing daily necessities contributed to taxi drivers, school bus drivers,

PPR tenants, KDEB Waste Management solid waste lorry drivers and the Orang Asli community

- RM2 million in agriculture community assistance with RM300 vouchers provided to every fisherman for buying petrol; poultry feed and farming input channelled to poultry and aquaculture entrepreneurs; while food baskets, as well as fresh produce, were given to all 10,160 members of the agriculture community
- RM1 million spent on the Frontliners Child Care Initiative that saw the opening of temporary childcare centres at public hospitals and temporary premises to care for the children of 400 frontline workers for free for two months
- RM300,000 for the Selangor Online Tuition Centre Portal (e-PTRS), a digital platform that provides interactive learning sessions for candidates of the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) and Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM) examinations

On Aug 27, state executive councillor for rural development and traditional village Borhan Aman Shah told the State Legislative Assembly that as of Aug 16, RM41.7 million had been channelled through the Kita Selangor Package, and out of the 46 programmes outlined, 11

that focussed on the people's welfare and the progress of the state have been completed.

Kita Selangor Package 2.0

Just five months after the first Kita Selangor Package, Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin introduced the second installation, a bigger and more focussed stimulus package, the Kita Selangor Package 2.0.

On June 9, RM551.56 million was channelled into initiatives that benefited some 1.6 million people in the state who were affected by the enforcement of a full MCO.

Themed 'Moving Together Towards Success' (Bersama-sama Menuju Kejayaan), the Selangor Menteri Besar said the package consists of three strategies covering 25 programmes that will cushion the social and economic impact of the pandemic.

The three strategies are to care for the people's welfare and survival, to save the industries, the economic sectors, and small- and medium entrepreneurs in Selangor, and to execute health controls to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

With it, the state government has continued to provide free Covid-19 screenings for the community with a target of 100,000 tests done in the third phase of the programme, and should anyone be found positive, a home assessment kit will be provided to them for self-monitoring with the help of SELangkah.

Death benefits will also continue to be given to the next of kin of Covid-19 victims.

In an effort to encourage people to take the Covid-19 vaccine, Kita Selangor Package 2.0 also provided a RM20 trans-



portation rebate for those who hail a Grab car to their vaccination centre. This initiative had benefitted close to 50,000 people.

Furthermore, RM200 million was injected into the state-owned Selangor Covid-19 Vaccination Programme (Selvax) to accelerate inoculating the people and to complement the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme.

Other efforts included in the Kita Selangor Package 2.0 are:

- Moratorium on loans for 40,000 Hijrah scheme entrepreneurs, 1,300 graduate students for the year 2021, 286 students sponsored by Yayasan Selangor, 2,632 tenants of the People's Housing Project and 477 participants

of the Smart Rental Scheme

- Selangor Internet Data programme, which distributed subsidised SIM cards with unlimited internet data for 70,000 recipients comprising petty hawkers, students, single mothers, taxi drivers, senior citizens and gig economy workers
- RM200 million channelled to Selangor Advance to assist small- and medium-enterprises with cash flow and to cover their expenses. This had helped to keep many small industries afloat in trying times
- RM80 million allocated to Hijrah Selangor to provide 8,000 entrepreneurs, especially those who had lost their jobs due to the MCO, with enough capital to start a new business
- RM2.55 million allocated to members of the tourism industry via the Tourism Activity Assistance Grant, the Selangor Tourism Voucher 2.0, the Digitisation Learning Training Programme as well as one-off financial assistance to tourism associations in Selangor
- RM500,000 to continue the Prevention of Outbreak at Ignition Sites (POIS) programme to ensure compliance with health controls in all factories as well as to assist in the implementation of vaccine programmes for all 'economic frontliners'

On Aug 25, Amirudin told the Selangor State Legislative Assembly that as of Aug 16, a total of RM236.63 million, or 42.9 per cent, out of the RM551.56 million allocated to Kita Selangor Package 2.0 has been disbursed to the targeted groups, benefiting 496,800 recipients.

