

MARINE SAFETY NEWS

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

An honour is not diminished for being shared.
- Lois McMaster Bujold

INFOTAINMENT DVD 46

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• Take a sneak peek into the 2011-2012 NBA Season in the Sports section of DVD 46. Also read about ways to cure sports injuries and learn about world's best ice-skating destinations.

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Muslims To Get Counselling

KUALA LUMPUR - Islamic authorities will provide counselling to a dozen Muslims to "restore their belief and faith" after they attended a community dinner at a church hall, a royal sultan said on Monday. The case has triggered worries among officials in the Muslim-majority country that some non-Muslims were implementing tactics to convert them.

Proselytising of Muslims is punishable by prison terms of various lengths in most states.

Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah said Islamic officials who inspected a dinner at a Methodist church hall in early August found "evidence that there were attempts to subvert the faith and belief of Muslims."

The sultan did not elaborate on the evidence or mention Christians in his statement, but said the evidence was "insufficient for further legal actions to be taken."

Church officials had repeatedly denied any proselytisation occurred at the dinner, which they described as a multi-ethnic gathering to celebrate the work of a community organisation that worked with women, children and HIV

patients.

Christian leaders had also criticised Islamic state enforcement officials for what they called an unauthorised raid.

State sultans command immense moral clout particularly among ethnic Malay Muslims, who regard them as the top authorities on Islamic issues.

Muslims, who comprise nearly two-thirds of the country's 28 million people, are not legally permitted to change religion.

"We command that (Islamic officials) provide counselling to Muslims who were involved in the said dinner, to restore their belief and faith in the religion of Islam," Sultan Sharafuddin said.

Rev Hermen Shastri, the general secretary of Malaysia's Council of Churches, said the sultan's statement "brings closure to the case."

"No one should speculate or aggravate the situation further," he added. The sultan also said that he was "gravely concerned and extremely offended by the attempts of certain parties to weaken the faith and belief of Muslims." (AP)

Indonesia: No Border Conflict With Malaysia

JAKARTA - Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa has denied allegations that Jakarta is involved in a border conflict with Malaysia. Speculation may have occurred as a result of a misunderstanding over some basic terms regarding the two countries' borders, Marty stressed.

"Until now, we have not been involved in a border dispute with the Malaysian government," he added.

"In regards to news that keeps mentioning there has been one-sided claim to Indonesia's Tanjung Datu and Camar Bulan village, I must say that this is not true."

However, the foreign minister also acknowledged that there were several border marker stones that could not be found, for natural reasons, which could have sparked premature claiming speculation.

Indonesians have been once again raising eyebrows in regards to its northern neighbour over news mentioning that Malaysia had one-sidedly claimed two territories belonging to Jakarta, the Tanjung Datu and Camar Bulan, both situated on the border between the two countries in Kalimantan/Borneo. (Jakarta Post)

Anifah, 'No Need For Military Intervention In Syria'

PUTRAJAYA - Malaysia on Monday condemned the foreign military intervention in Syria in a pledge of solidarity with Damascus. Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman said foreign military intervention in Syria was unnecessary as conflicting parties in the country are capable of solving the political impasses through peace dialogue.

"As a friendly country, Malaysia does not want to see Syria embroiled in conflict, which will be detrimental to the Syrian people," he said at his office in Putrajaya.

Anifah made the comment after holding a closed-door meeting with special envoy of the president of Syria to Malaysia, Bouthaina Shaaban, who explained to him the situation in Syria.

Bouthaina is visiting Malaysia and Indonesia as part of the Syrian government's efforts to "head to the East" following recent United States and European Union sanctions on the country.

Malaysia has close ties with Syria as both countries are members of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. "We do not need foreign interference, especially from western countries, to control the situation in our country as we ourselves can control it," Shaaban told reporters after meeting Anifah.

Ananda Tagged In India Corruption Probe

NEW DELHI - The Indian police are formally investigating a second former telecoms minister over a hugely damaging scandal that has cost the country up to USD39 billion and embarrassed the government.

A former telecommunication minister is already in custody and a police spokeswoman said cases of corruption and conspiracy were registered against his predecessor, Dayanidhi Maran, and Maran's elder brother, media baron Kalanithi Maran.

