

Get-together of the Malaysian Community in Lebanon



A section of fellow Malaysians in discussion with Ambassador Bala Chandran at *Rumah Malaysia*, Beirut.

The Malaysian Embassy organised a get-together of the Malaysian community in Lebanon on 28 February 2016. The event was held at *Rumah Malaysia* in Beirut, with the Malaysian Ambassador to Lebanon, His Excellency Bala Chandran Tharman and wife, Madam Gouri Balachandran as well as the staff of the Embassy playing host. About 50 people attended the event, comprising Malaysian expatriates and their family members, students, visiting Malaysian businessmen and friends of Malaysia.

During discussions with fellow Malaysians, Ambassador shared his thoughts on the current challenges facing Lebanon and advised all Malaysians to be extra vigilant of their safety and security, and to be in close contact with the Embassy at all times. Ambassador encouraged the Malaysian community to make full use of the daily security update transmitted to them via the Diaspora WhatsApp group. He also called upon them to keep abreast of developments in Malaysia and towards this end, drew attention to news highlights on Malaysia prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that the Embassy transmitted to the Malaysian community in Lebanon via email on a daily basis.



Exchange of views over a home-cooked Malaysian meal at *Rumah Malaysia*, Beirut.

Humanitarian assistance to displaced Syrians in Lebanon

Malaysian Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon provided humanitarian assistance, consisting clothing and foodstuff, worth USD 360,000.00 (RM 1.6 million) for the benefit of 12,273 displaced Syrians in Lebanon, particularly women and children.

Malaysia's humanitarian assistance was made possible by the Honourable Datin Paduka Seri Rosmah Mansor, who had initiated the assistance, in her capacity as Patron of the Global Children's Wellbeing Fund (GCWF) and as President of the Welfare Association of Minister's Wives (BAKTI) Malaysia. The GCWF and BAKTI Malaysia contributed

USD 300,000.00 and USD 60,000.00, respectively.

Between February and March 2016, the Embassy distributed 10,000 units (each) of pull-overs, pants, scarves, jackets, socks, and blankets worth USD 300,000.00. Likewise, between April and June 2016, the Embassy distributed foodstuff worth USD 60,000.00 to the benefit of 2,273 families of displaced persons. Each family received a box of foodstuff worth USD 25.00 each which contained 15 items, namely, milk powder, sugar, rice, cooking oil, flour, tuna, cheese, tomato sauce, noodles, biscuits, and pulses including chick peas and lentils, bulgur grain and pasta.

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The Embassy procured and distributed the clothing with the assistance and cooperation of the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs. The foodstuff was distributed by the Embassy with the assistance of Lebanese NGOs and members of the civil society such as the Makhzoumi Foundation, Lions Club, Rotary Club, Foodbank Lebanon and the Diplomatic Spouses Association of Lebanon (DSAL).

The humanitarian assistance was distributed personally by the Malaysian Ambassador,

His Excellency Bala Chandran Tharman and wife, Madam Gouri Balachandran as well as Embassy officials in 24 villages and towns near Syrian encampments throughout Lebanon, including in the villages of Sheeba in southern Lebanon; Rashaya and Zahle in the Bekaa Valley in eastern Lebanon; Aley, Ashkout, Kfarhim, Maten and Shoueifat in Mount Lebanon; and Amair, Syr and Aidamoun in north Lebanon as well as in and around Beirut and Sidon.



Syrian women and children at the Malaysian Aid Distribution Centre in Zahle, Bekaa Valley, 13 February 2016.



Ambassador and Madam Gouri Balachandran distributing food boxes at Malaysian Aid Distribution Centre in ShouEIFat village, Mount Lebanon, 9 April 2016.

Showcasing Malaysia in Lebanon

The Malaysian Embassy participated in three cultural events in Beirut, namely, the *International Bazaar and Cultural Show* in March, the *United World Charity Event* in May and the *Ramadaniyat Beirutiya* in June, 2016. The objective was to showcase Malaysia, particularly her people and culture, cuisine, dance and music.