He said three out of the 25 pro-

grammes had been completed. They are the loan moratorium for Hijrah traders, rent deferment for the low-cost housing tenants, and the deferment of scholarship loans for Yayasan Selangor students.

Royal nod

Meanwhile, on Aug 20, the Smart Selangor Delivery Unit (SSDU) announced the launch of the kitaselangor.my portal which aims to make applications for any initiatives under the Kita Selangor Package 2.0 more convenient.

On Aug 23, the Sultan of Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah Alhaj in his royal address during the opening of the First Meeting of the Fourth Session of the 14th Selangor State Legislative Assembly, commended the various financial assistance and initiatives introduced by the state government since March 2020, which has helped to ease the burdens of the people.

His Royal Highness said the cooperation between the Federal and state administrations has also assisted the people and ensured the continuation of the country's economic and development agenda despite the many challenges following the coronavirus outbreak.

"The Selangor government has announced various stimulus packages for the people who face difficult times.

"I hope the assistance will reach the targeted and affected groups to help reduce their burden and survive the challenges they face," said His Royal Highness.

As of Aug 16, a total of 871,837 individuals have received benefits from the two Kita Selangor Packages.





A tough load to shoulder

By AMIN RIDZUAN ISHAK

It is an hour to midnight on Dec 27 and the deep, rumbling sounds of 7.5-tonne lorries fill the night air. In front of the single-storey houses that line Taman Sri Nanding in Hulu Langat, broken furniture, soggy mattresses and soiled carpets pile up like bonfire offerings.

A little more than a week ago they were decorative pieces in the homes of their owners. Now, ruined by floodwaters that rose so swift and fierce on Dec 17 that the residents had fled for their lives, they are left out to be carted away.

Tasked with collecting the massive bulk of refuse are the workers of KDEB Waste Management (KDEBWM). The men call out to each other as they heave the mangled pieces of metal and wood onto the back of their lorries, their pale blue uniforms and hands soiled with orange-coloured dust.

When a lorry is fully laden, it rolls out of the lanes of the housing estates towards the main roads where excavators and backhoes work continuously to shift even larger piles of waste, broken branches and mounds of mud.

The scene resembles the aftermath of an earthquake or a tsunami. Not much can be salvaged.

The workers stop now and then only to pull down the mask on their faces for a few deep gulps of fresh air. Working at night after long hours of toil in the day is hard, but at least the sun is not beating on their backs.

No small task

KDEBWM managing director Ramli Mohd Tahir said that ever since electricity returned to the area on Dec 26, his men have been working the night shift. Prior to that, as evening fell, work had

to be halted as the darkness prevented their lorries from accessing the areas that were deemed too dangerous to pass through.

"This is our latest strategy (working at night) in helping to clear as

much refuse as possible to ease the burdens of the flood victims," he said during an interview at his office on Dec 27.

Ramli confided that his team of workers have a massive job ahead of them. Aside from residential homes, extensive work needs to be done at shop lots and factories too. The workers are worn out, he said. The teams have been stretched to the limit.

"Imagine their exhaustion, working from early in the morning," he said. "The most we allow is for them to work till night. They need rest, too."

Ramli added that the manual labour that comes with clearing flood-damaged waste has been particularly tough on his team. Once their job at Taman Sri Nanding is done, the lorries and excavators — together with the workers — head to other areas, and will finish up at Sungai Lui, one of the worst-hit locations. There is no time for fatigue.

To ease their job, KDEBWM had requested for the police to close the main road leading into Hulu Langat for two days from Dec 27 so that its heavy vehicles can traverse the routes with more ease.

"We hope that the residents of all flood-ravaged areas in the state will make way for our lorries to transport their discarded items to the landfills in Batu 14 and Sungai Serai. Previously, many of our lorries were blocked by vehicles that had come in from other places. We want to do as much work as we can and in the fastest time possible. We need to speed things up," Ramli said.

