

# Living On TheHILL

JUNE 2020

A Publication of BTRA

[www.btra.com.my](http://www.btra.com.my)

## Neighbourhood Security Coral Reefs Conservation MCO @ Home

*Photo credit: KL Skyline from Jalan Bukit  
Tunku by Arif Wan Abdullah, Jalan Girdle*



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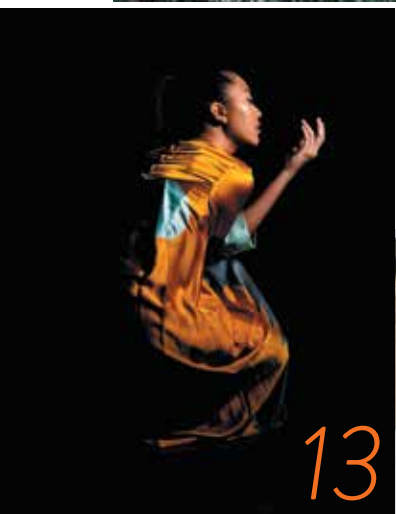
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# The President Speaks

Well, the beginning of 2020 certainly started with a huge jolt to our way of life. Not only did we have a change of government, but a terrible epidemic has hit the world. Malaysia was not spared.

As I write this message in the midst of our Movement Control Order, scientists the world over are working on a vaccine, which will need to go through all testing protocols before it is commercially and publicly available. So, while we wait for a favourable outcome on this front, we must still continue to stay safe and follow the advice of health officials to flatten the curve and slow the spread of coronavirus. At the same time, we help to keep our medical workers, first responders and other essential workers safe.

The MCO has caused things to be put on hold. As you will have noticed, work at *The Stories of Taman Tunku* has halted, but I can say it was nice to have Kenny Hills Bakers back, even if only for a short time. I suspect there will be a delay to the original completion time frame for the other blocks. Apart from CIMB Bank, I've heard on the grapevine that the majority of the retail tenants will be F&B outlets. Fingers crossed this will still materialise, given the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the F&B sector.

That said, there are many uplifting and inspirational stories about the human spirit and the generosity of Malaysians in general. Right here, residents of Bukit Tunku and Taman Duta responded to a donation appeal from YB Hannah Yeoh to buy food essentials for families unable to do so themselves, due to loss of income. We raised more than RM55,000, exceeding the original target amount. As a result, 605 families

in the Segambut Constituency received essential food items.

One key update: The BTRA mobile app has been discontinued. It was a useful experiment, but on-going technical issues and low user traffic made it unsustainable. The primary channel for member communications will be through the BTRA email ([bukit.tunku.residents@gmail.com](mailto:bukit.tunku.residents@gmail.com)). *Living On The Hill* will continue to be published twice a year, but email will ensure members receive notices in a timely manner. To continue receiving member emails, please ensure that your membership fees have been paid to date.

If you are not yet a BTRA member, please join. Our email database is a members-only database, so joining means you will receive updates. Membership forms are downloadable from the website [www.btra.com.my](http://www.btra.com.my), and are included in every issue of the magazine. For only RM200 a year, you will be joining one of the most active and engaged residents' associations in Kuala Lumpur.

Lastly, this magazine reaches us only after Ramadan and Hari Raya Aidilfitri. This year sees rather subdued festivities as we emerge from our MCO and into a new normal. May I wish everyone a blessed 2020 and beyond.

Thank you to any doctors, nurses, and first responders among our community for your invaluable service. Everyone, please take care and stay safe.

*Muthanna Abdullah*

## Feedback? Suggestions? Comments?

If you have feedback or comments on *Living On The Hill*, or would like to suggest topics for future issues, or wish to contribute an article, please don't hesitate to email [bukit.tunku.residents@gmail.com](mailto:bukit.tunku.residents@gmail.com). Please enter "Living on the Hill" in the subject line for easy reference. We'd love to hear from you!

(Contributions and correspondence may be edited for space and clarity). *Living On The Hill* is available at [www.btra.com.my/newsletter](http://www.btra.com.my/newsletter).

