



**LAPORAN LIPUTAN MEDIA HARIAN
ISNIN 15 NOVEMBER 2021**

BIL	TAJUK KERATAN AKHBAR	KEMENTERIAN / JABATAN / AGENSI
1. 2. 3.	BANTU NELAYAN, PETANI HADAPI TENGGUJUH, NASIONAL, BH -17 KERAJAAN TUBUH JAWATANKUASA BERSAMA STABILKAN HARGA BAJA DAN RACUN, NASIONAL, SH -18 AIR BAWAH TANAH BANTU SEKTOR PADI KEKAL PRODUKTIF, NASIONAL, BH -22	KEMENTERIAN PERTANIAN DAN INDUSTRI MAKANAN (MAFI)
4.	EMPURAU RM1,000 SEKILOGRAM, LOKAL, HM -10	JABATAN PERIKANAN MALAYSIA (DOF)
5.	FAMA BANTU PASARKAN 10.5 TAN ROSELLE, NEGERI PAHANG, SH -30	LEMBAGA PEMASARAN PERTANIAN PERSEKUTUAN (FAMA)
6.	AGROBANK MAHU KERJAYA PERTANIAN MODEN LEBIH MENARIK UNTUK GOLONGAN MUDA, BISNES, SH -36	AGROBANK
7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13.	PESTA KERANG PANTAI PANDAK KEMBALI, NEGARA, KOSMO -18 PENYU TAK JUMPA JALAN PULANG, LOKAL, HM -2 SIDEK MEE KINI MENJADI PETANI SOLOK HIJAU, USAHAWAN, HARAKAH -H9 SEEDS OF KNOWLEDGE, MUKA DEPAN, THE STAR -1 COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRE TOLD TO MOVE, NEWS, THE STAR -2 SUSTAINABLE LIVING TAKING SHAPE IN PPR, NEWS, THE STAR -3 IMPACTFUL SUPPORT FOR POSITIVE CHANGES, NATION, THE STAR -13	LAIN-LAIN

UKKMAFI

UNIT KOMUNIKASI KORPORAT
KEMENTERIAN PERTANIAN DAN INDUSTRI MAKANAN
(UNTUK EDARAN DALAMAN MAFI, JABATAN DAN AGENSI SAHAJA)

Bantu nelayan, petani hadapi tengkujuh

Pasir Puteh: Kementerian Pertanian dan Industri Makanan (MAFI) membuat persediaan awal bagi membantu nelayan, petani dan penternak menghadapi musim tengkujuh, tahun ini.

Timbalan menterinya, Dr Nik Muhammad Zawawi Salleh, berkata keutamaan diberikan kepada negeri Pantai Timur seperti Kelantan, Terengganu dan Pahang selain Johor dan Kedah yang sering terjejas akibat bencana alam itu.

Bagaimanapun katanya, pihak MAFI turut membuat persediaan

bagi negeri lain yang mungkin menghadapi banjir luar jangkaan.

“MAFI mempunyai jadual tahunan, kita sudah adakan mesyuarat dan perbincangan bagi bantuan melalui tabung bencana alam kepada petani terjejas.

“Nilai bantuan tidak dikhususkan. Kita lihat nilai kerosakan yang dihadapi dan bantuan akan disalurkan segera,” katanya pada Program MAFI Prihatin di Jabatan Pertanian Pasir Puteh, di sini, semalam.

Beliau berkata, selain persedi-

aan bantuan musim tengkujuh, MAFI giat membantu penduduk memulakan tanaman khususnya pasca COVID-19 melalui pelbagai insentif.

Katanya, Kelantan menerima peruntukan lebih RM5.6 juta melalui 17 projek pembangunan untuk disalurkan kepada 4,142 petani.

“Hari ini pula 559 petani di Pasir Puteh menerima peruntukan lebih RM634,000 bagi membantu mereka yang terjejas dan mengembangkan tanaman selepas pandemik,” katanya.

Air bawah tanah bantu sektor padi kekal produktif

Wujudkan sistem penyimpanan sumber jamin keselamatan makanan negara

Putrajaya: Sistem penyimpanan air bawah tanah perlu diwujudkan untuk kesinambungan sumber kekal produktif serta efisien jika berdepan krisis bekalan air pada masa depan sekali gus menjamin keselamatan makanan negara.

Ketua Pengarah Pengawatan Padi dan Beras Kementerian Pertanian dan Industri Makanan (MAFI), Azman Mahmood, berkata sistem pengairan diwujudkan sekarang hanya bergantung kepada air hujan atau empanan sedia ada, namun kaedah ini perlu ditukar dalam menghadapi cabaran krisis air yang bukan sahaja dikuatir terjadi di Malaysia malah peringkat global.

