

# DAS COURSE

Weekly Vol. 8. Issue 09



**Penang World Clean-up Day 2024** embodied the Merdeka spirit by uniting the community to protect and sustain Malaysia's natural heritage in line with the Malaysia Madani: Jiwa Merdeka theme.

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## Remarks from the President

As we gather today to celebrate the 67th Merdeka celebration of Malaysia, we reflect on the journey that has shaped our nation and the values that continue to guide us. This year's theme, "Malaysia Madani: Jiwa Merdeka," resonates deeply with the spirit of independence and the collective aspirations of our people.

At DISTED College, we are honoured to be part of this journey, contributing to the education and development of the next generation of Malaysians. Higher education is not merely about acquiring knowledge but about nurturing a Jiwa Merdeka—an independent spirit that empowers our students to think critically, innovate, and lead with integrity.

In a Madani society, where progress and sustainability are paramount, education plays a fundamental role in shaping a future that mirrors our shared values of freedom, unity, and inclusivity. At DISTED College, we are unwavering in our commitment to fostering a learning environment that not only encourages but also empowers our students to embrace these ideals and contribute meaningfully to the nation's growth.

As we look to the future, let us remember that the strength of our nation lies in the empowerment of its people. Let us continue to inspire our students to carry forward the legacy of Merdeka, building a Malaysia that is not only united and resilient but also brimming with promise and potential.

*Happy Merdeka to all!*

Prof. Dr. Vikneswaran Nair  
President



Cover  
 Story

## Merdeka Day Clean-up: Embracing Malaysia Madani - Jiwa Merdeka

In the spirit of "Malaysia Madani: Jiwa Merdeka", Penang celebrated World Clean-up Day a week before the Merdeka celebration. This meaningful community initiative was held on 24th August 2024 at Teluk Bahang's Angsana Beach Resort. This event symbolised our collective freedom and responsibility to protect Malaysia's natural heritage. Organised by DISTED College in collaboration with the Green Educators' Workgroup (GREW) and the local secondary school, SMK Teluk Bahang, the clean-up was a testament to the power of unity in safeguarding our environment, in line with the Merdeka celebration.

Volunteers from all walks of life—students, families, faculty, and local residents—gathered to clean the shores of Teluk Bahang. On this day of action, we reflected the Merdeka spirit, emphasising the importance of a collective effort to maintain our freedom to enjoy a clean and beautiful Malaysia. The Angsana Beach Resort, with its commitment to sustainability, provided the perfect venue for this patriotic environmental endeavour.

As participants gathered at Angsana Beach, they were armed with gloves, bags, and a sense of purpose. Participants combed through the beach, diligently collecting discarded items such as plastic bottles, cigarette butts, and food wrappers. The sheer volume of trash collected was a stark reminder of the pressing issue of plastic pollution and the urgent need for collective action. The clean-up went beyond merely picking up litter; it was a learning experience in environmental stewardship. A detailed waste audit followed the event, revealing the types and amounts of waste collected. The audit identified significant quantities of non-recyclable materials, including cigarette butts and plastic waste, and highlighted the need for better waste management practices. Recyclable materials and miscellaneous waste further underscored the importance of adequate waste segregation and recycling.

Reflecting the theme of *Jiwa Merdeka*, the event concluded with policy recommendations aimed at reducing waste and promoting sustainability. Angsana Beach Resort can lead the way in sustainable tourism by banning single-use plastics, managing cigarette waste, and promoting reusable items.

These efforts embody the Merdeka spirit, ensuring our natural resources are preserved for future generations.

Beyond the physical act of cleaning, the event served as a powerful platform for fostering relationships and strengthening community bonds. Lecturers, staff, and students from both institution shared experiences, ideas, whilst having a lot of fun and laughter. This intergenerational exchange created a sense of unity and collaboration, demonstrating the positive impact of community engagement.

The event was a resounding success, not only in terms of environmental impact but also in fostering relationships and strengthening community bonds. The event showcased the power of collective action and the positive impact that individuals can have on their environment. As we continue to face the challenges of plastic pollution, initiatives like these are essential in inspiring and empowering communities to work together towards a cleaner and healthier Malaysia. As we move forward, the lessons learned will inspire continued efforts to protect and cherish our environment in the true Malaysia Madani spirit.