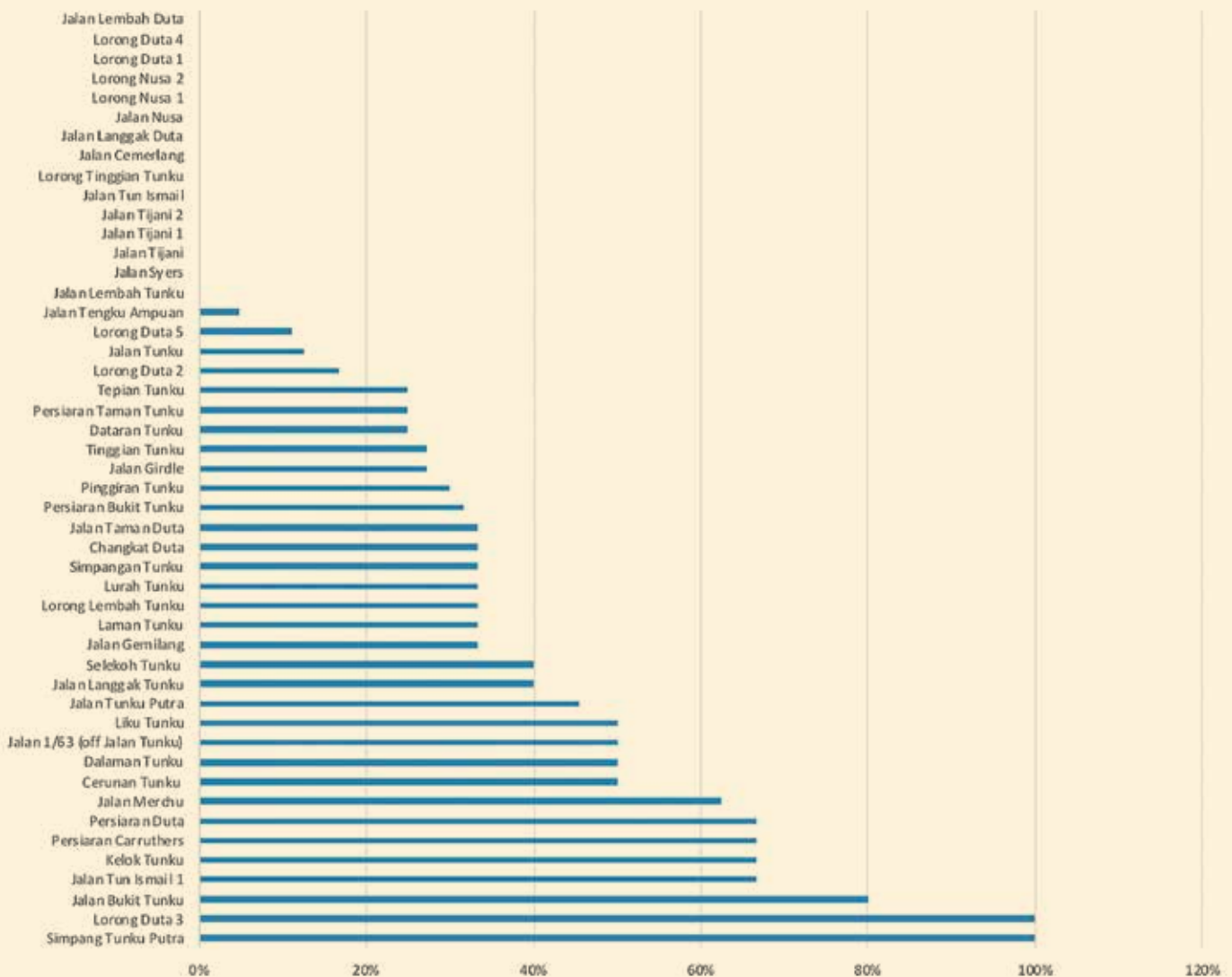
# Neighbourhood Security

**BTRA Security Scheme welcomes six new members** from Jalan Tun Ismail 1, Dalaman Tunku and Tinggian Tunku who joined through outreach programmes initiated by the Security sub-committee. We are delighted that the number of subscribers has increased to 86 as at April 2020.

This reflects an increased awareness of the importance of security in our neighbourhood, as well as the success of the scheme in preventing break-ins. The scheme offers very good value at RM250 per month (RM3000 p.a.) and for those with security guards, it provides an added layer of protection whilst helping ensure your security staff is alert at all times.

A survey by the BTRA Security sub-committee carried out in May suggests that approximately 28% of occupied properties in Bukit Tunku and Taman Duta subscribe to the BTRA Security Patrol Scheme to date. A further breakdown shows that there are more subscribers in Bukit Tunku (34%) than there are in Taman Duta (20%).

This graph shows the percentage of BTRA Security Scheme subscribers by street, calculated based on occupied properties only.



# Security scheme for Bukit Tunku residents

■ By Hizreen Kamal [hizreen@nstp.com.my](mailto:hizreen@nstp.com.my)



**FOR THE RESIDENTS:** Ishak (centre), flanked by Tan (left) and Gan, releasing the balloons to mark the launch of the security scheme.

THE Bukit Tunku Residents Association launched a security scheme for residents in a simple ceremony held at the National Tennis Stadium in Jalan Duta, Kuala Lumpur recently.

Association security sub-committee chairman Gan

Tee Jin said under the scheme, three guards from Semai Hikmat Guard Force Sdn Bhd will patrol the Bukit Tunku area.

"The patrols will start at 7pm and end at 7am the next day," said Gan.

"We want the neighbour-

hood to be a safe place for residents. The scheme is also to help curb criminal activities in the area.

"At the same time, we are also helping the police as they do not have enough personnel to concentrate on our area alone."

Also present at the launch were Sentul OCPD Ishak Abdul Aziz and association security sub-committee member Tan Hoe Pin.

Gan said two guards will be patrolling the area daily in a Perodua Kancil while another will be stationed at

its security office in Sri Hartamas to monitor distress calls.

He said the scheme, which started last May, came about when some members raised their concern about crime in the area.

"However, only a third of

association members are contributing to the scheme as many have their own guards stationed at their homes," he said.

In the event of any emergencies, the residents can call the Semai Hikmat hotline at 03-62031184.

The sub-committee is calling on all residents of Bukit Tunku and Taman Duta who have not joined to please consider subscribing to this scheme. More subscribers means that the number of patrols can be increased from the current three to four in the evenings, thus ensuring more frequent and better coverage of our neighbourhoods.

**The BTRA Security Scheme** is a subscription-based service offered to BTRA members.

The Patrol Service began in 2002 and was upgraded in 2013 to three vehicles — two patrol cars (7.00 pm to 7.00 am) and a motorbike (11.00 pm to 7.00 am). One round of day patrols is also done by car. The patrol circles the neighbourhood daily and will respond to distress calls (of subscribers only). The service offers improved security on two fronts: general deterrence; and timely response.

General deterrence is best achieved by visibility. To this end, the guards are constantly on the move, except for scheduled rest breaks. The patrol route is shaped by the subscriber base, so some parts of Bukit Tunku and Taman Duta may not be visited at all.

## How It Works

Visits to each house are recorded on an electronic clocking device, with the data downloaded to a PC and analysed by the task force each month. The number of visits will depend on the weather (cannot clock visits when it rains, but the car continues to patrol), and distress calls (responding to calls leaves less time to patrol).

Each car makes four rounds of street patrol (clocked at selected houses on each street); from 11.00 pm to 3.00 am; two rounds of house-by-house clocking are done with both guards in one car. The motorbike will do three rounds of full clocking if there are no interruptions.

The patrol car's movements are also tracked by satellite, using a GPS device. This is particularly useful to verify its movement during rainy weather, when electronic clocking is not practical.

## Timely Response

Subscribers may call the Supervisor to report a home intrusion, disturbance or suspicious situation near their



residences. The Supervisor will then dispatch the patrol car. His contact number is provided to subscribers.

### Caller ID

Subscribers are encouraged to provide telephone numbers of occupants in the household so that incoming calls can be traced to the caller's address. In the panic of a home intrusion, the caller may not be coherent or in a position to speak for more

than a few seconds. Therefore, providing telephone numbers is strongly encouraged.

Security Task Force Contact Adam Smurthwaite; [asmurthwaite@gmail.com](mailto:asmurthwaite@gmail.com); 012.352.5373.

## Neighbourhood Security Alert

Members and residents are advised to be vigilant at all times for suspicious activity in our neighbourhoods, but especially more so as the economy undergoes some hardship due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

1. An attempted break-in at a house on **Lorong Lembah Tunku** was reported in the second half of March, coinciding with the first fortnight of the Movement Control Order. Fortunately the attempt was unsuccessful. However, the perpetrators escaped.
2. Open burning in **Jalan Merchu** was reported in the last week of April. Open burning is not permitted under the Environmental Quality Act 1974, which carries a penalty of a substantial fine or jail term, or both. Additionally, open burning poses a danger to the surrounding environment and buildings, especially if there are strong winds that can fan the fire and escalate the situation.

