



**6 February 2009 (Friday)**

## **UKM plans to offer PhD in nursing**

By : June Ramli

**KUALA LUMPUR: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia is aiming to become the first Malaysian university to offer a PhD in nursing.**

UKM Faculty of Medicine lecturer Samsiah Mat yesterday said the university was working hard to achieve this. 'We have sent several lecturers abroad to pursue their doctorates and when they come back, we will start our PhD course in nursing.'

She said, at present, no local university or private college in the country was offering PhD courses in nursing. She said UKM offered, among others, diploma-level nursing courses and an advanced diploma for mid-wives. "We plan to introduce a masters in nursing by July."

She said nursing was now a lucrative career as nurses were in high demand in the Middle East. "A person with a nursing degree and some working experience can earn up to RM10,000 a month," she said, adding salaries would match the qualification. Samsiah said the faculty was planning to introduce more courses for nurses to boost their soft skills when dealing with patients. "We will be conducting the first-ever research nursing workshop this year from March 2 to 6 and hope to attract as many participants as possible."

She said the workshop would provide a platform for the dissemination of knowledge and advancement in nursing and healthcare. "It is limited to 300 participants and targeted at nursing lecturers, staff nurses and tutors and will be conducted at the auditorium of UKM Hospital."

The registration fee is RM500 per participant. Registration forms are available at [www.ukmk.com.my](http://www.ukmk.com.my). The closing date for registration is Feb 23. Call 03-91735308 for details.

**12 February 2009 (Thursday)**

## **'Better than Smart Tag' radio system by USM**



Dr Widad Ismail showing the integrated radio frequency identification system.

**GEORGE TOWN: Universiti Sains Malaysia has developed an integrated radio frequency identification (RFID) system to detect objects at a distance.**

School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering lecturer Dr Widad Ismail developed the contactless 2.45 GHz active integrated RFID system with a RM2 million grant from the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry. She said the battery-powered system can detect objects within a range of 30 metres indoors and 45 metres outdoors.

"This system can be used for monitoring or tracking assets, such as mechanical equipment and laptops, as well as people, for example hospital patients and babies, in real time. "The best thing about this system is that it is contactless, which means it does not require a manual touch. The system can detect any object or human within any range even when there are obstacles in the way."

Widad said the active RFID could replace the Smart Tag and Touch 'n Go systems currently used for toll collection. She said the Smart Tag system uses infrared, has a smaller range of between three and five metres, and it goes from point to point.

She said she plans to approach Projek Lebuhraya Utara Selatan (PLUS) Expressway Sdn Bhd and propose the usage of the active RFID system. She added that three firms have expressed interest in signing on as investors.

## **13 February 2009 (Friday)**

### **Boat licence freeze ends**

By : Nurul Mardiana Abdul Alim and Ili Izlin Hanim Othman

**MARANG: After a freeze of almost 10 years, the government has begun re-issuing licences for traditional fishing boat.**

Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said yesterday traditional fishermen could now enjoy a host of incentives and facilities. He said 864 traditional fishing boat licences were issued in Terengganu recently, of which 223 were for fishermen in Marang district.

He said in line with the ministry's decision to designate February as the month for the fisheries sector, officials had been going to the ground to address problems faced by the fishing community. "Most of the problems are related to licences and facilities," he said after meeting the fishing community at the Fisheries Development Authority of Malaysia jetty here.

He said traditional fishing boat licences were frozen to allow surveillance of fishermen and to protect coastal waters from being overfished. "However, with the economy showing signs of slowing down, we have decided to re-issue these licences so that the fishermen would be able to sustain their livelihood and enjoy incentives from emergency funds made available by the government."

The fishing community here is the ministry's second stop in its "Meet the Fishing Community" programme. It will proceed to Semporna, Pangkor, Pekan and Penang next. Mustapa said the programme was beginning to make some headway as it placed the ministry's agencies closer to the ground. "We have more avenues to listen to their problems and we are committed to resolving them."

For example, he said, in his meeting with fishermen here, the ministry addressed a litany of complaints, of which eight were on catch incentives, 14 on allowances and four on subsidies. The ministry also identified infrastructure needed by the fishing community here, including a new fishing jetty and wave barriers.

## **13 February 2009 (Friday)**

### **Aiming for world-class highways**

**THE Works Ministry has every reason to beam with pride after it became the first and only ministry to score five stars under the Star Rating System of the Malaysian Administrative, Modernisation and Management Planning Unit.**

Led by Works Minister Datuk Mohd Zin Mohamed, the ministry has, over the years, achieved great strides in improving the country's roads. In fact, it is Mohd Zin's wish for Malaysian roads to be on par with major highways of the world and provide high levels of safety and comfort. "The ministry is vested with a heavy responsibility to build the nation's infrastructure and public utilities, with the motto 'Towards People Comfort'. "The ministry's roles and tasks have increased over the years in meeting the demands of Malaysia's rapid development," he said.

The Works Ministry continues to remain committed to strategic planning and efficiency in developing and maintaining roads, expressways and highways for the benefit and comfort of road users, as well as to ensure that the country is well-connected. With the help of strategic partners such as Federal JKR, Sabah JKR and Sarawak JKR, it has built 16,500km of roads throughout the country.

Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan said he was looking forward to the upgrading of federal roads which would help spur greater economic growth in the state. "We have been looking forward to new federal roads of the Works Ministry since many of the roads are old and need upgrading. "We are happy to have received a lot of support from the Federal Government, which granted us RM330 million under the Ninth Malaysia Plan to upgrade these roads."