At the International Bazaar and the World Charity Event, Malaysian staff and family members cooked and distributed a variety of Malaysian finger food including *cucur kodok*, *roti canai*, *kuih bakar jagung*, *cekmek molek* and *apam gula hangus*. The *congkak* was played as an interactive game. Tourism promotional booklets and pamphlets were also distributed.

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Some of the Embassy staff at *Gerai Malaysia* at the International Bazaar and Cultural Show organised by Lebanese Preparatory School in Beirut, 5 March 2016. From left: Mr. Melvin and wife Ms. Ina; Mr. Shamsul and wife Ms. Rasidah; and Ms. Adawiah and husband Mr. Razali.



Ambassador and Madam Gouri Balachandran with Embassy staff and family members at United World Charity Event, UNESCO Palace, Beirut, 7 May 2016.

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Ramadaniyat Beirutiya 2016



Ambassador, Madam Gouri Balachandran, staff and family members of the Malaysian Embassy at *Gerai Malaysia*, 22 June 2016.

The Malaysian Embassy in Lebanon, for the first time, participated in the *Ramadaniyat Beirutiya 2016*. The event was held at the International Exhibition & Leisure Center (BIEL) in Beirut from 21 to 25 June 2016.

The *Ramadaniyat Beirutiya* is the biggest social and cultural festival organised by the Beirut Municipality, in collaboration with Embassies in Lebanon. The annual festival is organised during the month of Ramadhan.

The Embassy's staff and family members as well as a lively team from the Malaysian peacekeepers in southern Lebanon (MAL-BATT 850-3) led Malaysia's participation at the festival.

The Malaysian Embassy was among 14 embassies that participated in the festival. Others were Algeria, Egypt, France, Indonesia, India, Italy, Mexico, Pakistan, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States, in addition to some 40 local companies

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and organisations. The festival attracted an estimated 25,000 visitors.

The Malaysian Embassy had put up a *Gerai Malaysia* and was amongst the only three Embassies that took part in the Cooking Demonstration segment on 25 June. The Embassy undertook tourism and cultural promotional activities at *Gerai Malaysia* including playing the *Congkak* and *Kompang* as interactive activities, screen promotional videos and distribute tourism brochures. The cooking demonstration entailed making *Teh Tarik*, *Ais Kacang* and *Roti Canai*. The participants were treated with the Malaysian dishes after the demonstration.

Ambassador Bala Chandran Tharman noted that the Embassy's participation in the festival was exceptional for two reasons. First, it was the Embassy's inaugural participation and was of great success. Second, staff and family members solely led the Malaysia's participation together with a talented team from MALBATT 850-3. The cooking demonstration attracted very good crowd and earned praise from the organisers, despite our staff being amateur "chefs".

Mr. Shamsul Fitri was the chef for *Teh Tarik* whereas Ms. Adawiah and her spouse Mr. Razali for *Ais Kacang*. The MALBATT team impressed the crowd with the *Roti Canai* making. Mr. Melvin Cheah and Ms. Mirvat were emcees during the demonstration.



Gerai Malaysia.



Malaysia's cooking demonstration, 25 June 2016.

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A Lebanese family playing the *Congkak*.



Visitors trying out the *kompang*, guided by MALBATT team.

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Temporary Settlement of Syrian Displaced Persons from Lebanon to Malaysia



Selected Syrians arriving at Rafik Hariri International Airport in Beirut for departure to Kuala Lumpur, 27 May 2016.

In May 2016, the Malaysian Embassy facilitated the processing and departure of 68 Syrian displaced persons from Lebanon to Malaysia. The Syrians comprised 17 families and departed Beirut on 27 May on a chartered Air Asia flight to Kuala Lumpur.