In both these cases, the BTRA Security Patrol team was deployed to the respective properties to check and handle the situation appropriately.

## Member Communications

To ensure members receive notices in a timely manner, the following adjustments have been made:

1. **The BTRA Mobile App has been discontinued.** On-going technical issues and low usage made it unsustainable. Anyone who downloaded and installed the App may un-install it, if they haven't already.
2. **Email will be the principal communications channel for members.** Announcements will be sent through the official email address, [bukit.tunku.residents@gmail.com](mailto:bukit.tunku.residents@gmail.com). Please note that there is only one email address for BTRA; unsolicited email correspondence from any other party claiming to be from BTRA is likely to be a scam.
3. *Living On The Hill* will continue to be published twice a year, until further notice.
4. The BTRA website, [www.btra.com.my](http://www.btra.com.my), will be used to share news on selected events and happenings in our community. Key documents are available to read and download: membership forms, and the magazine.

Anyone who would like further information on BTRA or *Living On The Hill*, please email BTRA Admin at [bukit.tunku.residents@gmail.com](mailto:bukit.tunku.residents@gmail.com).

# Keeping the Neighbourhood In Good Shape

Between September 2019 and February 2020, the BTRA Environment sub-committee worked with DBKL and Alam Flora to ensure The Hill is well kept and in good shape. Public drains get damaged over time, and unsightly illegal banners hanging from lamp posts or walls or fences pose constant problems. The relevant Public Service departments responded to requests in a timely manner and sent crews to attend to these hazards.



Removal of illegal banners and posters in Bukit Tunku and Taman Duta



Inspection and clearing of monsoon drain at Lembah Tunku



Joint inspection of drains on Dalaman Tunku by BTRA Environment Sub-Committee members and DBKL officers



Joint inspection by BTRA Environment Sub-Committee and DBKL officers of street and drain conditions at the junction of Dalaman Tunku and Cerunan Tunku

# The Hill Responds to Donation Appeal During MCO

How uplifting it was to see such a quick and generous response from The Hill to YB Hannah Yeoh's appeal for donations in late March!

As the economic impact of MCO Phase 1 (18 to 31 March) set in and accelerated throughout marginalised communities across the city, the office of YB Hannah Yeoh contacted BTRA to raise funds that would enable families in the Segambut Constituency facing hardship to receive food essentials.

A target of RM30,000 was set to cover two weeks' worth of food staples. The office of YB Hannah had already arranged for the supply and delivery of these food essentials to the affected families as soon as the process was in place.

In short order, members responded to an appeal letter from BTRA President Dato' Muthanna, raising **RM45,710**. BTRA donated RM10,000, bringing the total to **RM55,710**. This amount enabled **605 families** in the Segambut Constituency to receive much needed food essentials.



Your contribution helped  
**605 families**  
in Segambut

*Thank you Bukit Tunku Residents' Association!*





# MCO and Me: Life Adjustments Overnight

BTRA Deputy President **Dato' Tan Hoe Pin** gives his personal account of life under MCO, some of which will resonate with many of us.

## MCO 1 (18 to 31 March)

When the MCO was first implemented, I asked myself, am I ready to confine myself together with my wife at home, how bad or how good can it be? I decided to tell myself it's time to enjoy the home in which I normally spend the least amount of time, previously spending most of my time at work, or playing golf or attending social dinners and other events.

In the beginning, I made myself useful around the house while my wife attempted to cook for us daily. Setting a schedule for myself: started with cleaning and keeping every corner of the house inside and outside spick and span. I began to do the laundry, including hanging it to dry in the sun. My excuse was to get some sunlight, i.e. natural Vitamin D. Surprisingly, I was quite enjoying it and became used to this new routine. In between, I watched the daily news and updates about how COVID-19 was spreading. I watched as the world locked down, counting the number of infected persons and the victims succumbing to the disease, and finally the undignified and lonely burials as the regulations imposed that funeral rites and gatherings were not allowed. It was supposed to be my time to relax, yet it was unnerving and at times depressing listening to the deluge of global and local news on the consequences of this pandemic.

## MCO 2 (1 to 14 April)

Social distancing was getting to me as I am a social creature by nature. I was getting a little irritable and feeling somewhat unfamiliar in this chapter of my life. Fortunately, Zoom made it possible for my church group to organise and attend classes, meetings and prayer get-togethers. I also Zoom-ed with my regular RSGC golf group, my colleagues and drinking buddies, as well as my children who are living abroad, also undergoing lockdown. My wife's cooking skills were getting better! To my surprise she could prepare dishes that I never imagined she could do, and I am thankful. She baked and cooked using YouTube videos, and she kept herself busy and happy with her routine.

## MCO 3 (15 to 28 April)

We were now on an extended MCO and it started to get distressing knowing that when I Zoom-meet with my business circle, I could envisage how our economy

would look with many businesses going into insolvency and unemployment would escalate when this MCO is over. Traveling was no longer a viable option, and let's forget about the idea of planning our favourite overseas holiday destination for at least 12 months — possibly longer.

We had to cancel all our flights booked previously, as well as hotels and resort reservations for the rest of the year. Eerily, when I would go to supermarket, and bump into a friend, somehow with natural instinct, I withdrew and avoided shaking hands. The very concept of social distancing has become the new norm and it had become ingrained into me. What has this pandemic done to us? I'm absolutely protesting the very action and conditioning that the situation has brought on but the reality has set in.

How long more will we see the kind of socialising and fraternising habits that we used to indulge in? It's time to see how we can learn to adapt and move on... and in fact I am learning not to go out, if it's not necessary.

## MCO 4 (29 April to 12 May)

And so we now have Phase 4. But the good news is that the MCO is now a "Conditional MCO," meaning some rules have been relaxed. I can return to golf with my buddies, which is allowed as an outdoor sport, as long as we maintain physical distancing and wear masks. The first golf outing felt fantastic — being outdoors for an extended period, hitting the golf ball, and of course and it was wonderful to meet my golf buddies again to exchange news and views. It is true that the economy has to re-start at some point. But there is still a lot we don't know about this disease, so we must all tread cautiously and listen to the health experts.

