

KERATAN AKHBAR-AKHBAR TEMPATAN
TARIKH: 8 JULAI 2014 (SELASA)

Bil	Tajuk	Akhbar
1	Space poster contest for students	The Star
2	Amaran angin kencang, laut bergelora ekoran Taufan Neoguri	Bernamea.com
3	Gempa bumi kuat di Near Coast of Chiapas, Mexico	Bernamea.com
4	Tapping flower power	The Star
5	Anti-Lynas protest affect livelihood of workers	New Straits Times

KERATAN AKHBAR
THE STAR (NATION) : MUKA SURAT 22
TARIKH: 08 JULAI 2014 (SELASA)

Space poster contest for students

KUALA LUMPUR: Primary and secondary school students are encouraged to come up with a poster that depicts their vision of the future for a competition.

The National Space Agency (Angkasa) said the *Space for the Future* competition was part of the Prime Minister's Cup National Space Challenge 2014 programme that would be held in October.

The contest is co-organised by the Science, Technology and

Innovation Ministry.

Three winning drawings in the primary school category will represent Malaysia at the 21st Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum Poster Contest in Japan in December. The contest closes on Aug 31.

Call Jong Tze Kian at 03-2273 4303, or visit www.angkasa.gov.my/planetarium or Angkasa's Facebook page for more information. — Bernama

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BERNAMA.COM
TARIKH: 08 JULAI 2014 (SELASA)



Amaran Angin Kencang, Laut Bergelora Ekoran Taufan Neoguri

KUALA LUMPUR, 7 Julai (Bernama) -- [Jabatan Meteorologi Malaysia](#) pada Isnin mengeluarkan amaran angin kencang dan laut bergelora berikutan Taufan Neoguri yang dikesan kira-kira 1,995 km ke Timur Laut Kudat, Sabah pada pukul 5 petang tadi.

Taufan itu yang dikesan pada Latitud 21.9U dan Longitud 127T bergerak ke arah Barat Laut dari lokasi berkenaan dengan anggaran kelajuan 25km sejam.

Berikutan itu, keadaan angin kencang Barat Daya dengan kelajuan 40 hingga 50 km sejam dengan ombak mencapai ketinggian sehingga 3.5 meter, dijangka berlaku di perairan Perlis, Kedah, Pulau Pinang, Sarawak (Miri), Sabah (Kudat, Pantai Barat dan Pedalaman) dan Wilayah Persekutuan Labuan dan berterusan sehingga Ahad ini.

Keadaan itu berbahaya kepada bot-bot kecil, rekreasi laut dan sukan laut, menurut kenyataan jabatan itu.

-- BERNAMA

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TARIKH: 08 JULAI 2014 (SELASA)



Gempa Bumi Kuat Di Near Coast Of Chiapas, Mexico

KUALA LUMPUR, 7 Julai (Bernama) -- Satu gempa bumi kuat bermagnitud 7.0 pada skala Richter telah berlaku di Near Coast of Chiapas, Mexico pada pukul 7.24 malam ini.

[Jabatan Meteorologi Malaysia](#) dalam satu kenyataan berkata, pusat gempa itu terletak di 15.0 darjah Utara dan 92.1 darjah Barat, 786 km di tenggara Puebla, Mexico.

Menurut jabatan itu, tiada ancaman tsunami berikutan gempa itu namun pihaknya sedang memantau perkembangan tersebut.

-- BERNAMA

Tapping flower power

Firm cultivates orchids using biotechnology

By LIM WING HOOI
winghooi@thestar.com.my



In the 16th century, tulip mania became the first recorded speculative bubble. At its peak, 12 acres of land was offered for a *Semper Augustus* orchid bulb.

During the Victorian era, *Orchidelirium* became the name of the game. Wealthy orchid fanatics of the 19th century sent explorers and collectors to almost every part of the world in search of new varieties of orchids.

Orchids became status symbols for the rich and famous of the day.

Today, there are still some levels of madness for orchids. In 2012 alone, the global orchid trade was valued at US\$504mil (RM1.6bil).

Capitalising on the growing appreciation and demand for orchids, Orchid Life Sdn Bhd founder and chief executive officer Abdul Razak Mohd Isa, together with his chief operating officer Mustadza Muhamad, looked at the possibility of growing orchids on a larger scale through tissue culturing.

"We chose to go into business with orchids as there is global demand," said Abdul Razak.

From cell

In 2006, the former manager of a multinational oil and gas company partnered with architect Mustadza to set up the venture.

A year into the business, they secured funding from the Malaysian Technology Development Corporation (MTDC) to commercialise Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) AgriBiotech's research and development. Orchid Life received an RM2.5mil allocation from the Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation (BiotechCorp) under the BioNexus Seed Development Fund to grow their business.

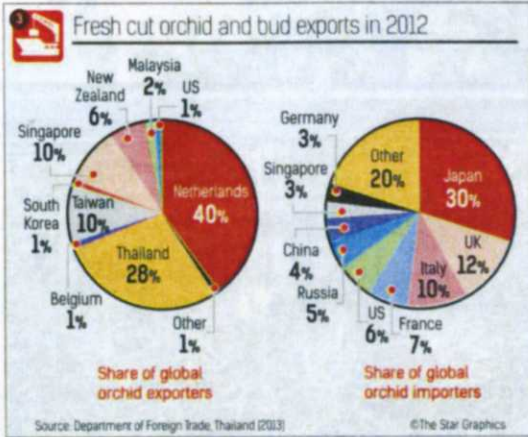
Abdul Razak said the first phase of their business saw them establishing a 1,000sq ft lab at UPM, buying equipment for tissue culture activities and funding the research and devel-



SEE NEXT PAGE



KERATAN AKHBAR
 THE STAR (STAR METRO) : MUKA SURAT 27
 TARIKH : 8 JULAI 2014 (SELASA)



100,000 orchids and counting

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

opment programme.

