

**KERATAN AKHBAR-AKHBAR TEMPATAN
TARIKH: 11 OKTOBER 2015 (AHAD)**

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Towards a sporting nation

MILLIONS of people throughout the country joined hands to make the first National Sports Day a resounding success.

From the launch in Putrajaya, runs and cycling events on the second Penang bridge and elsewhere, to aerobics and zumba, swimming and kayaking and even less strenuous sports like pool, people around the country came in early to take part in the events.

A total of five million students and teachers were involved, according to Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid, as schools used the replacement school day today as a sports day.

In Putrajaya, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa joined more than 2,000 civil servants from the various

departments and agencies at the 'Senamrobik Ceria@Hari Sukan Negara' exercise.

Also present were Public Service Department director-general Tan Sri Mohamad Zabidi Zainal, Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (Mampu) director-general Datuk Seri Zainal Rahim Seman and **Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovations secretary-general Datuk Seri Dr Noorul Ainur Mohd Nur.**

The event at the Kompleks C compound in Putrajaya began at 9am with aerobic exercises and karate demonstrations.

At 10.10am, Dr Ali performed the official opening by performing Muay Thai moves together with Mohamad Zabidi.

Earlier, some 7,000 cyclists took

to the roads in Putrajaya for a fun ride organised by Rainbow Jersey Events.

Families, casual cyclists and enthusiasts arrived from as early as 6am, all ready for the race.

While most arrived with bikes secured on their cars, some cycled from their homes in the surrounding areas.

Former national cyclist M. Kumaresan, who flagged off the cyclists in the 120km, 40km and 10km categories, said some of them even travelled from Kedah and Terengganu for the ride in Putrajaya.

"It is great to see so many people getting involved in the first year," Kumaresan said.

Oh, and did you know it was also World Squash Day? That sport was not forgotten, either.

KERATAN AKHBAR
 NEW SUNDAY TIMES (LEARNING CURVE) : MUKA SURAT 2
 TARIKH : 11 OKTOBER 2015 (AHAD)

COVER STORY



UP CLOSE WITH MOTHER NATURE: Students on Ice 2015 Arctic Expedition members talk about their memorable experiences while on the two-week event



"They learnt about the challenges and opportunities facing the Arctic and its people during a time of significant change."

Geoff Green,
SOI founder and
executive director

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FOUR Malaysian secondary students had an opportunity of a life-changing journey of discovery and learning when they were chosen to be part of the recent Students on Ice (SOI) 2015 Arctic Expedition.

Together with more than 100 high school and university students from across Canada and around the world, they converged on Ottawa to begin a two-week expedition on board the MS *Ocean Endeavour* to Greenland and the Canadian High Arctic.

Through hands-on learning, the youth fostered a greater understanding of and respect for the history, culture and ecological diversity of the Arctic, and the changes it faces.

Beginning in Ottawa, this vessel- and land-based journey explored the communities, coasts and fiords of western Greenland before crossing the Davis Straits to Canada's High Arctic.

The expedition also passed through the eastern entrance of the Northwest Passage and included visits to Pond Inlet, Sirmilik National Park and Beechey Island.

For Nurul Izzaidah Zulkiflie, one of her memorable experiences was seeing icebergs for the first time. "My feelings were indescribable. I was astonished by everything. We saw a polar bear swimming only a few hundred metres from us."

"It never crossed my mind that I would see Arctic wildlife one day. I will never forget the incredible sight of bird cliffs and the thousands of bird colonies."

"We saw school of whales during the expedition and it was an amazing moment when we came across a humpback whale at a close distance," she said.

But the most unforgettable moment was celebrating her 16th birthday on board the ship. "Nothing is better than spending your birthday in the Arctic."

"It was a full-sea day — we didn't do any landings. I was touched as the SOI staff made a birthday cake for me."

The hike to Santa's house in Ummanaq will forever be in her memory. "We spent 1½ hours on a return journey. It was a life-changing moment looking down from the top of a hill at Mother Nature. It made me realise how small I am. I felt the scenery was too beautiful to be real and I knew we have to preserve it."