Nur Aisya Najwa,  
 Lecturer, School of Business and Hospitality



## Malaysia Madani: Celebrating the Spirit of Freedom Through National Symbols

As Malaysia celebrates its 2024 National Day with the theme "*Malaysia Madani: Jiwa Merdeka*" ("Malaysia Strong: Spirit of Freedom"), the nation's rich tapestry of symbols comes to life, each embodying the enduring spirit of independence and unity that defines the country. From the majestic *Jalur Gemilang* fluttering across the nation to the stirring notes of the *Negaraku*, these symbols unite Malaysians in a shared sense of pride and resilience.

Malaysia's national flower, the *Bunga Raya* (hibiscus), blooms brightly, symbolising the vibrant and resilient spirit of the nation. The *Malayan Tiger* stands as a powerful emblem of strength and courage, much like the nation it represents. The *Merbau* tree, chosen as the national tree, mirrors the country's deep-rooted strength and steadfastness, essential qualities as Malaysians continue to forge their path forward.

Cultural symbols such as the *Baju Melayu* and *Baju Kurung*, with their unique designs and styles, showcase Malaysia's rich diversity. The *Joget* dance, a lively and inclusive cultural tradition, and the music of the *Gambus*, with its rich melodies, reflect the nation's deep cultural heritage. These symbols of our culture and traditions unite us in a shared sense of pride and inclusivity, regardless of our individual backgrounds.

Places like *Masjid Negara* and *Taman Negara* underscore Malaysia's commitment to preserving its religious and natural heritage, while the *Istana Negara* symbolises the country's constitutional monarchy.

Malaysians come together to celebrate their "*Jiwa Merdeka*," these symbols are potent reminders of the nation's journey—rooted in unity, defined by diversity, and driven by an unyielding spirit of freedom and strength. The theme of 2024 encapsulates not just a celebration of past achievements but a commitment to a future where Malaysia continues to grow stronger and more united.



# Durian The King of Fruits and a Symbol of Malaysia's Cultural Heritage



The durian, often hailed as the "King of Fruits," holds a revered status in Malaysia as its national fruit, symbolising its rich biodiversity and cultural heritage. Scientifically known as *Durio zibethinus*, this spiky, aromatic fruit is native to Southeast Asia and thrives particularly well in Malaysia's tropical climate. The durian is infamous for its strong, distinctive odour, which evokes deep affection and aversion. Beneath its tough, spiked exterior lies creamy, custard-like flesh with a flavour profile that melds sweet and savoury notes—a taste that Malaysians have cherished for generations.

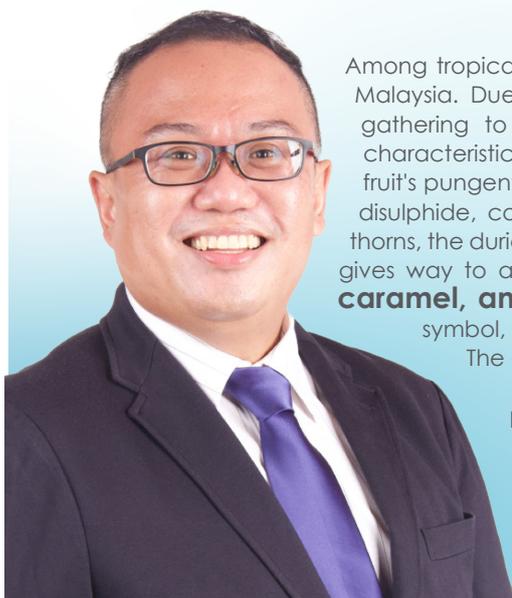
Malaysia has long been recognised as a leading producer of durians, offering numerous prized varieties such as Musang King, D24, and Red Prawn, which are highly sought after locally and internationally. These varieties are celebrated for their unique flavours, textures, and superior

quality, and Malaysian farmers carefully cultivate them. In Malaysia, durian is more than just a fruit; it is a cornerstone of local food culture, celebrated in festivals, integrated into culinary dishes, and a significant income source for many rural communities.

Despite Malaysia's deep-rooted connection to the durian, Singapore has made recent claims regarding the fruit's origin and cultural ownership. While Singapore also enjoys durians and has developed its own durian culture, the fruit's historical and cultural ties are far stronger with Malaysia. Such claims overlook the extensive durian heritage in Malaysia, where the fruit is intricately linked with traditional practices, local economies, and national pride.