## MCO 5 (13 May to 9 June)

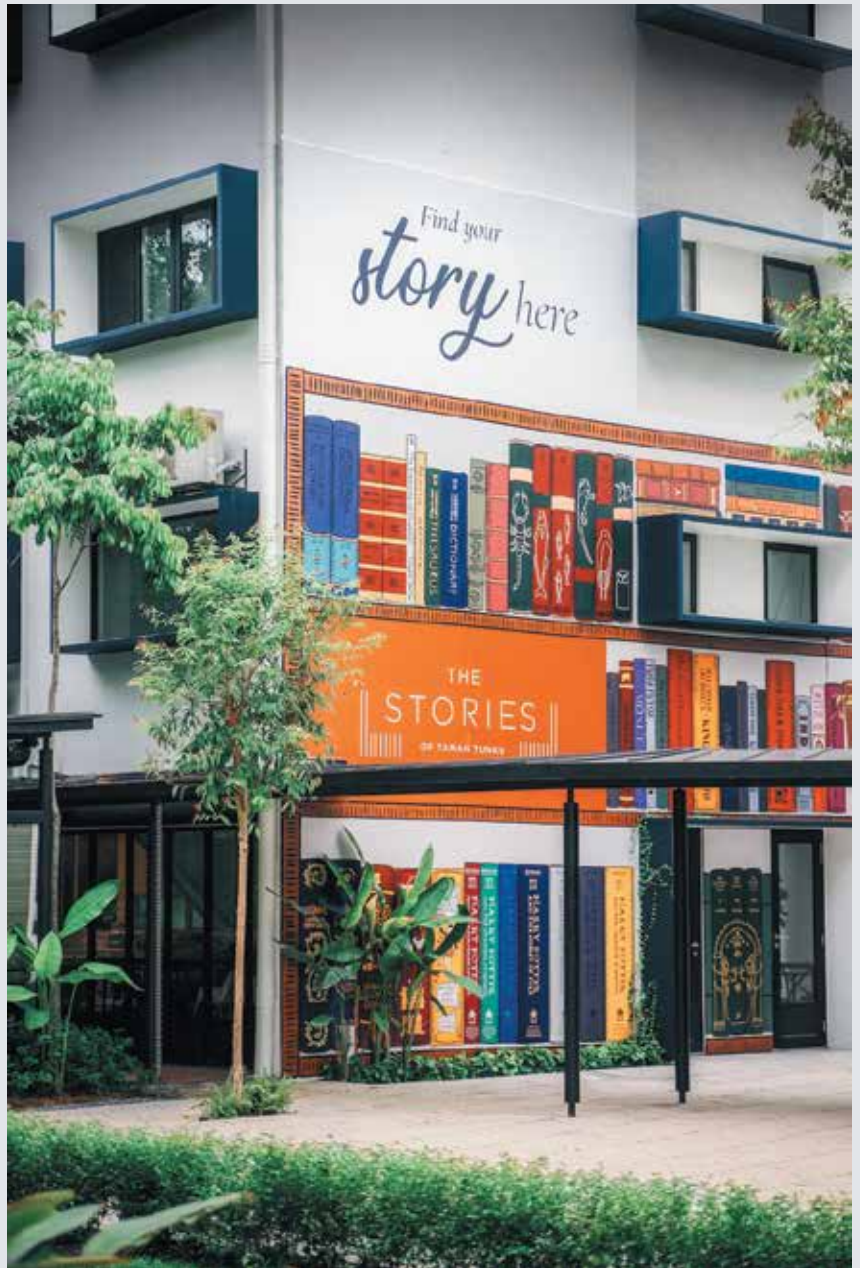
Here we go again... I will miss visiting and celebrating Hari Raya Aidilfitri with many dear friends. Wishing all of them Selamat Hari Raya!

I am determined that all these changes will not put me down or out, for there's always light at the end of the tunnel. As a nation, we shall fight on together to see the end of this pandemic. At the very least, our faith in God has strengthened and our hopes burning ever stronger from this struggle. We are made more resilient in tough times...stay home and stay safe!

# The Stories of Taman Tunku Unfolding

Since 2018, *The Stories of Taman Tunku* has been undergoing refurbishment to transform it into a vibrant service and social centre, a place for people from near and further afield to get together, for business or leisure. During this refurbishment period, except for CIMB Bank, familiar retailers moved out of Taman Tunku; some have returned while some will not. Residents and customers of the departing retailers will miss their services. However, new retailers with unique propositions will take their place in the vibrant hub.

Entrance to block



Mural



Since the return of Kenny Hills Bakers — now combined with Kenny Hills Bistro in a single location — a buzz of activity has started in Block A, where this popular F&B outlet is now located.

More F&B and Services outlets are anticipated, each offering a different concept, according to Selangor Properties Sendirian Berhad. Inevitably, with the MCO, the original completion time-frame of October 2020 may be pushed back by several weeks.

Pre-MCO customers would have noticed a different look to some of the exterior walls. A mural of bookshelves on Block A reflects the theme of *The Stories of Taman Tunku*, whose name is inspired by the living and working spaces that encourage residents, retailers and visitors to create and share their stories.

The Instagram-able mural has attracted many customers to take selfies and share their photos on their social media. Sharp-eyed visitors may notice that the middle shelf has a book titled “Kington Loo,” who was the original architect of *The Stories of Taman Tunku*, a life-long resident of the Hill and one of the founders of the informal residents’ group that led to the formation of BTRA. There is also a book titled “Kenny Hills Bakers,” the first in a new concept of adding books named for each retailer. Blocks E to K, when completed, will join Block A



Walkway front



Terrace

with its own bookshelves holding books named for each retailer.

The sudden halt put a damper on the new buzz at *The Stories of Taman Tunku*. Barring further extensions of the MCO, customers can look forward to more retailers in the near future.

# New Location for Green Studio at Taman Tunku

The refurbishment of the Taman Tunku crescent, now known as *The Stories of Taman Tunku*, meant that some outlets would re-locate within the new set-up.

**Green Studio** is now located at the Ground Floor, Unit D2. It's been operating from this unit since April 2019. Christina Chan, Founder and Instructor, said that the new premises provides better accessibility.

“Our clients no longer need to climb flights of stairs to reach us. Another advantage is that the new location opens out into the garden where there are fruit trees, flowers and lush plants. Clients are able to take a quick break during lunch hour, on the way to work, or after work, all within the city in serene settings.

“In fact, during private or small group classes, we can often hear birds chirping in the background, feel the cool air, or even have the neighbourhood tabby cat watch us in motion. After classes, there's a nice little patio to chill with friends over a cup of coffee,” Christina said.