He also transformed one acre of land he inherited from his father in Sungai Buloh, Selangor into an orchid nursery, where he grew orchids.

Using the lab, the company grow orchid using tissue and suspension-culture techniques. Gel, in the form of purified agar and an in-house formula, is used in tissue culture technique to grow orchid plants.

In the suspension culture, a large quantity of orchid cells are kept in glass containers that are continuously stirred and aerated to promote growth of new orchids.

Mixed with special plant hormones and other chemical compounds, a cell, from 0.5cm can grow to 6cm within six months. Up to 5,000 orchid plants can be cultivated using a 500ml jar.

He said skilled and experience tissue culturists are critical in growing orchids from cells.

"Once a shoot emerges from the culture, the plant is put into pots and kept in the greenhouse or nursery for it to grow."

He said among the orchids commonly reproduced using the tissue culture techniques

are *Aranda Tiger Green*, *Mokara Char Kuan Pink* and another eight types of orchids.

Abdul Razak said the company faced many challenges in sustaining the business, including obtaining bank loans for expansion.

Slowly but surely, he said, they managed to overcome the obstacles.

Meeting challenges

Having grown over 100,000 orchid plants since 2009, the company now provides cut orchids to local and international buyers.

"We pick hybrid orchids that have long stems, interesting colours and flower freely to meet the demand for cut orchids," he said.

He said they export their cut flowers to Australia, India, South Korea, Europe, North America, Latin America and Middle East.

Abdul Razak said they have to reject some of the orders, as they were unable to cope up with the demands.

He said Orchid Life was also appointed by Kedah BioResources Corporation Sdn Bhd (KBioCorp), a subsidiary of Kulim High Tech Park, from 2010 to 2013 as consultant to help developed an agribiotechnology plan, which involves the setting up of the Plant Science and Tissue Culture Node (PSTCN) as part of the

Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER) to enhance economic growth in northern Peninsular Malaysia.

"The project was handed back to the state agency after the facility and the protocols were established for propagating the *misai kucing* traditional herb, together with the technology transfer from research institutions to young local researchers working on the project."

With the profit generated from cultivating and selling orchid plants and flowers over the years, as well as consultancy fees, the company secured 70 acres of agricultural land in Rawang recently, to prepare itself for more expansion.

"The company is also looking at hiring more tissue culturists. Currently, it has 10 people but aims to employ up to 30."

He said, with several strategic arrangements with local institutions like Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Malaya, the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute, the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia and their expansion plan, the company is set transform into a full-fledged agribiotechnology firm.

Abdul Razak said they anticipate growth in the business especially from the overseas market, where there is strong demand for orchids.

- 1 Abdul Razak showing the tissue culture of the Vanda variety, which is about a year old and will take another year to flower.
- 2 There is a big demand for orchids such as Vanda in the global trade.
- 3 Orchid tissue culture in growing stage. Orchid life can grow 5,000 orchid plants in a 500ml jar.
- 4 A sub-culture process of the Berangana orchid.
- 5 Some design of cut orchids. The global trade for orchid was valued at US\$504mil in 2012.

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KERATAN AKHBAR
NEW STRAITS TIMES (LETTERS) : MUKA SURAT 18
TARIKH : 8 JULAI 2014 (SELASA)

CAUTION

Anti-Lynas protests affect livelihood of workers

THE main reason why anti-Lynas folks were attacked in front of the police station in Kuantan recently is this — villagers were getting incensed by the persistence of the anti-Lynas campaigners in trying to destroy their livelihood.

The anti-Lynas campaigners may not realise that what they are doing is destroying the livelihood of people who are directly or indirectly dependent on Lynas to put food on the table to feed their children.

This is definitely not green and not fair.

Their actions may trigger a racial riot. I was once accused of crying wolf over the danger of the anti-Lynas movement developing into a racial conflict but we must take precautions.

The goal of this anti-Lynas movement is polarisation and dangerous.

The majority of the workers at Lynas and those indirectly dependent on Lynas for a decent living perceive that the demonstrators are trying to destroy the jobs of some 1,750 hardworking people.

Who is going to feed the children of these people if Lynas is forced to close down?

Good jobs are hard to come by and if you do not have a job, nobody is going to feed your children.



The Lynas Advanced Materials Plant in Gebeng, Pahang, provides jobs for locals.

The reason why I got involved in this Lynas debacle is that I found out that the younger generation of our population has started to practise abusive and confrontational politics.

The protest may erupt into something insidious that could tear the fabric of our society. It is a tragedy that nobody wants.

On one occasion, a group of villagers confronted the anti-Lynas campaigners and it was fortunate that the police were there to defuse the tension.

When the first shipment of Lynas ore arrived in Gebeng, the police escorted the consignment to the plant.

Datuk Dr Looi Hoong Wah, Kuantan, Pahang