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PRIME NEWS

'Magic drink' gets all-clear

LAB TESTS:

Malacca concoction said to be able to cure 15 illnesses

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THE much-touted Kampung Pengkalan Batu "magical herbal drink" that can reportedly cure 15 types of illnesses, including diabetes, is safe for consumption.

Malacca Health Department director Datuk Dr Ghazali Othman

said tests conducted by the Chemistry Department on samples of the drink found that there were no dangerous or banned substances.

He said 12 samples had been sent in three batches to the department's laboratory in Petaling Jaya, Selangor, in September, October and December last year to be analysed.

"Among the tests conducted were those to detect the presence of sex stimulants, steroids and drugs.

"The results are negative. The drink is safe for consumption," he said yesterday.

It was reported that the drink was concocted by former school gardener Anuar Hashim, 59, from Kampung Pengkalan Batu, Batu Berendam, here.

Anuar said the drink was made



People filling containers with the 'magical herbal drink' in Kampung Pengkalan Batu, Malacca. Pic by Muhammad Hatim Ab Manan

from boiling the leaves of a "secret plant" and no chemical additives were added to the product.

Besides diabetes, the drink is also said to be able to cure piles, hy-

pertension and stroke.

On the drink's alleged healing properties, Dr Ghazali said a specific test for the purpose would have to be carried out separately.

"The Health Ministry and Chemistry Department do not conduct such tests. They are usually carried out by university researchers and interested industry players."

A common medium

THE recently-released *Academy of Sciences Malaysia Science Outlook 2015*, specifically the section on harnessing strategic global alliances, states "scientists should be positioned as torch bearers to drive international scientific collaborations towards acquiring, sharing and utilising knowledge that resides anywhere in the world to connect the scientific community and their endeavours meaningfully."

We all know that for the above to be achieved there must be a common medium of communicating scientific innovations. In this case, that medium is the language of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine) which is English.

Therefore, let us ponder a little on the role of the English language in this matter and pose a few questions.

But before that, we would like to take this opportunity to congratulate chemical engineering experts, Prof Dr Bassim H. Hameed from Universiti Sains Malaysia and Prof Datuk Ir Dr Wan Ramli Wan Daud and Prof Dr Siti Khatum Kamarudin, both of

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), for being honoured among the "World's Most Influential Minds in 2015". May they continue to reap greater success.

What was the language used to present their research findings? If it was English, then it has to be English at a level that has to be well understood by the panel that evaluated their application and research.

In order to do that, applicants for such awards have to be proficient in the scientific language required.

What was the language of the main sources of reference? If it was English, then the person sourcing for these reference materials would require a good command of the language in order to get the most accurate information from these sources.

Again, congratulations on the publications of the various research findings of UKM students and Indonesia which were written in Bahasa Malaysia. Equally important is the citation of these articles. Publications in Bahasa Malaysia have a limited audience – referred to by scholars in

Malaysia, Indonesia and maybe Brunei Darussalam (the latter uses English to teach science and therefore is more likely to refer to articles in English). Although this is an achievement, it is not good enough. Scholarly articles from Malaysia have to reach beyond the shores of these countries and English plays a major role in this.

Time and experience have shown that those with good English skills have a higher level of confidence in presentations at international conferences and gatherings compared to those who cannot speak in English. Poor language level not only mars the presentation but may also cause a lack of understanding on questions and issues raised.

Experience has also shown that teaching a language as a subject does not produce the same language proficiency compared to using the language to teach a subject. Using it in the teaching of science provides the required language – jargon and terminology – needed, and saves students from having to translate what they are learning, if they were required to, in the language that is internation-

ally accepted as an official language, that is, English.

Let us not deprive the younger generation the opportunity of reaching out beyond our local context including Indonesia and Brunei. A researcher in science does not lose out if he/she can speak and present his/her findings in more than one language. In fact, he would gain admiration and respect from the international community where the current language of science and knowledge is English. Even the French and German languages cannot compete with English in the context of the rapid discoveries in the scientific world.

Do bear in mind that the official languages of the United Nations are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

Anything presented in languages other than these will not be able to be served with official simultaneous translation services in UN conferences or its affiliated organisations' support.

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