

# KL's young talent — shaping our future

*I have often been told by MNCs that having diverse talent is what sets Greater KL apart from other cities*



KL STREET WISE

by DATUK ZAINAL AMANSHAH

I WOULD like to take this opportunity to wish all readers "Selamat Hari Merdeka". Our 60th Merdeka anniversary is a great occasion to celebrate the stability, peace and unity in the country.

It's also great that we have done so well in the 2017 SEA Games. Seeing Malaysians from all walks of life coming together to cheer on our home grown talent is in itself a heartening moment worth celebrating, medals aside.

Speaking of talent, at InvestKL, we recently took on the opportunity to do something different by showcasing our young Malaysian talents from various multinational corporations (MNCs) to engage top officials from our two overseeing ministries — International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed and Federal Territories Deputy Minister Senator Datuk Dr Loga Bala Mohan — as well as Pemandu Associates Sdn Bhd president and CEO Datuk Seri Idris Jala. The three spoke in a no holds barred open panel session with 300

young talents employed by MNCs based in Greater Kuala Lumpur (Greater KL).

While the discussion ranged from governance and transparency, education, crime and safety, all the way to geopolitics and mental health, the message was clear: Our young talents are invested in making Malaysia and Greater KL better places to live and work in, and key to that, as aptly put by Mustapa, is moderation and communication.

## Governance, Transparency

Asked what could be done better for the country, our young talents overwhelmingly chose greater governance and transparency — over public infrastructure or even job security — the latter a mark of confidence in InvestKL and other agencies' efforts in that sphere.

As we continue to attract more multinationals to invest in Greater KL, it is reassuring to know that the high-skilled jobs created by MNCs have allayed immediate concerns on job security.

I conclude that the sentiment of the youth here mirrors the latest of the government efforts such as creating a comfortable and convenient way to commute to work itself — via the newly launched mass rapid transit and having an integrated public transport system overall.

Besides job creation, keeping our talent in touch and updated is an ongoing effort and critical towards promoting transparency and trust in our government. While the influx of investors into

the country is proof of existing governance and transparency, I believe that communication between the government and its people, especially the young talent, is key to take this further.

## Quality of Education, Talent

As we continue to attract more multinationals into Greater KL, we want to ensure that quality talent birthed by a good education system in Malaysia is readily available and on par with global talent.

The dinner was attended by about 300 highly-skilled and articulate young talent, who communicated through a live poll that they would prefer to continue their careers in Malaysia, given enough international exposure.

Coupled with seeing returning talent into the country, this proves that the MNCs that choose to set up hubs in Greater KL can continue to rely on quality local graduates, as well as the returning talent with international experience.

Our education system, both public and private, continues to produce high quality talent, but not enough in numbers to meet the increasing demand and needs of MNCs, especially for high-skilled positions. Thus, the challenge now is to increase the quantity to a "critical mass" of 30%.

## Propelling Greater KL Forward

Another poll on factors needed to propel Greater KL forward received more

votes highlighting the need to reduce crime rate and improve safety, while attracting international investments into the city came in second.

It was encouraging to see that there was less urgency for improved connectivity and traffic. This is a nod to what the government has been doing to reduce major congestion in Greater KL via implementing an integrated public transport system.

However, an interesting point brought up by Idris is that Malaysia's crime rate is exactly the same as Singapore's (300 incidents daily per 100,000 population). In fact, compared to other cities which are not spared by crimes such as terrorism, Malaysia has it on a lesser scale — with petty crimes being the main concern compared to larger national security threats like terrorism attacks.

I believe that the Kuala Lumpur City Hall, our Special Branch and police force have done a great job, especially to reduce or lessen the crime rate in Greater KL. Furthermore, the companies and expats who continue to come to Malaysia prove that our cities and country are still relatively safe to live and work in. Having said that, this is a continuous and ongoing effort.

## Promoting Values, Peace and Diversity

Merdeka has always been about promoting unity between every Malaysians. During the dinner, I was amazed by the energy of the 300 young Malaysians who are multiracial and multicultural.