The SMK Tengku Ampuan Intan student from Kuala Berang, Terengganu has always liked travelling and adventures.

"I also learnt about aquatic life in Arctic lakes and ponds. It's amazing how the creatures survive in the Arctic extreme climate. During Arctic Hours, I listened to talks by amazing speakers, gained knowledge and was made aware of issues in the Arctic. What made Arctic Hours exciting is they are not only talks but also discussions."

Students gave their opinions freely. "Every idea was discussed. It was not a one-way learning session."

MRSM Alor Gajah, Malacca student Raslan Abd Rahman, 16, said the expedition itself was an incred-

ible experience as the SOI activities were engaging. "The expedition staff included experts who helped expand my knowledge of the Arctic and made me want to find out more. The workshops conducted by experts were interactive and enjoyable," said Raslan.

"The appeal of adventure travel is contingent upon several factors. Firstly, pictures of ice cannot compare to the real thing. Icebergs are so alien a sight that I cannot help but be amazed."

"Also, adventure travel is not merely gallivanting around far-off countries. The experiences gained form banks of knowledge. Learning in the moment provides an engaging experience which fuels interest in issues."

"Clearly, learning about sea ice in class is incomparable to witnessing it before your very eyes."

Playing football on a small gravel pitch and a visit to Jakobshavn Glacier remain clearly in his mind. "At the glacier, we had an amazing view of lush hills as we traversed a boardwalk. There was ice as far as the eye could see. All I could do was take in its beauty in absolute silence."

Raslan said SOI had delivered on

its promises to provide experiential learning of the culture, science, politics and development of the Arctic.

"During the expedition, I was in close contact with experts in various scientific and political fields. However, I was most inspired by youth leaders on the expedition. They proved that age is not a barrier as several of them had founded various movements and unions while one leader was the Arctic Youth Council member."

"So, I want to become more involved in community work. Hopefully, I can visit more schools in Malaysia and raise awareness of challenges in the Arctic," he added.

As for Ashraf Hakimi Mohd Nurul-faizin from MRSM Kuala Kubu Baru, Selangor there were a lot of amazing and mind-blowing activities.

Some of his favourite activities included swimming in the freezing Arctic Ocean; attending workshops conducted by educators from participating countries and panel discussions on political and social issues in the Arctic; kayaking and paddle-boarding; and taking part in cultural shows where the Malaysian team performed the *Tiga Kupang* song and bamboo dance.



Geoff Green (right) addresses students during the first landing in Greenland.

SAMBUNGAN...
NEW SUNDAY TIMES (LEARNING CURVE) : MUKA SURAT 3
TARIKH : 11 OKTOBER 2015 (AHAD)



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(From left) Ahmad Amirul Farhan Zulkifli, Ashraf Hakimi Mohd Nurulfaiz and Raslan Abd Rahman are all smiles during the expedition.

"The chat with geologist Dr Fred Roots was memorable. Having a chat with an experienced scientist was so overwhelming and life-changing. I also met the president of Mars Institute from Nasa, Dr Pascal Lee. His presentations on geology, Mars and Earth were so inspiring.

Ashraf Hakimi, who inspires to be a geologist, said travelling around the world is his life goal. "The chance to know new cultures, uniqueness of flora and fauna, extreme weather and temperature are life experiences. For example, when I was in the Arctic, I got a closer look at a polar bear, felt the cold weather and atmosphere, and learnt about Arctic plants such as lichen and moss.

"I was fascinated by the plants especially lichen. Scientifically, lichen is a symbiosis of fungi and bacteria. Just imagine, two things living as one, helping one another and symbiotically growing together."

Nurul Izzadah added that she would like to share the knowledge and experience she gained during the expedition with everyone, especially youth in her hometown.

"We don't have enough exposure to issues in the Arctic and North Pole. I would love to discuss how people from other regions can help in the sustainability of the Arctic," she said.

Raslan said participants must



Nurul Izzadah Zulkiflie beaming upon landing in Uummannaq, a town in the Qaasuitsup municipality of northwestern Greenland.

involve themselves in the activities and stay engaged throughout the expedition. "Make full use of the time on the trip. The expedition requires commitment to morning routines and occasional late night activities."

