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Moving onward with fresh vigour

MBPJ did good in 2019 with a few firsts, but some folk feel frustrated over long-standing woes



MBPJ now requires developers to submit written assessment of how their proposed projects will affect the people's quality of life.

By SHEILA SRI PRIYA
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IN 2019, Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) introduced a few first-of-its-kind concepts in the country, implemented new guidelines to safeguard public interest, experienced the worst flash floods in recent memory and saw the appointment of its fifth mayor.

Firsts

CHILD COUNCILLOR

Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) is the first local council in Malaysia to have appointed child councillors.

The 32 young councillors are between the ages of nine and 17.

The move is part of the city's aim to be recognised as a child-friendly city by Unicef Malaysia.

The appointment ceremony was marked by the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between MBPJ and Unicef, witnessed by Deputy Women, Family and Community Development Minister Hannah Yeoh.

The MOU signing ceremony took place after the two-day Child-Friendly City Conference 2019 held at Petaling Jaya Civic Hall.

Children who attended the conference penned their wishes on a notice board in the event hall.

Among their wishes were for their ideas to be translated into reality, that adults do not undermine children's opinions and for all to stop body shaming.

LIFE QUALITY

Developers are now required to submit a written evaluation detailing how their proposed development will affect the people's quality of life.

Petaling Jaya City councillor Derek Fernandez said the local council also made it a compulsory requirement for developers to carry out public engagement.



Projek Karung Kitar is a community effort that upcycles discarded banners and bunting into useful products and it helps housewives in the B40 group earn a living.

The engagement must be conducted to allow those likely to be affected by the development, an opportunity to submit their opinions and views on how it might affect them.

"A checklist will be created on the requirements for the developers to fulfil," said Fernandez following the closing speech for a Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) full board meeting.

Fernandez said this ruling was in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Local Agenda 21 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1976.

"MBPJ is the first local authority in the country to use such powers given by Parliament to directly implement the sustainable development goals for planning and development control."

UNESCO AWARD

The Petaling Jaya free bus programme, the recycling bag made of bunting by housewives and the city's library-in-the-park initiatives were among the notable projects that earned the city council the Learning Cities Award 2019 from the Unesco Institute for Lifelong Learning.

Deputy Petaling Jaya mayor Johary Anuar said MBPJ took a year to compile activities that were carried out for the community which encouraged growth in terms of learning among city folks.

The Karung Kitar Semula project, which was MBPJ's initiative in 2017, has helped housewives from underprivileged community generate income using their sewing skills.

The city council provided the

knowledge, materials and equipment to the women, who made bags out of old bunting and banners collected from around Petaling Jaya.

Newsflash

FIFTH MAYOR

Datuk Mohd Sayuthi Bakar was sworn in as Petaling Jaya's fifth mayor in April, bringing new vigour.

He has big plans to help the city grow further and cater to the future needs of its population.

He also hopes to increase the city council's coffers so that it can provide better services.

Mohd Sayuthi acknowledged that maintenance cost was rising and this posed a challenge to Petaling Jaya City Council.



Mohd Sayuthi swearing in as Petaling Jaya's fifth mayor.

OLDEST SUPERMARKET CLOSES

Section 14's beloved neighbourhood supermarket Cold Storage is calling it a day. It will be closing its doors at the end of today. It is the oldest supermarket in Petaling Jaya, having opened in 1974 inside another iconic building in this city — the Jaya shopping centre.

Worst

FLASH FLOOD

In October, Kampung Cempaka experienced the worst flash flood ever seen in Petaling Jaya in 40 years.

The flooding of part of the 50-year-old village occurred when Sungai Kayu Ara burst its banks during a downpour.

Water rose up to over 1.5m and villagers suffered material losses.

Village chief Theresa Lim said the flash flood that day was the worst she witnessed in her life, having grown up in this village.

Kampung Cempaka has about 1,030 families and 30% of its population are senior citizens.

According to Lim, a sizeable number of residents here fall into the B40 category and they are the ones worst hit.



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KDEB takes over waste disposal in Shah Alam

By DENISE KHOO
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THE handover of 56 rubbish compactors and one "arm roll truck" to a sub-contractor in Shah Alam marks a new beginning for waste solution in Selangor.

State-owned Kumpulan Darul Ehsan Bhd (KDEB) established Waste Management Sdn Bhd to streamline solid waste collection and public cleansing services at all municipalities in Selangor. Shah Alam is the last to be included in its jurisdiction.

State local government, public transport and new village development committee chairman Ng Sze Han, who witnessed the handover, said solid waste management was no easy job but he was confident that KDEB and its sub-contractors were up to the task.

"KDEB will be managing more solid waste from now on. Currently, KDEB manages 5,200 tonnes of solid waste daily on average."

"With the addition of Shah Alam, it may reach 6,000 tonnes per day."

"We anticipate the amount to go up to about 7,000 tonnes a day in the near future."