Beliau berkata, industri padi dan beras perlu dimodenkan dengan teknologi digital seperti penggunaan tablet dan dron untuk pengurusan dan pengawalan

air di sawah yang dilihat bukan sahaja memastikan padi dan beras negara mendapat hasil optimum malah menjamin keselamatan makanan serta nasib pesawah yang menjadikan aktiviti pertanian sebagai sara diri.

"Selain baja dan penggunaan teknologi moden, air adalah faktor utama dalam pengurusan sawah.

"Tidak cukup air maka wujud penyakit dan padi angin yang menyebabkan hasil petani merosot serta merta.

"Ini menjadi kerisauan 300,000 pesawah di seluruh negara. Oleh demikian, kaedah *ricecheck* yang betul dari segi pengurusan padi, air dan teknologi perlu diseragamkan," katanya kepada Bernama, baru-baru ini.

Azman berkata sistem penyimpanan air bawah tanah yang dipraktikkan seperti di Australia dan Jepun membuktikan kaedah itu berkesan dalam mengurangkan kerugian, memberi hasil berterusan dan mapan, malah turut mendorong pembabitan anak muda dalam sektor pertanian.

Sebagai permulaan, beliau berkata, beberapa negeri seperti di Kedah, Perak dan Pahang boleh

dipilih sebagai tapak projek rintis untuk melaksanakan pembinaan sistem penyimpanan air bawah tanah kerana mempunyai kelebihan air yang terpaksa dilepaskan ke laut.

"Contohnya Rompin di Pahang yang tiada masalah sumber air. Jadi penting untuk mewujudkan sistem penyimpanan air bawah tanah bagi menyimpan lebihan air dan menggunakan sumber itu ketika diperlukan pada waktu tertentu.

"Saya yakin dalam tempoh 10 tahun akan datang, Malaysia terbabit dalam kaedah ini kerana sumber air semakin terhad," katanya.

Beliau berkata, infrastruktur bagi projek simpanan air bawah tanah itu boleh dilaksanakan secara berperingkat menggunakan 20 peratus daripada RMI.53 billion yang diperuntukkan kerajaan bagi program bantuan subsidi dan insentif kepada pengusaha tanaman padi sebagai dorongan mencuba teknologi baharu dalam pengurusan dan pengawalan air.

"Jika kita mengubah kaedah konvensional kepada moden dengan menggunakan 20 peratus daripada peruntukan untuk infrastruktur, Perak dan Pahang boleh

industri padi dan beras, kita jangkakan dalam 10 tahun akan ada sistem sendiri.

"Bayangkan pesawah hanya menggunakan peranti tablet dan dron untuk mengurus dan mengawal air bagi tanaman masing-masing, ia begitu mudah dan efisien," katanya.

Mengambil Australia sebagai contoh, beliau berkata, lebihan air daripada banjir diserap ke bawah tanah dan disimpan untuk industri tanaman atau kegunaan ketika musim kering.

"Contoh di kawasan Lembaga Kemajuan Pertanian Muda (MADA) pada 2019 yang menghadapi krisis air kemuncak. Perkara ini akan berulang di tempat lain.

"Jika penyimpanan air bawah tanah maka pengurusan padi tidak terjejas dan menyelamatkan lebih banyak jelapang untuk penyelesaian jangka masa panjang," katanya.

Azman berkata, pihaknya akan menjemput kepakaran yang ada di Kementerian Alam Sekitar dan Air untuk berbincang mengenai hala tuju pelaksanaan sistem penggunaan air bawah tanah serta pembinaan penyimpanan di kawasan sawah dan jelapang mulai tahun depan bagi memperkenalkan kaedah itu dalam usaha seiring dengan revolusi industri 4.0 (IR4.0)

BERNAMA

Empurau RM1,000 sekilogram

Raja ikan sungai Sarawak mempunyai nilai komersial tinggi dinobatkan ikan termahal di Malaysia

Kapit jernih serta mengalir deras dengan dasar sungai berbatu merwebakkan ikan ini akan berhijrah jika habitatnya dicernari.

Seorang peniaga empurau di sini, Loh Hoe Hua berkata, kebiasaannya beliau mendapat bekalan empurau daripada Langkawi, Kedah yang dikatakan 'harga kayangan' kerana mencecah lebih RM1,000 untuk ikan seberat 7-48 kilogram, mungkin tidak ramai tahu di Sarawak terdapat satu spesies ikan termahal di Malaysia.

Empurau yang juga dikenali sebagai raja ikan sungai Sarawak mempunyai nilai komersial tinggi dan harganya boleh mencecah RM800 hingga RM1,000 sekilogram!

Ikan eksotik ini mahal disebabkan ia hanya memakan buah-buahan yang tumbuh di tebing sungai seperti engkabang iaitu makanan ruji ikan empurau yang mampu memberikan rasa bertemak pada isi ikan dan mempunyai aroma harum tersendiri apabila dimasak.