Police raids of premises belonging to the Marans were "conducted at Delhi and Chennai," Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) spokeswoman Dharini Mishra said in New Delhi.

The CBI also registered cases against Malaysian tycoon Ananda Krishnan, owner of the Malaysia-based Maxis group, among others.

Under Indian law, the registering of cases, known as a First Information Report, means that police will now investigate to see whether there is enough evidence to lay formal charges.

The CBI announcement is a fresh headache for Premier Manmohan Singh's government, which has been badly shaken by the alleged telecom licensing scam in 2008 that the national auditor said may have cost the country up to USD39 billion in lost revenue. (AFP)

Dance Guru Eyes Successors

KUALA LUMPUR - For a generation of Malaysian lovers of the classical realm in dance, Ramli Ibrahim has been dynamism and creativity personified, but the man who has inspired many towards theatrical dance is worried over the paucity of male dancers in the art form.

A cultural icon for many in this multi-ethnic country, Ibrahim, a Malay, is credited for infusing new experimental thought in Malaysian theatre and as a trainer of Odissi and Bharatnatyam has groomed some of the finest dancers in the country.

However, the veteran artist is concerned that a stigma associated with dancing, for men, is preventing many good talents from entering the stream.

"The number of male dancers coming to learn classical dancing is not very encouraging," says 58-year-old Ibrahim, whose Sutra Foundation trains dancers in traditional and contemporary styles.

MARINE NEWS SUMMARY

CONTAINER VESSELS: NEXT-GENERATION WILL BE LARGEST EVER

If the need is for greater efficiency for road and rail freight during an economic slowdown, standard operating procedures might be to downgrade to smaller and lighter means of overland transport. Shipping lines, however, have a different approach: they build bigger ships. The reason, they say, is better economies of scale, costing them less to send a string of three or four huge new ships across the oceans instead of a larger fleet of smaller vessels. These bigger and newer ships will also have more efficient engines and lower emissions, which also means lower fuel costs, as the company hopes an everlasting impression on its customers. One shipping giant is reportedly spending USD 1.9 billion on 10 new ships, each of which will carry 18,000 TEUs. The new Ultra Large Container Ships (ULCS) will be more than 1,312 feet long and more than 193 feet wide, and will outdo cargo capacity of the world's largest container vessel currently afloat, by 16%. The company's chief executive said that building ULCSs was not only a top priority for the firm but also for its customers, who are heavily dependent upon this in their supply chain. Five years ago, the world's largest container ship had a TEU capacity of 9,500. According to a Paris-based maritime research firm, the container carriers' answer to challenges of sustainable shipping and reduction of emissions is to build ever-larger ships, whose sizes have doubled over a decade.

"I think one of the reasons is that there is a kind of stigma attached to male dancing, especially in countries of Asia. This is not the social trend in Europe," he added.

Moreover, Ramli said, when dancing is not a very viable option to earn money, even those who love the art wither away with time. "So only a few who are really driven by a passion to dance and cannot think of living without it take it up," he added. (PTI)

REGIONAL NEWS

Kelantan/Terengganu in Focus

News from around Kelantan/Terengganu over the past seven days. (In tomorrow's issue: Pahang/Negeri Sembilan)

UMNO Confident On Taking Back Kelantan

KOTA BHARU - The United Malays National Organisation Kelantan chapter is confident to turn the tide come the next general election, saying the organisation now has a bigger chance of winning due to the opposition's poor governance.

According to UMNO, the Parti Islam SeMalaysia-led state government is doomed for defeat due to its stale policies and lack of innovation to spur economic growth in the state.

As such, UMNO believes that it can deny the opposition the two-thirds majority in the 45-member state legislative assembly.

The party also said that Menteri Besar Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat "might have overstayed his welcome" and that his bloc is headed for defeat. The 81-year-old Nik Aziz, besides Sarawak Chief Minister Taib Mahmud, is the only holdover leaders left from the 1990 general election.

Terengganu, NGOs To Launch 'Jom Boikot' Campaign

KUALA TERENGGANU - Terengganu will team-up with a number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to ensure that consumer prices remain stable despite numerous incentives announced by the government in its 2012 Budget.