**Green Studio** still offers classes for Gyrotonic, Gyrokinesis, Yoga and Pilates. Apart from Christina, who leads classes in Gyrotonic and Gyrokinesis, there is also Kareena Tan for yoga, as well as a few part-time Pilates instructors.

Christina explained that the arrival of new equipment for Gyrotonic — the Leg Extension Unit (LEU) — is imminent. The LEU is the latest addition to the existing Gyrotonic Tower and the Jumping Stretching Board at Green Studio.

The LEU is a compact piece of equipment that facilitates functional full-body movement sequences that strengthen upper/lower body coordination, and hand/foot coordination. The hip and knee joints are able to move in a fluid, natural range, without compression, increasing stability and strength around those joints.

For those interested, contact Christina Chan at 012.332.2420, or visit Green Studio online at <https://www.facebook.com/GreenstudioMY/> and <http://www.greenstudio.com.my/>

# Coral Reefs, Heart of the Marine Ecosystem

*Iskandar Smurthwaite*

At the beginning of March this year, I set sail for Pulau Pom Pom, a tiny island located off the eastern shore of Borneo, to volunteer and work for [TRACC – Tropical Research and Conservation Centre](#). TRACC is a marine conservation organisation dedicated to preserving and restoring the Sabahan coral reef ecosystem. The organisation was founded by the late Prof Steve Oakley in 2001. Hazel Oakley, his daughter, is currently the managing director.

Pom Pom is 2.3km in circumference. It has a few resorts with chalet rooms and a dense population of trees. The beaches are golden, the water is clear, and the volunteers live in tents.

Prof Steve Oakley formed TRACC due to the devastating effects of blast fishing on coral reefs. Blast fishing is an extremely harmful practice where fishermen use explosives to collect fish to sell at markets. The explosives are usually homemade from cheap materials like kerosene and fertiliser, which send lethal shock waves in the water that stun or kill fish. However, this method also destroys the reef itself.

Coral reefs are an essential habitat for marine creatures. You'll find algae, sponges, molluscs, crustaceans and turtles, as well as fish. Coral reefs are a source of nitrogen and other nutrients vital for the marine food

chain, and they assist in regulating carbon levels and recycling nutrients in the water. They also provide the coast with protection from strong wave forces and erosion as they help break wave energy, preventing loss of land.

The reefs occupy less than 1% of the ocean floor yet act as nurseries for 25% of the ocean's fish; juveniles spend most of their time at the reef before they travel to the open ocean. Coral reefs occur along the coast in shallow ocean areas, mainly found in the tropics. Optimal temperatures in the tropics grant coral reefs with some of the highest biodiversity on the planet.

## **Stop The Deterioration!**

The destruction of coral reefs has a detrimental effect on the environment, but also to people. Approximately 1 billion people around the world depend on coral reefs for food and income. So, it's important that we protect our reefs!

Coral reefs that have been physically damaged are unlikely to recover. Their calcium carbonate coral skeletons are destroyed by the explosives and the structural complexity is lost. This leads to algae overgrowth, rubble fields, and a heavy reduction in biodiversity.

In order to restore the coral reef, TRACC has implemented artificial reefs around the island, such as "ARC reefs" and "Step reefs." These artificial reefs are made out of concrete, a mixture of cement and other materials found on the island – sand, water, rubble. While creating the structure, we form rectangular gaps where we would later plant the coral.

An amazing feature of coral is that if you break off a piece, the mother coral will still grow, and the fragment will grow into a 'clone.' Fragments are collected with a specific pair of shears that reduces the damage done to the coral. We pour the concrete mixture into small Tupperware boxes and place the fragments in the solution before the concrete solidifies.

*ARC reef*





*Coral biscuits*

The parts of coral in direct contact with the solution will unfortunately die, but this allows the rest of the fragment to grow. Once solidified, these “coral biscuits” are taken out of the Tupperware and are planted in the rectangular holes of our artificial reefs by the shore or on the sea floor in an “underwater garden.” Over time, the fragments will grow into larger colonies. This method of underwater farming utilises the practice of coral fragmentation.

The ARC reefs are placed on flat seabed of the shore while the Step reefs are installed on the slope. Step reefs are also fitted with metal poles and glass bottles so that the concrete structure stays stable on the slope, they create the “step.” The steps help prevent the reef structure from falling down the slope, thus providing a stable substrate for the coral to settle and grow. Different types of coral take varying amounts of time to grow; some grow at a rate of 1cm a year and others 20cm a year. It takes a long time for a colony to grow and prosper, so TRACC ensures regular maintenance of the artificial reefs.

### **Green Turtles — A National Treasure**

TRACC also pays lots of attention to turtle conservation. Green turtles are the most common around Malaysia. Sea turtles in Malaysia are unfortunately disappearing due to human impact, and the contributing factors to this include egg poaching, ornamental trade, plastic pollution and blast fishing.

Local people harvest the meat of turtles to eat as turtle soup, and poach their eggs to sell, sometimes up to RM600 per batch. Despite the banning of turtle poaching, the soup is seen as traditional in certain places in Malaysia. Turtle shells are used as ornaments, and since the shell is part of their

skeleton and body, turtles are killed to acquire the shells. Unfortunately, like blast-fishing, some local people depend on these practices to financially support themselves.

Turtles suffer the consequences of our plastic use and disposal. Autopsies of local turtles show plastic in their bellies; this suffocates the turtles and prevents them from digesting food. Coastal developments disable turtles from crawling up beaches to lay, and light pollution disorientates turtles. Babies head toward moonlight once hatched and artificial light can confuse them, disabling them from entering the sea.

To ensure the safety of a nest, TRACC volunteers walk around the island twice every night to seek out turtles laying eggs. If we see a turtle climbing up the beach, we must not disturb it while we wait for them to lay their eggs. Once laid, we carefully transport the eggs to our hatchery. Embryos form quickly so we aim to do this within an hour of laying. Once the eggs hatch, we release them in the evening where the baby turtles find their way to the sea.



*Baby Turtles*

Although my experience was cut short due to the movement control order, I am excited to return to Pom Pom and undertake a 12-week project focusing on what materials are best suited to use as artificial reefs. Amongst the concrete structures, there are rubber tires, plastic milk crates and PVC poles installed by the shore, each with varying effectiveness in coral regrowth. I will conduct research by reviewing publications and by monitoring the growth of coral, algae, molluscs and other life forms on each of these substrates.

