



MALAYSIAN PETROLEUM CLUB
RESOURCE MAGAZINE

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SELAMAT HARI RAYA

Aidilfitri

Maaf Zahir & Batin



There is a lot of science happening at ExxonMobil.

Since 1970, the scientists and engineers at ExxonMobil have contributed to nearly 30,000 patents for innovations in fields across our industry. Along with inventions to produce cleaner fuels, we continue to actively develop technologies such as carbon capture on a mass scale, next-generation biofuels made from algae, and high-efficiency engine lubricants. These are just a few of the technologies we're researching to reduce emissions on a global scale.

ExxonMobil

Energy lives here™

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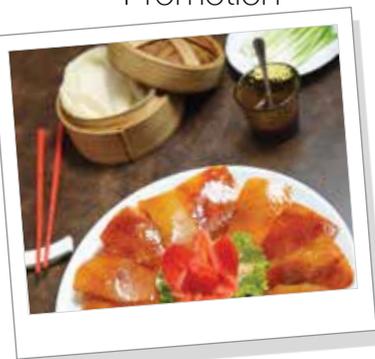
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MPC's Recycling Campaign

TRIPLE R : RECYCLE = RESPONSIBILITY + REWARDS

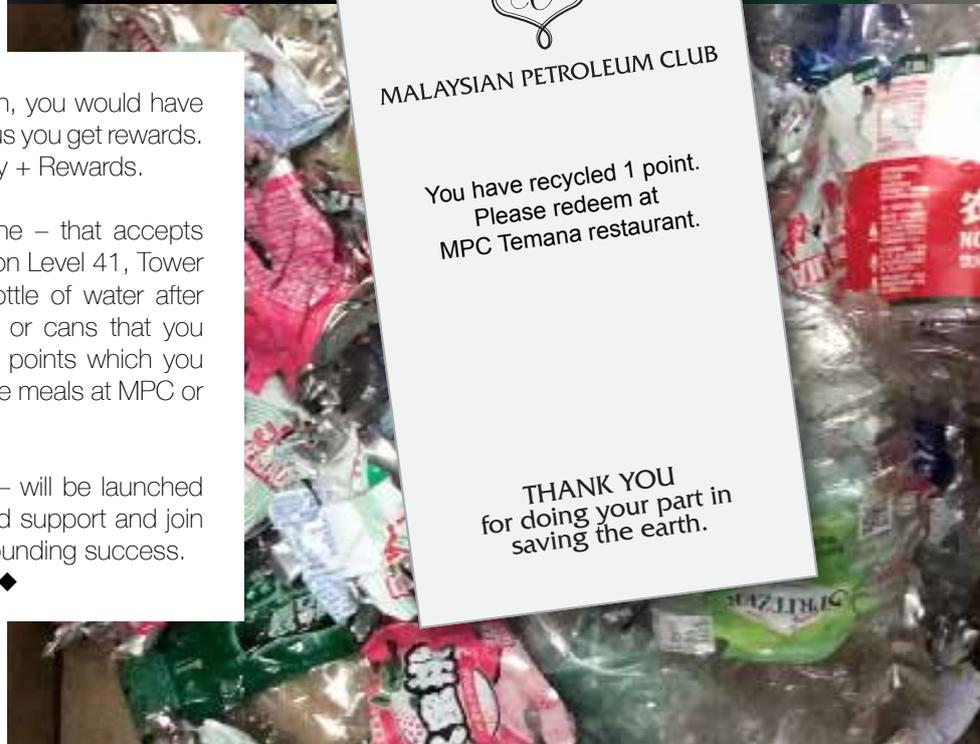
Recycling is not a new concept to Malaysians. Yet Malaysia's recycling rate in 2018 was only 17.5%, a far cry from our government's target of 22% by 2020. So why do we – highly-educated, socially-conscious, socially-responsible, professionals – do not recycle our waste? One of the most obvious reasons could be the lack of facilities for recycling. Where do we send our waste for recycling?

Realising this conundrum, MPC has decided to put its CSR focus, efforts and resources to spearhead a recycling campaign that concentrates on PET (polyethylene terephthalate) plastic bottles and aluminium cans. This recycling campaign will initially focus on MPC members, and tenants of KLCC Towers 1 & 2, and their work force. But with a positive difference.

The well-known concept of recycling 3Rs refers to reduce, reuse, recycle. But the only way to really motivate people to recycle is to incentivise them. In other words, recycle and get something back for your efforts. That's the strategy MPC will adopt for its recycling campaign. Thus when you join MPC in its recycling campaign, you would have fulfilled your social responsibility to recycle, plus you get rewards. So MPC's Triple R is Recycle = Responsibility + Rewards.

MPC will have its Recycling Vendor Machine – that accepts empty plastic bottles and aluminium cans – on Level 41, Tower 2. You can then get back one recycled bottle of water after a pre-determined number of empty bottles or cans that you recycle. On top of that, you will get reward points which you can collect and accumulate to redeem for free meals at MPC or other attractive items.

MPC's recycling campaign – MPC Triple R – will be launched soon. And everyone working in KLCC should support and join MPC to make this recycling campaign a resounding success. Look out for more MPC Triple R news soon! ♦




MALAYSIAN PETROLEUM CLUB

You have recycled 1 point.
Please redeem at
MPC Temana restaurant.

THANK YOU
for doing your part in
saving the earth.

Extraordinary Times Demand Extraordinary Efforts



These are very challenging times with the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected us all, both in Malaysia and globally. We must all do our part and support all efforts to reduce, and hopefully eliminate, the rate of infections.

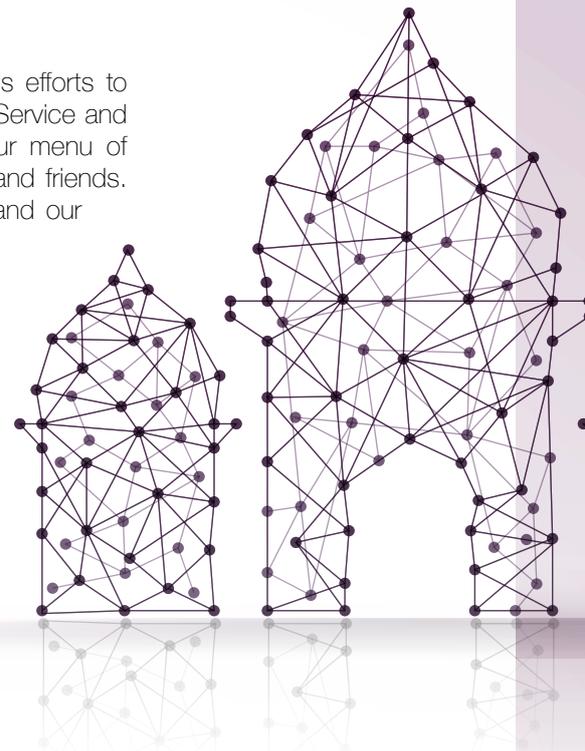
On our part, we have closed our restaurants to avoid social gatherings and to encourage social distancing. Understanding that the closure of our restaurants will bring some inconvenience to our members, we have introduced our Takeaway Service at our takeaway counters, and our Special Food Delivery Service to your office or homes within Kuala Lumpur.

We urge you, our esteemed members, to support MPC's efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19, by using our Takeaway Service and Special Food Delivery Service. You can choose from our menu of delicious lunch sets to order for yourself and colleagues and friends. Yes, even in times like this, we can still treat ourselves, and our friends to lunch, without sitting at the same table.

We pray and hope that this pandemic will end soon. And we have lined up a lot of exciting menus and activities once it is safe to do so. As we will be greeting Ramadan soon, we take this opportunity to wish all Muslims Selamat Berpuasa, and Selamat Hari Raya Aidil Fitri Maaf Zahir & Batin, after we have humbly and steadfastly completed our fasting obligations.

Even the smallest changes in our daily routine can create incredible outcomes, if we all do it together. So stay safe, stay healthy and stay incredibly strong. ◆

Joanne Lee Abdullah
Club Operations Manager



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Recycling Is Everyone's Obligation



Recycling is the process of collecting and processing materials that would otherwise be thrown away as trash and turning them into new products. Recycling also includes purchasing products which may then be processed themselves. Recycling can benefit our communities and environment, and should be everyone's obligation to ensure that future generations do not inherit a land full of unwanted trash. Some of the benefits of recycling are :

- *reduces the amount of waste sent to landfills and incinerators*
- *conserves natural resources such as timber, water and minerals*
- *increases economic security by tapping a domestic source of materials*
- *prevents pollution by reducing the need to collect and use new raw materials*
- *saves energy*
- *helps create jobs in the recycling and related-manufacturing industries*

Typical materials that are recycled include iron and steel scrap, aluminum cans, glass bottles, paper, wood and plastics. The materials reused in recycling serve as substitutes for raw materials obtained from such



ORGANIC



increasingly scarce natural resources like petroleum, natural gas, coal, mineral ores and trees. Recycling can help reduce the quantities of solid waste deposited in landfills, which have become increasingly expensive. It will also reduce the pollution of air, water and land resulting from waste disposal.