Ashraf Hakimi plans to share his experience with his schoolmates and teachers by showing them pictures and videos. He hopes to start a club to raise awareness of the Arctic.

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE POLAR REGIONS

THE participation of Malaysian students and teachers in the Students on Ice (SOI) Arctic Expedition for the first time this year in the 15-year history of the programme is an achievement for the country.

Yayasan Penyelidikan Antartika Sultan Mizan (YPASM) chief executive officer Mohd Nasaruddin Abd Rahman said: "From feedback, this expedition was an eye-opener for the participants on issues in the Arctic, especially climate change, the opening of new shipping routes and their global impact including sea-level rise.

"They also learnt about the Arctic community as well as the flora and fauna, and met people from various background, cultures and nationalities during the two-week event.

"Although the experiences were only the tip of the iceberg, they were mind-blowing and once-in-a-lifetime events."

He added that the trip has also empowered youth to speak up and contribute to society.

To maximise the impact of the programme, YPASM has planned post-expedition activities grouped into short- and long-term events. For short-term programmes, YPASM will visit the participant's school and organise talks for the participant to share his or her experiences with the school community.

"We visited SMK Tengku Ampuan Intan, Kuala Berang and SMKA Sheikh Abd Malek Kuala Terengganu last month. We also plan to give participants the chance to share their experiences with their peers from other schools.

"On long-term plans, YPASM has created an alumni for the participants. The students and teachers



Mohd Nasaruddin Abd Rahman

will be invited for sharing sessions or as support crew or volunteers in our awareness programmes.

Since YPASM has an understanding with SOI Foundation to secure slots for Malaysians in the next expedition, funding is crucial. "We have approached relevant institutions and companies to get funding. The selection process will follow.

"We look for all-round students and teachers who can represent Malaysia. Participants must be fit enough to spend two weeks in the icy continent, show leadership qualities, have communication skills and the desire to contribute to society.

"We will update the call for application on our website and social media (Facebook and Twitter)."

"It is important to continue to undertake polar awareness activities including sending more Malaysians especially students and youth for an experience of these extreme regions through SOI expeditions.

"We also hope to inculcate an interest to learn science through this educational programme."

"My advice is work on your communications skill, learn to express ideas and boost your confidence. These traits are essential regardless of whether you are a SOI participant or not.

"Communication and self-confidence are important to interact globally," he added.

Participant Ahmad Amirul Farhan Zulkifli from SMK Agama Sheikh Abdul Malek, Trengganu said: "Participants must speak fluent English. Don't be shy. Take an active part in activities. Be strong mentally and physically."

He was inspired to take more pictures after attending a photography workshop in Itilleq. To him, "photography is art" and it tells a story.

"The trainers guided me on the correct way of using a camera," he added.

He loves to hike and had the chance to do so at Itilleq ice fjord, Santa Claus house and the glaciers. "The hikes were breathtaking journeys with my friends. I was mesmerised by Mother Nature and the scenery was so picturesque.

"I was on cloud nine when I saw an iceberg for the first time. I was also lucky to get a glimpse of whales, seals,

seagulls and polar bears.

"Spending two weeks in the Arctic, seeing the panoramic beauty of Mother Nature and gaining knowledge from the expedition were the most memorable experiences in my life so far."

SOI founder and executive director Geoff Green said students view the world and their place within it differently after they witness the beauty of the Arctic first-hand and better understand its important role in the global ecosystem.

"SOI welcomed four exceptional Malaysian students onboard the 2015 Arctic Expedition this summer. They connected with youth from all over the world and shared their culture and perspectives on the importance of the Arctic," said Green.

"Raslan, Ashraf, Amir and Nurul are passionate and curious students who engaged in a diversity of workshops on the sciences, history, Arctic culture and the arts.

"They learnt about the challenges and opportunities facing the Arctic and its people during a time of significant change, and I am confident that this educational and transformational experience will continue to inspire and motivate them as young leaders."