Ikan empurau liar, yang digelar enas Borneo, hidup dalam habitat sungai yang bersih, sejuk,

ngan membeli ikan tersebut daripada mereka yang 'bertuah' dapat mengangkapnya di sekitar sungai seperti Sungai Rajang, Sungai Beram dan Sungai Baleh.

Mempunyai pengalaman lebih 10 tahun dalam penjualan ikan empurau dan spesies ikan sungai Sarawak seperti semah, baung, tapah dan tengadak, beliau berkata empurau sentiasa mendapat permintaan tinggi daripada pengusaha restoran serta orang kenamaan yang sanggup datang dari Kuching dan

Kuala Lumpur untuk membeli ikan tersebut kerana ia sukar didapati, memandangkan kadar pembiakannya lambat membesar dan bermusim.

Kebiasaannya, Loh berkata ikan empurau atau nama saintifiknya 'Tor tambroides' dengan berat lebih tiga atau empat kilogram dijual hing.

Selain dapat melihat Raja Sungai dengan lebih dekat dan berpeluang merasai sendiri ikan mewah yang dididat masak kukus, tidak menafikan rasanya amat berbeza dengan ikan-ikan lain - kenyal, bertemak, sedikit manis dan baunya agak wangi - menjadikannya hidangan eksklusif.

Ketika ini, terdapat syarikat yang sudah mula bertapak dan menjalankan kajian berkaitan ikan empurau secara bebas menerusi bantuan Jabatan Pertanian Sarawak, selaras matlamat kerajaan negeri memranformasi sektor pertanian, perikanan dan penternakan negeri ke arah lebih produktif dan moden.

Setakat ini, kerajaan Sarawak yang diterajui Gabungan Parti Sarawak, telah memperuntukkan RM265 juta bagi Dana Mudahcara Pertanian bagi membantu meningkatkan kemahiran ketiga-tiga sektor itu.

Nampaknya, mereka yang ingin berkunjung ke Sarawak nanti, jangan lupa bekalkan ikan stekap dan ikan empurau ya! - Bernama



TARIKH	MEDIA	RUANGAN	MUKA SURAT
15/11/2021	SINAR HARIAN	NEGERI PAHANG	30

FAMA bantu pasarkan 10.5 tan roselle

ROMPIN- Lembaga Pemasaran Pertanian Persekutuan (FAMA) membantu memasarkan 10.5 tan hasil tanaman roselle yang diusahakan oleh 46 peserta ladang kontrak di dua kawasan di daerah Rompin, tahun ini.

Pengarah FAMA Pahang, Saiful Sadri berkata, nilai keseluruhan jualan produk pertanian itu tahun ini sebanyak RM42,000.

Bagaimanapun menurut beliau, jumlah itu jauh berkurangan berbanding hasil dan nilai jualan untuk tahun-tahun sebelum ini.

“Ia berikutan pekebun mengurangkan keluasan tanaman ekoran pelaksanaan perintah kawalan pergerakan (PKP).

“Bagi hasil tahun ini, selain untuk bekalan pusat memproses makanan FAMA Rengit, Johor, buah roselle

keluaran pekebun Kampung Desa Murni dan Kampung Tebu Hitam itu turut di eksport ke Australia,” katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian selepas mengiringi lawatan Pengarah Kanan FAMA, Abd Rahman Mahmood ke Pusat Pengumpulan Ladang Kampung Desa Murni di sini pada Sabtu.

Saiful berkata, roselle keluaran daerah itu terkenal dengan kualitinya hingga mampu menembusi pasaran antarabangsa.

“Pihak FAMA akan terus berusaha membantu pekebun roselle yang turut mengusahakan beberapa tanaman kontan lain seperti keledak, kacang tanah dan jagung.

“Pelbagai kemudahan telah disediakan kepada pekebun antaranya bantuan peralatan, pengangkutan, kursus dan latihan,” katanya.

15/11/2021

SINAR
HARIAN

BISNES

36

Agrobank mahu kerjaya pertanian moden lebih menarik untuk golongan muda

KUALA LUMPUR - Kerika Malaysia terus mengimport makanan pertanian bernilai RM50 bilion merangkumi gandum dan jagung, profesion pertanian yang dikenali 'pekerjaan 3D' (kotor, bahaya dan sukar) kini dilihat mula menarik minat lebih ramai golongan muda yang sebelum ini mengelak daripada mencubanya, kata Penangggung Tugas Presiden/Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif Agrobank Bhd, Khadijah Iskandar.

"Ini benar terutama semasa Covid-19 apabila kami mendapati sektor ini telah dianggap sebagai salah satu industri yang kalis kemelesetan dan terus menarik minat kumpulan ini (generasi muda).

"Tatkala negara gigit berusaha untuk memperkukuh keselamatan makanannya, kami sangat teruja melihat sektor yang sebelum ini kelihatan kurang menarik kepada generasi muda, terutamanya disebabkan sifatnya yang kotor, bahaya dan sukar selain pendapatan dan pulangan yang

lebih rendah berbanding industri lain, ia kini telah bertukar menjadi sebaliknya," katanya kepada *Bernama*.