Society's choice of whether and how much to recycle depends basically on economic factors. Conditions of affluence and the presence of cheap raw materials encourage our tendency to simply discard used materials. Recycling becomes economically attractive when the cost of reprocessing waste or recycled material is less than the cost of treating and disposing of the materials, or of processing raw materials.

Today, it is not just every government's duty to recycle or that of the local council, but it is our duty and obligation to ourselves, to our communities and to our future generation, to reduce, recycle and reuse. This is what needs to change. We should all use less, re-use what we can, and treat our waste like the waste industry sees it – a resource. Not the ending of something, but the beginning of something else.

We should stop calling them waste. Call them materials. The recycled materials will be new cardboard boxes within a week, and someone else's rubbish after that. And so the cycle continues. ♦

PAPER



PLASTIC



GLASS



METAL



E-WASTE



MIXED





Custard APPLE

For Excellent Health

In North America, apples have a very distinct look. But what about apples grown in other countries? The custard apple or *Annona reticulata* Linn is light green with a bumpy skin. It is found all over India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. However, this fruit originated from the West Indies and South America.

It's called custard apple because it tastes like sweet custard and cooked apple. Together, these flavours are delicate and pleasant. Another name for custard apple is bullock's heart because of its shape. It's widely used in Ayurveda healing, thanks to its powerful medicinal properties. Even the roots, leaves and seeds hold amazing health advantages.

Lowers Risk of Diabetes

The benefits of custard apple for diabetes are incredible. It can lower blood glucose levels and therefore your diabetes risk. What if you already have diabetes? Well, the anti-hyperglycemic (lowering blood glucose) effect will prevent your diabetes from getting even worse.

Lowers Risk of Heart Disease

Custard apples have phytochemicals like tannins and flavonoids. These healthy compounds are also found in tea. Tannin or tannic acid is linked to reduced lipid levels and blood pressure. And flavonoids have a strong history of lowering heart disease risk. A custard apple a day, keeps the doctor away.

Heals Wounds

Custard apple can be used to heal wounds. Its extract speeds up skin cell regrowth and makes room for smoother recovery. In one study, researchers mixed custard apple seed extract (10g) with grape seed extract (3g), ghee (4g), hoiney (2g) and neem oil

(2g) to heal wounds. Consider using custard apple extracts for minor injuries as it has the ability to heal wounds quite effectively. Plus, the anti-bacterial properties will limit the chances of infection.

Relieves Pain

Not just wound healing, a surprising benefit of custard apple is pain relief. This is because of the Kaur-16-en-19-oic acid, a compound that has anti-inflammatory abilities. The effects are even comparable to standard drugs used for analgesic effects.

Fights Bacteria

Custard apple also fights harmful bacteria. According to a study in the Beni-Suef University Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences, extracts of custard apple can kill strains like *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella typhi* and *Staphylococcus aureus*, the bacteria responsible for causing diarrhea, typhoid and pneumonia respectively. The effects are so remarkable that it could serve as a natural antibiotic.





Cure Acne

Acne is caused by bacterial buildup in the skin pores. However, the strong anti-microbial properties of custard apple may help your skin. It'll clear out bacteria, making breakouts less likely. The wound-healing properties of custard apple will also treat existing breakouts.

Prevents Cancer

The health benefits of custard apple include cancer prevention. This super fruit is full of plant chemicals that are also antioxidants that can fight free radicals and protect cells from free radical damage. A study in Nutrition and Cancer found that custard apple leaf extract is toxic to breast cancer cells. It kills the cancerous cells by disrupting the function of the cells' mitochondria – the organelle responsible for a cell's respiration and energy.

As a precaution, please consult your doctor if you want to take custard apple supplements or extracts. Eating the fruit regularly can be beneficial to your health in the long run. Indulge. It's very tasty. ♦





Western Set Lunch

Monday-Friday

SELECTION OF STARTER

Beetroot Salmon Gravlax Rosette

Cucumber Orange Salad & Fresh Picked Mesclun

OR

Smoked Duck Breast

Apple Salsa & Onion Jam

OR

Crustacean Bisque

Parmesan Cheese Stick & Fresh Cream

OR

Fresh Picked Garden Lettuce (VEGAN)

Sliced Apple, Semi Dried Cherry Tomato, Black Olive, Shallot, Corn Kernel & Vinaigrette



MAIN COURSES

Grilled Australian Chilled Sirloin

Potato Au Gratin, Grilled Roots Vegetables & Natural Beef Jus

OR

Pan-Fried Seabass

Grilled Polenta, Pan-Fry Baby Bok Choy in Asian Style, Squid Ink Cracker & Orange Mussel Beurre Blanc

OR

Pan-Seared Chicken Roulade

Mashed Potato, Asparagus, Baby Carrot, Cocktail, Grilled Morel & Natural Chicken Jus

OR

Pasta Pesto (VEGAN)

Grilled Aubergine, Semi-Dried Cherry Tomato, Black Olive & Shaved Parmesan



DESSERT

Lemon Cheese Carrot Cake

OR

Pandan Caramel Cake

AND

Coffee & Tea

Price : RM 128 nett/Pax



MALAYSIAN
PETROLEUM
CLUB

Sing, eat, drink and be happy !

Semarang Karaoke Lounge Promo



MALAYSIAN
PETROLEUM
CLUB



SPEND
RM300
on F&B
Free 1hr
use of
Semarang
Karaoke



SPEND
RM500
on F&B
Free 2hrs
use of
Semarang
Karaoke



SPEND
RM800
on F&B
Free 3hrs
use of
Semarang
Karaoke



SPEND
RM1000
on F&B
Free 5hrs
use of
Semarang
Karaoke



BOOK
Birthday Parties,
Private Functions
or the perfect place
to showcase your
crooning prowess.
Max. 10 Paxs

Your MPC Member SmartCard

MPC is constantly upgrading its services, facilities and technologies in order to provide you with premium benefits you deserve as a club member. One of the benefits is your member SmartCard. More uses for your SmartCard will be added by integrating technological innovations for seamless access to club facilities, that will be added from time to time.

#1 SmartCard Benefit : Easy Air-Gate Access

You already have easy access through the Air-Gate with your SmartCard, on the ground floor of KLCC, which we have introduced many months ago, without the need to register at the MPC counter.

#2 SmartCard Benefit : Bayan Bar Sliding Glass Door

Since January 2020, we have installed a new sliding glass door for Bayan Bar, which you can access by touching your SmartCard on the electronic pad. There is also a New Coffee Bar where you can help yourself to as many cups of coffee and espressos, as well as cookies, free of charge. However, non-members will be charged a nominal sum of RM10 per person. This is very convenient as you can quickly grab a cup of coffee and some cookies for yourself and your guests, and get right down to your discussions. Or for just a quick breather from your hectic schedule, before you head out again.

#3 SmartCard Benefit : Coming Soon !





MALAYSIAN
PETROLEUM
CLUB

Member-Get-Member: Here's Your Opportunity to Earn 2,000 Points (RM 2,000)

All you have to do is get 5 confirmed new club members and you'll earn 2,000 points (RM2,000) that will be credited into your MPC account. That's great isn't it? Get your colleagues and friends to be MPC members so that they can enjoy all the facilities and prestige of being a member just like you, and earn RM2,000.

So put your networking skills and contacts to good use. Start today!

GET 5 CONFIRMED NEW CLUB MEMBERS



MPC – Your Gateway To 250 International Clubs Around The World.



West Lake Mansion,
Hangzhou, China

Welcome to the International Associate Club (IAC), a global reciprocal affiliation network, which currently includes 250 private City, Country and Sporting Clubs, as well as prestigious Golf Resorts in over 50 countries.

This means you have direct access to IAC member clubs that offer a wide range of facilities, including 60 golf courses, over 100 clubs with sports facilities and, for that business trip, prestigious venues suitable for conferences and entertainment in most key cities.

All Clubs must meet exacting standards of service and luxury to qualify as an affiliate to this exclusive global membership club network. IAC has a strong presence in all continents and is continually adding new clubs every year. To-date, IAC worldwide membership exceeds 330,000.

IAC's website www.iacworldwide.com provides all the relevant information you need for your prospective visits to IAC clubs, including the location of the club, amenities available, opening times and much more. Their brand new booking system will also allow you to make your own bookings with a few simple clicks: whether it's reserving a table in a club restaurant or booking a round of golf, it's all very easy.

MPC members who wish to visit any of the clubs during their travels must first obtain a letter that is duly signed by MPC's Club Manager. They will then be given a membership card that must be presented at the club or clubs they wish to visit to enjoy all the benefits and facilities.

Collect your IAC Card at MPC after you have registered at this IAC website www.iacworldwide.com as a member of IAC.

Register for your IAC account

Please fill out the fields below in order to access the IAC Membership Portal.

Last name

Enter last name

Home club

Malaysian Petroleum Club

Membership number

Enter member number

I already have a membership card.

REGISTER

Happy Clubbing!