He said since the state was close to Kuala Lumpur, good roads and sound infrastructure would encourage more people to live in Seremban and travel to work in Kuala Lumpur. Negri Sembilan Public Works Department director Dr Roslan Mohd Taha said the ministry and minister had been very supportive of the maintenance of federal roads in the state. "For example, ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Dr Abdul Munit Kasmin had approved an allocation of RM20 million last year for the maintenance of federal and Felda roads in the state. "At the same time, the ministry also looked into our request for RM20 million to upgrade bridges which are narrow and pose a danger."

Dr Roslan said the state PWD was satisfied with the action taken by the ministry to maintain roads. "Officers from the state PWD are often invited to meetings organised by the ministry and this has greatly enhanced our relationship. "We also welcome efforts by Munit who goes to the field to inspect roads and communicates with his subordinates to improve road networks." He said the RM5 incentive for ministry staff who snapped pictures of defective roads was a step in the right direction. "This is an excellent move and very effective as we have an extensive network of roads."

## **17 February 2009 (Tuesday)**

### **Experts called in to study Camerons apartments**

By Jaspal Singhjaspal@nst.com.my

**CAMERON HIGHLANDS: Two independent consultants will study the structure of three blocks of apartments in Kuala Terla which were evacuated last Friday, after wide cracks appeared on one of the blocks.**

The Cameron Highlands District Council has asked them to prepare reports detailing the reasons behind the weakening of the structure and the level of strength of the soil in the affected area. Council president Datuk Mohd Noor Abdul Rani said the consultants, a structural specialist and the other with expertise in the geotechnical field, had been asked to submit reports to the local authority in two weeks' time.

"The council takes this matter seriously, especially in view of the many hillside tragedies that have occurred elsewhere. "We are taking immediate action to ascertain the factors that led to the wide cracks on the apartment block."

Noor, also the district officer, said 22 of the 30 families who left the block last Friday had been allowed back into their homes yesterday. He said they were allowed to return after initial investigations by the structural specialist on Sunday showed that only some units were unsafe for occupation. Of the 32 units in Block A, which is the worst affected of the three four-storey apartment blocks, only four were found to be unfit for occupation.

"However, the district council has taken precautions by declaring eight units unsafe as these are situated where wide cracks appeared on the foundation pillars. "At the moment, eight families have been advised to put up elsewhere temporarily until the consultants have completed their investigations."

He said the district council had decided at its meeting yesterday that it would compensate the eight families by paying their rent for the duration that they were unable to return to their homes. Similarly, monetary compensation would be paid to the rest of the 22 families who had to put up in hotels and rented apartments between Friday and Sunday, he added.

Noor said if the final findings by the consultants showed that Block A needed major repairs to make it safe for living, then the district council would hold a meeting with residents on the next course of action.

"But, if the findings show that the block is not safe at all, then the matter will be brought to the attention of the Pahang government. "The district council will then propose that temporary shelters be built to house the affected residents."

Regional Environmental Awareness of Cameron Highlands president R. Ramakrishnan has urged the district council to carry out studies at the Puncak Arabella apartments in Tanah Rata. He claimed that it was unsafe as the hillslope on which it was located was eroding.

## **18 February 2009 (Wednesday)**

### **RM13m to upgrade hospitals**

**ALOR STAR: Nine hospitals and 51 health clinics in the state will be upgraded at a cost of RM13.4 million this year.**

Health Minister Datuk Liow Tiong Lai said the allocation was part of the RM7 billion stimulus package announced by the government last year.

"We need to improve facilities and services, as 85 per cent of the country's population require treatment at government hospitals and clinics," he said after inspecting the facilities at Pokok Sena district health clinic near here yesterday

**18 February 2009 (Wednesday)**

**PM to civil service: Get going on recovery work**

By : R. Sittamparam

**KUALA LUMPUR: The civil service should act as an agent of economic recovery by quickly implementing projects under the RM7 billion economic stimulus package, the prime minister said.**

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the stimulus package introduced last November would only lift economic growth if the projects were underway. "The projects will activate the domestic economy by boosting the construction industry and manufacturing sector, and preventing the retrenchment of workers.

"This will lighten the people's burden and prevent negative reactions towards the government," said Abdullah. Speaking at the Defence Ministry's monthly gathering here yesterday, Abdullah, who is also defence minister, said the country's economy would become more vibrant if local factory products were utilised for public sector projects.

He said it meant that people would then be in work and earn wages and allowances which they would subsequently spend, thus boosting the domestic economy. "It is, therefore, important that the public sector quickly implement its projects, for which big sums were allocated under the stimulus package announced last November. However, the allocations have not been fully utilised."

He said even if the allocations could not be used up in the busy year-end season of November and December, they could have been implemented by this month. "Soon, in the present parliamentary session, there will be an announcement related to another stimulus package," he said. "The announcement by the finance minister will involve allocations that could be more sizeable than the November package."

Abdullah said the imminent introduction of the second package should spur the civil service to work harder to ensure that all allocations under the present package were spent. He said it was the government's policy that the private sector should be the catalyst for the country's economic growth.

"But, in the present economic situation, the private sector is unable to play its role fully in accordance with the government's aspirations. "It is at this time that the public sector should play its role as the engine of economic recovery with the speedy implementation of the stimulus package projects."

Abdullah also called on the Defence Ministry to embark on the remaining 30 per cent of the projects it has yet to implement to improve facilities and purchase equipment for the armed forces. "I instructed my ministry's secretary-general to form a committee to work out a plan to expedite the outstanding projects."