

EX-PAPER BOY WINS JOURNALISM AWARD

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NST's Alagesh Theruravul Nathan wins award for stories on teacher Samuel Isaiah.

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ALAGESH Theruravul Nathan was doing morning rounds delivering newspaper in his mother's Perodua Kelisa in Ketari, Bentong, in 2007, when the *New Straits Times* called him for an interview for a journalist position.

Alagesh, who was 26 then, remembers taking a pen from a fellow interview candidate to fill up a form in the waiting area and recalls feeling nervous at the prospect of being grilled by editors Joseph Soosai and the late K.P. Waran.

On Tuesday night, Pahang NST lead journalist Alagesh, who goes by T.N. Alagesh in print, won the Malaysian Press Institute-Petronas journalism award for excellence in news reporting for his inspirational stories on Samuel Isaiah, a teacher who taught Orang Asli students in Pekan.

His story "Teacher Sam vying for Global Glory" won him a cash prize of RM10,000 and a trophy.

The 41-year-old was also given an honourable mention for the prestigious Kajai award for the series on Isaiah, whose dedication



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob presenting a mock cheque to 'New Straits Times' reporter Alagesh Theruravul Nathan at the MPI-Petronas Malaysian Journalism Awards in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday. PIC BY HAIRUL ANUAR RAHIM

and creativity made him a finalist for the Global Teacher Award.

"I did not see this coming. I thought others who were nominated had stories with wider reach. I never expected a national award.

"As a reporter doing stories on Pahang, I always felt state recognition was as far as I could go.

"But I am grateful as this means we can aim higher with human interest stories about people, their problems and experiences."

Alagesh thanked his family,

particularly his wife, Dr.S. Bavani, colleagues, bosses and former Pahang NST bureau chiefs, including Shahrum Sayuthi, B. Suresh Ram, Alina Simon and Nik Imran Abdullah.

The win was especially sweet for him and his wife as the day he received the award was their ninth wedding anniversary — a double celebration, indeed.

Former Pahang NST bureau chief M. Hamzah Jamaluddin praised Alagesh as a hardworking journalist who championed the

plight of ordinary people.

"He gets things others normally don't see, such as how bauxite mining in the state has affected ordinary people's livelihood and the environment," said Hamzah on the sidelines at the award ceremony.

NST features writer Elena Koshy walked off with the top prize for feature writing, taking home RM10,000 and a trophy for three of her entries, including an interview with Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah ("The Reluctant Hero").

Koshy, who joined NST in 2017, said she had been an avid reader of the NST since childhood.

NST group editor Ahmad Lokman Mansor said the multiple awards and recognition for NST and the New Straits Times Press (NSTP) was testament to the hard work put in by the paper and the media group's talented teams.

"From editorial, photo, multimedia to graphics design, everyone has a role to ensure quality content reaches our audience."

The NST bagged six awards at the prestigious award ceremony, while the NSTP group won 18, including five top awards.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob was the guest of honour at the event.

Present were Malaysian Press Institute chief executive officer Datuk Dr Chamil Wariya and Petronas Chemicals Group Bhd managing director and chief executive officer Datuk Szali Hamzah, who represented Petronas president and group chief executive officer Datuk Tengku Muhammad Taufik Tengku Aziz.

Former newsman and National Journalist Award recipient Tan Sri Johan Jaaffar was also present.

The award ceremony was initially scheduled to be held in the middle of the year, but was postponed due to the implementation of the Movement Control Order.

A total of 228 entries from various media companies were received by the Malaysian Press Institute this year. Petronas has been the major sponsor of the awards since 1994.