

E-NEWSLETTER, Issue 4/2016

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GREETINGS FROM THE AMBASSADOR

In Finland the four distinct seasons set the tone for life and the working year, something new and different for us Malaysians. The summer period is behind us and along with the changing colours of the leaves, the Malaysian Embassy in Helsinki has embarked upon another busy autumn of activities to promote Malaysia and to strengthen our bilateral relations with Finland, Estonia and Latvia.

Our summer period activities included, among others, the Aidilfitri Hari Raya celebration with the Malaysian community at Rumah Malaysia and the official ASEAN flag raising ceremony with our fellow ASEAN Embassies in Helsinki. On the consular services side the Embassy processed another batch of visas for the Finnish students heading to Malaysia for their exchange years starting this autumn. We wish them well in their studies and hope they will enjoy their time in Malaysia.

Earlier this autumn we took the opportunity to commemorate the National Day and Malaysia Day in a joint high tea reception with the Malaysian community in Helsinki. The autumn also includes some delegation visits from Malaysia as well as some more joint ASEAN activities to see through my year of chairmanship of the ASEAN Helsinki committee. Please read on for an overview of our activities.

In these quarterly newsletters, we continue to update our cooperation partners and stakeholders on Embassy activities and other areas of interest.

We wish you an enjoyable reading experience and please do not hesitate to be in touch with us on your views or ideas!

With best wishes for the last quarter of 2016,

H.E. Dato' Blanche Olbery
Ambassador of Malaysia to the Republic of Finland
accredited to the Republic of Estonia and the Republic of Latvia

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UPCOMING EVENTS AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

- **Saturday 1 October 2016:** ASEAN Family Day

- **Friday 7 October 2016:** Malaysian Sports Day
- **Saturday 29 October 2016:** Diwali National Holiday in Malaysia
- **Friday 17 November 2016:** ASEAN Food Festival
- **Tuesday 6 December 2016:** Embassy closed for Independence Day of Finland
- **10 December 2016:** Little Christmas Party with the Finland-Malaysia Association
- **Monday & Tuesday 26-27 December 2016:** Embassy closed for Christmas and Boxing Day

For the full list of Embassy closure dates on public holidays, please see the list on our website from this [link](#).

EMBASSY ACTIVITIES

The Embassy's activities support its mission of strengthening bilateral relations between Malaysia and the countries under our coverage, namely Finland, Estonia and Latvia; of promoting Malaysia; and of providing consular services.

In the third quarter (July–September 2016) the Embassy's activities included, among others, community events with Malaysians in Finland, diplomatic events such as collaboration with fellow ASEAN colleagues and a luncheon with the Women Ambassadors' network, as well as visitors from Malaysia. Read more about our activities in this section.



Group photo of participants at the Aidilfitri Hari Raya Open House at Rumah Malaysia on 9 July 2016

MALAYSIAN COMMUNITY EVENTS: Aidilfitri Hari Raya Open House

After a month of fasting for about 20 hours a day during Ramadhan, the Muslims in Finland observed the arrival of Syawal 1437 with the celebration of Aidilfitri.



Ambassador Blanche Olbery and participants at the Merdeka & Malaysia Day High Tea at the Embassy of Malaysia on 13 September 2016

MALAYSIAN COMMUNITY EVENTS: Merdeka & Malaysia Day High Tea

HE Dato' Blanche Olbery, Ambassador of Malaysia to Finland hosted a High Tea reception at the Embassy of Malaysia in Helsinki honour of the two Malaysian national

HE Dato' Blanche Olbery, Ambassador of Malaysia to Finland hosted the Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebration at the Rumah Malaysia, Finland with attendance of more than seventy Malaysians, Friends of Malaysia, neighbours, and even a few visitors from Malaysia.

Officers and staff at the Embassy prepared the food, including among others, Chicken Curry and Roti Jala, Rendang Daging, Ayam Masak Merah, Ayam Percik, Ketupat Palas, Lemang and Kuah Kacang, the traditional food often found in Malaysian homes during the festival.