Devonshire Club, London, UK



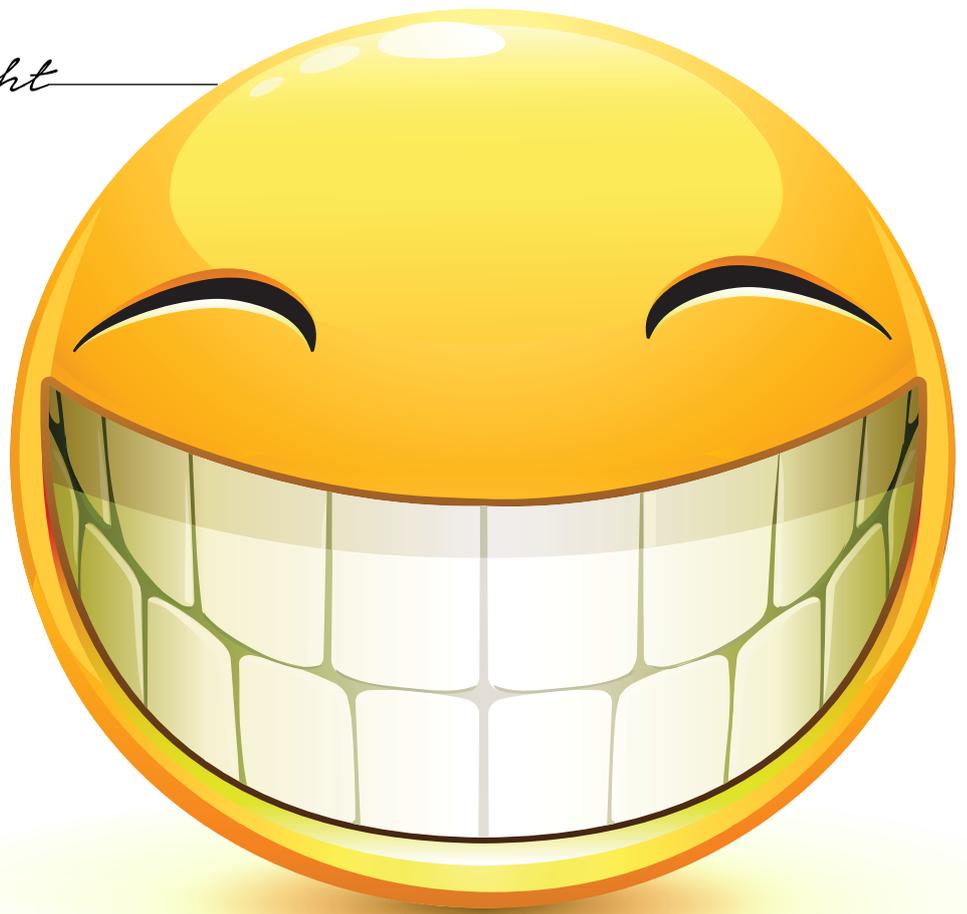
The Vintage, Hunter Valley, Australia



Capital Club Bahrain, UAE



Bali National Golf Club, Bali, Indonesia



Want To Be Happy? Then Learn To Be Miserable ;)

It's wonderful if you can be positive all the time. But it's not possible. Life is not like that.

In the 2017 Harris Poll of 2,200 adults, only one-third say they are happy. Not surprising when Millennials are calling themselves the "burnout generation". Even the New York Times magazine is saying that the "elites" are miserable. So why are we told every day in every possible way that happiness is the ultimate goal in life? It's just bad programming and why not, people have been cashing in on self-help books, seminars and what have you. For generations, this myth called happiness had been perpetuated and ingrained into young minds....."and they lived happily ever after". Sounds familiar?

So why are people still unhappy?

It can be deduced that the source of privileged people's unhappiness lies in overly high expectations, and too little practice struggling with obstacles early on in life. According to many research studies, people today have placed devotion to work as the highest priority in their lives. Making more money, getting that promotion and climbing the never-ending social ladder can only lead to more

unhappiness. Ironically, people think these ambitions will make them happy in the long run. Instead, they are always busy, confused and sad.

Herein lies the main problem – it's the clamouring for happiness that makes people miserable. Trying too hard to be happy yields the opposite result. The more invested you are in achieving happiness, the more likely you will be obsessed over your failure of not achieving it.

Happiness is a good thing, wonderful in fact. But setting it up as something to be achieved tends to fail rather spectacularly. The universal truth is that we have to consider misery, discomfort and disappointments in any existential calculation. A lot of things don't go right. The best relationships involve pain, and the greatest jobs are also tedious and tiring. Nothing can be fun all the time, and some stuff that end up enjoyable may seem dreadful while you were doing it.

Here are some hard truths about life that every major religion, philosopher and great thinkers have been trying to teach us. Desire causes suffering. All living beings struggle their way into existence and survive with pain -

HAPPINESS
..... *is not a*
DESTINATION
..... *it is a*
WAY
OF LIFE

physically, mentally, emotionally – until they die. To escape this cycle is impossible but we can make peace with the process, and appreciate the difficult adventure which we call our life.

Learning to want and need less can help us to minimize our suffering. Learning to have lower expectations of everything and every situation also helps greatly to minimize our unrealistic demands fueled by our ego and imagination. We must be realistic but resolved, rather than deluded, desirous and determined to have the impossible. By including discomfort and struggle into our lives' equation, we can remain cautiously optimistic, knowing surely that's trouble ahead, but that we will face it with grace.

According to a Zen master, handling our suffering is an art. If we know how to suffer, we suffer much less, and we're no longer afraid of being overwhelmed by the suffering. We should not be afraid of suffering. We should be afraid of only one thing, and that is not knowing how to deal with our suffering. Still following?

So how do you suffer properly? Cultivate perspective.

Happiness cannot last long. And if you chase it, it will elude you time and again. It's precious and momentary. That is what makes it so delightful. It arises unexpectedly.

It can't be planned or pursued. We can only make room for it when it happens. We have no control over it.

Over millennia, no one has avoided suffering successfully. It's unlikely any of us will be the exception. The wise thing to do is to accept this sad but funny fact. What we really need more than positivity is objectivity. And this can be learned. Know that you'll fail, you'll fall, you'll feel pain, and be sad. You will be rejected. You will get sick. Your expectations will not be met.

Know also that it can always get worse. That's why it's worth remembering that every day, good things do happen too. Small little things to be thankful for and to be savoured. A genuine smile, a warm touch, good health, people who care about us, having enough to eat and to wear, enjoying a good meal with good company, and so many other small blessings we take for granted.

We should be thankful for everything we have, and not be miserable about things we don't have.

Serenity isn't freedom from the storm, but peace within the storm.

Now that you know how to be miserable and how to suffer elegantly, perhaps happiness will embrace you soon, when you least expect it. ♦

Tech or No Tech On Holidays?



Technology – whether we see it as good or bad – has become an integral part of life. In the travel and hospitality industries it is driving change, with mobile increasingly at the heart of developments. More sophisticated devices mean we can be better connected for work, but those benefits seemingly have a negative flip side as it is harder to escape from the technology, and even during down time we cannot stop ourselves from going online.

According to an article in the Blue Swan Daily, a new survey from international roaming service TravelSim has shown that UK travelers are spending more than half an hour each day using tech for work while on holidays. And over a third of people say they are anxious if they don't have access to the internet on holiday. Shouldn't going on holiday seem like the perfect time to switch off from work and technology?

Well, apparently it isn't so.

In fact, the research showed that UK holidaymakers spent a whopping average of four and a half hours using tech each day. And just around a sixth of the time (44 minutes) is actually spent on direct messaging apps, despite the fact that the number one reason people gave for taking tech on holiday is to keep in touch with family and friends.

When it comes to social media and direct messaging, there is a gender divide. Women dedicate more of their holiday time to these than men. Women spend 42 minutes more each day on social media and direct messaging apps than men, and over the course of a week's holiday, this racks up almost 5 hours more online time.



That's how attached we are to our phones, at least for UK people. But this is probably true for the rest of the world as well. The survey went on to reveal that 53% of respondents say that they couldn't go on holiday without their mobile phone. For 25-34 year olds, this figure increases to 72%, yet 49% of them also say they would like to use their phone less while on holiday, but find it difficult to do so.

Access to the internet is a genuine consideration when booking a holiday as a third of the respondents (33%) said they would be less likely to book a holiday in an area that doesn't have good internet access. While a similar number of people (32%) say they get anxious on holiday if they can't access the internet.



For a large number of travelers, much of the ‘tech time’ can be attributed to keeping children entertained – this is an important factor for tech use among parents. More than half of parents (59%) say they take tech on holiday to entertain their children, and just over two in five (44%) say they find it easier to relax if their children have access to tech. More than half of the parents (57%) also say that travelling with children is less stressful if they have access to tech, and a third (33%) agree that mealtimes are also easier if children have access to tech.

The survey also highlighted that occupations have an important role on the likeliness to use tech while on holiday. Those that work in human resources find it hardest to break the work bug and spend around a third (30%) of their total holiday working with tech. 40% of HR people say they are in regular contact with colleagues while on holiday.