For Malaysia, the durian is not just a national fruit but a symbol of cultural significance and an assertion of its agricultural legacy. The country continues to lead in durian production and innovation, solidifying its rightful place as the true home of this iconic fruit.

Prof. Dr. Vikneswaran Nair  
 President



Among tropical fruits, durian stands out as the "**King of Fruits**" and the national fruit of Malaysia. Due to its seasonal availability, durian harvests are festive, with people eagerly gathering to savour this unique fruit. One of durian's most controversial and defining characteristics is its **potent, intoxicating, yet sweet and seductive smell**. The fruit's pungent aroma is derived from a combination of sulphur compounds, including diethyl disulphide, contributing to its signature scent. Protected by an outer shell of sharp, tough thorns, the durian conceals segments of creamy, golden-yellow pulp within. This rugged exterior gives way to a **rich, creamy texture with flavours reminiscent of almonds, caramel, and vanilla**. Durian is not just a culinary delight in Malaysia; it is also a cultural symbol, celebrated in festivals and used in various dishes, from desserts to savoury meals.

The durian represents the richness of Malaysia's gastronomic heritage.

Dr. Kam Yew Chee  
 Senior Lecturer, School of Pre-University Studies



## Celebrating “Majmuk”

## Embracing Diversity in the Spirit of Jiwa Merdeka at DISTED College



The term “majmuk” in the context of a college like DISTED College in Penang, Malaysia, refers to diversity and plurality, especially with the different ethnic, cultural, and religious communities that make up the student body and staff. In the Malaysian context, “majmuk” is often associated with the nation’s identity as a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society.

In line with the 2024 Merdeka celebration theme, “Malaysia Mardani: Jiwa Merdeka” (Malaysia Strong: Independent Spirit), “majmuk” at DISTED College could be emphasised as part of the celebration of this diversity. It might involve promoting unity among the diverse groups within the college, celebrating the unique contributions of each community, and fostering a deep sense of belonging and mutual respect among students and staff from various backgrounds, ensuring everyone feels included and appreciated.

This celebration of “majmuk” would align with the “Jiwa Merdeka” theme by highlighting the strength and independence that comes from embracing and respecting diversity while promoting a shared sense of national identity and unity. It could be reflected in various college activities, events, and discussions during the Merdeka period, aimed at fostering greater understanding and collaboration among the diverse groups within the college community.

## Merdeka The Cultural Mosaic That Unites Us at DISTED College

At DISTED College, Malaysia’s cultural and ethnic diversity is more than just a hallmark of the nation; it’s an integral part of our academic and social environment. Our student body, comprising Malays, Chinese, Indians, and international students, mirrors the rich tapestry of cultures that define Malaysia. This diversity enriches our campus life, fostering mutual respect and understanding in daily interactions. As we approach Merdeka, or Independence Day, on August 31st, we are reminded of the unity in diversity that forms the backbone of our nation. For DISTED students, Merdeka is not just a historical milestone but a celebration of our shared identity. The parades, cultural performances, and the waving of the Jalur Gemilang symbolise our collective commitment to peace, prosperity, and progress. At DISTED, we believe that our strength lies in our unity, driving us towards a brighter future together.

Rishindran Paramanathan  
Lecturer, School of Business and Hospitality



## Celebrating Merdeka Through the Eyes of Generations



Ms. Vilashini  
Kandaiah



Ms Nurshakirin  
Sulaiman



Ms Iris Ong

As we approach Merdeka Day, it's a time for reflection, celebration, and unity. But what does Merdeka truly mean to Malaysians from different generations and backgrounds? In this unique feature, we explore the perspectives of three women—Ms. Vilashini Kandaiah (Gen X), Ms Nurshakirin Sulaiman (Gen Y), and Ms Iris Ong (Gen Z)—share their thoughts, memories, and hopes for Malaysia.

### What does Merdeka Day *mean* to you?

**V** Merdeka Day **brings back many memories** from my childhood, mainly from my primary school days. Back then, the celebrations were grand, with visits from the royal family, parades, and school concerts. Unlike today, it was a day filled with activities and excitement, where it often felt like just a day off work or school.