Those who wish to learn more or lend a helping hand, visit [www.stopblastfishing.org](http://www.stopblastfishing.org) and [www.tracc.org](http://www.tracc.org). Check out their Instagram @traccborneo for updates. All photos provided by TRACC.

The Tropical Research and Conservation Centre is a marine conservation organisation based in the Celebes Sea dedicated to protecting sea turtles and restoring coral reefs destroyed by the local fish bombing practices of Malaysia.

# Photography: For Art and Life

Residents of The Hill may have spotted a young woman cycling around the neighbourhood, or at a community event occasionally, merrily and dutifully snapping photos. That young woman is likely to be Faylasufiyah Muthanna, a resident of The Hill and a keen photographer constantly honing her photography skills and building her portfolio.

Back from university in Australia at the end of 2017, Fayla has been diligently utilising her time outside her day job as a creative visualiser to pursue her passion. Unfortunately, the recent MCO has meant an enforced hiatus on her outdoor photography activity. That said, Fayla is ready to return to it as soon as it is safe to do so.

Fayla's interest in world of photography started from young. Her father is also a keen photographer, so this early exposure at home to cameras, lenses, technique and visual moments turned into a genuine hobby while young. A 16th birthday present of a Nikon DSLR meant that things were getting serious. Thereafter, Fayla would be the lucky beneficiary of any photography equipment "handed down" at home.

"The first one is always special, as the saying goes. That Nikon DSLR is still my best mate! The thing about photography is that it can quickly become an expensive pursuit, so most, if not all photographers take very good care of our equipment. Also, fortunately there are second-hand photography stores where I can pick up a piece of equipment, and instalment plans that make things easier for someone like me," Fayla said.

## "Practice makes Perfect"

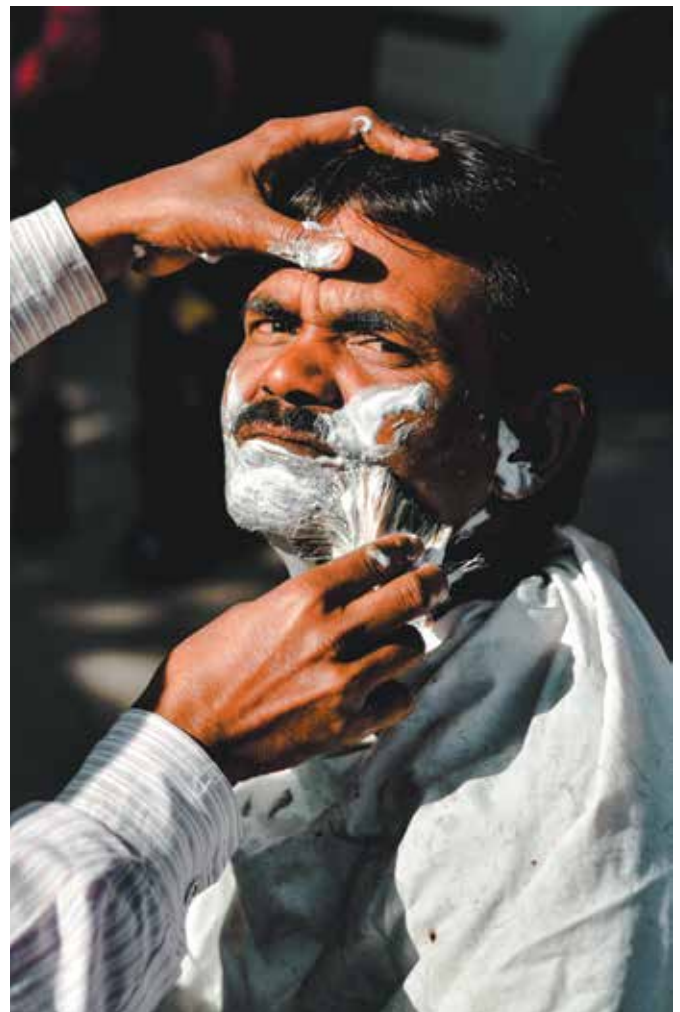
Beyond having photography equipment at home, Fayla graduated with a Bachelor's in Visual Arts from Monash University. According to Fayla: "Visual Arts is essentially Fine Arts, with a strong focus on communicating your art to your audiences. There is no right or wrong.

"My tutors would push us to experiment and develop our concepts into 10 different things that would still

reflect our principal idea. It was frustrating at times, but on hindsight, I'm grateful for the discipline and perseverance."

While at university, Fayla pushed herself to build her experience by photographing lots of events, freelancing gratis at the beginning, and later landing some commercial assignments.

"There is no substitute to real-life practice and experimentation. In my opinion, photography is a lifetime of learning because it is both technical and creative. Nowadays, there are many useful instructional videos on YouTube that I can access. There is still some merit to learning in a group environment because you can swap tips and stories with fellow students. After that, you can ask friends for advice, and then it's practice, practice, practice!"



## The Path to Specialisation

The landscape for photography is vast and practically endless; there are so many areas in which one can focus on and develop specific techniques for a particular niche interest. Fayla gave herself a wide berth, trying different types before deciding that she most enjoyed photographing people and street photography for now.

“Over time, I’ve experimented with different types, from fashion to food. I’ve found photographing people fascinates me the most. With the right lens, the right angle, the right light, the right moment, it’s true that a picture paints a thousand words.

“I’ve recently developed an interest in sports photography, and I’m now saving up for specific lenses to capture those thrilling sporting moments that I can only dream of taking right now,” Fayla declared.

Fayla emphasised that the creative industry is very competitive, and it is growing quickly. A common pain point is that many people tend to under-value photographers and their work. The proliferation of camera-phones has contributed to this situation, in which people may under-estimate the effort behind

capturing that “perfect shot.”

“It’s similar to dining out. It’s not just about the eating of food. It’s also about what you’re eating, its flavour and taste, its preparation and presentation. It’s about the restaurant itself, the atmosphere, the service, the knowledge of product and the care you experience. It’s the same with creating that perfect photo for a client.

“It’s true that the economic reality for an emerging photographer isn’t rewarding at first. But don’t give up! I’m still in this stage myself, so I see it first-hand. I focus on looking for opportunities to fine-tune my photography skills. I’m grateful to have a day job that helps to support this interest. My hope is that one day I can do this full-time, but I know I still have a long way to go,” said a determined Fayla.