The 68 Syrians formed part of the *Syrian Temporary Settlement Programme* spearheaded by the Malaysian Ministry of Home Affairs. The programme is inline with the government's voluntary pledge in September

2015 to settle 3000 Syrian displaced persons in Malaysia over three years on a temporary basis as Malaysia's international contribution towards lessening the burden faced by host countries over the Syrian refugee crisis.

The Embassy worked closely with relevant local authorities to ensure smooth execution of the programme in Lebanon. Following several discussions and negotiations between the Malaysian Ambassador to Lebanon, His Ex-

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cellency Bala Chandran Tharman and authorities, the Lebanese government went the extra mile to facilitate and assist the Embassy.

The Malaysian Embassy established a Migrant Processing Centre in Beirut. Candidates who were earlier identified were transported to the Centre from Taalabaya village in the town of Chtoura in the Bekaa Valley, some 80 kilometres away from Beirut near the Syrian border. A special task force comprising officials from the Malaysian Ministry of Home Affairs, immigration and police conducted health and security screenings on the candidates.

The Government of Lebanon expressed its utmost appreciation to the Government and people of Malaysia for assisting Lebanon in its efforts to manage the huge influx of displaced Syrians into Lebanon.

Ambassador Bala Chandran pointed out that in the context of the crisis in Syria, the temporary settlement of Syrian displaced persons from Lebanon to Malaysia was a significant development in Malaysia-Lebanon relations.



Health screening by a Malaysian medical personnel at Migrant Processing Centre, Beirut, 24-25 May 2016.

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Malaysia re-elected President of the Diplomatic Spouses' Association of Lebanon



A seminar on identifying gemstones and jewelry making organised by DSAL-Malaysia at the Official Residence of the Malaysian Ambassador in Beirut.

The Malaysian Embassy was given the distinct honour, for the second time consecutively, to preside over the Diplomatic Spouses' Association of Lebanon (DSAL), with the unanimous re-election of Madam Gouri Balachandran, spouse of the Malaysian Ambassador, on 12 May 2016 as DSAL President for the term 2016-2017. Madam Gouri initially took over DSAL helm in May 2015 and served as President for the term 2015-2016.

The DSAL is an extension of the diplomatic community in Lebanon. At present, the organisation has 80 members from 35 countries, and they are spouses of diplomats from the embassies and international organisations accredited

to Lebanon. Its primary aim is to promote and enhance socio-cultural understanding between the diplomatic community and the people of Lebanon.

The Embassy's chairmanship of the DSAL is significant given that Madam Gouri is the first Malaysian to serve as the DSAL President since the establishment of the Embassy of Malaysia in Beirut in September 2005.

During Malaysia's Presidency, the DSAL has been undertaking a number of activities, strengthening socio-cultural understanding between the diplomatic community and the Lebanese society as well as personal enrichment of its members. These activities include

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monthly Coffee Morning, excursions, seminars and talks, workshops, fund raising events and charity work.

The Embassy has made the DSAL International Charity Bazaar and the DSAL International Women's Day as trademarks of the DSAL.

Visits by Malaysian Dignitaries and Officials to Lebanon

The Malaysian Embassy facilitated a number of visits by Malaysian dignitaries and government delegations between January and June 2016.

Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah, and entourage (15 to 23 January 2016), and General Tan Sri Zulkifli Mohd Zin, Chief of Defence Forces and delegation from the Malaysian Armed Forces (28 June 2016).

Among the notable visits were by Her Royal Highness Tengku Puteri Seri Lela Wangsa Pahang, Tengku Tan Sri Hajjah Meriam binti



Ambassador and Madam Gouri Balachandran with HRH Tengku Puteri Seri Lela Wangsa Pahang, Tengku Tan Sri Hajjah Meriam binti Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah and entourage, 15 January 2016.

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Ambassador Bala Chandran Tharman in discussion with General Tan Sri Zulkifli Mohd Zin at the Malaysian Embassy in Beirut, 28 June 2016.