According to State Health, Unity and Consumer Affairs Committee chairman Rahman Mokhtar, the Terengganu administration and NGOs, as well as consumer associations, will launch a campaign aimed at preventing traders from increasing the prices of goods.

The scheme, dubbed "Jom Boikot," will be implemented on a large scale to identify traders who will take advantage of the government's planned incentives.

"Enforcement officers will carry out inspections, and surveys on premises to check price increases this month," Rahman added. Meanwhile, citizens were urged to support the campaign by reporting cases of irregularities with regards to consumer goods.

T'ganu To Continue Sungai Bridge Project

KUALA TERENGGANU - The Terengganu government is set to resume the construction of the stalled Sungai Pinang Bridge, which was first built ten years ago. Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Said said the federal government has already earmarked MYR8.5 million for the project, which will link Chukai with Air Puth and surrounding villages.

Its construction is also expected to benefit some 20,000 people. Construction is expected to start early next year and to be completed in two years," Ahmad said while visiting villagers affected by recent floods in the area.

According to the menteri besar, the project aims to raise the previous bridge, which often gets submerged in water during floods. The government also plans to elevate the road from Kampung Paya Pamam leading to the thoroughfare so that it can remain passable even if there is flood in the area.

30,000 Kelantan Students Reeling From Water Woes

KOTA BHARU - Air Kelantan Sdn Bhd has received a wake-up call from the state government regarding the trouble that the company is causing to students. According to Kelantan education director Hussain Awang, some 30,000 students across the state are reeling from water-related woes ever since the company cut off supply several months ago.

As a result, students had resorted to using wells as an alternative to enable school sessions to proceed.

Among the affected schools are located in Kota Bharu, Pasir Mas, Kuala Krai and Bachok. "We believe many more schools are facing the same problem but did not report them to the department," Hussain said during an Aidilfitri gathering organised by the Tumpat District Education Office last last week.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Abbas Willing To Restart Israel Talks 'Any Time'

BOGOTA - Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas on Monday in Colombia said he was willing "at any moment" to restart peace negotiations with Israel aimed at a settlement that allows them to exist side by side as states.

"We are in favour of peaceful negotiations leading to the creation of a Palestinian state, alongside the state of Israel," Abbas said in Bogota, where he is on a Latin American tour to rally support for United Nations recognition.

"We are at any moment willing to return to the negotiating table if Israel is of the same mind," he said, during an event where he was declared an honorary citizen of Bogota by the city's mayor.

The Middle East Quartet (United States, Russia, United Nations and the European Union) has called for a resumption of negotiations.

Israel on Sunday accepted with reservations a plan proposed by Quartet envoy Tony Blair, while the Palestinians have said there will be no negotiations until Israel freezes settlement - a demand they say is written into the Quartet proposal.

The Palestinian leader is due Tuesday to hold talks with Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos, who has previously said that Bogota, which has a seat on the UN Security Council, would abstain in a vote on recognition of statehood. (AFP)

Saudis Struggle To Find Affordable Housing

JEDDAH - Saudis, citizens of one of the world's wealthiest nations, are struggling to afford housing in a crisis spurred by urbanisation and a lack of competition in real estate.

Less than 40% of Saudis are home-owners, and demand continues to outstrip supply in the property market, driving up prices and leaving low- and middle-income families with few options to buy or even rent.

A recent study by the construction and real estate conglomerate Binladin Group said the oil-rich Gulf kingdom needs one million new housing units over the next five years.

In March, King Abdullah ordered 500,000 housing units to be built within five years and set aside USD66 billion for the project, but the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said last month that more needs to be done.

"To address the affordability of housing, mitigate the land prices, and increase the supply of land...the government must unlock the static supply of land," the IMF said in a report. At the core of the problem, analysts say, are the ultra-wealthy who own massive swathes of land in major cities and on their outskirts but do nothing with it. (AFP)

UN Official To Hold Food Talks In Pyongyang

UNITED NATIONS - United Nations humanitarian chief Valerie Amos was headed for China ahead of a visit to North Korea, stricken by a new food crisis, as the UN presses Pyongyang to give aid agencies more freedom.

Amos will have talks with government officials in China this week, before going on next Monday to meet ministers in the isolated North where the world body estimates that a third of children aged under five are malnourished.