In fact, I have often been told by

MNCs that having a diverse talent is what sets Greater KL apart from other cities — as our talent are not only valuable in what they do, but also prized for their multilingual abilities.

Promoting values such as unity and inclusion would ideally lead to a more tolerant society — which in turn adds to the country's attractiveness as an investment destination.

By the end of the night, I was proud of Malaysia's young talents wanting to do right and more for their country. After all, the influx of MNCs and investments must translate to more benefits for the people, irrespective of colour, creed or economic background.

A prosperous Malaysia must also be an inclusive Malaysia with a sustainable future, not built on short-term goals but long-term ideas that will keep our country abreast with global developments.

I am heartened that the youth — the future of Malaysia — are just like me, in it for the long-haul.

*Datuk Zainal Aman Shah, InvestKL CEO since 2011, brings with him 20 years of private sector experience in senior positions at MNCs, Malaysian companies and startups. You can follow Zainal on Twitter: @Zainalamanshah.*

*The views presented are of the writer and do not necessarily represent the editorial board and its owners.*

# Celcom launches Easyphone instalment plan for prepaid users

by NUR HAZIQAH A MALEK

CELCOM Axiata Bhd yesterday launched Easyphone, a hire purchase scheme for prepaid users in partnership with AEON Credit Service (M) Bhd, allowing consumers to own mobile devices without a high initial investment.

The Easyphone plan allows consumers to choose from 30 smartphone models with a 24-month instalment plan. A similar easy payment scheme was previously introduced for Celcom's postpaid plan users in May.

The mobile operator claimed that the easy payment scheme for prepaid consumers is unique and the first of its kind in the market.

Celcom chief marketing officer Zalman Aefendy Zainal Abidin said the scheme is aimed at allowing more

people to purchase smartphones at affordable prices.

"For some people, the price of the device is quite an issue as smartphones can cost up to RM4,000. We wanted to make sure that affordability is a problem that we can solve for our customers," he said at the launch of the Easyphone in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Zalman Aefendy said the newly introduced plan for prepaid users is similar to the postpaid plan.

The plan would allow customers to choose the smartphones that they have always wanted to own but do not have the financial mean to purchase with a single payment.

Zalman Aefendy said the prepaid market is of a substantial size in the country.

"We all know that Malaysia is a

huge prepaid market. So, those who are using prepaid can now get smartphones through this programme," he said, adding that the programme also allows consumers to own smartphones without a credit card or any upfront payment.

At the end of the first-quarter of 2017 (1Q17), Celcom has 10.25 million subscribers, of which 7.3 million are prepaid users.

Easyphone has all the features similar to the easy payment postpaid plan except for the device protection option related to the loss of the smartphone.

Celcom plans to introduce the feature for the programme at a later date.

Under the scheme, consumers can subscribe for the plan for as low as RM74. Users have to make the payment to AEON Credit throughout the 24-month scheme.



*The scheme is aimed at allowing more people to purchase smartphones at affordable prices, says Zalman Aefendy*

# How not to communicate: Lessons from trolls

by KARA ALAIMO

IN RECENT weeks, many Americans have been astounded by the hatred some of their compatriots seem to harbour toward people of colour, immigrants and anyone else who seem different.

But as a woman who is regularly trolled for sharing her opinions, I have long understood that our country has a harrowing problem with hate.

I'm a professor and I write about one op-ed a week, typically for *CNN Opinion* and *Bloomberg View*.

My commentary focuses on politics and communication, so I've written about everything from how US President Donald Trump can communicate more effectively to why Cynthia Nixon should run for governor of New York.

The abusive emails and tweets I receive in response aren't voluminous — they clearly come from a small fringe of my readers. But three things about them trouble me, and suggest trouble for the country.

First is the issue of gender. Although it's difficult to confirm someone's identity on the basis of an email alone, it appears that almost all of my hate mail comes from men.