**N** To me, Merdeka **symbolises freedom**—a vast and encompassing concept. It's about having the right to voice our opinions and stand up for our beliefs. The essence of Merdeka is the freedom to express our thoughts and live without undue restrictions.

**I** Merdeka Day reminds me of our **country's achievements**—how far we've come socially, economically, and politically. It's about honouring the efforts of our past leaders who fought for the independence we enjoy today.

### What is your *fondest memory* of Merdeka Day?

One of my most cherished memories is standing along the road with my friends, **waving the Jalur Gemilang as the Sultan's car passed**. He waved back, and that simple gesture filled me with pride and excitement. I often wonder if today's generation feels the same joy and pride. My fondest memories revolve around

family gatherings, primarily when we **celebrated Merdeka Day at Padang Kota Lama and Fort Cornwallis**. I remember the parades and festivities, and it was a special time for my family, particularly with my late father.

I fondly recall the Merdeka celebrations at school, where we sang patriotic songs with all our hearts. The sense of unity as we **waved our little flags and held hands while singing and dancing was exceptional**.

### Do you think Malaysia is *united*?

**Yes**, I believe Malaysia is united. We are a peace-loving nation, and despite the diversity, we live harmoniously. Unlike other countries facing internal strife, we strive for unity and avoid stirring up sensitive issues.

Unity is subjective, but from my experience, Malaysians are generally **united**. We coexist peacefully, communicate well, and live under one roof, regardless of our differences.

**Absolutely**. Every day, I see people from different races coexisting harmoniously. We embrace each other's cultures, traditions, and, most importantly, our delicious food.



## Can you give examples of times when you have **interacted with** or received help from people of **other races**?

**V.** Recently, I fractured my foot and fell into a pothole while walking. **A young Chinese girl rushed to help me**, even insisting on driving me to the car park. Her kindness touched me deeply, and it reminded me of the compassion that transcends race in Malaysia.

**N.** Living in a multicultural neighbourhood and **working at DISTED College, I interact with people of various races daily**. My experiences in America during my psychology studies also exposed me to diverse cultures, further enriching my understanding of unity.

**I.** Most of my interactions with other races happen in school. I remember **renting electric scooters from a Malay shop owner** after SPM. He was surprised at how I spoke English with a Malay accent, which I had picked up in school while interacting with my Malay and Indian friends.

## In your opinion, what has Malaysia **achieved** post-independence?

Economically, we're still lagging, primarily due to corruption. If we could work with more integrity, we could develop much faster and avoid unnecessary projects that waste resources.

Malaysia has made **significant strides socially, economically, and politically since independence**. While we've achieved a lot, there's room for improvement, particularly in unity and reducing corruption.

Malaysia has **grown tremendously** since independence.

Economically, we've become a preferred destination for foreign investments, and our reputation as a top tourist destination speaks volumes. We've also maintained peaceful relationships with other countries, which is something to be proud of.

## What are your **hopes** for Malaysia's future?

I hope the **younger generation prioritises the welfare of our people over money-making**. They should be taught the importance of integrity and doing what is best for the country and its people.

I wish Malaysia **to shine globally**, not just within Asia but worldwide. I hope we become known for our positive attributes and continue to improve and progress as a nation.

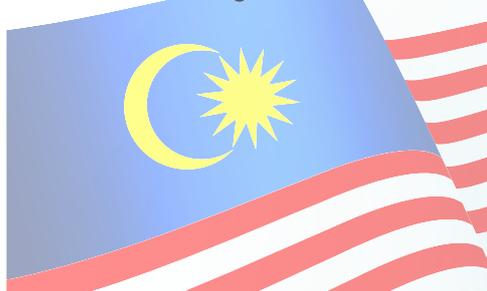
I hope that **Malaysia remains harmonious**, with minimal racial tensions. Our unity is what makes us unique, and we should cherish and maintain it.

## Can you share a story about how **proud** you are of **being a Malaysian**?

I once witnessed an accident in which a Malay woman was helped by a Chinese man, an Indian woman, and another Malay man. It was a beautiful moment that encapsulated the essence of being Malaysian—**coming together to help someone in need, regardless of race**.