Most of us are guilty of keeping one eye on emails while on holiday, even if it is just to keep on top of our inboxes to avoid hundreds, even thousands of unread messages when we return to work. But increasingly, it appears that people are taking work on holiday to ease stress. This might seem strange, but people working in sales, media and marketing really do just that. One third of survey respondents (35%) say they feel less stressed about work if they have access to tech that allows them to keep on top of work while on holiday.

If that is the reality of our lives with tech and our phones right now, imagine what would tech be like for our children when they become adults? Now that is really tech for thought. ♦



*Chef Lai's
Signature
Dish*

Seligi's Lunch & Dinner Promotion

Peking Duck

RM268

Peking Duck is a specialty dish from Beijing (Peking) that has been prepared since the imperial era for the Emperors of China. There are 3 ways the Peking Duck is served. First, it is served with its thin, crisp skin with very little meat and dipped with special sauces. Next the meat is served Black Pepper Style or Ginger & Spring Onion. And lastly, the bones and some meat are cooked to make Salted Vegetable Soup or Deep-fried with Salt & Pepper. Treat yourself and feast like an Emperor or Empress. You deserve it.

Serving Method

- 3 Ways:**
- 1. Skin:** Served with Condiments
 - 2. Meat:** Black Pepper Style or Ginger & Spring Onion
 - 3. Bones:** (Optional) Add RM20
Salted Vegetable Soup or
Deep-fried with Salt & Pepper





Dulang Suite



Lemana Brasserie



Seligi Pavilion

Celebrate Your Birthday In Style!

We want to make your Birthday really special as an exclusive member of our Malaysian Petroleum Club. That's why we have put together all these treats, just for you to celebrate with your family and friends, at any of our finest restaurants. Or in all of them!

All these treats specially for you...

Free - One Bottle of Wine/Sparkling Juice, when you dine at the Malaysian Petroleum Club.

Free - One Birthday Cake, when you dine at the Malaysian Petroleum Club.

Free - One Hour of Fun Singing @ Semarang Karaoke Room.

Free - Exclusive Sky Deck Viewing Experience.

50% - Discount for 4-10 people at any one of the restaurants. Applicable once only.



Sky Deck



Sky Bridge



MPC members can now go up to the Sky Deck for a most memorable cityscape view of KL. Please enquire at MPC for more details.



Origins Of Favourite Foods

Ever wondered where these favourite foods came from? You will be surprised to discover the origins of some of these foods.

Hamburgers

Historians point to Genghis Khan's army for creating the earliest version of a hamburger in the 1200s. Genghis's Mongol cavalry needed to eat on the move while they rode on horseback. Chopped up raw lamb meat was perfect because they could eat with one hand while using the other to steer the horse. When Kublai Khan invaded Moscow, he introduced ground meat to the Russians. Over the years, Russian chefs adapted Steak Tartare or Mongolian Steak, but refined it by including other local ingredients and spices.

By the 1600s, the Russian version of steak tartare eventually made its way to the port of Hamburg, Germany. The locals adored the Russian meat dish and quickly adopted it as its own. It became known throughout Germany as Hamburg Steak. In New York city at the end of the 1800s, food vendors wanted to attract business from German sailors by offering special Hamburg-style patty steaks. At some point, vendors started serving smaller versions between pieces of bread. Thus the modern-day hamburger was born.

Pie

The pye – as it used to be spelled – is a venerable dish which can be traced all the way back to ancient Greece and Rome. But those pastry-based dishes were not the desserts we think of today. Instead, they were overwhelmingly savory dishes, and for good reason. The crusts could help the contents of the pie (meat typically) last a little longer than they could otherwise.

The apple pie's original recipe came from England. These pre-Revolutionary prototypes were made with unsweetened apples and encased in an inedible shell. Yet the apple pie developed a following and was first referenced in 1589 in a poem "Thy breath is like the steeme of apple pies".

Caesar Salad

Although many people assume that Caesar Salad originated in Rome and was named after Julius Caesar, the salad is believed to have been invented by an Italian immigrant in Tijuana Mexico. In 1924, Caesar Cardini,





owner of a restaurant on a busy street, was running low on ingredients and was caught by surprise when a large group of patrons arrived. In an attempt to improvise, he tossed together a few items he had on hand – romaine lettuce, garlic, croutons, Parmesan cheese, olive oil, eggs and Worcestershire sauce. Impressed with the creation, patrons quickly spread the word, and a salad sensation was born.

Cardini and his daughter later launched Cardini Foods to sell the popular bottled Caesar salad dressing, still striving until today.

Sandwich

Many people are aware of the association between sandwiches and the British statesman John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich (1718 – 1792). According to one account, Montagu, a gambler in his private life, was deep in poker play and unwilling to break for food. He requested a servant to bring him a piece of meat, stuffed between two slices of toast, so he could eat without stopping the card game. Apparently, his friends supported his request and began asking for the same “sandwich”.

Capitalising on the family name, the 11th Earl of Sandwich (a direct descendant) established a sandwich shop called “The Earl of Sandwich” in Florida in 2004, with franchise locations throughout the United States and in London and Paris.

French Toast

People usually assume that French toast has its origins in France. However, the etymology of the popular breakfast dish is still unclear. During medieval times, a battering process was used to make stale loaves of bread more appetizing. An extremely popular and similar dish, supped orate, was popular in England during the Middle Ages. There's also a story about an innkeeper in Albany, New York, named Joseph French. In 1724 he advertised the dish “French Toast” because he reportedly had not learned to use apostrophes.

Waffles

This peculiarly patterned breakfast staple has a surprisingly long and illustrious history. The ancient Greeks used a waffle iron to make cakes. And the treat came to the New World with some of its earliest European settlers. It is believed that waffles arrived in the US with the Pilgrims, who sampled them in Holland en route to Massachusetts. Thomas Jefferson reportedly brought a waffle iron home from France around 1789, helping spark a fad for waffle parties in the US.



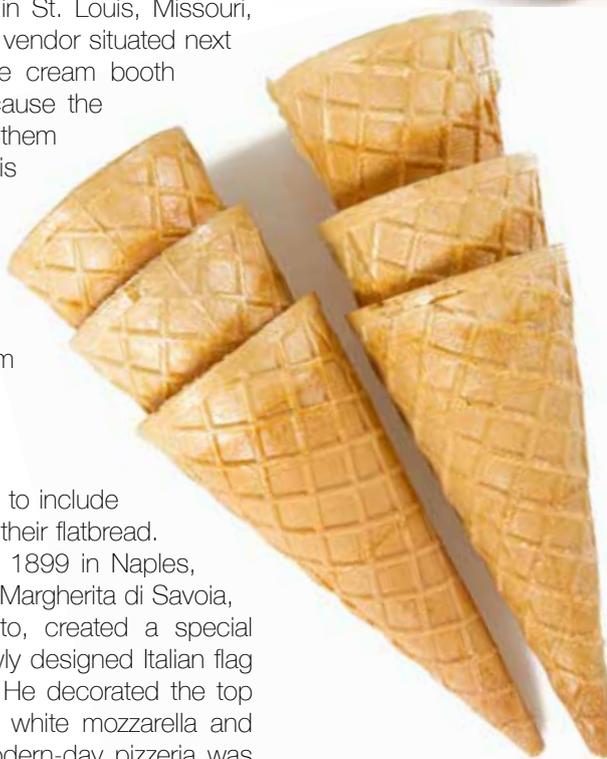
Peanut Butter

Peanut Butter's origin is a bit of a mystery. Contrary to popular myth that George Washington Carter came up with the idea, there's evidence that some version of peanut butter was made decades before George Washington published his 1916 text "How To Grow The Peanut & 105 Ways Of Preparing It For Human Consumption". However, Dr John Harvey Kellogg has a good claim as the inventor too. In 1895, the cereal pioneer patented a process for turning raw peanuts into a butter-like vegetarian health food. The taste caught on, and in a few years, the spread had gone mainstream.



Ice Cream Waffle Scones

The first time ice cream was served in a waffle-like cone was in 1904 at the World's Fair in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. Ernest Hamwi was a pastry vendor situated next to the ice cream booth. The ice cream booth ran out of ice cream dishes because the customers were not returning them fast enough. Hamwi offered up his waffles as a means to hold the ice cream. Patrons raved about the odd combination of ice cream inside rolled-up waffles. Since then his waffle cones were baked wafer-thin and ice cream was scooped inside and topped.



Pizza

Greeks and Romans were known to include different ingredients on the top of their flatbread. The modern pizza dates back to 1899 in Naples, Italy. To honour the visit of Queen Margherita di Savoia, a baker named Raffaele Esposito, created a special flatbread dish inspired by the newly designed Italian flag colours of red, white and green. He decorated the top of his flatbread with green basil, white mozzarella and red tomato. In 1905, the first modern-day pizzeria was opened in New York City, USA by Gennaro Lombardi.



Doughnut

The origin of doughnut dates back to the mid-19th century when the Dutch were making olykoeks or oily cakes – balls of cake fried in pork fat. As the center of the cake would not cook as quickly as the outside, the pastries occasionally were stuffed with fruits or nuts, which required no cooking.