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Check out Fayla’s portfolio at:

- [Instagram: @faylasufiyah](https://www.instagram.com/faylasufiyah)
- [Website: http://faylasufiyah.com](http://faylasufiyah.com)





# The Nile: Of Gods and Pharaohs

*John Smurthwaite*

Some 20 years ago while participating in a conference in Cairo, I enjoyed a few days in the city. I took the chance to slip out of the conference and took a speedy trip to the pyramids. But apart from a few taxi rides around the city, and a quick view of the historic Nile, I could only absorb a little of the promise of this ancient land. The dream of a real visit was constantly on my mind, particularly as every major European museum reminded me of the importance of the early Egyptian civilisation. But that dream faded about five years back when I began to have second thoughts about such a visit.

After the Arab Spring that started in late 2010 and continued in 2011, safety and security seemed to deteriorate and there were enough attacks on foreigners that I set aside my dream of sailing the Nile and seeing for myself the ancient wonders. (Let me say I am by no means a timid traveller).

But my wife also shared this dream and was persistent about a trip to Egypt seemingly unfazed by safety issues.

Finally, in 2019 I succumbed, and the planning began. In agreeing to the trip, however, I had a condition, which was that we join a fully guided tour (guide, transport and hotel — the whole works) so that we would always have assistance. In all our years of travel, we have avoided guided tours — except an occasional half-day city trip here and there.

And of course, this adventure turned out to be one of the most rewarding trips of all time. From the moment we landed on a hot night in Cairo to the moment we departed 10 days later, we had the company of polite, charming and knowledgeable guides who knew when to be attentive and when to recede.

For the first few days in Cairo, we participated in the usual tourist activities. Everyone knows about the pyramids — so no need to wax on about those grand sites except of course to wonder, like many millions of others, just how such colossal structures could be built without modern heavy machinery. These grand edifices are just a short drive from Cairo — all very easy, including the rather bumpy ungainly camel rides.

## Of Horus and Hieroglyphs

But Egypt is the Nile and that's where we headed next. Life starts very early in Egypt, so we prepared for very early activities, such as our flight to Luxor to join our Nile cruise. Our expectation was that the boats would be smallish and maybe not so comfortable. But that is not the case. The Nile cruise boats are quite large offering perhaps 60 or so well appointed airconditioned cabins with generous public spaces and large open decks for relaxation and viewing the banks of the Nile.

The river itself more than meets one's expectations — all the history that we learnt or read about comes to life. One can relax on the decks and enjoy the views for days — five days for us. The Nile is wide, fast flowing and clean, offering sights of daily life along the banks. One gets the feeling that life along the banks has changed little over the centuries. While the banks are rich with the additional soil provided by the annual floods, the farmland only stretches inland a short distance — maybe only a few hundred metres in many parts so not able to provide sustenance into the desert beyond.

Of course, the boat anchors at various points along the way so one can visit the many marvellous sites of ancient Egypt. Our first stop, Luxor, was originally Thebes capital of the Egyptian Empire at one time. Consequently, it has an abundance of sights. Nearby is the famous Valley of the Kings where the Tutankhamen tomb was found not so long ago. There are many tombs to visit, and most of them richly decorated.



And then onto the towns of El Kab, Esna and Edfu to see the best-preserved temple in Egypt, dedicated to the falcon-headed Horus wearing the double-headed crown of Upper and Lower Egypt.

The cruise took us to Aswan and the High Dam, which holds the water for the massive Lake Nasser — the dam serves to moderate the annual floods that provide rich new soil for farming, but which also cause havoc at the height of the floods.

From Aswan we set out at 5:00am for a three-hour drive to Abu Simbel, just north of the Sudan border. All the ancient structures along the Nile can be described as massive, gigantic, or enormous — photos, videos and film location settings don't begin to do them justice.

## An Extraordinary and Memorable Trip

As we hired a very reputable tour company, there were no problems large enough to spoil our trip. The concerns I had about safety were never an issue.

In terms of weather, our trip was in September and the temperature was still uncomfortably hot, so the recommendation is to visit between October and April when it is cooler.

For people who like to drink, there is little available except beer, and very expensive low-quality wines — a small price to pay for an extraordinary trip.



The temples of Abu Simbel, dedicated to Rameses II, are immense and awesome — another architectural masterpiece! They are special in many ways — firstly because they had been buried under the sand for centuries, and they were to be flooded with the water from Lake Nasser. With the assistance of UNESCO, these massive temples were cut into 30-ton blocks and transported onto safe land and reconstructed exactly as they were around 3000 years ago.

Egypt, of course, is not just about massive structures. These were mainly built to honour the great Pharaohs and gods from four millennia ago. Understanding the gods of ancient Egypt is another fascinating side to travelling in this country — Ptah, Amun, Osiris, Hathor, Isis, Horus and many others who are central to the story of ancient Egypt.

# What Did You Do During The MCO?

**M**ovement control order, circuit breaker, lockdown, shelter in place — call it what you will, the purpose is the same. Stay at home, work from home, practise physical distancing, go out only for essential tasks (e.g. to the supermarket or pharmacy). Flatten the curve and reduce the rate of coronavirus cases. Protect our family, the vulnerable, front-liners, and essential workers.

So what did people get up to at home? Those who could work from home, did. Some binged on Netflix watching K-dramas, or catching up on films and TV series. Others opted to watch plays, concerts or ballets made available online by various cultural and theatre groups. Fitness enthusiasts ramped up their exercise routines, either with online classes, watching Youtube videos or just doing it themselves. Many connected or re-connected with friends and family video calls. A few decided to learn something new.



**“Wine is the most healthful and most hygienic of beverages.”**

*(Louis Pasteur, microbiologist; “father of the vaccination,” renowned for his discoveries on the principles of vaccination)*

Han, from Taman Duta, participated in a Zoom presentation on *Amarone della Valpolicella*, with the lead speaker joining from the Veneto region in pandemic-struck Northern Italy. Eighty-three participants attended the 90-minute session, culminating in an online competition about Amarone with prizes to be won!

**AMARONE: A UNIQUE WINE**

Amarone is unique because of:

- **Its history:** first recorded under the Ancient Romans (Reticum – Acinaticum – Recioto Amaro – Recioto Amarone – Amarone della Valpolicella)
- **Its area of production:** Valpolicella Classica, between Verona and Lake Garda, where temperate climates prevail
- **Its use of indigenous grapes:** Corvina, Rondinella, Molinara e. Oseleta
- **Its production technique:** grape appassimento for at least 100 days with a loss of 35-40% of original weight; botrytis attack
- **Its organoleptic characteristics:** full-bodied, complex, velvety, well balanced - “a gentle giant”. High alcohol content and structure allow for long ageing potential

**“Drawing is not what one sees but what one can make others see.”**

*(Edgar Degas, Artist)*

Chooi-Hoong from Taman Duta re-discovered the joys of drawing and sketching. Starting with food items, friends saw the sketches on her social media and promptly began to request sketches of their pets! Chooi-Hoong said she has always enjoyed art, and studied it at school. She said sketching allowed her to have a relaxing and enjoyable time while stuck indoors under the MCO.