Selangor Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari had also called on volunteers to be patient and to choose the right time to access the roads into Hulu Langat and other flood-hit areas. Careful coordination among those who have rolled up their sleeves to help is vital after a natural disaster of such scale.

KDEBWM had initially dedicated 50 Roll-On, Roll-Off (RORO) lorries for the task. By Dec 31, a total of 3,023 ROROs, 224 excavators and 35 rented lorries had been mobilised to 11 temporary landfills in the state. Each vehicle was installed with a monitoring device so that their routes can be tracked at the company's head office in Shah Alam.

Ramli added, "We want to see how our vehicles move in real time so that we can plan better. Hopefully, we can wrap up our job in a week".

The waste management company has been placed on active duty since Dec 19 after unusually heavy rains inundated many parts of Selangor, Melaka and Pahang on Dec 17.

The cleanup at Selangor's eight flooded districts is estimated to cost RM6 million. As of Dec 27, more than 13,000 tonnes of rubble and waste had been relocated.



No dropping our guard



Selvax reached out to the community in as many ways as possible — through Selvax Mobile where vaccines were brought to the people living in the fringes of the city; through Selvax for Adolescents where schools were roped in to inoculate their students; and through Selvax Booster, providing adults with the option of a third dose.

On Aug 26, Malaysia recorded 24,599 new cases, the highest daily figure since the pandemic hit the country, with Selangor topping the list at 6,936 cases. Despite the grave situation, Selangor Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari was optimistic that the state would shift into Phase Two of the National Recovery Plan (NRP) in September as 98 per cent of the adult population had already received their first dose of the vaccine.

In October, following the high rate of vaccination, Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Melaka were moved into Phase Three under the NRP. In addition, the long-awaited announcement to allow interstate travel was made on Oct 11 when the country's adult vaccination rate hit 90 per cent.

Soon after, several states including Selangor entered Phase Four of the NRP, followed by the reopening of schools in those states on Nov 1.

Ahead of the game

As the year rolled to a close, the number of daily Covid-19 cases stabilised, hovering around the 3,000 mark, but much still needs to be done.

In Selangor, the Food Basket programme that benefits the B40 group, the disabled, single mothers, unemployed individuals and taxi and bus drivers, continues. The administration will also continue to provide RM1,000 in cash aid to the families of Covid-19 victims.

The Home Assessment Tools (HAT) programme was also introduced to equip patients undergoing house quarantine with the right tools to monitor their health status. Oximeters, thermometers, medicines, and saliva-based test kits provided by the state government have proven to be vital in reducing brought-in-dead cases.

Work at the Selangor Covid-19 Assessment Centre (CAC), too, continues. Some RM10.7 million has been injected into managing the centre, including a recent expenditure of RM298,988 to purchase laptops, tablets, printers, and oximeters.

With our war against Covid-19 half won, indifference and carelessness must never get the better of us. The new variant Omicron has already reared its head among us and we must not let it or other variants put to nought our incredible efforts of the past year.

By **NASUHA BADRUL HUZAINI**

LAST year, many of us thought we had won the battle against Covid-19 when on July 1 Malaysia recorded zero cases of local transmissions within its borders. Despite many reminders from the Health Ministry (MOH) to the people to remain vigilant and to uphold the standard operating procedures (SOPs) against the pandemic, many people did not take heed.

This resulted in the people of the states of Selangor, Penang, Melaka, Johor, Sabah and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur being placed under a movement control order (MCO) to contain the spread of the virus.

When the number of daily cases reached four digits, a federal proclamation of emergency issued by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah imposed further social and work restrictions on Malaysians and saw the closure of parliament from Jan 12 to Aug 1.

At the state level, Selangor endeavoured to protect its economic backbone — its industries — by introducing the Preventing and Detecting Outbreaks at Ignition Sites (POIS) programme on Jan 6 that aimed to reduce workplace clusters.