North Korea puts severe restrictions on the movement of foreigners, however, and the UN became so frustrated that it would only send aid to areas where it could get access.

"Those living in counties which remain off limits to humanitarian agencies, therefore, do not receive assistance," UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a report last month on human rights in the North.

Ban again pressed for more co-operation when he met North Korea's vice-foreign minister, Pak Gil-yeon, in New York last month.

Many governments have raised concerns that food aid could be diverted to the North's 1.1 million strong Army. Kim Jong-il's government has allowed more access this year, however, as the food crisis has worsened and daily rations have been further cut, according to aid groups. (AFP)

FINANCIAL NEWS

FOREIGN EXCHANGE

USD 1 = MYR 3.1205

Bank Negara Malaysia

Singapore Seen To Post 3-5% Economic Growth

SINGAPORE - Singapore President Tony Tan Keng Yam has said it is going to be tougher for the country to have high growth rate as the city state moves closer to the income level of the developed countries, but it can still achieve growth of three percent to five percent in the coming years.

Tan said such growth rate will be enough to achieve a better life for all Singaporeans, according to local daily "Business Report" on Tuesday.

"High rates of growth will become more challenging as we grapple with the limits of our land area and population size, and as our income level reaches that of developed countries," Tan said at the opening of the republic's 12th Parliament.

Singapore has a well-diversified, financially sound and competitive economy, adequate to see it through tough times, he said. Tan added that growth is not an end in itself and the government seeks quality growth by improving every job, raising the productivity of every worker and helping companies innovate.

Cambodian Flood Toll Climbs To 207: Govt

PHNOM PENH - More than 200 people have died in Cambodia's worst floods in over a decade, a disaster official said on Monday, as the country scrambled to provide aid for tens of thousands of families.

Over 80 children were among those killed in two months of flooding caused by heavy rainfall that has seen the Mekong River burst its banks, according to the National Committee for Disaster Management.

More than 270,000 families have seen their homes or livelihoods waterlogged by the floods, which have inundated 350,000 hectares of rice paddies across the country, according to committee spokesman Keo Vy.

The flooding, which has killed 207 people, including 83 children, is the deadliest since 2000 and represents a huge challenge to the impoverished nation.

Despite the scale of the disaster Keo Vy insisted the situation was under control.

"We are not yet appealing for international assistance," he said, adding that the waters have begun to subside. But he said the floods were "very serious for us." The government, the Red Cross and several other relief organisations are working to provide aid, including urgent food deliveries, to the flood victims, he said, reaching some 67,000 families so far. (AFP)

 WEATHER

Kuala Lumpur: 24-31c Mostly Cloudy
 Johor Bahru: 24-30c Light Rain
 Petaling Jaya: 24-31c Mostly Cloudy
 Sandakan: 24-31c Mostly Cloudy

 SPORTS NEWS

Badminton - Chong Wei Eyes 10th Natl Crown

KUALA LUMPUR - Ace shuttler Lee Chong Wei has promised to win the national championship for the last time before he officially leaves the domestic scene.

The world No 1, who has won the top plum over the past nine years, said he wants to end his dynasty on the local circuit by winning the National Grand Prix Finals, which starts tomorrow at the Stadium Juara in Bukit Kiara.

The Penangite is widely expected to reign supreme at the tournament anew as there is no one who can match his dominance in the competition.

Still battling flu and fever, Lee is determined to defend the crown he first won in 2002.

However, the 28-year-old is hoping to avoid injuries so as not to derail his chances of bagging the crown at the BWF Super Series Denmark Open next week.

"It is not easy to juggle my time between the local and international tournaments. The schedule can be hectic sometimes. To me, both are important but the time has come for me to let go of one," Lee stressed, adding that his main priority is to bring home the gold medal at the 2012 London Olympics.

Among the local bets who will challenge Lee in the national meet are second stringers Liew Daren, Chan Kwong Beng, Chong Wei Feng, Goh Soon Huat and Mohd Arif Abdul Latif.

Felda Shock Deers

Felda United 1 - Negeri Sembilan 0: It was mission accomplished for Felda, who edged Group B champions Negeri in the first leg of their Malaysia Cup quarterfinal-tie at the MBPJ Stadium yesterday.