Khadijah berpendapat idea untuk lebih ramai anak muda mencernakan diri dalam industri ini sebagai petanda yang baik kepada negara melangkah ke arah status negara menua menjelang 2030.

Berkongsi data, beliau berkata, seramai 1,159 usahawan tani muda telah menerima geran dan pembiayaan berjumlah RM23 juta di bawah program Agropreneur Muda (PAM) Agrobank tahun lepas berbanding 764 berjumlah RM13.7 juta pada 2019.

Program PAM membantu usahawan tani muda bukan sahaja dalam pembiayaan dan modal untuk memulakan perniagaan, tetapi juga menggabungkan nasihat teknikal, perundingan, latihan serta ke-



KHADIJAH

mahiran lain yang berkaitan.

Ini dilakukan selepas menilai risiko pembiayaan yang berkaitan dengan mereka seperti pengetahuan yang tidak mencukupi, kemahiran dan pengalaman perniagaan yang relevan, selain daripada tidak mempunyai sejarah kredit sebagai jaminan utama.

Dalam pada itu, Khadijah berkata, bank itu juga betharap dapat memajukan industri pertanian melalui Revolusi Industri 4.0 (IR4.0), menjadikan perniagaan tani satu kerjaya yang lebih menarik, muda dengan 'trend terkini' sebagai usaha memupuk minat bertani dalam kalangan generasi muda atau menjadikannya satu kerjaya atau profesion yang dipandang



tinggi.

"Kami mempunyai pemilik perniagaan yang telah pun menerima pakai konsep pertanian moden -- me-

manfaatkan sepenuhnya Internet Pelbagai Benda (IoT) sebagai petani moden dan mereka berjaya melakukannya dengan sangat baik," katanya.

Beliau berkata, pertanian moden pastinya akan menarik minat golongan muda, kerana mereka akan dapat menguruskan ladang - bermula daripada penyediaan tanah untuk penanaman sehingga menuai secara tepat dengan hanya meletet telefon pintar mereka.

"Kami percaya trend ini dalam kalangan golongan muda akan meningkat tidak lama lagi, menjadikan pertanian sebagai kerjaya pilihan mereka, cunanya generasi baharu mengambil pendekatan secara berbeza," katanya. *-Bernama*



SEBAHAGIAN penduduk mengutip kerang di Pantai Pandak, Chendering, Kuala Terengganu semalam.

Fenomena air pasang bawa rezeki kepada penduduk

Pesta kerang Pantai Pandak kembali

Oleh MOHD. AZLI ADLAN

KUALA TERENGGANU – Suasana di Pantai Pandak, Chendering di sini bagaikan pesta apabila ramai penduduk datang mengutip kerang yang banyak terdampar di pantai itu akibat fenomena air pasang besar sejak tiga hari lalu.

Seorang penduduk Kampung Pantai Pandak, Amirrudin Othman, 26, berkata, kerang tersebut mula disedari naik ke pantai berkenaan selepas solat Jumaat lalu.

Menurutnya, kehadiran kerang dalam kuantiti banyak itu mendorong sebahagian penduduk kampung keluar ke pantai dengan membawa bakul, baldi dan plastik untuk mengutipnya.

"Memang hampir setiap ta-

hun, kerang akan naik ke Pantai Pandak akibat ditolak ombak besar disebabkan fenomena air pasang besar sepanjang musim tengkujuh.

"Tanda mudah untuk mengetahuinya ialah kulit-kulit kerang akan memenuhi pesisir pantai tersebut," katanya ketika ditemui Kosmo! di Pantai Pandak di sini semalam.

Amirrudin berkata, dia sendiri sudah mengutip puluhan kilogram (kg) kerang yang terdampar sejak Jumaat lalu.

Seorang lagi penduduk, Roslan Mohammad, 32, pula berkata, bagi fasa awal fenomena air pasang besar yang hanya menghasilkan ombak yang kecil, kebanyakan kerang yang naik ke darat adalah bersaiz kecil.

"Berdasarkan pengalaman kami, semakin kuat ombak, semakin besar kerang yang naik. Memang fasa awal ini kerang yang naik bersaiz kecil, tetapi selepas ini mungkin saiznya akan lebih besar.

"Biasanya kerang akan mendarat di Pantai Pandak pada setiap kali fenomena air pasang besar sepanjang musim tengkujuh sehingga bulan Mac depan," ujarnya.

Roslan berkata, kebanyakan kerang yang dikutip kali ini bukan untuk jualan, tetapi dimakan sendiri ekoran saiznya yang kecil.

"Kalau ada rezeki, fasa air pasang besar selepas ini akan membawa kerang bersaiz besar pula, barulah kami jual untuk tambah rezeki," katanya.