It was an event that brought friends and families together in the spirit of harmony and friendship. The day was also blessed with beautiful sunny weather.

celebrations: the 59th Merdeka Day and 53rd Malaysia Day at the Chancery of the Embassy of Malaysia in Helsinki, Finland on Tuesday 13 September 2016. The reception marked the National Day on 31 August and Malaysia Day on 16 September.

The national anthem "Negaraku" and "Jalur Gemilang" flag song reverberated throughout the Chancery as the guests sang together. For some, Jalur Gemilang was a welcome reminiscence of home as they heard it for the first time having been away for years.

Guests were then treated to a splendor of Malaysian traditional kuih including roti jala, chicken curry, fried bihun, curry puffs, pulut kuning, teh tarik and an array of sweet desserts prepared by the staff of the Embassy.



Solidarity among the Helsinki-based ASEAN Ambassadors (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand) and Chargé d'affaires (Vietnam) at the Flag Hoisting ceremony on 8 August 2016

DIPLOMACY: ASEAN activities

The Embassy of Malaysia in Helsinki hosted the ASEAN Flag Hoisting Ceremony in commemoration of the ASEAN Day on 8 August 2016 at the Chancery of the Embassy of Indonesia. The event was attended by the ASEAN Heads of Mission, representatives of the ASEAN Dialogue Partners, invited guests



Women Ambassadors' Luncheon with Dr. Päivi Sillanaukee (fourth from the right) on 19 August 2016

DIPLOMACY: Women Ambassadors' Luncheon

HE Dato' Blanche Olbery, Ambassador of Malaysia had the pleasure to host a luncheon for the Women Ambassadors' group on Friday 19 August 2016 at the Embassy, with Dr. Päivi Sillanaukee, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health of Finland as the chief guest.

and officers and staff of the ASEAN embassies.

As the Chair of the ASEAN Helsinki Committee, HE Dato' Blanche Olbery, Ambassador of Malaysia to the Republic of Finland, delivered a short speech on the relations between ASEAN and its dialogue partners, ASEAN Community 2015 and ASEAN Vision 2025.

The Ceremony ended with a small reception for all the guests with each of the Helsinki-based ASEAN embassies prepared light refreshments from their respective countries.

Upcoming activities undertaken by Malaysia as the chair of the ASEAN Helsinki Committee include the ASEAN Ambassadors' visit to the European Commission Representation in Helsinki, ASEAN Family Day and ASEAN Food Festival.

The lunch invitation followed Dr. Sillanaukee's visit to Malaysia earlier this year with the Finnish health sector delegation. The health industry is one of the current focus areas in the bilateral relations.

The participating Ambassadors had the opportunity to get first-hand views from Dr. Sillanaukee on the ongoing health, social services and regional government reform in Finland.

The working luncheon was attended by the Ambassadors of Algeria, Austria, Canada, Germany, Mexico, Spain, the United Kingdom and the Chargé d'affaires of the Embassy of Colombia in Helsinki.

The Women Ambassadors group is an informal diplomatic network of female Ambassadors based in Helsinki.



HE Dato' Blanche Olbery and Home Based Staff with Puan Saleha Abd Rahman at High Tea at Rumah Malaysia on 16 August 2016

VISITS FROM MALAYSIA: Puan Saleha Abd Rahman

HE Dato' Blanche Olbery, Ambassador of Malaysia hosted a High-Tea at Rumah Malaysia, the Ambassador's Residence on



HE Dato' Blanche Olbery with the Malaysian timber industry delegation at the Habitare fair on 9 September 2016

VISITS FROM MALAYSIA: Malaysian Timber Industry delegationa

A Malaysian furniture entrepreneurs' European trade mission organised by the Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB) visited Helsinki on 8-12 September

Tuesday 16 August 2016. The occasion was to welcome visiting Puan Saleha Abd Rahman and recently-arrived Puan Razdiah Omar.