**“One cannot think well, love well, sleep well if one has not dined well.”**

*(Virginia Woolf, Author)*

Ainuddin, from Kiara Hills, is the lead chef in a family of chefs. Often cooking up a storm, from simple meals to scrumptious feasts, friends can only gawk and salivate at his creations on Instagram. The dishes are fit for kings (and queens); imagine when the entire family gets into the gastronomical act!

### A Taste of Persia



*Saffron rice baked with chicken, topped with barberries and pistachios*

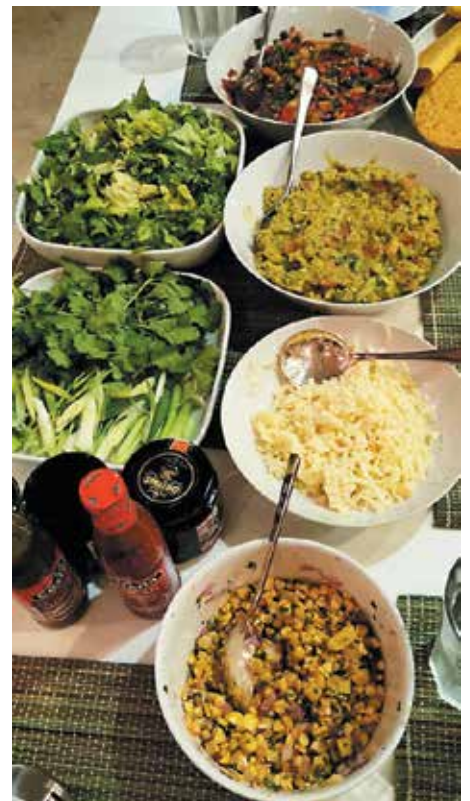


*Sabzhi Khordan, a salad of flat leafy parsley, mint, dill, chervil, coriander, tomato and radish*



*From Top: Mast o Khair (yoghurt, dill, mint, coriander, cucumber); in the bowl are Dolme (vine leaves stuffed with ground veal), cucumbers and pickled cucumbers; Mirza Ghazemi (roasted eggplant with tomato); Zeytoon Parvardeh (olives with ground walnuts and pomegranate molasses)*

### A Taste of Mexico



*Corn salsa; goat feta; guacamole; lettuce; spring onions and coriander*



*Chicken mole; fried red snapper; refried beans*



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34 likes

[simplyindi\\_an](https://www.instagram.com/simplyindi_an) I was always scared to try my hand at Indian cooking, until I started. There was no stopping me after my first dhal curry. I'd love to create a Simply Indi\_an cooking experience for you and your friends. Drop me a message.

“There is no love sincerer than the love of food.”

(George Bernard Shaw)

Meanwhile, over in Sierramas, something's cooking in Indi's kitchen! Already accomplished at creating Indian culinary delights, Indi decided to ramp it up under the MCO. It also presented an opportunity to connect with friends who were keen to learn how to produce some delicious and healthy Indian fare. All photos are on Indi's [Simplyindi\\_an](https://www.instagram.com/simplyindi_an) Instagram account.

[https://www.instagram.com/simplyindi\\_an/](https://www.instagram.com/simplyindi_an/)



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[simplyindi\\_an](https://www.instagram.com/simplyindi_an) Meatless Monday Menu: Chapatis, Spinach + Moong Beans + Tomatoes Gravy, Beetroot & Green Apple Raita, Brown Chickpeas Cutlets with Mint, Coriander & Moringa Chutney. Secret ingredient: Love ❤️

[simplyindi\\_an](https://www.instagram.com/simplyindi_an)

17 likes

[simplyindi\\_an](https://www.instagram.com/simplyindi_an) It's all about Almonds: Almond Protein Balls - total life saver! and Almond Butter. #simplyindi #homecooking #knowyourfood #vegetarian



## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

### DEWAN BANDARAYA KUALA LUMPUR (DBKL)

All matters / complaints – need only to call: DBKL Hotline (24 hours) [www.dbkl.gov.my](http://www.dbkl.gov.my) **1.800.88.3255**

### ADDITIONAL DETAILS FOR DBKL

Public Health (Bukit Tunku-Damansara Zone) **General Line 2027.5300**  
• Abandoned houses / land / swimming pools  
• Breeding mosquitoes, festering rodents, snakes  
• Fogging of public drains

Enforcement 24 hours – Emergency **4024.4424**

Maintenance of drains, broken drains, structural problems **General Line 2617.9392**

Maintenance of monsoon drains **2617.9453**

Tree trimming / overhanging branches **General Line 2693.4123**

Stray cats and dogs **4021.1682**

Snakes / beehives (24 hours) **9284.3434**

### OTHER PUBLIC SERVICES

**ALAM FLORA** **1.800.88.7472**  
[www.alamflora.com.my](http://www.alamflora.com.my) **General Line 2052.7922**  
Garbage collection, cleaning, clearing of drains,  
sweeping of roads, grass cutting, recycling

<b>POLICE</b>		<b>SYABAS</b> (water works) <b>1.800.88.5252</b>
Sentul Station	<b>4048.2222</b>	<a href="http://www.syabas.com.my">www.syabas.com.my</a>
Bukit Aman	<b>2266.2222</b>	Puspel 24 hours
KL Traffic Police	<b>2071.9999</b>	Email: <a href="mailto:puspel@syabas.com.my">puspel@syabas.com.my</a>

<b>TNB</b> (electricity) <b>15454</b>	<b>INDAH WATER KONSORTIUM</b> <b>2284.7828</b>
<a href="http://www.tnb.com.my">www.tnb.com.my</a>	<a href="http://www.iwk.com.my">www.iwk.com.my</a>
Breakdown, power failure, streetlights	Service / Operations Enquiries

<b>TELEKOM MALAYSIA</b> <b>100</b>	<b>DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT</b> <b>1.800.88.2727</b>
<a href="http://www.tm.com.my">www.tm.com.my</a>	Open Burning – 24 hours
Dropped telephone cables, faulty lines	