Another popular story was about Elizabeth Gregory, a New England ship captain's mother, who prepared deep-fried dough for the boat's crew to enjoy on long voyages. She stuffed the dough with hazelnuts or walnuts and referred to the treats as doughnuts. According to her son, Hanson



Gregory, he invented the familiar ring shape in 1847, while abroad his ship. In an effort to eliminate the raw insides, he claimed to have punched a hole through the center of the dough with the ship's tin pepper box. The hole increased the doughnuts exposure to the hot oil and therefore eliminated the uncooked center.

Barbecue

Though the word "barbecue" is wrongly used to label all manner of grilled meats, it actually refers to a specific process of using indirect heat to slowly cook the meat. The conventional wisdom is that the Spanish, upon landing in the Caribbean, used the word 'barbacoa' to refer to the natives' method of slow-cooking meat over a wooden platform. By the 19th century, this culinary technique was well-established in the American South. As pigs were prevalent in the region, pork became the primary meat for barbecues. Eventually, barbecue evolved into several regional styles with their own preferences for meats and unique flavours. ♦



Renewable Energy



Renewable Energy is energy produced from sources that do not deplete, or can be replenished within a human's lifetime. The most common examples include wind, solar, geothermal, biomass and hydropower.

Most renewable energy is derived directly or indirectly from the sun. Sunlight can be captured directly using solar technologies. The sun's heat drives winds, whose energy is captured with turbines. Plants also rely on the sun to grow and their stored energy can be utilized for bioenergy.

Not all renewable sources rely on the sun. For example, geothermal energy utilizes the earth's internal heat. Tidal energy on the other hand, relies on the gravitational pull of the moon, and hydropower relies on the flow of water.

Renewable energy accounts for 13.5% of the world's total energy supply, and 22% of the world's electricity. Renewable energy systems are a major topic when discussing the globe's energy future for two main reasons :

- *Renewable energy systems provide energy from sources that will never deplete.*
- *Renewable energy systems produce less greenhouse gas emissions than fossil fuel energy systems.*

While renewable energy systems are better for the environment and produce less emissions than conventional energy sources, many of these sources still face difficulties in being deployed due to technological barriers, high start-up costs and intermittency challenges. It is important to note that the terms 'renewable energy', 'green energy'



Types of Renewable Energy

and 'clean energy' are not interchangeable in all cases.

For example, a 'clean' coal plant is simply a coal plant with emissions reduction technology. The coal plant itself is still not a 'renewable energy' source. 'Green energy' is a subset of renewable energy, that boasts low or zero emissions and low environmental impacts to systems such as land and water.

Ironically, even though renewable energy is often thought of as a new technology, harnessing nature's power has long been used for heating, transportation, lighting and more. Wind has powered boats to sail the seas and windmills to grind grain. The sun has provided warmth during the day and helped kindle fires. Over the last 500 years, humans have increasingly turned to cheaper but unrenowable energy sources such as coal, fossil fuels and fracked gas. Is polluting our environment the price we pay for our demand for instant energy day and night, to sustain our modern, urban lifestyles? Perhaps now is the time to gradually switch to renewable energy sources to reverse the effects of global warming.

Oil & Gas Companies Are Investing In Renewable Energy

The reality is that displacing and replacing fossil fuels won't be easy, nor cheap. Moving towards a renewable future as quickly as possible will require help from the world's largest oil companies which have incredible capital generation capabilities that renewable energy technologies require. It also makes perfect economic sense as fossil fuel will deplete in the future. And what is left to harness is renewable energy and innovative technologies that curtail CO₂ emissions. This transition has already started from investing in solar energy to developing next-generation genetically-engineered algae to produce renewable crude.

This heavy focus on synthetic biology may be the way forward to replace drilling for crude oil. These include researching extensively in low-carbon technologies like fuel cells that capture and consume CO₂ to produce electricity and manufacturing plastics with 50% less CO₂ emissions, to name a few. ◆



SOLAR

Humans have been harnessing solar energy for thousands of years – to grow crops, stay warm and dry our foods. According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, more energy from the sun falls on the earth in one hour than it is used by everyone in the world in one year.

Solar, or photovoltaic (PV), cells are made from silicon or other materials that transform sunlight directly into electricity. Distributed solar systems generate electricity locally for homes and businesses, either through rooftop panels or community projects that power entire neighbourhoods. Solar farms can generate power for thousands of homes, using mirrors to concentrate sunlight across acres of solar cells. Floating solar farms, or floatovoltaics, can be an effective use of waste-water facilities or bodies of water that aren't ecologically sensitive.

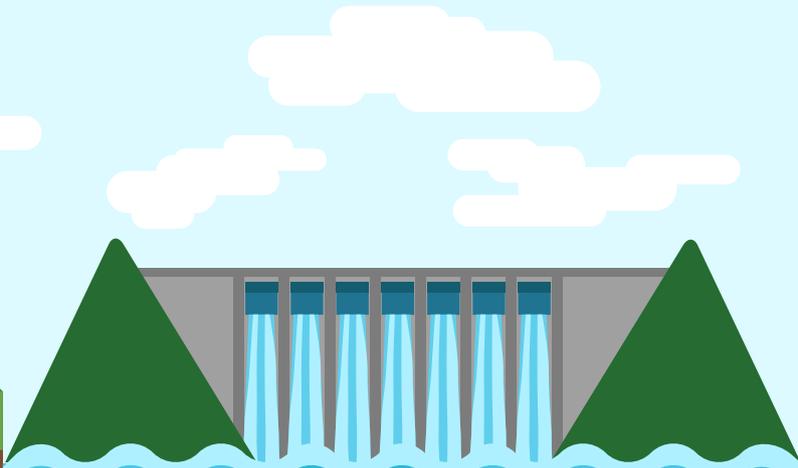
Solar energy systems don't produce air pollutants or greenhouse gases, and as long as they are responsibly sited, most solar panels have few environmental impacts beyond the manufacturing process.



WIND

We've come a long way from old-fashioned wind mills. Today, turbines as tall as skyscrapers, with turbines nearly as wide in diameter, stand at attention around the world. Wind energy turns the turbine blades, that feed an electric generator and produces electricity.

Wind has become one of the cheapest energy sources and can be placed anywhere with high wind speeds such as hilltops, open plains or even offshore in open water.



HYDRO ELECTRIC

Hydropower is one of the largest energy sources for electricity globally. Hydropower relies on water, typically fast-moving water from a large river or rapidly descending water from a high point, and converts the force of that water into electricity by spinning a generator turbine blades.

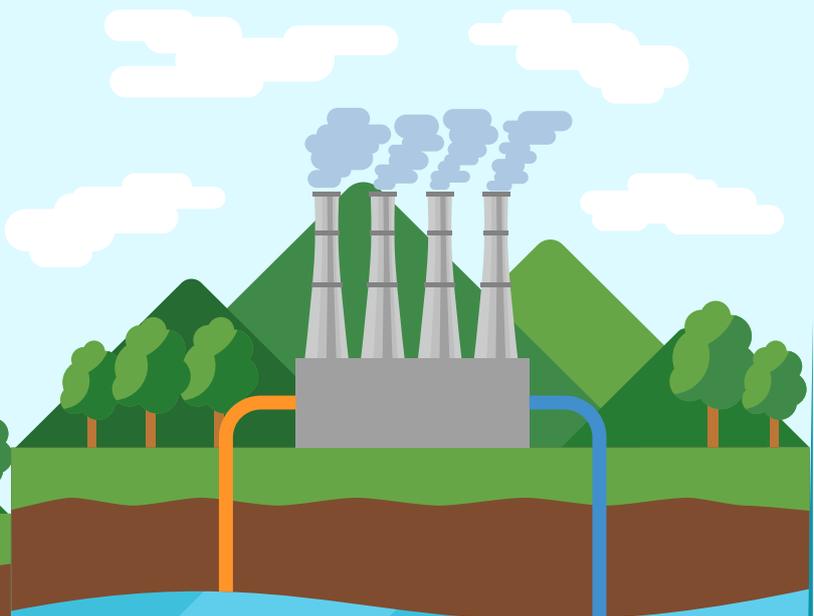
However, today, large hydroelectric plants or mega dams are often considered to be non-renewable energy. Mega dams divert and reduce natural river flows, restricting access for animal and human populations that rely on rivers. Small hydroelectric plants (an installed capacity below 40 megawatts) that are carefully managed are better alternatives as they do not cause huge environmental damage, diverting only a fraction of the river flow.