In February, the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme (PICK) was launched. The then Prime Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, became the first individual in the country to receive the Covid-19 vaccine.

PICK was implemented in three phases: giving priority to frontline workers in the first phase, ensuring that all senior citizens, high-risk groups and people with disabilities receive their shots in the second, and focusing on inoculating all adults in the third. The pro-

gramme, however, faced several hiccups due to a low supply of the Pfizer vaccine while daily Covid-19 cases soared.

In May, the third instalment of the MCO was implemented across the nation in an effort to hold back the contagion. This time, however, all economic sectors were allowed to operate as the government was careful to not put the livelihoods of the people under further strain.

The following month, MOH announced that eight cases of the Delta variant were detected in Malaysia.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the variant, first identified in India in October 2020, continued to spread around the world at a scorching pace, driving a new spike in cases and deaths.

Picking up speed

In early July when Selangor realised with panic and frustration that it had the lowest vaccination rate in Malaysia, it launched its own vaccination programme Selvax — comprising Selvax Community and Selvax Industry — to complement PICK and to expedite vaccine delivery to the community and factory workers in the state.

With a total allocation of RM200 million, the administration independently procured 2.5 million doses of the Sinovac vaccine that would go on to benefit 1.25 million people.



Battles, truces and a win for youths

By ALANG BENDAHARA

As Malaysia entered its second year of battle with Covid-19 in 2021, its ground was also set for political battles and truces that led to a change in the premiership and two state elections held.

Continuing its shaky situation from the previous year, the country saw its eighth Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin battle multiple political tests from within his own coalition and with the opposition.

An Emergency for an emergency

On Jan 11, 2021, the Emergency Proclamation was declared after Muhyiddin's second request was granted by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah.

Widely speculated that the Emergency was an excuse to safeguard Muhyiddin's precarious position and the fact that the country was only recording about 700 new Covid-19 cases a day at the time fueled anger among the rakyat.

The nationwide Emergency would last from Jan 11 to Aug 1 and led to the suspension of Parliament.

Throughout this period, the relationship between Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (Bersatu) and Umno was weakening. By March, the latter announced that it would not work with Bersatu in the next general election.

On Feb 24, the King was of the view that Parliament should convene during the period of Emergency, on a date that would be advised by the prime minister. By June 16, when Covid-19 cases had escalated at such an alarming rate that the country was again put on lockdown, the King — who by convention plays a ceremonial role and by constitution acts upon the advice of the Prime Minister — intervened.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong called for Parliament to reconvene as soon as possible to allow debate on the Emergency Ordinances and a Covid-19 recovery plan. What followed was a very unusual and unprecedented public spat between Istana Negara and the Federal government.

On July 26, the day of the special Parliamentary session, the Law Minister announced that there was no need to debate the Ordinances as they had already been revoked. Three days later, the Palace publicly rebuked the decision, saying that the revocation had been done without the King's consent and therefore was not legal under the country's laws.



Muhyiddin eventually agreed to consider debating the Emergency laws in Parliament. However, he was soon forced into a corner with surging Covid-19 numbers and deaths, plus a near stagnant economy.

He resigned on Aug 16, just 17 months after he was sworn in as prime minister on March 1, 2020.

On Aug 20, Muhyiddin's deputy, Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob, was sworn in as the ninth Prime Minister.

An MoU like no other

To avoid another political calamity and standoffs in Parliament, a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Federal Government and Pakatan Harapan was signed on Sept 13.

The MoU on Transformation and Political Stability aimed to get all political parties to stop attempts to topple the government and focus on the country's recovery efforts from the pandemic.

Contained in the MoU are six agendas that called for strengthening the Covid-19 plan, administrative transformation, Parliamentary reform, independence of the Judiciary, the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63), and the formation of a steering committee.

It also contained an agreement that the government would not dissolve Parliament before July 31, 2022.

Yet the MoU seemed to only work at the Federal level as political squabbles continued in many states.