Despite our diverse backgrounds, I'm proud of how Malaysians **come together to overcome challenges**. Our ability to work together in times of need makes me proud to be Malaysian.

Although I haven't lived long enough to have many experiences, I recently saw a TikTok video in which Malaysia welcomed Palestinian refugees. I'm proud of Malaysia for **standing up for humanity** and doing what we can to help those in need.



Merdeka means different things to different people, but one common thread binds us all—our love for Malaysia and our hope for a brighter, more united future. As we celebrate Merdeka Day, remember the importance of unity, compassion, and progress as we build a better Malaysia for future generations.

Sea Yun Xuan  
DISTED Discourse Student Editor (Student of Cambridge A-Level)



## Embracing Mental Health on Malaysia's Independence Day from A Counselor's Perspective

As Malaysia celebrates its Independence Day, we reflect on the journey toward freedom, both as a nation and as individuals. This year's theme, Malaysia Madani: Jiwa Merdeka, emphasizes a vision of a compassionate, just society where personal well-being, including mental health, is integral to our collective independence. In my role as a counselor at a DISTED College, I see the challenges students face such as academic pressures, social anxieties, and the uncertainties of young adulthood; that can impact mental health.

Just as Malaysia fought for its independence, individuals must strive for mental freedom, overcoming the barriers of stress, anxiety, and depression. Embracing Jiwa Merdeka means recognizing that mental health is a key part of true independence. Seeking help through counseling is a step toward personal liberation, and it's crucial for students to use the resources available to them. At DISTED

college, we offer confidential counseling services to support mental well-being, reflecting the Madani principles of care and empathy.

A supportive college community is essential for fostering mental health. By promoting open discussions, awareness campaigns, and peer support, we embody the spirit of Jiwa Merdeka, creating an environment where mental health is prioritized. This Independence Day, let us remember that true freedom includes the ability to care for our mental health. Selamat Hari Merdeka, and may we continue to build a Madani Malaysia where everyone can thrive, mentally and emotionally.

Syahirah Farwin  
 Psychology Lecturer and Registered Counsellor



## Merdeka, Mental Health, and the Care Box: Art Therapy for a Thriving Malaysia



As Malaysia celebrates its 67th Merdeka, attention is increasingly turning toward mental health—a growing

concern in this developing nation. Rapid urbanisation, economic instability, rising living costs, and intense work demands have contributed to chronic stress for many. Simultaneously, cultural stigmas surrounding mental health make it difficult for people to openly discuss these issues, leaving many without the resources or safe spaces needed to manage their emotions effectively.

This is where the care box, linked to art therapy, offers valuable support. A care box encourages relaxation and self-care. As an expression of art therapy, creating and curating the care box is a therapeutic activity in itself. The process of selecting items that bring peace and joy taps into creativity and intuition, allowing individuals to engage in self-reflection and emotional expression. For example, items like journals, stress-relief tools, and calming teas can help foster a sense of inner calm.

In a fast-developing country like Malaysia, where daily pressures continue to mount, the care box not only promotes self-care but also provides an accessible form of art therapy. It serves as a reminder to prioritize mental health amid life's challenges. The care box symbolises Malaysia's growing commitment to mental well-being and highlights the importance of integrating creative therapeutic practices into daily life. As the nation progresses, this simple yet meaningful tool reminds us that while we celebrate external growth, internal peace and self-care are equally vital in our journey as a nation.

Teoh Ker Hsin  
 Lecturer, School of Psychology

## Jiwa Yang Merdeka

*Puluhan tahun berlalu, bendera berkibar tinggi  
 Sorak sorai merayakan kemerdekaan yang diraih  
 Namun di balik gemuruh tepuk tangan  
 Benarkah jiwa ini benar-benar bebas?*

*Apa yang sedang kau sembunyikan?  
 Di kobar api atau kilatan pedang pada kedalaman mata  
 Aku melihat sebatit kepedihan yang merobek-robek lembaran jiwa*

*Tapi taukah engkau  
 Bahwa bumi yang kini kita pijak ini adalah keringat para jasa pahlawan  
 Yang berjuang membela tanah yang kita pijak hingga air yang kita minum.*

*Pena dan sejarahlah yang berbicara bagaimana merdeka kita  
 Terpujilah tanah airku yang mulia, akan kekal berdiri selamanya  
 Terbebas dari pelbagai bentuk penjajah  
 Tuhan bersama kita yang mencintai negara kita*