BIOMASS

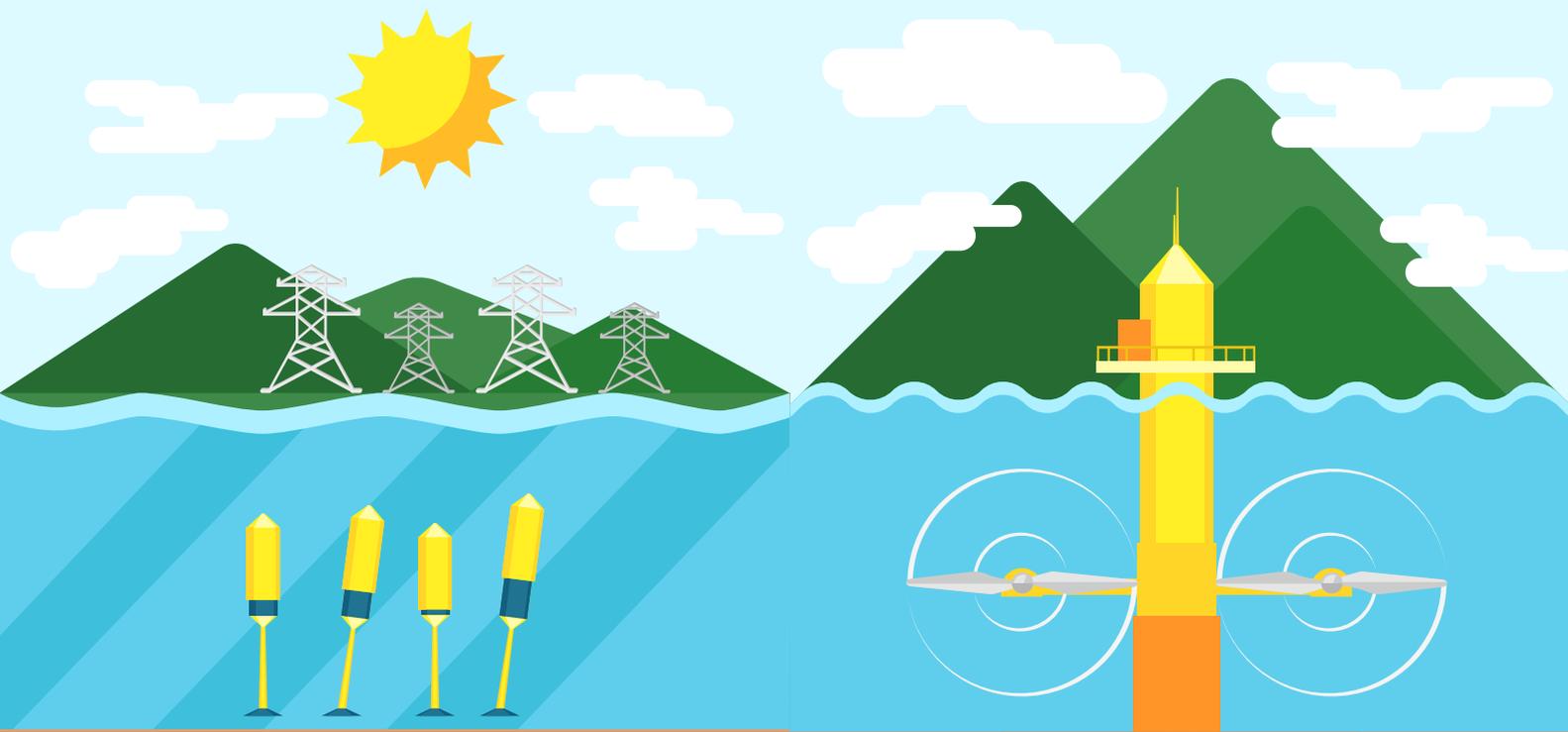
Biomass is organic material that comes from plants or animals, including crops, waste wood and trees. When biomass is burned, the chemical energy is released as heat that generate electricity with a steam turbine. Biomass is often mistakenly described as 'clean' renewable fuel and a greener alternative to coal and other fossil fuels. However, recent scientific studies show that many forms of biomass, especially from forests, produce higher carbon emissions than fossil fuels. There are also negative consequences for biodiversity.

All things considered, some forms of biomass energy could serve as low-carbon options under the right circumstances. Saw-dust and chips from saw-mills that would otherwise quickly decompose and release carbon can be a low-carbon energy source.



GEOTHERMAL

If you've ever relaxed in a hot spring, you've used geothermal energy. The earth's core is about as hot as the sun's surface, due to the slow decay of radioactive particles in the rocks at the core of our planet. Drilling deep wells brings very hot underground water to the surface as a hydrothermal source. The steam from hot water is then pumped through a turbine to produce electricity. However, there are concerns that these geothermal plants may increase the risk of an earthquake in areas already considered geological hot spots.



WAVE AND TIDAL

These forms of energies are still in the developmental phase but the theory is that the great oceans of our planet will always be ruled by the moon's gravity, and this makes harnessing its power an attractive option. Some tidal energy options may harm wildlife such as tidal barrages which work much like dams. While wave power also relies on dam-like structures or ocean-anchored devices on or just below the surface of the water.



NEW KIKU

The New Kiku has been completely refurbished to create a new event space for our members. It can be used for any corporate events or even meetings. We can convert this elegantly appointed space to suit your need. It can be for personal functions like anniversaries, weddings, birthday parties, and reunion dinners.

Just let us know your event and we will help transform this space creatively for a memorable event.





Central Asia: The Stans Countries.

Central Asia also known affectionately as The Stans, is a vast region stretching from the Caspian Sea to China in the east. The Stans are made up of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The countries have Afghanistan and Iran as neighbours in the south and mighty Russia to the north. The suffix 'stan' in Persian and Urdu means "land of". So if you're in Kyrgyzstan, you're in the land of the Kyrgyz. The Stan countries offer such diverse and distinct experiences, each unique to its own region.

For example, Turkmenistan is dominated by a desert, but Tajikistan is all about its majestic mountains. Uzbekistan brims with Silk Road cities, but Kyrgyzstan is the place for hiking and horse riding. The Stans have a very long history which included the most recent, as former Soviet republics. In pre-Islamic and early Islamic times, Central Asia was predominantly Iranian, populated by Bactrians, Sogdians, Chorasmians, Scythians and Dahae. After expansion by the Turkic people, Central Asia became the homeland for the Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Tatars, Turkmen, Kyrgyz and Uyghurs. The Turkic language soon replaced the Iranian language spoken here.

Central Asia has historically been closely tied to its nomadic peoples and the Silk Road. It has acted as a crossroads for the movement of people, goods and ideas between Europe, Western Asia, South Asia and East Asia. From the mid-19th century until almost the end of the 20th century, most of Central Asia was part of the Russian Empire, and later the Soviet Union. Central Asia has a population of 72 million : Kazakhstan (18 million), Kyrgyzstan (6 million), Tajikistan (9 million), Turkmenistan (6 million) and Uzbekistan (33 million).

The history of Central Asia is defined by the area's climate and geography. The aridness of the region made agriculture difficult, and its distance from the sea cut it off from much trade. Thus few major cities developed in the region. Instead, the area was for millennia dominated by the nomadic horse people of the steppe.



UZBEKISTAN

This is the cradle of Central Asia's culture for more than two millennia. Uzbekistan is the proud home to a spellbinding arsenal of architecture and ancient cities, all infused with the political conflicts and fascinating history of the Silk Road. In terms of sights alone, Uzbekistan is Central Asia's biggest draw and most impressive showstopper.

According to the Lonely Planet, Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva never fail to impress visitors with their fabulous mosques, madrasahs and mausoleums, while its more eccentric attractions such as the fast disappearing Aral Sea, the fortresses of desperately remote Karakalpakstan, its boom town capital Tashkent and the ecotourism opportunities of the Nuratau Mountains, mean even the most diverse tastes can be catered for. Of the 5 Stan countries, Uzbekistan is the most populous.

Despite being a strictly governed police state, Uzbekistan remains an extremely friendly country where hospitality remains an essential element of daily life and you'll be made to feel genuinely welcome by the people you meet.

Tashkent

Tashkent is the capital of Uzbekistan and one of the largest cities of Central Asia. It is one of the ancient cities of the world and in 2009, Tashkent celebrated its 2,200th anniversary. No other Central Asian city has been studied so thoroughly by scientists as this modern capital of Uzbekistan. During the years of independence, more than 240 architectural and archaeological monuments within the city have been brought to light.



Today, the images of ancient times such as mosques, madrasahs and minarets stand in elegant grandeur among parks, museums, fountains, modern skyscrapers and highway flyovers. A city tour will bring you to the Monument of Courage, Romanov Prince Duke's Residence, Opera and Ballet Theatre, Memorial of Repressions Victims, Tashkent TV Tower, Khazrat Imam Complex and many more.

Lake Charvak

This is a popular resort in Tashkent and many holiday makers from all over the country and neighbouring countries visit this reservoir. Villages on the banks and surroundings offer a wide range of hotels, dachas, houses and tapchans.

Amir Timur Museum

This museum was open in 1996 to commemorate the famous Mongol warrior, Amir Timur. The blue cupola museum resembles Gur-I Amir mausoleum in Samarkand built on the traditions of medieval architecture. Located on a large square that also houses a small park, gymnasium and schools in the immediate vicinity, the museum and the monument of Amir Timur, standing proudly as a bronze figure with imperial regalia on a reared horse, are impressive sights.

There are so many more sights and attractions around and within Tashkent that will take you days to explore to your heart's content. So go discover!

Samarkand

The historic town of Samarkand is a crossroad and melting pot of the world's cultures. Founded in the 7th century BC as ancient Afrasiab, Samarkand had its most significant development in the Timurid period from 14th to the 15th centuries. The major monuments include the Registan Mosque and Madrasah, Bibi-Khanum Mosque, Shakh-Zinda compound, Gur-Emir ensemble, and Ulugh-Beg's Observatory. Samarkand like Bukhara, is one of the oldest continuously inhabited towns from two millennia back.