"But KDEB's smart waste solution has proven to be most effective for Selangor," he said.

KDEB's compactor garbage trucks are fully equipped with



Ng (third from left), Rashidi (second from left) and KDEB board members launching the garbage compactors in Shah Alam. — MUHAMAD SHAHRIL ROSLI

GPS trackers, rear cameras and closed-circuit television cameras for easy tracking of truck movement, safety and for better waste collection planning.

Arm roll trucks are meant for public cleansing activities and bulk waste collection. These trucks are also equipped with GPS trackers and rear cameras.

Automatic Grease Lubricant

System is installed in both types of trucks for auto maintenance of the vehicles.

"The existing trucks are old, they constantly break down and can barely pass through narrow roads."

"I hope these new trucks that are equipped with modern technologies, will address the problems."

"I also believe KDEB and Shah Alam City Council (MBSA) will be able to resolve and reduce complaints regarding rubbish as well as maintain cleanliness in the city," said Ng.

He said the issue of illegal dumping presented a challenge for effective waste management efforts.

"I would like to urge all parties

"We anticipate the amount of rubbish to go up to about 7,000 tonnes a day in the near future."

Ng Sze Han

to work collectively to curb such irresponsible act.

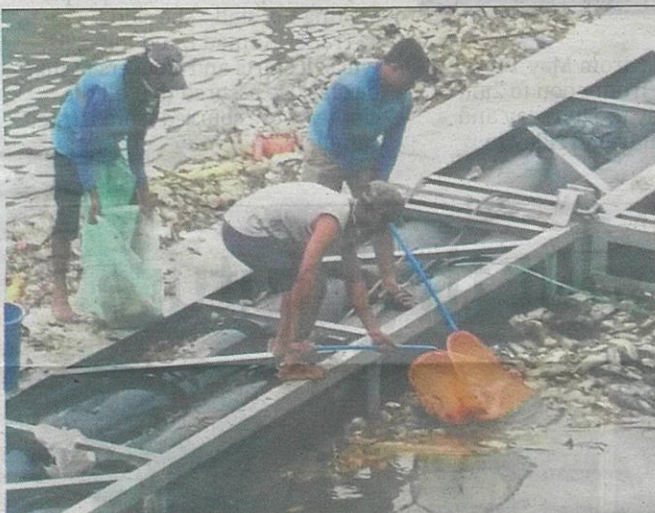
"Frequent monitoring and enforcement by all relevant agencies are extremely important in this regard," he added.

KDEB will officially take over solid waste management from MBSA starting tomorrow while the takeover of public cleansing services is slated for July 1.

KDEB managing director Ramli Mohd Tahir said the company currently owned 500 refuse compactor garbage trucks and 500 arm roll trucks being used throughout Selangor.

Also present were Shah Alam deputy mayor Mohd Rashidi Ruslan and KDEB chairman Raja Shahreen Raja Othman.

KDEB is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Selangor Menteri Besar Incorporated (MBI), under the Selangor government. It started its pilot project for waste collection in Klang in July 2016.



Council workers cleaning up thousands of dead fish caught in a rubbish trap downstream of Sungai Kayu Ara.



Section 14 residents are sad to see their neighbourhood supermarket, Cold Storage, closing down.



Children from Petaling Jaya being trained to become the voice for their peers in the city when they are appointed as child councillors.

In the following weeks, large rocks that were blocking the flow of Sungai Kayu Ara were broken up to reduce the risk of flood recurring in Kampung Cempaka.

Bandar Utama assemblyman Jamaliah Jamaluddin said the river clean-up was still ongoing, adding that the work was expected to finish this month.

Jamaliah said the soil composition of the river was sand based, so the river could not be dug deeper for fear of triggering the collapse of its retention walls.

POLLUTION

Residents in Ara Damansara are at their wits' end over the dumping of waste in Sungai Kayu Ara, a problem that has plagued them for more than a decade without any lasting solution to-date.

They said they were puzzled by the lack of action from the authorities to stop the illegal activity, which was exacerbated by the open burning of rubbish in recent years.

They are appealing to the authorities to come up with a permanent solution to the long-standing environmental problems.

Weeks later, wastewater dis-



The site where culprits carry out open burning near Ara Damansara, Petaling Jaya.

charged from sewage treatment plants was believed to be the reason thousands of fish found dead in Sungai Kayu Ara, Petaling Jaya.

Residents from Kampung Cempaka noticed a school of fish jumping out of the river and knew something was amiss.

They saw thousands of dead fish swept downstream and the situation worsened.

In a statement, state environ-

ment, green technology, science and consumer affairs committee chairman Hee Loy Sian said the pollution could be due to sewage water.

However, Indah Water Konsortium in a statement to the media denied Hee's claim.

Media's efforts to gain findings by the relevant authorities who conducted the water inspection, were in vain.



Kampung Cempaka villagers wading through floodwaters to get to higher ground.