Puan Saleha Abd Rahman, Undersecretary, National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, was in Helsinki to attend a course for the National Authorities organised by VERIFIN – The Finnish Institute for Verification of the Chemical Weapons Convention 9–18 August 2016.

Puan Razdiah Omar is the new Personal Assistant to the Ambassador who joined the Embassy in July 2016. She is the first point of contact if you wish to arrange a meeting with the Ambassador for instance.

The event was a good occasion for the Embassy to hear about Puan Saleha's impressions of the VERIFIN course and vice versa to update her on Malaysia's activities and interests in Finland.

2016.

As part of their mission the delegation visited the Habitaire interior, design and furniture fair at the Messukeskus fair centre in Helsinki as well as meeting with with Finnpartnership – Finnish Business Partnership Program.

The aim of the mission was to see the potential market for wood furniture industry in Northern Europe and to discover the new designs and inspiration for young furniture designers from Malaysia. The delegation engaged and established connections with Finnish companies for opportunities to collaborate for example a Malaysian designer made a contract with a Finnish company.

The delegation also had dinner with Ambassador H.E. Dato' Blanche Olbery and paid a courtesy call to the chancery of the Embassy of Malaysia.

More information on the MTIB from their website [here](#).

BILATERAL AFFAIRS

The main focus of Malaysian bilateral relations with Finland is on trade and tourism. Following the Finnish health sector delegation visit to Malaysia in March this year, the most recent focus has been on health industry related cooperation and we are looking to get a reciprocating ministerial visit from Malaysia to Finland.



The Ambassadors of the two countries had a chance to catch up earlier in the summer. Ambassador H.E. Dato' Blanche Olbery received H.E. Petri Puhakka, Ambassador of Finland to Malaysia on Friday 26 August 2016 at the Chancery of the Embassy of Malaysia in Finland. Ambassador Puhakka was in Helsinki for the annual Heads of Mission meeting by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

The two Ambassadors took the opportunity of the informal meeting to exchange views on current affairs concerning bilateral relations between Finland and Malaysia including domestic political situations, activities that have been undertaken by the Embassies to further strengthen Malaysia–Finland cooperation and other issues.

LOCAL EXPERIENCES

During her term H.E. Dato' Blanche Olbery has enjoyed getting to know Finland through local experiences such as picking mushrooms and berries from the Finnish forests. This summer Ambassador Olbery went blueberry picking together with her sons and friends guided by one of the Embassy's staff, Laines, who herself is an enthusiastic picker of mushrooms and berries.



Finland prides itself for being a cradle for the natural nutrition-rich food products. Wild berries and mushrooms can be freely picked in Finland's forests under everyman's right.

The many different types of flavour-intense berries found in Finnish forests and nature include blueberries, wild strawberries, raspberries, lingonberries and cloudberry.

The most popular mushroom types include ceps, chanterelles and autumn chanterelles but there is no limit to the types of mushrooms you can find if you are a connoisseur. However it is important to know your mushrooms first before picking them to

make sure to avoid the poisonous ones.

You can read more about this aspect of Finland from these articles by Visit Finland: [here](#) and [here](#).

MALAYSIAN PROFESSIONALS IN FINLAND: SARAVANAN VELLU, MALAYSIAN FOOTBALLER

This feature series introduces Malaysian professionals in Finland to give an insight to the career stories of members of the Malaysian community in Finland and their impressions of living here. The archive of previous stories can be viewed here: [Malaysian professionals in Finland](#).



Saravanan Vellu is a former Malaysian national team footballer, today working as a football coach at the Gnistan football club in Helsinki, Finland. Saravanan played for the national team of Malaysia 1997–2004. In Finland he wants to pass on his passion for football to the younger generations as well as developing his coaching skills. He is also interested in the idea of a sports exchange programme between Malaysia and Finland to extend the benefits of the Finnish style of teaching.

Saravanan Vellu has come from an intense football career, traveling around the world, playing for the national team in Malaysia, to discovering peace, quality of life and balance in Finland. After the initial settling down phase, Finland has become a place for Saravanan, where he has had time to charge his batteries and to develop his skills as a football coach.