Samarkand is an exquisite place that will fill your heart and mind with ornate, ancient and stunningly beautiful architecture and intricate tilework by master craftsman wherever you turn. The best of Islamic cultural creativity. It is believed that Samarkand's mosque and madrasah architecture were the inspiration for the Taj Mahal in Agra, India. It even rivals the stunning architecture in Isfahan, Tehran and Kashan in Iran.

Bukhara

Bukhara is located in the south-western part of Uzbekistan about 200 km from Samarkand. It is one of the oldest cities in Central Asia and is known as the 'Star of the Islamic World'. In the middle ages, there were 360 mosques and 80 madrasahs in this city alone. Founded 2,500 years ago by the Persian Prince Siyavush, the city began rapid expansion due to its strategic location at the crossroads of trade.



The Pearl of the City is a small mausoleum of the Samanids, recently celebrated its millennium anniversary. There is also the architectural wonder of Poi Kalyan (Pillar of Greatness) that comprises the Great Minaret Kalyan, one of the highest in Asia and the Kalyan Mosque. There are more than 20 great mosques and madrasahs to visit and be awestruck by the architecture, ornate tilework, meticulous construction and creative, tranquil spaces to calm mind, body and soul.

So much to see, to do and yet so little time. That's the lament of world travellers when the time comes to leave Bukhara.

Khiva

Located 450 km to the northwest of Bukhara, Khiva is a pocket-size gem akin to a living museum within a walled city. It offers a delightful labyrinth of narrow mud-walled alleyways and spectacular blue mosaics that will sweep you back in time. There are many mosques, mausoleums, madrasahs and bazaar that will stun you with their architecture and magnificent mosaic tilework. It offers a slow pace of life yet still so inspiring. A must-see before you leave the magnificent land of Uzbekistan.







KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakhstan is the ninth-largest country by area and the largest landlocked country in the world. It is also the largest country amongst the Stan countries in Central Asia, and the most economically advanced in this region, thanks to its abundant oil reserves and other valuable minerals. The country inherited the culture of the ancient Silk Road, nomadic lifestyle and Soviet Union which have had a great influence on its formation.

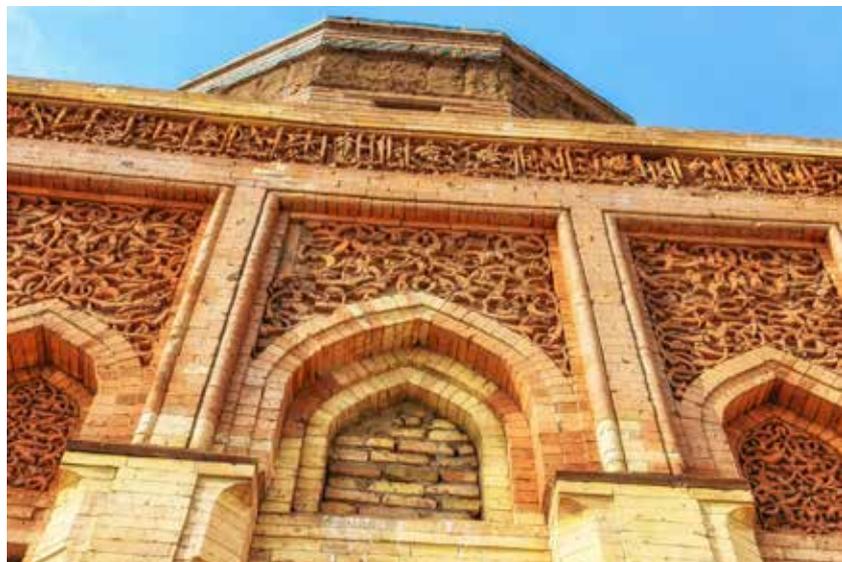
While Kazakhstan is relatively unexplored and less visited by global travellers, it offers better standards of accommodation, restaurants and transportation in the region. Besides its European style capital and cities, it is beyond the cities that you'll find the greatest travel adventures, whether hiking in the high mountains and green valleys of the Tian Shan or searching for wildlife on the dotted steppe. You'll truly enjoy homespun hospitality in village guesthouses or venturing out across the western deserts to remote underground mosques.

Nur-Sultan

Previously named Astana, this capital of Kazakhstan was renamed Nur-Sultan in March 2019, after the departing Kazakh president, Nursultan Nazarbayev. This is the second largest city in the country, after Almaty, and is a planned city under the supervision of its main architect, Kisho Kurokawa. As the seat of the government, Nur-Sultan is the site of the Parliament House, the Supreme Court, the Ak Orda Presidential Palace and numerous government departments and agencies. It is home to many futuristic buildings, hotels and skyscrapers.

Almaty

Almaty lies in the southeast of Kazakhstan and was





once the capital of the country. This modern city is the largest city of Kazakhstan and is still the commercial and financial hub of the nation. Interestingly, the city was called Almaty, meaning Father of Apples, alluding to the many apple trees grown in this city. This cosmopolitan city resembles large European cities with its wide tree-lined streets, numerous parks and orchards, against a stunning backdrop of majestic mountains.

Ile-Alatau National Park

This is a beautiful national park located in the Trans-Ile Alatau Mountains south of Almaty, and is home to over 300 species of wildlife, including the famous but elusive snow leopard. There are lots of hiking trails in this national park that will bring you through woodlands and alpine meadows towards beautiful waterfalls, glaciers and lakes. The world's largest outdoor ice-skating rink Medeu and Central Asia's top skiing resort Chymbulak are located on the edge of this national park.



Charyn Canyon

The Charyn Canyon is part of the Charyn National Park and stretches 154km along the Charyn River, one of the deepest rivers of the northern Tian Shan mountains. For more than 12 million years, wind, water and sand sculpted Charyn's red sandstone to form the wonderful shapes and shades that vary from deep orange to light brown. There are so many lakes, national parks and mountain ranges to explore and trek in this vast expanse of a country.



Nomad's Land

Nomad's Land is an area in the middle of the Kazakh Steppe that sits along the Ili River. This place looks like an ancient town at first glance, but it is in fact a film set that was abandoned after the completion of filming the Kazakh/French movie 'Nomad'.

Turkestan

Turkestan was one of the most important commercial centres of the ancient Silk Road. The city was founded over 15 centuries ago and is now the historical center of Kazakhstan's culture. Here in Turkestan lies the mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi, a Turkic Sufi, who was the first man to introduce Islam to Central Asia. His mausoleum attracts thousands of pilgrims yearly and was designed by Amir Timur, who also created spectacular architectural wonders in Uzbekistan.

TURKMENISTAN

This is by far the most mysterious and unexplored of the Central Asia's Stans. Turkmenistan until 2006 was ruled by a dictator, Saparmyrat Niyazov, who erected grandiose monuments and golden statues of himself. Although many of these statues have been dismantled, many outsiders still think of Turkmenistan as an authoritarian state. Putting this aside, this desert republic is an ancient land of great spirituality, tradition and natural beauty.

The ancient cities of Merv and Konye-Urgench inspire visions of caravans plodding along the ancient Silk Road, while the haunting beauty of the Karakum desert and other quirky natural phenomena are equally mesmerising. The full Turkmen experience is ultimately about mingling with the warm and fascinating people themselves, whose hospitality is the stuff of legends. It is also known as "North Korea with oil" as it is so isolated and remote that maybe even North Korea gets more visitors than this country.

Ashgabat

The capital, which means city of love, is an oasis of some five million square metres of white marble. Grand government buildings lacquered with gold are visible around the city, as well as monuments to leaders and the nation's beloved Akhal-Teke horse.