TARIKH

MEDIA

RUANGAN

MUKA
SURAT

15/11/2021

HARIAN
METRO

LOKAL

2

Penyu tak jumpa jalan pulang



SEEKOR penyu hijau ditemui tersesat di dalam kawasan Stesen Janakuasa Tuanku Jaafar, Port Dickson, kelmarin. Penyu hijau yang berusia antara tujuh hingga 10 tahun dianggarkan seberat 40 hingga 50 kilogram itu berjaya dikeluarkan anggota Angkatan Pertahanan Awam (APM) Negeri Sembilan Cawangan Port Dickson kira-kira sejam kemudian dan berada dalam keadaan baik. Penyu hijau itu kemudian dipindahkan dan dilepaskan semula ke laut di pantai Tanjung Gemok.

15/11/2021

HARAKAH

USAHAWAN

H9

Sidek Mee kini menjadi Petani Solok Hijau

Usahawan

Foto SIDEK ALI

TUMPAT: Di Kampung Geting, Tumpat, beliau dikenali sebagai Sidek Mee, ramai yang sangat biasa dengan mee celup yang dijual ibunya di hadapan rumah.

Setelah sekian lama membantu ibunya di kedai, maulaandaungan usia telah mencecah awal 30 an, Sidek Ali Hassin dan isteri sepakat untuk punyai kerjaya sendiri lalu mengambil langkah drastik menceburi bidang pertanian mulai tahun 2020.

Tanaman yang dipilih ialah lada solok hijau, mereka menyewa sebidang tanah setengah ekar di Kampung Tujuh, maka bermulalah kehidupan baharu serta cabaran baharu sebagai petani moden.

Dengan modal lebih RM9,000 pasangan suami isteri ini menanam 1,000 pokok dalam polibag dengan teknik fertigation, iaitu sistem siraman secara automatik.

"Hasil kutipan lada solok hijau banyak bergantung kepada penjagaan rapi bagi elak pokok diserang penyakit. Alhamdulillah, kutipan kami pernah mencecah 4 tan semusim.

"Selain cabaran pokok lada solok ni sangat manja, mudah kena penyakit, cuaca juga merupakan cabaran besar, pokok akan mati kalau hujan berterusan.

"Tanam lada ni bukan



Sidek Ali berusaha untuk menjadi usahawan berjaya.

semudah yang disangka, kena cekal dan kena ada ilmu selain usaha gigih. Kalau tidak, kita memang akan cepat putus asa," katanya kepada Speed Media Gallery.

Menurut Sidek, harga pasaran lada solok hijau agak baik ketika ini, iaitu boleh mencecah lebih RM20 sekilogram, manakala harga terus dari kebun sekitar RM85 bagi 5 kilogram.

Ditanya mengenai kesan pandemik Covid 19, beliau berkata sebelum ini pendapatan semusim boleh mencecah puluhan ribu

man untuk musim ini men-



Lada solok besar dan panjang sangat diperlukan dan boleh mendapat hasil lumayan sehingga mencecah ribuan ringgit.

jadi, cuaca panas dan tiada hujan, hampir semua pokok hidup segar dan lada mampu tumbuh dengan saiz yang menepati keperluan pasaran.

"Lada memang besar dan panjang, sejak mula petik semalam memang beberapa tok peraih dah tunggu untuk beli, jadi saya tak perlu lagi bawa jual kepada kedai-kedai makan seperti sebelum ini," katanya.

Sidek mula mengutip hasil tanaman lada solok selepas pandemik Covid-19 berkurang.



Seeds of knowledge

Inculcating interest: A young resident of PPR Pekan Kepong is among the many volunteers who are nurturing padi planted in the flats compound. — AZLINA ABDULLAH/The Star

The PPR Pekan Kepong community in Kuala Lumpur is cultivating padi in planter boxes and polybags as part of a project to educate urbanites on how the crop is grown

By **VIJENTHI NAIR**
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URBAN farms abound in Kuala Lumpur, but the one in PPR Pekan Kepong stands out for growing an unusual crop in the city — padi.

Although it is normally found in open fields, the community gardeners are growing padi from shallow do-it-yourself planter boxes and polybags.

The first crop was harvested in April, followed by the second in August.

Each harvest yielded about 3kg of padi seeds.

The idea was mooted by Persatuan Lestari Alam Malaysia, which is an association that promotes sustainable living.

Its president Rashdan Rashid said several members went to Kedah to learn how to plant padi last year and shared their knowledge.

They guided Persatuan Sosio Ekonomi dan Alam Sekitar (Perseas), which took up the challenge of planting padi at the PPR Pekan Kepong compound under the Local Agenda 21 programme by Kuala Lumpur City Hall.

Perseas chairman Nor Hilmi Mohamad, who is also a PPR Pekan

Kepong resident, said they wanted to educate people, especially the younger generation, on how the rice they eat every day was grown.