Achieving the footballer's dream in Malaysia

It started from a knee injury that set in motion the developments that would later bring Saravanan Vellu into contact with Finland. Saravanan was playing for the Malaysian national football team at the time and his Finnish wife-to-be, Satu, was working

Coaching career in Finland and learning the language from the children

Approaching the end of his professional footballer career, in 2012 Saravanan agreed to move to Finland with his Finnish wife, who was missing her friends and family. The beginning was difficult having to wait for six

at the Malaysian Institute of Sports. The two of them first met in 2006 thanks to the injury; she was the one to treat his knee and the spark was ignited. Today the couple also has a six-month-old son, who has yet to visit Malaysia.

Saravanan had a successful high-level football career in Malaysia. His passion for the sport started as a young boy selling nuts at the football stadium, where he was inspired to dream of one day becoming a football star himself.

Saravanan spent the majority of his football career at Perak FA, winning Malaysia Cup, Premier One league title and Malaysia FA Cup. Early in his career, he was also the youngest player of the national team at 19-years-old.

A particularly memorable moment of his career was scoring the first goal at the Bukit Jalil National Stadium, in Kuala Lumpur, with a capacity of about 90 000. The stadium was built to host the 1998 Commonwealth Games and it became the home stadium for the Malaysian national football team. During his time in the national team, he got to travel around the world. The pressure was also intense.

months for his residency permit. After four months Saravanan was getting bored and his brother-in-law recommended playing football with the Gnistan club hobby league.

Saravanan was happy to join the Gnistan league as it gave him something to do and he loved playing football. The team was also pleased to have him; Saravanan helped them rise up the ranks, scoring plenty of goals. The connections from playing with the league later helped him find work after attending a Swedish cruise with the team. Saravanan was talking with one of his teammates, who turned out to be the CEO of the club. The CEO asked Saravanan to come see him at the office the next day and suggested for him to begin coaching and to learn Finnish from the children.

At first Saravanan worked on a voluntary basis. Learning Finnish was very hard in the beginning. Luckily he did not need words in football; he could teach by showing. He found the children to be the best teachers as they were quick to correct his mistakes. Today Saravanan has reached a level of Finnish with which he is able to coach and also to communicate with his in-laws.

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Saravanan Vellu with national football team in 1998

Opportunities to develop professionally

Finland has given Saravanan opportunities to develop professionally and to challenge himself. As opposed to Malaysia, where he was a well-known football star, here he started from zero. He is now a chief coach for the Gnistan football club and has gained a European B-license of football coaching. Saravanan is also studying to become a sports instructor for children and youth. The course is in Finnish, which has made it challenging, particularly the writing. However it has enabled him to further expand his knowledge on other areas useful for coaching such as children's motor skills development and administrative funding matters.

Saravanan hopes to relay the benefits he has gained from the Finnish style of education to Malaysia. He hopes to pass on to the next generations lessons related to professionalism and health, not known to him during his own youth and playing career, such as on proper sleep, nutrition, and recovery. One way to do this would be



Counsellor Devrin Jeck and Saravanan Vellu at the Embassy

Reborn in peaceful Finland

Coming to Finland after an intense career of professional football has given Saravanan time to recharge his batteries and find balance. During his first visit at his brother-in-law's summer cottage 'mökki' by a lake near Kuopio, Saravanan was particularly amazed by Finnish nature, and the stark contrast between Kuala Lumpur, a busy city with millions of people, and the silent, peaceful Finland. This is something unique and difficult for a Malaysian to understand before experiencing it personally, he thinks. After some time at the 'mökki', listening to the birds, recharging batteries, Saravanan feels reborn.

Saravanan enjoys traveling, meeting new people, and being exposed to new cultures, attitudes and food. He believes that abiding by local rules and manners is the best way to cope abroad. One cannot expect to have 'nasi lemak' in Finland or cross the street when the light is red. One must act as one of the locals. Experiencing big changes in his life, whether it be traveling around the world

connecting Malaysian football players with Finland in the form of training exchanges for instance.

with football or moving to a faraway new country, Saravanan's positive stance on life has been something that has helped him through.

