

19/09/2003

Here and out there

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HERE'S a quick look for those of you who missed out on what's been happening in Malaysia and around the world from Sept 10 to 16.

* MALAYSIA

Internet fees slashed

THE recent Budget speech by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was the main talking point this week.

Youths were eagerly anticipating lower Internet access rates and were not disappointed.

Telekom Malaysia is offering a 50 per cent discount on various Internet packages. Charges for the newly introduced broadband service will also be reduced.

Yet, the most interesting piece of news was the merger of the two leading Internet service providers.

Dr Mahathir disclosed that Jaring and (Telekom's) TMNet, which owns more than 90 per cent of fixed lines, will provide services under "Jaring-TMNet".

The merger will hopefully ensure a wider and better Internet service. Colleges not up to standard

THE Auditor-General's 2002 report revealed that the Education Ministry's matriculation colleges nationwide are facing serious structural problems, such as low quality facilities and inadequate teaching manpower.

The ministry has set up nine of the intended 10 matriculation colleges, and most have failed to meet standards.

Audits revealed weaknesses and problems in the colleges' management. Revenue and expenditure control was another problematic area, as it was reported that student fees, canteen rental and receipts were badly managed.

Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad stated that he is aware of the problems, and steps have already been taken to resolve them.

* VIETNAM

Luxury car-racing teen jailed

YOUTHS are known for pushing life to the limit. Boys yearn to experience the wild and fast-paced side of life. Combine the two and disaster follows.

This was the case for a 17-year-old Vietnamese boy who was sentenced to three years in jail for organising a "luxury" car race along the city streets.

Trinh Sam Mau was found guilty of organising the race and "disturbing public order". He was jailed along with six other youths who took part in the race.

The luxury cars that were featured in the illegal race included a BMW, a Lexus, a Mercedes Benz and a Toyota. Inspired by the movie Too Fast Too Furious perhaps?

* UNITED STATES

New York museum holds first sex workshop

FOR New Yorkers who are having trouble finding that "significant other", help is at hand. New York's Museum of Sex is holding its first-ever practical sex workshop entitled "Loving You: Female Sexual Self-Esteem".

Although shows like Sex and the City foster notions of a city where sex is alive and ongoing, most New York women complain they don't even know the basics concerning sexual exploits.

The workshop includes courses on the principles of flirting. Here is one of the more outrageous tips from the workshop for some of you adventurous women. While dating, go to a restaurant, go to the bathroom, take off your panties, and put them on your date's plate.

If he has it to go, you're all set!

* ENGLAND

Handphone generation heading for early senility

IT is so common to have a handphone these days, that most teens wouldn't be caught dead without one. Yet, new research has indicated that excessive use of handphones may cause youths to go senile in the prime of their lives.

The research indicates that microwaves released by the handphone and other wireless technology cause protein to leak across the blood-brain barrier, causing heavy brain damage.

Senility may normally occur at 60, but the new research shows that the abundant use of handphones by teens can cause their brain to malfunction by the tender age of 30.