"We planted the aromatic rice MRQ/4 variety and one seed can grow into a bunch of 20 to 30 stalks.

"It can produce 350g of seeds, and half that weight when processed into rice.

"We did not process the seeds into rice grains because our aim was more educational.

"Furthermore, the quantity produced was very low," he said.

> TURN TO PAGE 3

By **BAVANI M**
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A COMMUNITY recycling centre, which has been operating in Kuala Lumpur for over a decade, has to move out as the landowner wants the site back for a carpark.

Tzu Chi Taman Desa Recycle Collection Centre in Taman Danau Desa, Kuala Lumpur was served a notice to vacate on Oct 22 by the landowner.

Taman Desa Residents Association (TDRA) chairman Wong Chan Choy said volunteers as well as the surrounding communities were devastated as the place was not just a recycling centre but also an education hub where the public was taught about recycling and embracing a green lifestyle.

The centre has been operating on a 1,400sqm plot since 2011.

The site used to be an Alam Flora rubbish sorting centre.

Tzu Chi Foundation Malaysia took over the running of the centre 11 years ago.

In 2017, the land was sold to a third party.

"The new landowner allowed us to remain at the site for free all this while and we appreciate that, but now they want it back and we need to look for a new place.

"We hope to continue the centre in some other place in Taman Desa so that recycling efforts will continue," Wong said.

TDRA advisor Datus William Chan said they were hoping to appeal for an extension as it was not easy to find an alternative site.

"We hope to continue recycling activities near or around the area.

"We have identified one area, but we are not sure who owns the land and we hope to find out," he said, adding that they needed more time.

Tzu Chi station master for the Taman Desa centre Francis Tan confirmed it had to move out by Nov 22.

"We will appeal and we are willing to pay rent.

"We have established a haven for elderly folk to spend their free time sorting recyclables," he said.

One of the volunteers is 70-year-old Lee Lin.

"I do this to keep my mind active. It is better than sitting at home watching TV," she added.

The centre is also open to visitors from schools, colleges and compa-

Community recycling centre told to move

Landowner wants to use site in Taman Danau Desa as carpark



Tan says the centre has to move out by Nov 22.

nies who want to learn about recycling.

When the matter was brought to the attention of Solid Waste Management and Public Cleansing Corporation (SWCorp) Federal Territories director Umni Kalthun Shuib, she commended Tzu Chi for successfully carrying out the recycling programme all these years.

"We hope a suitable location will be found.

"Unfortunately, we do not have a site to place the centre," she said when met during a visit to Taman Desa.

She urged anyone with suitable land to come forward.

Apart from recycling, Tzu Chi and TDRA had last year embarked on a Kebun Desa project aimed at getting residents out of their homes to do gardening.

They started growing organic vegetables for their own consumption and for the city's soup kitchen.

Chilli, cucumber, tomato, curry leaf, brinjal, okra, mrim, as well as french and long beans were grown.

More than 60 families were regular volunteers in the project.



Tzu Chi Foundation Malaysia's recycling centre in Taman Danau Desa also educates the public on embracing a green lifestyle.



Wong (in red shirt) tending to the community garden before the Covid-19 pandemic hit in March last year.

Flash floods plague couple in Klang's Southern Park

By **EDWARD RAJENDRA**
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ALL that T. Naysarajah, 80, and his wife Ambikal Chelliah, 73, can do when it rains heavily is watch helplessly as water from the drain outside their house at Jalan Ladang in Southern Park, Klang overflows into their compound and home.

Naysarajah said floodwaters would reach knee-height.

"Our house experienced its first flash flood in June 1995.

"It worsened after the naturally flat terrain was elevated when residential lots nearby were built," said the former teacher.

Prior to this, their home, built in 1957, had never been inundated.

"Southern Park was first set up with 32 houses on individual lots built under the banner of Jaffnese Co-operative Housing Society.

"There were only four rows with eight houses on each row while a vast oil palm plantation bordered Jalan Ladang.

"In the 1970s, terrace houses were constructed and it became a bigger residential area, also called Southern Park.

"This did not cause flash floods,"



Ambikal showing the large bricks that are used to raise the bed in the master bedroom to protect it from floodwaters.

he said.

The pioneer owners of the individual lots sold their properties and the subsequent owners demolished the old structures and raised the land, which he said had triggered surface runoff onto his property.

Naysarajah urged Klang Municipal Council's (MPK) Engineering Department to find a solution.

"I have written to MPK numerous times and in 1998, the Engineering Department widened the drain along Jalan Ladang to 0.8m but it was a futile exercise," he said.

Ambikal bemoaned the damage to her furniture each time floodwaters entered their home.

"For more than two decades now MPK has not resolved the matter.

"Most of the wooden furniture, electrical items, doors and even the walls have been affected.

"Floodwaters seep through the walls and has damaged the parquet flooring in the master bedroom," she said.

They built a concrete skirting of about 0.2m at the front and back of the house but the floodwaters still flowed in.