State elections

The Melaka government fell on Oct 4 after four Barisan Nasional (BN) assem-

blymen withdrew their support for Chief Minister Datuk Seri Sulaiman Md Ali's leadership.

This paved the way for a state election on Nov 20 that saw BN winning 21 seats with a two-thirds majority. Pakatan Harapan ended with five seats and Perikatan Nasional, two.

Less than a month later, the delayed 12th Sarawak State Election was set on Dec 18. The election saw a record 349 candidates from the state-based ruling coalition Gabungan Parti Sarawak (GPS), nine opposition parties and independents contesting.

GPS, contesting in an election on its own for the first time, had a landslide win, grabbing 76 of the 82 state seats. Parti Sarawak Bersatu (PSB) won four seats while DAP won two.

Youth power

The year 2021 also saw the Federal government forced to set Dec 15 as the date to implement Undi18, putting into motion the law that lowers the voting age from 21 to 18 and automatic voter registration (AVR) for all electorates. The same law also allows 18-year-olds to run for office.

On Dec 8, the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Parliament and Law) said due to Undi18, 5.8 million voters would be added to the electoral roll. This translates to an increase of around 40 per cent in the number of registered voters in the country, to a new total of 21.1 million voters.

What is next?

Ismail Sabri should know well that his administration's honeymoon period will not last forever. How long can a govern-

Looking back to 2021, it is clear that Malaysian politics is not ready to function without a dominant party at the helm or an alliance party holding the majority

ment that was not elected by the people last? Seventeen months like the Muhyiddin-led, coup-based government?

The current prime minister's time may be up once Parliament is allowed to dissolve post-July 31 this year. If he survives the date, will he be lucky enough to lead the country till the next round of general elections in May 2023?

Looking back to 2021 and back to the 14th General Elections, it is clear that Malaysian politics is not ready to function without a dominant party at the helm or an alliance party holding the majority.

This is evident after the Melaka and Sarawak state elections.

Would things change for Malaysia when, in the next elections, almost six million more young voters are given a chance to decide the country's future?

'Take e-sports to newer heights'

By ZAREEF MUZAMMIL

SHAH ALAM - The development of e-sports in Selangor in 2022 will focus on three areas in line with the state's aspiration to produce more world-standard players.

Selangor E-Sport Association president Abdul Razak Datuk Dr Mohd Yusof said the focus will be on the players, the commentators and the coaches. This will complement the sport's ecosystem and help individuals realise the possibility of developing a career in the field that often comes with lucrative wages.

He said the association has also held several discussions with state executive councillor for sports Mohd Khairuddin Othman, focusing on ways to expand the industry.

"There have been many e-sports competitions, but no development programmes after these competitions. What is the next thing for the players after winning the game? They could possibly be trained to become commentators or coaches.

"There are many players and e-sports teams, therefore what they need is a coach or a commentator in order to en-

sure that the industry can progress," Abdul Razak said when contacted on Dec 8.

Under the 2022 Selangor Budget, RM1.2 million has been allocated for e-sports programmes to develop the sport in each district.

Meanwhile Todak Valorant coach Nor Aiman Nor Azham has lauded the state's commitment to e-sports with the allocation of funds for the industry to make Selangor the e-sports leader in Malaysia.

However, the professional player has advised that the allocation be used prudently.

"I am ecstatic every time I hear any

announcement related to e-sports. Hence, I hope those who are managing the funds will be able to implement the programme effectively," said the 28-year-old who has been active in the sport since 2016.

In 2020, Selangor introduced the Xtiv Virtual programme, which recorded over 250,631 participants and over 18 million views on social media platforms.

The programme's competitions include PUBG, Mobile Legends Bang Bang, Call of Duty Mobile, Pro Evolution Soccer 2021, FIFA Pro Club and Selangor Xtive Ride.

No plans to pull down stadium, says exco

SHAH ALAM - The state government has rejected allegations by certain quarters that there are plans to demolish the Shah Alam Stadium in Section 13.