Siti Nur Ayunie Binti Zawawi  
 Lecturer, School of Language and Communications



## Nurturing the Nation: My Journey as an Educator on Merdeka Day

As an accounting lecturer at DISTED College in Penang for over 15 years, Merdeka Day holds special significance for me. This day is a reminder of the contributions we all make to our country, regardless of our profession. My passion lies in equipping students with the skills and knowledge for career success. Beyond technical expertise,

I strive to instill in them the values of professionalism, integrity, and accountability—qualities that are essential for success in any field, but particularly in accounting, where trust and ethical

conduct are paramount.

Throughout my teaching career, I have seen my students' success as they have become chartered accountants, tax consultants, audit partners, and hold managerial positions. Their contributions to Malaysia's financial, banking, tax, and auditing sectors are a testament to the impact of education on national development.

As Merdeka Day approaches, I am filled with pride for my role in shaping the professionals who contribute to our country's growth and stability. Together, let us celebrate this meaningful and memorable day, and continue to build a brighter future for Malaysia.

Tong Pei Sun  
 Senior Lecturer, School of Business and Hospitality



## Growing Up in Malaysia: A Story of Change and Connection



I recalled a conversation with my late mother from many years ago. Born in 1934, she shared what life was like before Malaysia's independence. Food was scarce, and they survived mainly on sweet potatoes, fish caught from nearby rivers, and vegetables they grew themselves. Access to education was mostly reserved for the males in the family, while the females had to help with house chores and work to supplement the family's income. My mother often reminded me of how blessed I was to live in a different era.

For those of us born after independence, we have little connection to that era. Fast forward to the 1970s—I was born and raised in Kampar; a small town once famous for its tin mining glory days. I remember my primary school days vividly. My parents, who had little formal education, decided to enroll me and my two older siblings in national schools. Having been educated in national schools all my life, I had the opportunity to mix with peers of all ethnicities. We never questioned the color of our skin, the food we ate, or the words we spoke. We learned each other's languages and faced no communication barriers, simply speaking the language we were most comfortable with.

Now that my schoolmates and I are in our 50s, we continue to meet and organise reunions. Each time we gather, we are transported back to those good old days. Long before the "1Malaysia" concept was introduced, we truly embodied the spirit of one Malaysia—a melting pot of Malaysians celebrating our differences.

As we celebrate our 67th independent day, I pray that my beloved motherland will continue to shine and thrive. Let us all contribute to nation-building so that our children and future generations can take pride in our country and continue to help make it a developed, peaceful, and vibrant nation. Happy 67th Birthday, Malaysia!

Elaine Chan  
 Senior Lecturer, School of Business and Hospitality

## Merdeka: A Heartfelt Celebration of Malaysia's Unity in Diversity.

Merdeka Day is celebrated with a spirit of unity and pride in the country. Regardless of colour or religion, our DISTED community, which includes the staff and students, come together to remember the sacrifices made by earlier generations to ensure the independence of the nation. Vibrant displays of Malaysian culture abound throughout the day, showcasing the country's immense diversity.

Merdeka Day acts as a reminder of the principles that unite the people of the country. It highlights how crucial harmony, respect, and tolerance are among DISTED community's diverse population.

In addition to paying respect to the past, the Merdeka spirit looks forward to a future where all Malaysians can live in peace, harmony, and progress. We at DISTED view this diversity as a strength and an opportunity for growth.

Norih Kallanjam  
 Lecturer, School of Language and Communications



## Reflecting on Patriotism and Progress: A 25-Year Journey at DISTED College Penang

As Malaysia approaches its 67th Merdeka, the spirit of patriotism fills our hearts, reminding us of the sacrifices made by our forefathers and the unity that has brought us this far. Merdeka is a celebration of our freedom, our identity, and our shared destiny as a nation. For me, this Merdeka holds special significance as I reflect on my 25-year journey as a lecturer at DISTED College Penang.

Since our nation's independence in 1957, the world of computing has undergone remarkable transformations. Back then, computing was in its infancy, with massive machines performing basic calculations. Today, computing powers every aspect of our lives—from the smartphones in our pockets to the complex systems that run our industries. This evolution has been nothing short of extraordinary, and Malaysia has kept pace with the global technological advancements.