For example, more than 90% of these messages come from senders with traditionally male names. They often

contain other cues that lead me to suppose the writers are men.

For example, one Lee W signed his vitriolic missive with "husband, father and grandfather".

And the language they use is rife with sexist slurs. As an example, when I criticised President Trump in a *CNN* op-ed for commenting on the French first lady's body, a Henry O in Cleveland wrote: "I'm sick of women or their pansy men who get offended over comments or jokes that they judge to be 'offensive'. Screw you, bitch".

My experience is hardly unique: Research confirms that female writers get more cruel feedback than men. When *The Guardian* commissioned a study of the comments posted by their readers last year, its conclusion was clear: "Articles written by women attract more abuse and dismissive trolling than those written by men, regardless of what the article is about."

Eight of the 10 writers who received the most abuse were women, even though the majority of the paper's regular opinion writers were men. (This same pattern repeats with race: Although most of the male *Guardian* writers were white, the two men who received the most abuse were black.)

And while women are disproportionately targeted by trolls, men are more likely to be trolls, researchers have found.

The second thing that troubles me is that hate mail usually doesn't contain counter-arguments. Writers almost never try to explain why they believe I'm wrong; instead, they attack me personally. (I sometimes need to reference *Urban Dictionary* to understand the earthy phrases they use.)

For example, after I wrote commentary for *CNN* arguing that *Fox News* should have fired host Bill O'Reilly when allegations of sexual harassment against him were first raised, a Greg V emailed: "I bet...you would be praying to have a famous rich guy call you hot anything"

(Interestingly, Twitter trolls are more likely to engage with my actual arguments than email haters are — perhaps because the authors realise they're posting publicly.)

Third, my interlocutors often put me into categories. Because I worked in President Barack Obama's administration, they peg me as a raging liberal. For example, in March, I received an especially nasty slew of emails for my *Bloomberg* column arguing that Melania Trump should hire a press secretary.

I didn't attack the first lady at all in the piece; I gave her the same advice I would have offered to Michelle Obama about how to improve her own and her husband's approval ratings.

Indeed, the day after the column ran, Melania Trump hired a communi-

cations director. But my commentary was nevertheless read as a hit job (if these writers bothered to read it at all).

This suggests that many of the people writing to me don't have a problem with my specific arguments. They have a problem with the fact that I have arguments at all.

Of course, you have to have thick skin to weigh in on contentious issues. An easy way to deal with these messages is to delete them.

In fact, when I wrote a piece for *The Washington Post's* Monkey Cage blog, I received official guidelines indicating: "You are writing for a general audience, who can be expected to be reasonably intelligent and reasonably interested in the world around them. (This excludes the commenters on articles. You can ignore them.)"

But the reason my hate messages are too disturbing to ignore is because of what will happen to our country if we engage with one another this way.

Trolls disproportionately target members of historically less powerful groups, as the *Guardian* study indicates.

This abuse has a chilling effect on the broader national debate. A study published by the Pew Research Centre last month found that 27% of Americans have declined to post something after seeing others harassed online.

And an especially large share of

women ages 18 to 29 (45%) have chosen to censor themselves after witnessing the harassment of others.

I'm one of the lucky ones. The only time I've ever self-censored was while writing this column: I chose not to use the last names of the men I quoted out of fear of retribution.

But I have some advantages. As the *Guardian* research showed, factors such as race can also make people targets.

A Pew study published last month found that black and Hispanic Americans are more likely than white Americans to be harassed online, and are far more likely to receive racial abuse.

Fifty-nine percent of African Americans, 48% of Hispanics and 41% of whites say they've experienced online harassment. For women of colour, the problem is compounded.

Ultimately, trying to intimidate people you disagree with is a sign of weakness. The only brave thing to do is to debate issues on their merits.

So, if you disagree with me, don't call me a beast. (MAGA Mike King on Twitter, I'm looking at you.) Tell me why I'm wrong. — *Bloomberg*

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