Felda, who finished as runners-up in Group C following the preliminary stages, kept their opponents at bay using their tight defence and superb ball control.

The Deers struggled throughout the match, with their key players missing several scoring chances.

K Rajan emerged as the toast for Felda as he scored the game's lone goal in the 58th minute to give his team the advantage heading into the second leg on Friday. **Other Results:** Sabah 1-2 T-Team Terengganu, Selangor 3-1 Perak, Terengganu 3-1 Kelantan.

2014 World Cup Asian Qualifiers Fixtures

North Korea Vs Uzbekistan, Australia Vs Oman, Japan Vs Tajikistan, South Korea Vs United Arab Emirates, Thailand Vs Saudi Arabia, Singapore Vs Jordan, Indonesia Vs Qatar, China Vs Iraq, Lebanon Vs Kuwait, Iran Vs Bahrain.

Hockey - KLHC Gunning For Double Supremacy

KUALA LUMPUR - Malaysia Hockey League (MHL) Premier Division kingpins Kuala Lumpur Hockey Club are bent on duplicating their feat of being crowned as double champions again when they begin their quarterfinal campaign tomorrow.

Coach R Vivekanandan's wards are aiming to become only the second team in MHL history after Tenaga Nasional Bhd to achieve such a feat.

KLHC bagged the Premier Division crown after winning all of their preliminary matches and securing the maximum 24 points.

Out to prevent them from reaching their goal are the Johor-based Tunku Mahkota Ismail Sports School (SSTMI), who finished as champions in Division One.

Vivekanandan advised his wards not to be too confident in facing SSTMI.

"It is easy to get carried away when you think that you have become unbeatable. I am thankful that the format for the knockout stage is over two legs as this will allow us to ensure we do not slip up," the coach said.

"The players are now playing well and are slowly getting their act together and not being over individualistic. We have several players who can deliver the goals. But it is still important that we maintain the consistency in our form and not take any team lightly," he added.

Squash - Siti Shrugs Off Injury Amid China Stint

SHANGHAI - Squash lady vanguard Siti Munirah Jusoh will not let her thigh injury ruin her title ambitions at the Wispa China Open, which begins today in Shanghai. The national No 4 hurt her thigh while taking part in the NSC Series No 1 last week.

Though playing injured, Siti still managed to reach the championship but eventually lost to Japan's Misaki Kobayashi.

Now, the 24-year-old wants to avenge her loss. It's quite disappointing not to win my first title but there was nothing much I could do because I was afraid of making the injury worst during the match," she said.

There will be no easy road for the title, though, as Siti will have to lock horns with Egypt's Nouran El Torkey in the first round.

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Should she progress, Siti will likely be on a collision course with compatriot Delia Arnold in the next stage. Also participating in the tournament is national No 2 Low Wee Wen, who has been posting dismal performances in international competitions of late.

Stosur, Zvonareva Book WTA Finals Tickets

PARIS - Australian US Open champion Samantha Stosur and Russia's Vera Zvonareva became the sixth and seventh players to qualify for the season-ending WTA Championships in Istanbul from October 25 to October 30.

They join world No 1 Caroline Wozniacki, three-time Grand Slam champion Maria Sharapova, Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova, world No 4 Victoria Azarenka and Chinese Roland Garros queen Li Na in the eight-player field.

Germany's Andrea Petkovic, Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska and France's Marion Bartoli are contesting the remaining spot during the final two weeks of the regular season. "It's very exciting to qualify for Championships for the second straight year especially because it will be the first year of this event in Istanbul," Stosur said. (AFP)

Hamilton Will Bounce Back, Warns Team Boss

SUZUKA - McLaren team chief Martin Whitmarsh has backed Lewis Hamilton to bounce back from his recent string of disappointments to win again and be a title contender in the next Formula One season.

Whitmarsh believes that the 26-year-old Englishman's difficulties this year have sapped his confidence, but he is just one win away from rediscovering his form as the world's fastest and most exciting racing driver.

Speaking after Sunday's Japanese Grand Prix won by Hamilton's team-mate, fellow-Briton Jenson Button, Whitmarsh said: "He's a great racing driver. His heart is in it and he is very open about his emotions. He doesn't like not winning, but it will come good." (AFP)