"Once floodwaters enter, it takes four hours for the water to recede. Each time I struggle to clean up. I get exhausted, and suffer aches and pains," she lamented.

MPK's Corporate Communications Department director Norfiza Mahfiz said the department would coordinate with the Engineering Department to investigate the flash floods.



Naysarajah says water level can reach 0.3m high each time there is a flash flood.

Sustainable living taking shape in PPR

> FROM PAGE 1

Nor Hilmi said padi could be grown in almost any place that received a lot of sunlight and water.

The soil must be moist, and that is the reason why padi needs good irrigation, he added.

"To replicate the ideal condition, we need to ensure the soil is always moist.

"So, in an urban setting, we had to make sure the plants were watered twice a day," he said.

Nor Hilmi said many people who heard about the project were sceptical until they saw the plants for themselves.

"We did not succeed on our first try as the planter boxes tipped over during heavy rain and we had to start over," he said.

Nor Hilmi said they planned to plant glutinous rice varieties on a bigger scale soon, in hopes of making and selling a Malay traditional snack called *emping*.

"Now that two batches of rice seeds have been successfully harvested, the community is confident of planting more padi to make rice products for sale

"We are also big on recycling and will plant the padi using the aquaponic method, which is with polybags made from used banners and mineral water bottles," he said.

Among the caretakers of the padi plants were students Hazwan Fahmy Hamzah, 20, and 17-year-old Muhammad Zulkiflie Jalan

Hazwan said he learnt about the padi planting project and found it interesting.

"I had a lot of time to spare and decided to join the group and learned to cultivate padi.

"I am not very interested in agricultural activities or have any plan to pursue it in the future. This was more like a fruitful pastime.

"But I am very proud of myself for being able to grow padi from a seed to a plant and harvesting.

"My friends were in disbelief and I had to bring them over to the garden to prove it," he said.

Muhammad Zulkiflie said he also took part in the project to pass time.

"We cannot go out much. So, when I was home, I came down to



Nor Hilmi says residents hoped to plant glutinous rice varieties on a bigger scale using various methods, including aquaponics.

tend to the padi plants.

"Although there were others who watered the plants twice a day, I came by almost every day to check if the soil was moist," he said.

Rashdan said the association was eyeing a 0.6ha area under high tension cables in Bukit Damansara to plant padi in a bigger area.

He said the place was ideal and they planned to rope in residents from a welfare home nearby to grow it for profit.

"The welfare home is facing financial difficulties. Instead of expecting donations and handouts, it should be self-sustaining.

"Food security is a serious concern and everyone should know how to grow their own food," he said.

Rashdan said they were preparing the necessary documents to utilise the land.

"We hope to start the padi project sometime early next year."



The community has harvested about 6kg of padi seeds so far this year.



The four Star Social Impact Grant recipients together with Star Media Group (SMG) chairman Tan Sri Chor Chee Heung (left) and Star Foundation trustee and SMG director Datuk Dr Mohd Aminuddin Mohd Rouse during the presentation ceremony at The Star's 50th Anniversary dinner. — AZHAR MAHFUF/The Star

Impactful support for positive changes

Foundation aids changemakers in empowering vulnerable groups via grants

PETALING JAYA: While non-profit organisations continue to play a crucial role in serving the underserved in society, adequate funding is important to keep their impactful work going.

That prompted Star Foundation to introduce the Star Social Impact Grant (SSIG) aimed at partnering with social organisations to carry out impact-driven projects to better the lives of local communities and the environment.

Presented in conjunction with The Star's 50th anniversary, this year's inaugural SSIG awarded a total of RM200,000 worth of grants to four NGOs, in support of their social projects.

The recipients are Vision To Transform, Hopes Malaysia, Selangor and Federal Territory Association for The Mentally Handicapped, and Pertubuhan Pembangunan Wanita Tamarai Pulau Pinang.

And the supported projects all have one theme in common - community empowerment.

They range from empowering rural farmers to adopt sustainable farming and providing vocational training to the disabled, to offering entrepreneurship training as well as skills development to the B40 and other vulnerable communities.

Each project will be carried out in various locations nationwide for a duration of up to 12 months and will be monitored to ensure smooth delivery of all agreed outputs.

Entrepreneurship

Vision To Transform (V2T) consultant Eza Salwa Rohani said the RM50,000 under SSIG would go a long way towards realising V2T's economic recovery programme to help vulnerable communities improve their livelihood.

The six-month project will involve guiding beneficiaries in identifying their skills and capabilities, followed by a series of online entrepreneurship courses besides continuous support and mentoring via a designated web-app as the participants kick-start their micro businesses.

"We are very grateful to receive this grant. It gives us the opportunity to help the B40 community, urban poor and economically-impacted individuals to generate income independently," she said.