DISTED College Penang has been a vital part of this journey. Over the past 25 years, I have witnessed firsthand how the college has evolved, embracing new technologies and continuously updating its curriculum to reflect the changing landscape of the computing world. DISTED has not only provided students with the technical skills needed to thrive in the digital age but has also instilled in them a sense of responsibility to use their knowledge for the betterment of our society.

As we celebrate this Merdeka, let us remember the progress we have made as a nation and the role that education and technology play in shaping our future. My journey at DISTED has been one of growth, both personally and professionally, and I am proud to have contributed to the development of future generations who will carry the torch of patriotism and progress forward.



Seethai Subramaniam  
 Head, School of Computing &  
 Engineering

## Merdeka Miracle: Welcoming My Son on Malaysia's Independence Day

MERDEKA!! The word Merdeka brings another level of meaning that is totally different for me. Delivering a baby boy on August 31, 2015, Malaysia's Independence Day, was an extraordinary experience, blending personal joy with national pride. For a mother in labour, this day brings special meaning and fills my journey with different emotions. The contractions were brutal and nonstop, met with a determination fueled by the very thought of bringing forth life on a day celebrating freedom and unity.

When my baby boy cried for the first time, his voice seemed to be in sync with the nation's celebration of independence. I was exhausted yet so full of new excitement, held my baby boy and felt in union with the history and future of the country. It imprints on the baby's life that special kind of legacy where the date of his birth is associated with something representative of resilience and hope toward a beaming future.

Giving birth to my baby boy on Merdeka Day might be viewed as bringing a new life; what's more, it is a new free life.



Adznida Md Daud  
 Lecturer, School of Business  
 and Hospitality

## Merdeka Spirit: My Journey as a Penangnite Athlete in SUKMA 2024

As a proud Penangnite, I recently had the honor of representing my state in the SUKMA Games held in Sarawak, participating in judo competitions in the Mukah district. Competing in both the nage no kata women (performing arts) and the -57kg shiai (fighting) categories from August 20th to 22nd, I faced tough competition from talented athletes across Malaysia. While I secured two bronze medals, I felt a mix of pride and disappointment, as I hoped to achieve more for Penang. However, the experience was memorable, filled with support and camaraderie from my teammates, who have become like a second family to me.

Upon returning from Sarawak, I received the news that I made the President's list for the January-May 2024 semester at DISTED College. Balancing academics with rigorous sports training was challenging, but I'm proud to have proven that athletes can excel academically as well. I owe much of my success to my cohort mate Eunice, who supported me throughout my academic journey, especially when I was away for competitions.

Looking ahead to the next SUKMA in 2026, I'm determined to aim for gold medals. This journey has been one of sweat, tears, and hard work, and I remain committed to making my state proud. Once a Penangnite, always a Penangnite. The Merdeka Day celebration this year is more meaningful with my achievement.

Delwina Cheah Kah Yan  
 Student of Bachelor of Psychology

## Navigating Stress: A Carousel of Coping Strategies for Students

As we celebrated Merdeka Day, a symbol of freedom, our orientation week fittingly commenced with a Stress Buster workshop designed to help students from the School of Psychology, School of Business and Hospitality, and School of Language and Communication gain independence from the internal pressures of academic life. The workshop provided students with essential tools to manage and reduce stress, setting the stage for personal freedom and academic success.

The workshop kicked off with the "Stress Snapshot" activity, where students took a metaphorical picture of their current stress levels. This self-reflective exercise encouraged them to identify their stressors, evaluate how they were coping, and set personal goals. By becoming aware of their stress triggers, students gained insights into the impact of stress on their well-being.

Following this, the "Stress Carousel" allowed students to move through various stations, each focused on different aspects of stress management. This interactive session exposed them to a range of stress-relief techniques, enabling them to discover which methods resonated with them the most. The activity also revealed the students' creativity in presenting their approaches to stress management.

The Stress Buster workshop effectively equipped students with self-awareness and practical tools to navigate the challenges of academic and personal life, fostering a sense of personal freedom and resilience.

Indra Sellappan  
 Lecturer/ Rehabilitation Psychologist  
 School of Psychology



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