State executive councillor for sports Mohd Khairuddin Othman said at present, no proposal paper has been brought to the State Executive Council (MMKN) on the matter.

"There are a lot of rumours, some say it will be demolished, some say 'build first, then demolish'. But I can confidently inform the Opposition leader that until today there is not a single paper included in the MMKN relating to

the demolition of the Shah Alam Stadium," he said.

Mohd Khairuddin was responding to a query by Opposition leader Datuk Rizam Ismail when winding up the debate on the 2022 Selangor Budget at the Selangor State Assembly on Dec 2.

He said the Special Project Unit (UPK) was established to conduct a study and present its findings to the state government on how to best repair the stadium.

"The UPK was established on June 9, 2021, and is expected to present its suggestions and feedback in the near

future," he said.

On Aug 21, the Menteri Besar said the Shah Alam Stadium will have a new look with upgrades to the entire complex starting in 2022.

Dato' Seri Amirudin Shari said the plan to refurbish the stadium was included in the proposed redevelopment of the stadium's surrounding area, a project undertaken by the Raja Muda of Selangor, Tengku Amir Shah.

The cost of repairing the stadium, which first opened in 1994, is expected to reach RM350 million, based on the Public Works Department's assessment.

Selangor scouts for new talent in football



SHAH ALAM - Up to 10 schools in the state will be used as platforms to search for new talent in football, starting at the grassroots level, said state executive councillor for youth generation development and sports Mohd Khairuddin Othman.

Of the 10, five are budding academies SK Johan Setia, SK Putra Heights 2, SK Kajang, SK Batu Sembilan 9 and SK Taman Bunga Raya 2 in Hulu Selangor.

The district training centres involved include SMK Dato' Harun, SMK Meru, SMK Shah Alam, SMK Kuala Kubu Bahru, and SMK Tinggi in Kajang.

"The state government via the Selangor Football Association and Selangor State Sports Council is often attuned to programmes that can unearth new talent at the grassroots level," he said.

Mohd Khairuddin was responding to a query by Sabak assemblyman Ahmad Mustain Othman on the proposal to open a football clinic during the Selangor State Legislative Assembly sitting on Dec 1.

He added that the Selangor Football Club is also working with the State Education Department through the Soccer Schools programme, with participation by 80 students from every 12 schools in two districts.

Red Giants sign Brazilian striker Caion

KUALA LUMPUR - Selangor FC have acquired the services of Brazilian striker Herlison Caion from Thailand's Muangkan United, as the team's third import signing ahead of the 2022 Super League campaign.

The 31-year-old hitman is no stranger to Asian football, having played for K-League side Gangwon FC at the age of 19 (2009-10), before returning to South Korea to feature for Daegu FC in 2018.

In the Thai League, the 184 centimetre centre-forward has netted 34 goals and 13 assists in 85 appearances for Navy FC, PT Prachuap FC, Chonburi FC, Suphanburi FC and Muangkan United between 2019 to 2021.

Selangor head coach Michael Feichtbeiner believes Caion's recruitment could add some real firepower to the side.

"I am happy we were able to sign and convince Caion to move from Thailand to Malaysia. He has been a well-known and proven player with his abilities in Thai football for the past four to five years.

"With his footballing style, he can adapt to the transition football we want to play. We need a player who can score goals, and with his experience of scoring a lot of goals in Southeast Asia, I have a good feeling and full confidence in him," he said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Caion, who also had a short stint with Danish side HB Koge in 2015, hopes to help the club achieve its goals.