LOCAL STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

This section of the newsletter includes introductions of the local staff at the Embassy of Malaysia in Helsinki. The local staff bring added value with their local understanding and language skills as well as improving communication and connections with the host country. The archive of previous introductions can be viewed here: [Local staff introductions](#).

Mr. Teet Ilves, the Ambassador's driver, has been with the Embassy of Malaysia since 2009. Thanks to Teet the Ambassador gets from place to place to her appointments and functions swiftly and securely.

The Malaysian Embassy staff come from a mix of backgrounds, similarly to multi-ethnic Malaysia. Teet himself is originally from the neighbouring Estonia. He frequently visits back home to meet with his family, Tallinn being only a few hours' boat ride away from Helsinki. As a father of four children, his family is very important to him.



Teet has a long history of working with Embassies, starting from the European Commission's office in Tallinn in the 1990s, to the Spanish and US Embassies in Tallinn, before moving to Finland and joining the Malaysian Embassy in Helsinki. Thus Teet was already experienced in working with diplomats and has a story or two about driving known statesmen and supporting high-level visits.

Teet has not visited Malaysia yet but he has become familiar with the culture and food through the Embassy and the various community events that are organised. As an Estonian used to mild food Malaysian flavours can sometimes be a bit spicy for his liking.

Next time you see this tall Estonian, don't hesitate to say hello!

This section contains web links to news about current affairs topics, trends and lessons to learn from Finland, Estonia and Latvia, as well as links to articles that feature Malaysia in the local press to provide impressions of the three countries under the Embassy's coverage.

Finland

- [Finland boosting its promotion of education export](#)
- [Finland – a world leader in health technology](#)
- [Finland emojis win big at Digital Communications Awards in Berlin](#)
- [Report on the rise of Finnish 'clean technology' expertise](#)
- [Pulled oats– rising Finnish innovation of “smart foods”](#)

Estonia

- [Kersti Kaljulaid elected next President of Estonia](#)
- [Estonia to push the digital single market in the EU](#)
- [Estonia is Europe's largest exporter of wooden houses](#)
- [Enterprise Estonia opens an office in Singapore](#)
- [The Guardian's article on Estonian e-residency](#)

Latvia

- [First pilot train from China to Latvia expected by the end of the year](#)
- [Foreign Ambassadors interested in using economic opportunities offered by Latvia](#)
- [Baltic, Nordic foreign ministries' officials meet in Riga to discuss current UN agenda](#)
- [Government approves Start-up Operation Support Law draft](#)
- [New scientific method in development in Latvia](#)

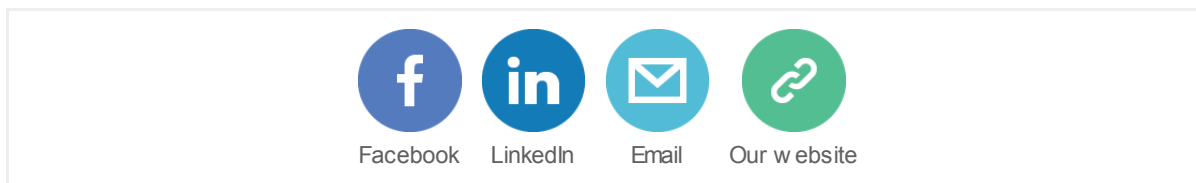
Malaysia in the Finnish media

- [Finland–Malaysia Association international food fair in August 2016](#) (article in Finnish)
- [Experience of Borneo on a steam train journey](#) (article in Finnish)
- [Malaysia as a holiday destination combining beach time with a city break](#) (article in Finnish)

The next issue of the Embassy of Malaysia newsletter (issue 1/2017) will appear in January 2017.

If you have any questions concerning the Embassy newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Satu Spratley at: [interpreter\(at\)malaysianembassy.fi](mailto:interpreter(at)malaysianembassy.fi)

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