

S'wak Report founder to release book on 1MDB

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KUALA LUMPUR: The key figure behind investigative website *Sarawak Report*, Clare Rewcastle Brown, will be releasing a book on her experiences in exposing corruption in Malaysia.

The book, also called *Sarawak Report*, will be launched in Malaysia and Britain.

The website, known for ground-breaking stories of alleged corruption in Malaysia involving some of the country's most powerful leaders and most notably, its hard-hitting pieces on the troubled state investment fund 1Malaysia

Development Bhd (1MDB), was blocked by the Malaysian government in 2015.

It was not until the Pakatan Harapan wrested power from Barisan Nasional in the 14th General Election that the new government lifted the ban.

A warrant of arrest for the British journalist issued in 2015 was also cancelled following Pakatan's victory.

The Sarawak-born Rewcastle Brown, 58, returned to Malaysia after GE14 and is now set to publish the book about her experiences.

"I would say that this is the story behind the investigation into 1MDB told through my eyes. It has been a very exciting and significant few

years for me with much to discover and much of that, sadly, was shocking. I hope to communicate some of the adventure I went through to readers," she said in an interview.

Rewcastle Brown, who lived in Malaysia for eight years before going to Britain to attend boarding school, worked for the BBC before becoming an independent investigative journalist.

She is the sister-in-law of former British prime minister Gordon Brown who has written the foreword to her book.

"This is not just a story about Malaysia or failures by Malaysians. It is about global failure, corruption and many Malaysians were the vic-

tims of that, and the same thing is happening to other countries.

"So this is a message to people across the world that we need to bring law and order to globalisation to protect us from criminals with connections to power. That is why 1MDB is not just a story about Malaysia," she said.

Rewcastle Brown also revealed that she has yet to return to Sarawak since GE14 and has been told that she is still on the travel blacklist to the state of her birth.

"I will be bringing out the book shortly and it will be launched in Malaysia and Britain, and available online. The exact launch date will be announced soon," she said.

Foiled – attempt to kidnap tugboat crew for ransom

KOTA KINABALU: Thanks to the quick response of security forces in east coast Sabah, a tugboat crew is safe from another abduction attempt by a kidnap-for-ransom gang from southern Philippines.

The gang – numbering about 10 – fled Malaysian waters in Lahad Datu's Tambisan area when they realised the presence of patrol boats from the Eastern Sabah Security Command (Esscom).

Esscom commander Datuk Hazani Ghazali said the gang members, who were believed to be armed, boarded the palm oil-laden tugboat at around 6pm on Friday.

"However, the crew managed to lock themselves in a room on the deck," he said, adding that they then raised the security alarm.

"As our boats approached, the intruders fled in their vessels towards international waters," he said, adding that none of the crew was hurt and no valuables were lost.

The crew had been ferrying palm oil from Felda Sabahat in Tengku to Kuantan when the intruders drew up alongside the tugboat in Tambisan waters, which is near to the southern Philippines' Tawi Tawi chain of islands.

Investigation is underway to identify the gang involved.

Hazani reminded all operators of vessels plying within the Eastern Sabah Security Zone (Esszone) to always be on high alert and update the Esscom operation centre of their position.

"This will enable us to quickly respond in the event of any emergency or criminal activity," he said.

All vessels, said Hazani, should also keep their Automated Identification System (AIS) switched on, report their travel schedule and use their distress call during any untoward incident.

"Esscom will not compromise on security and will take continuous efforts to monitor and tighten security in the area, particularly in the hotspots," he said.

Foreigners in state of limbo

270 Bangladeshis lose RM1.8mil and passports – and are still illegals

By FARIK ZOLKEPLI
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KUALA LUMPUR: Some 270 Bangladeshis are claiming that they paid an agent over RM1.8mil to get their applications approved under the Immigration Department's rehiring programme, but he has duped them.

One of the victims, Imran Haq Uzzal, said he and his countrymen handed over their passports, other relevant documents besides paying between RM7,200 and RM8,000 each to the agent.

However, not only did they not get accepted for the rehiring programme, they now had no passports to go home either.

"I have been working in Malaysia for about seven years," said Imran.

"When the Immigration Department introduced the rehiring programme, I saw it as a golden opportunity to continue working in the country," he said yesterday.

Imran said he and the other workers then sought the services of a company based in the Klang Valley.

"We went to the office many times to enquire about the status of our application – right until before the June 30 deadline for the rehiring programme.

"However, the man, who runs the company, kept giving us excuses," he said.

Fellow Bangladeshi Mohammad Alagir said they hounded the company's owner and even waited outside the Immigration office on the



Lost and nowhere to go: Mohammad Alagir (seated left), Imran and the other foreign workers making their statement to the media during the press conference in Kuala Lumpur.

day of the deadline.

"From June 27, the owner kept assuring us that our application would go through and we would get our permits.

"Our hopes were dashed when the deadline passed and there were still no permits," he said.

Mohammad claimed that when they confronted the owner, the man threatened them. "He warned us against reporting the matter to the authorities."

The group of workers, who are mainly from the construction sector in the Klang Valley and other states,

said they had since reported the matter to the police, Immigration as well as their embassy.

"We hope that the Malaysian authorities can help us get our permits," said Mohammad. "If they can't, then we hope to get our passports back so that we can go home."

Paying a fitting tribute for Eusoffe

PETALING JAYA: The late Tan Sri Eusoffe Abdoolcader is a man of integrity and wisdom, says British High Commissioner to Malaysia Vicki Treadell.

Treadell said Malaysians should be proud of Eusoffe and his contributions and legacy to the country.

"His legacy isn't just for this country. It is not just about being The Legal Lion of the Commonwealth, but in terms of his judgments, it is a legacy for the international legal community.

"There are not many Malaysians, or people of any country, who genuinely have an impact, not just in their own country but beyond their

shores and hold such high regard and respect," she said in paying tribute to the legendary Malaysian judge during Kinokuniya Bookstore's Merdeka month launch in Suria KLCC on Friday.

Treadell also said that Eusoffe, who was a King's scholar and graduated with First Class Honours from the University of London, was "a great example of the best of British education".

"The timely publication of his judgments is one that will inspire a new generation of Malaysians to understand that actually, we are great and we can be greater still," said the Ipoh-born Treadell.



Remembering a great man: Treadell giving her speech during the event at the Kinokuniya Book Store's Merdeka Month launch.

BN rep tells off Pakatan for changing slogan

ISKANDAR PUTERI: A Barisan Nasional rep has slammed the Pakatan Harapan state government for changing the state slogan of "Muafakat Johor".

R. Vidyathan (MIC-Kahang) said the slogan was apolitical and approved by Johor Ruler Sultan Ibrahim ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar.

"The slogan was not used by the Barisan administration for political gain, but to create a sense of togetherness among a multi-racial society called "Bangsa Johor".

"This is evident when various races came together in many events, including the time when all of us supported the Johor Darul Tazim (JDT) football team," he said in his debate at the state assembly sitting held at Bangunan Sultan Ismail here yesterday.

The Johor government's new slogan for the state is "Negeri Berprestasi Tinggi, Bangsa Johor Bestari".