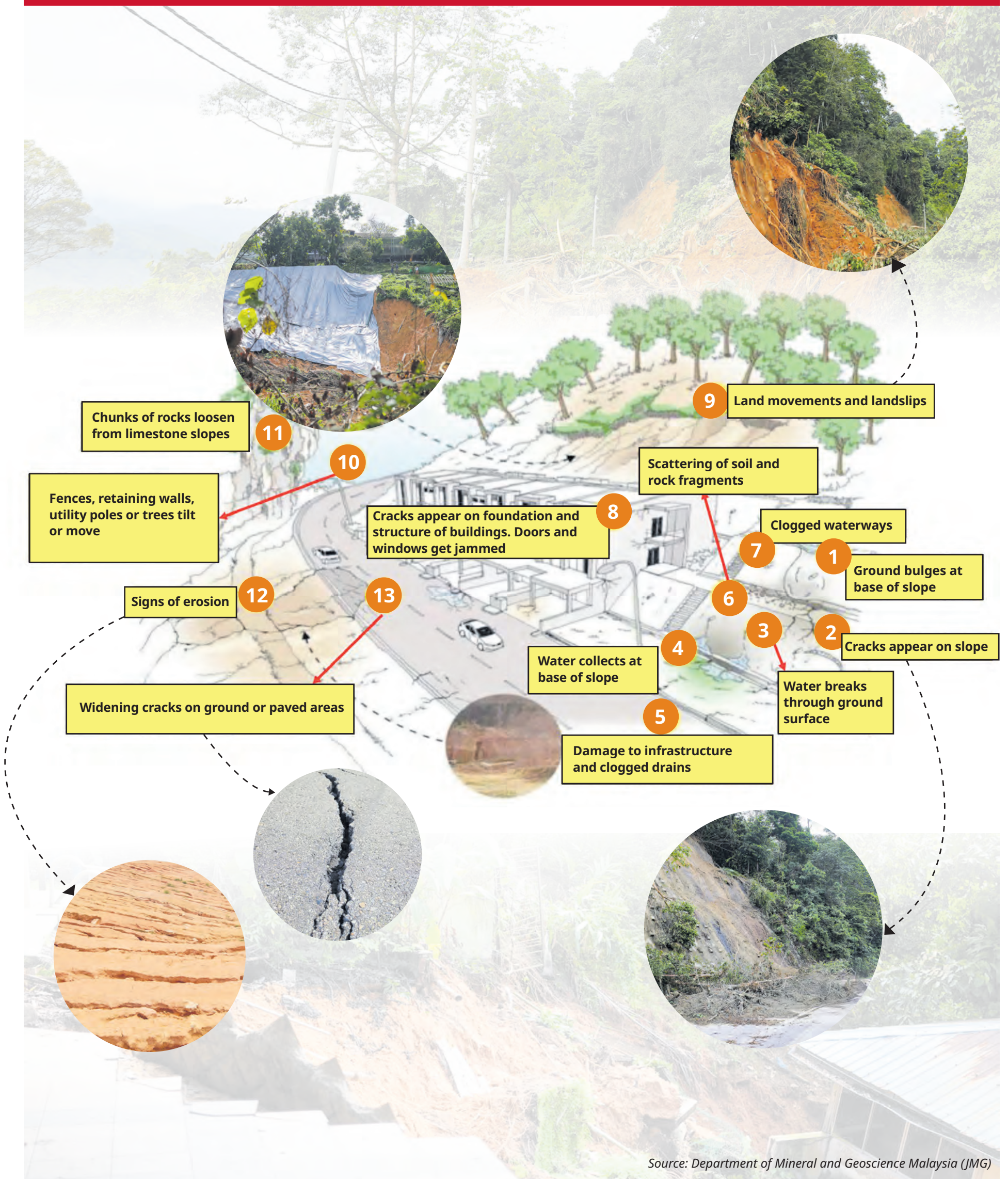
"According to the plan presented to me, the club will strive to achieve success together. I believe this season will be a year where the club will experience

great achievements, because I am confident we can do it," said Caion.

Caion is the Red Giants' sixth signing for the upcoming season, following Samuel Somerville, Fazly Mazlan, Zahril Zabri and two Jordanian import players, Yazan Al-Arab and Baha Abdelrahman. - Bernama



Warning signs of landslides



Source: Department of Mineral and Geoscience Malaysia (JMG)