



News Bulletin

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FROM THE EMBASSY'S DESK

A Malaysian's First Impression of Ukraine

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What is your impression about Ukraine or particularly Kiev so far? More often than not, this would be the question thrown to me when the people I meet learnt that I just arrived in Ukraine 3 months ago. And my an-

swer has been the same – I have been pleasantly surprised.

When I said I was pleasantly surprised, I did not mean because I had a disconcerting perspective about Ukraine. Kiev for that matter exceeded my expectations. I was surprised by the convenience of the public transportation, the liveliness of the city and how easy it is to shop your groceries as outdoor markets are located at every subway station.



Ukrainians' Hospitality and Openness



"Ukrainians took my foreignness in stride, without giving me a glaring stare .."

to babble in English. Despite this, I have never felt uncomfortable and out of place standing amongst them in a crowd. Ukrainians took my foreignness in stride, without giving me a glaring stare or giving me a hard time for not being able to communicate in Ukrainian or Russian. I observe that Ukrainians generally are open and hospitable. I have yet to encounter someone who is grumpy or simply brushing me off

Ukraine Got Talent

I am also amazed with how expressive Ukrainians are both in terms of performing and articulating their opinion. Ukrainians are proud to showcase their talents at every opportunity especially fea-

But most of all I was surprised by the people. Before I came, I had some reservations on how receptive Ukrainians would be towards me and my family. Being stunted in the height department with dark skin and distinguishably Asian facial features, we rather stood out without even opening our mouths

when I am trying to make any transactions in my awkward "sign language" due to my language handicap. I am also touched by the simple acts of consideration such as giving up their seats in the subway for my children or the person behind me at the cashier line letting me use his/her store discount card when I purchase items from that store.

turing their children's talents in various art performances such as singing and dancing. Furthermore, in my experience interacting with Ukrainians, I observe them ready to open up in

sharing their thoughts. They do not hold back even if they have differing views and seem to take criticism well when others do not hold the same views .

Prevalence of Smoking



**“Ukraine, I find
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for smokers ..”**

Ukraine, I find out to be a haven for smokers which is I am afraid quite unfortunate for me. Smoking is very popular and ubiquitous in Ukraine, from what I have seen, or rather smelled. Men and women smoke everywhere even while walking. There is no designated area for smoking and I have yet been to a common restaurant that has a partition between smoking and non-smoking areas. The only

place I have been that I was advised that smoking is not allowed inside was when I visited the hospital. It would be horrific if I was told otherwise. In comparison to other European countries, I understand that the prices of tobacco products in Ukraine are lower. But is it not supposed to be so much about the price, rather about the realisation of the risks of such habit. Somehow I foresee the non-smoking trend would still be a long time coming in Ukraine.

All things considered, I am hopeful that my stint in Kiev will be an unforgettable experience.

The writer is the Counsellor at the Embassy of Malaysia in Kyiv, Ukraine. The views expressed here are entirely her own.

EMBASSY'S ACTIVITIES



A Sunday of Asian Galore in Kyiv

“Two staff of the Embassy, Mr. Andriy Kurasov and Mr. Vitaly Boiko showed their “pulling tea” skills ..”

The Embassy of Malaysia once again was proud to be a part of the Asian Food and Cultural Festival 2015 held in Kyiv for the third time on Sunday, 18 October 2015. A joint effort by 14 Asian Embassies accredited to Ukraine, the Festival offered a glimpse of the Asian experience through food, culture and arts.

The Embassy of Malaysia’s booth sold cuisines and traditional desserts from Malaysia as well as Malaysian products made of batik and songket, among others. In addition, two staff of the Embas-

sy, Mr. Andriy Kurasov and Mr. Vitaly Boiko showed their “pulling tea” skills in a teh tarik demonstration.

The Festival was also a platform for the participating Asian Embassies to help alleviate the plight of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Ukraine whereby all proceeds from the Festival will be donated to the relevant NGOs in Ukraine.



ASIAN Food and Cultural Festival, 2015



Lest We Forget

Against the chilly and windy November day, the Embassy of Malaysia in Kyiv took part in the annual event to mark Remembrance Day in Ukraine on 11 November 2015. The diplomatic representatives, military officials and war veterans observed a two-minute silence at Kyiv's Park of Glory. The sombre event also included a reading of "In Flanders Fields," the laying of wreaths and prayers by faith representatives.

The Remembrance Day was not only significant in honouring the

fallen heroes of the World War I and World War II, but also served as a grim reminder of the ugly consequences of war.

Thus, we as the people should continue to pursue the path of peace and avoid war at any cost. This year's Remembrance Day has become even more poignant for the Ukrainians in view of the ongoing conflict in the eastern part of the country.



"We as the people should continue to pursue the path of peace and avoid war at any cost."

An Evening with Malaysians in Kyiv

A casual get together over dinner with Malaysian families in Kyiv was organised by the Embassy of Malaysia under the *Program Mendampingi Rakyat Malaysia (PMRM)* on 12 November 2015. Being a small community of Malaysians residing in Kyiv, the event has helped to strengthen esprit de corps and camaraderie amongst fellow Malaysians.

The get together was also important in providing an avenue for Malaysians to keep in touch with the latest developments in Malaysia and policies under-

taken by the country.

H.E. Ambassador Chuah Teong Ban thanked fellow Malaysians for their support and involvement in the Embassy's programmes. He said that the Embassy would continue to engage with fellow Malaysians in Ukraine and stands ready to render assistance if needed. Ambassador Chuah also acknowledged the contributions made by Malaysians living in Kyiv to raise the level of awareness about Malaysia amongst the local community.

"The event has helped to strengthen esprit de corps and camaraderie amongst fellow Malaysians."





Gathering with Malaysians



Do pobačennja to Ambassador Chuah Teong Ban

The bittersweet ambience was felt when H.E. Ambassador Chuah Teong Ban hosted his farewell reception on 21 December 2015. About 60 guests including Ambassadors, senior diplomats as well as distinguished figures from the local community attended the reception to say goodbye to Ambassador Chuah.

Ambassador Chuah extended his hearty thanks to all

the friends present whom he had come to know during his almost five year term as the Ambassador of Malaysia to Ukraine. He also recalled his happy stay in Ukraine while highlighting the downing of the Malaysia Airlines aircraft MH17 tragedy as the most challenging time he had faced here.

Although we are sad to see Ambassador Chuah leaves, we are not dismayed at saying goodbye or *Do pobačennja* in Ukrainian to Ambassador Chuah. As the adage

goes, a farewell is necessary before we can meet again and meeting again, after moments or a lifetime, is certain for those who are friends.



"A farewell is necessary before we can meet again and meeting again, after moments or a lifetime, is certain for those who are friends."



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