"The grant will enable us to use technology and our proven cost-ef-



Hopes Malaysia's vermiculture project farmers showing their vermicompost during the pilot project.

fective methodology to improve livelihoods and create multiplier effects over wider communities in the long term.

It will also boost digital and financial inclusion for vulnerable communities, in line with the national and global agenda," she added.

To date, V2T has managed to drive transformation and income increase for over 50,000 vulnerable people.

Eza highlighted that some of the beneficiaries recorded more than 100% income increase within two to six months of mentoring, even amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sustainable farming

Believing that equal access to food contributes to better health and wellbeing, Star Foundation provided RM50,000 in grant to Hopes Malaysia in support of its "Rural Crop Diversification via Vermiculture Project".

Hopes Malaysia co-founder Poh Kay Inn said that over 30 households in Kota Belud, Sabah, would benefit from this project.

"Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, the rural issues related to food security have worsened along with continuous poverty and loss of employment.

"These villagers spend most of their irregular income on food and groceries, high transportation cost and medical cost," she said.

As villagers turn to farming for daily consumption, they face another challenge which is soil infertility due to long-term lack of water supply and inappropriate use of chemical fertilisers.

Over the last two years, Hopes Malaysia has been educating villag-

ers on sustainable farming and helping to market their produce in Kota Kinabalu.

"To further encourage villagers, this vermiculture project, funded by Star Foundation, will use a type of worm called African Night Crawlers to help improve soil aeration and fertility, leading to crop diversification.

"With better quality, quantity and variety of produce, the villagers will be able to earn a better income to break their cycle of poverty," said Poh.

She explained that vermiculture turned food waste into quality organic compost.

"On top of reducing food waste, farmers can also organically improve their soil quality by moving away from chemical fertilisers, which benefits their land in the long run.

"This is a cost-effective and sustainable way for farmers to produce better quality varied crops and resolve the issue of soil degradation faced by many villagers in our farming projects.

"It is also an efficient solution and easily expandable to other rural communities, because these worms reproduce quickly for villagers to sustainably continue reaping the benefits of vermicomposting," she added.

"Hopes Malaysia is incredibly honored and thankful to be awarded this grant. Together with Star Foundation, we hope to once again touch more lives in the rural Kota Belud community," said Poh.

Vocational skills

Another changemaker that shares Star Foundation's stance in community development is Selangor and

Federal Territory Association for The Mentally Handicapped, widely known as SAMH.

The RM50,000 grant received by SAMH will be used to support the "SAMH Agriculture Project to Empower the Mentally Handicapped through Farming Skills" project, which will primarily benefit more than 50 intellectually-disabled students at its centres in Klang, Brickfields and Jinjang.

SAMH manager Krishnaveni Velayudham said agriculture had always been lauded for improving health as well as fine and gross motor skills which are important in childhood development.

It also enhances mood, improves concentration and develops social skills.

"At SAMH, we focus on providing education, training, employment and care to mentally handicapped children and youths. The agriculture project contains all of these key components," she said.

The project will help uplift mentally handicapped individuals by equipping them with agricultural skills for their wellbeing and future employment in the farming sector.

At SAMH centres, the trainees will be taught to tend to, care for and harvest the planted vegetables ranging from oyster mushrooms, chillies, lettuce, spinach, brinjals and ladies' fingers.

"The vegetables will also be used in preparing lunch for students, which indirectly introduces organic food to their daily diet," Krishnaveni explained.

She said the NGO would sell surplus produce to the parents, teachers and school staff to help generate income for its centres.

"The timely grant from Star Foundation will help equip the trainees with the skills that will get them a job and earn a stable income," she said.

Skills development

Pertubuhan Pembangunan

Wanita Tamarai Pulau Pinang (Tamarai) chairperson KS Pakyalakshmi Subramanian was overjoyed when she found out that the NGO's grant application was successful.

"This RM50,000 will help elevate Tamarai's efforts in providing skills development and work opportunities within our community.

"We are thrilled to empower vulnerable women both economically and socially through needlework," she said.

Under the "Button and Hook - Learn In: Empowering Women through Tailoring Skills" project, women in B40s, school dropouts and former prisoners will be trained in the art of sewing and fashion, working towards self-sufficiency and employment through the skills learnt.

Upon completion of in-class training, the 25 soon-to-be seamstresses will be able to make a living by selling their products ranging from bags, aprons and apparel to face masks, be it through Tamarai or by themselves.

"What makes the programme different is that the trainees will be given a sewing machine each after graduation," said Pakyalakshmi.

She said the sewing machine could help the women gain financial freedom.

So far, the eight-year-old Tamarai has provided income-generating skill courses to improve the living standards of over 1,300 people. The courses included cooking, hairdressing, henna art and accessories making.

Established in 2004, Star Foundation is the charitable arm of Star Media Group, which aims to deliver meaningful initiatives with lasting outcomes to diverse groups of beneficiaries.

For more information on Star Foundation's work with the community, visit starfoundation.com.my.