

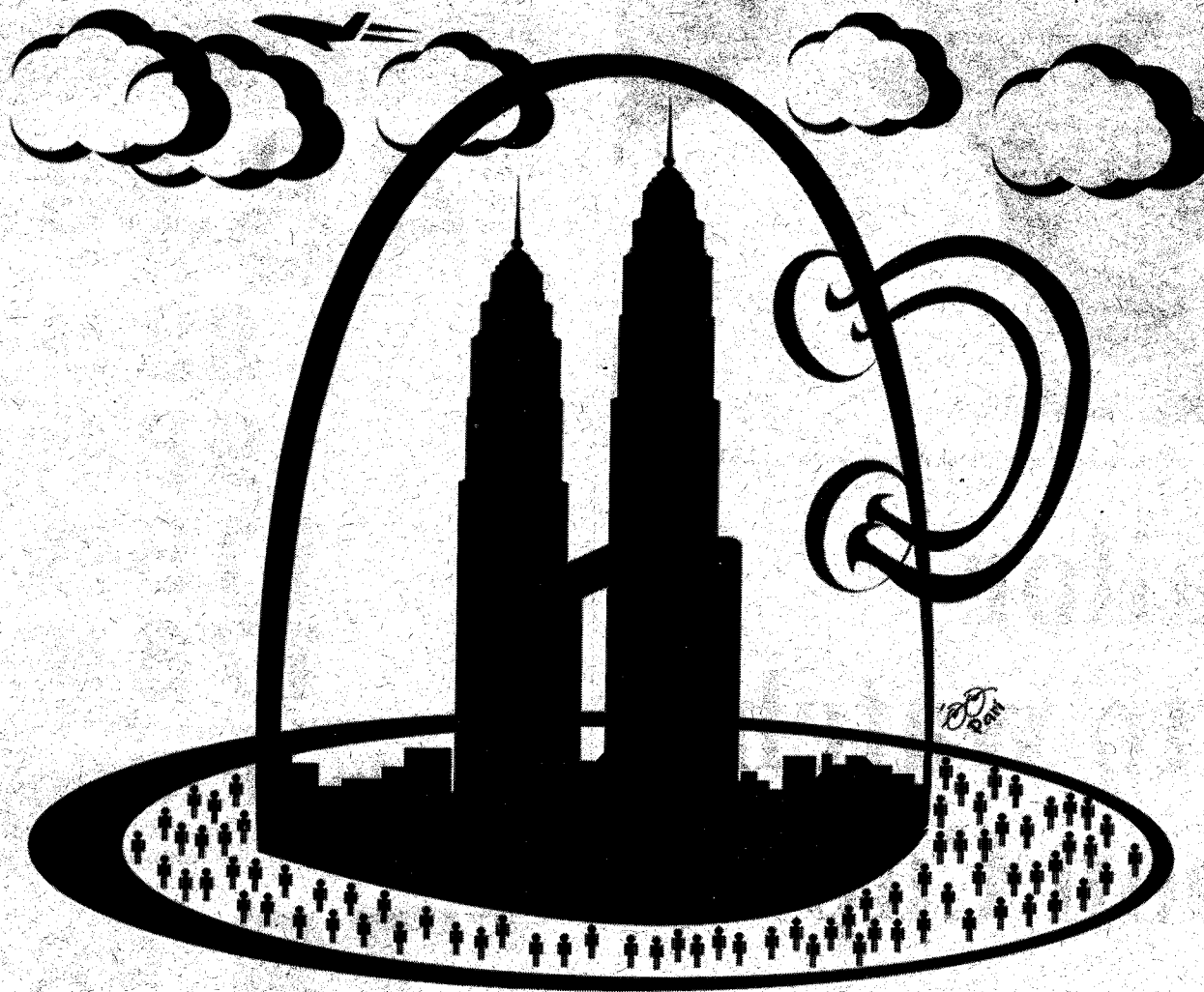
kancah2001@yahoo.com



Amir Muhammad

Malaysia to build World Cup

NST - 11/5/2006



AN expensive research study commissioned by Malaysian authorities has found that countries that host the World Cup tend to see a big spike in the number of tourist arrivals in that given year.

"This is a truly surprising find and I am glad we allocated RM40 million to this study," tourism expert Sayfool Bahari says while fiddling with his signet ring. "Who would have thought that just by hosting a few soccer matches, many people would come to your city?"

The research project included going to the cities that have hosted the World Cup over the past decade. "We accumulated many statistics. Unfortunately most of the numbers got lost after I wrote them on a napkin when I flew back First Class from Tokyo after witnessing the thrilling victory in 2002 of Brazil or some other South American country."

His findings, or what little of it can be found, have persuaded the authorities to invest in Malaysia's very own World Cup. Unlike the more established sporty one run by the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), this World Cup will exist all year round.

How is this possible? Sayfool's solution is ingenious: Malaysia will build a giant cup. "I am not talking about the XL cup that you drink Starbucks coffee from," he explains laughingly. "I am not that foolish! I am talking about a cup so big that if you turn it upside

down, it will cover both of the KLCC Towers."

Since this cup will be the largest in the world, Malaysia would be fully justified to name it the World Cup.

Sayfool sees enormous tourism benefits. "We can put ads in all major newspapers, saying 'Come experience the World Cup all year round.' Tourists will flock from all over

to take pictures in front of this great big cup."

When asked if there might be copyright issues with FIFA over use of the term World Cup, Sayfool says, "If we take it

to the international copyright body, I am sure we will win, because our Cup will be bigger than theirs."

A nationwide contest will be held for people to submit de-

signs for this new World Cup. "We will encourage traditional designs such as batik that can showcase our local culture," Sayfool adds.

The budget for the construction of the Cup will be RM800 million. "Although most of the cup will be made from porcelain, it will have lining made from solid gold," he explains. "This will make our World Cup harder to imitate by poorer nations."

Media commentator G. Pundee is sceptical. "Would people really want to come to Malaysia just because we will have an enormous cup?" he asks over a *masala thosai* meal. "It's not nearly as dramatic as watching international soccer players display their skills, is it?"

Sayfool dismisses this criticism. "We consciously chose a solid structure instead of a sporting event, as bringing in so many men in shorts might cause social problems," he says. "Besides it is well-known that the soccer World Cup encourages gambling and fights. The World Cup that will be permanently based in Malaysia will be a wholesome affair that can be enjoyed by the whole family. It'll be just like relaxing with a huge cup of tea. Except we probably can't find enough tea to fill our Cup!" he laughs.

■ Amir Muhammad's documentary *Lelaki Komunis Terakhir* just got banned! More details at <http://lastcommunist.blogspot.com/>