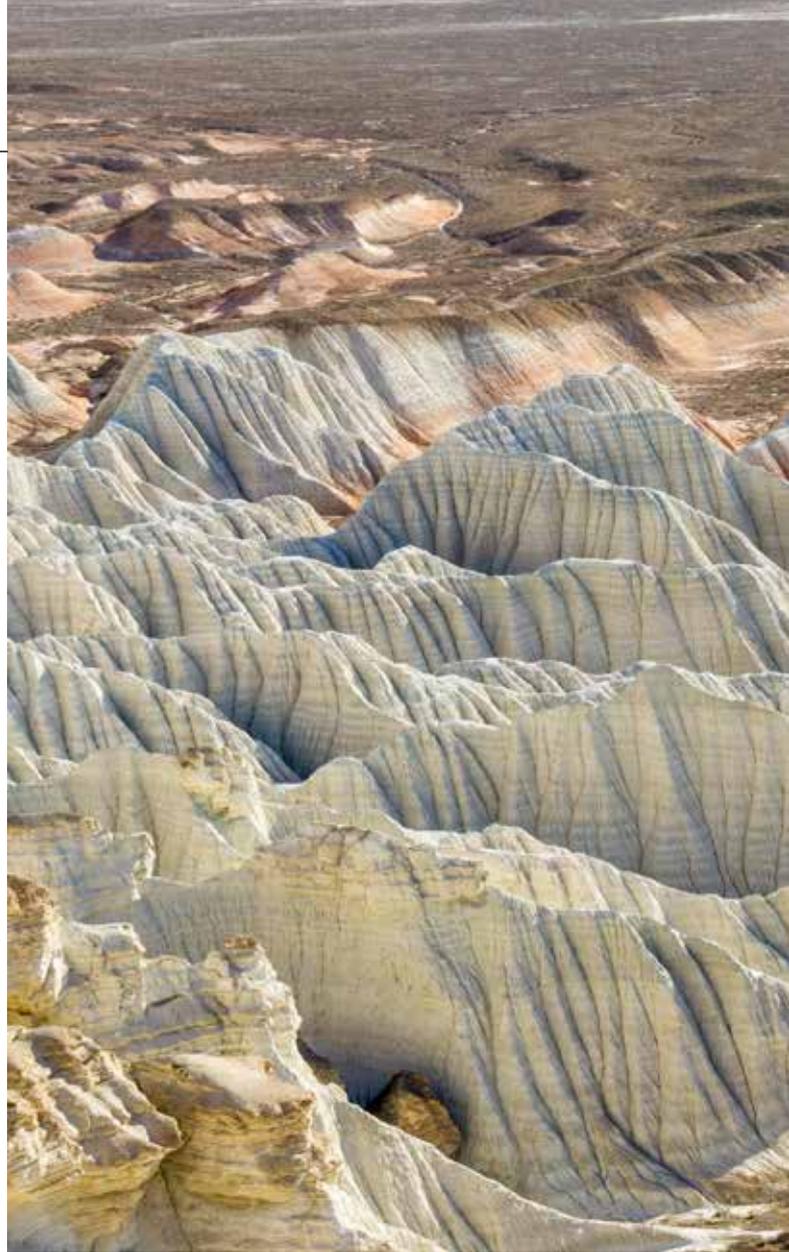
There's even a bizarre park featuring a giant Ruhnama, the rambling book of commandments written by the late President, that was once the centrepiece of the education system. Ashgabat has many tourist attractions like the country's best museums showcasing arts and artefact, as well as numerous bazaars where you can buy carpets, souvenirs and fresh food like the stone fruit and nuts.

Darvaza Gas Crater

Almost 80% of the country is desert, thus summers are baking hot and it's fairly warm all year round. No place is hotter than Darvaza's Gas Crater, the fire pit in the middle of the Karakum desert, otherwise known as 'the gateway to hell'. In the 1970s, a gas drilling project went wrong and created a fire that has never gone out. Spectacular in the dark, the surrounding desert provides a perfect camping ground for a night of photography under sparkling skies.

Konye-Urgench

This heritage-listed ancient town is a stark contrast to Ashgabat's futuristic architecture. Featuring two minarets, one dating back to the 1300s, this ancient mosque and mausoleum are the main attractions here. It is an open-air museum that chronicles the glory of past empires, and many Turkmen make their pilgrimage there from across the country.









TAJIKISTAN

90% of Tajikistan is highlands and that means some of the most inspiring, high-altitude landscape in the world. There are multi-hued lakes, peaks that beg to be conquered and high passes that even reluctant travellers will want to give it a try for the sheer beauty of the surroundings.

According to the lonely planet guide, it hasn't been easy for the traditional communities to adapt to the changing world beyond their mountain strongholds. But despite this, they are very welcoming of outsiders and if you can tolerate some travelling hardships like outdoor toilets, very cold water and pothole roads, then this country more than compensate with a rare glimpse of life on the Roof of the World.

Dushanbe

Dushanbe is the capital of Tajikistan and is a pretty modern city. This city flourished from a small village that hosted a bazaar on Mondays. Dushanbe means Monday in Tajiki. There are a few historical monuments, parks, tree-lined Rudaki Avenue and interesting Soviet architecture to explore and enjoy the sights.

Iskanderkul Lake

Iskanderkul is a mountain lake of glacial origin in Tajikistan's Sughd Province. It lies at an altitude of 2,195 meters and is triangular in shape. This lake is not far from Dushanbe located only 134 km away. Iskanderkul as the name suggests, was named after Alexander the Great. It offers stunning sceneries and pristine nature reserve that includes meandering rivers, water meadows, forests, sub alpine meadows and mountains.

Khujand

Khujand located on the Syr Darya River in the Fergana Valley is Tajikistan's second largest city. It has a population of 200,000 people including a large Uzbeks population, a minority group. It was also known as Leninabad for much of its Soviet-era history, and many locals still refer to it by this name. Panjshanbe Bazaar is the main food market and located on a large open square, next to the 16th century Muslihiddin Khujandi Mosque and Mausoleum.

Istaravshan

Istaravshan is a small town to the southwest of Khujand and is home to the country's only Timurid architecture. It is worthwhile to take a day trip here to take in the unique sights like the Kuk Gumbaz Mosque and Madrassah. This is the only example of Timurid (Samarkand-style) architecture. This is a small but beautiful mosque with intricate tilework and a classic blue dome. Blacksmiths at the bazaar sell decorative traditional knives made from animal bones, horns and various types of wood. They are beautifully crafted and you will enjoy seeing the blacksmiths at work. These knives are famous throughout Tajikistan.

The Pamir Mountains

Pamir is a technical term to describe a broad, U-shaped, high-altitude valley covered in grass and mossy vegetation. This mountain range is an extension of the Hindu Kush and Karakorum mountain ranges and is also aptly called the Roof of the World. People don't go to the Pamirs for the food, hotel accommodation or for comfort. They come to the Pamir for adventure, the remoteness, the sheer expanse of space and the incredible scenery.



KYRGYZSTAN

Kyrgyzstan is a nation defined by its natural beauty, unspoilt mountain ranges, stark ridges and rolling pastures brought to life by semi-nomadic, yurt-dwelling shepherds. It is also known as the Alps of Central Asia. This refreshing and quirky country is perfect for either a laid-back or adventure-filled vacation. It will definitely take you out of your comfort zone, which will make it so much more memorable.

Bishkek

Delightfully green and full of post-Soviet anachronisms, Bishkek, the capital city, is a cultural hub with culinary diversions, interesting arts scene and nightlife. It borders Central Asia's Tian Shan range and is the gateway to the Kyrgyz-Ala-Too mountains and the Ala Archa National Park with glaciers and wildlife trails.

Lake Issyk Kul

Kyrgyzstan has the world's second largest alpine lake and the second largest salt lake. The lake is over 113 miles long, 37 miles wide and situated almost exactly one-mile high or 1,606 meters. Its sparkling water and snow-capped backdrop make it a stunning natural wonder.

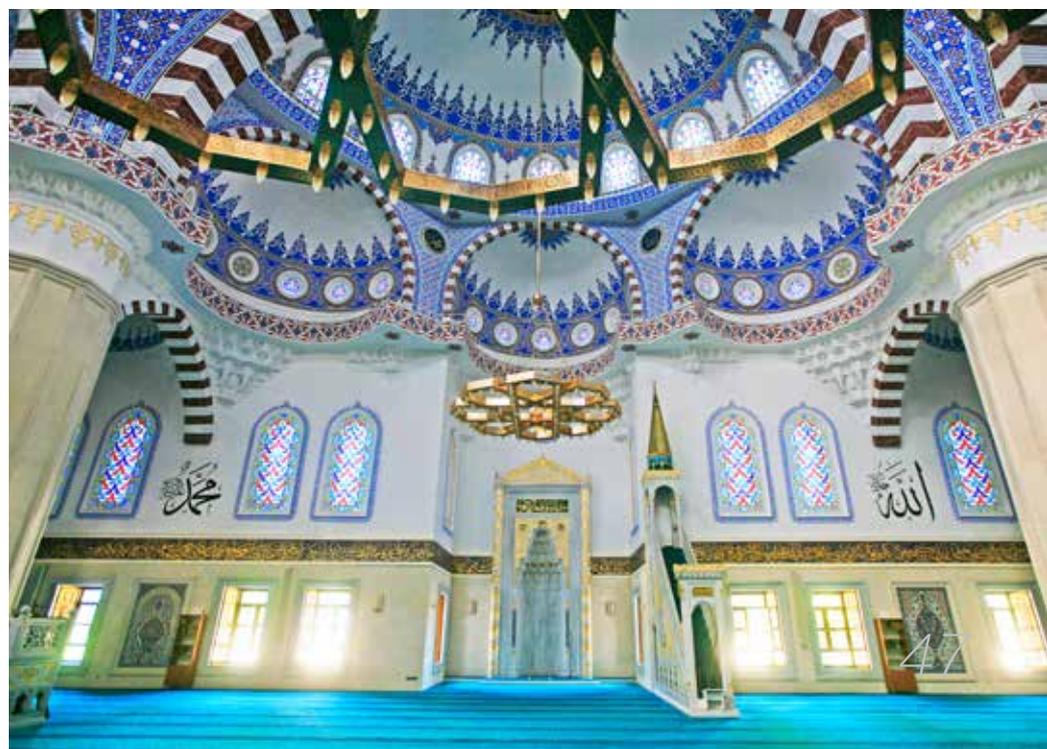
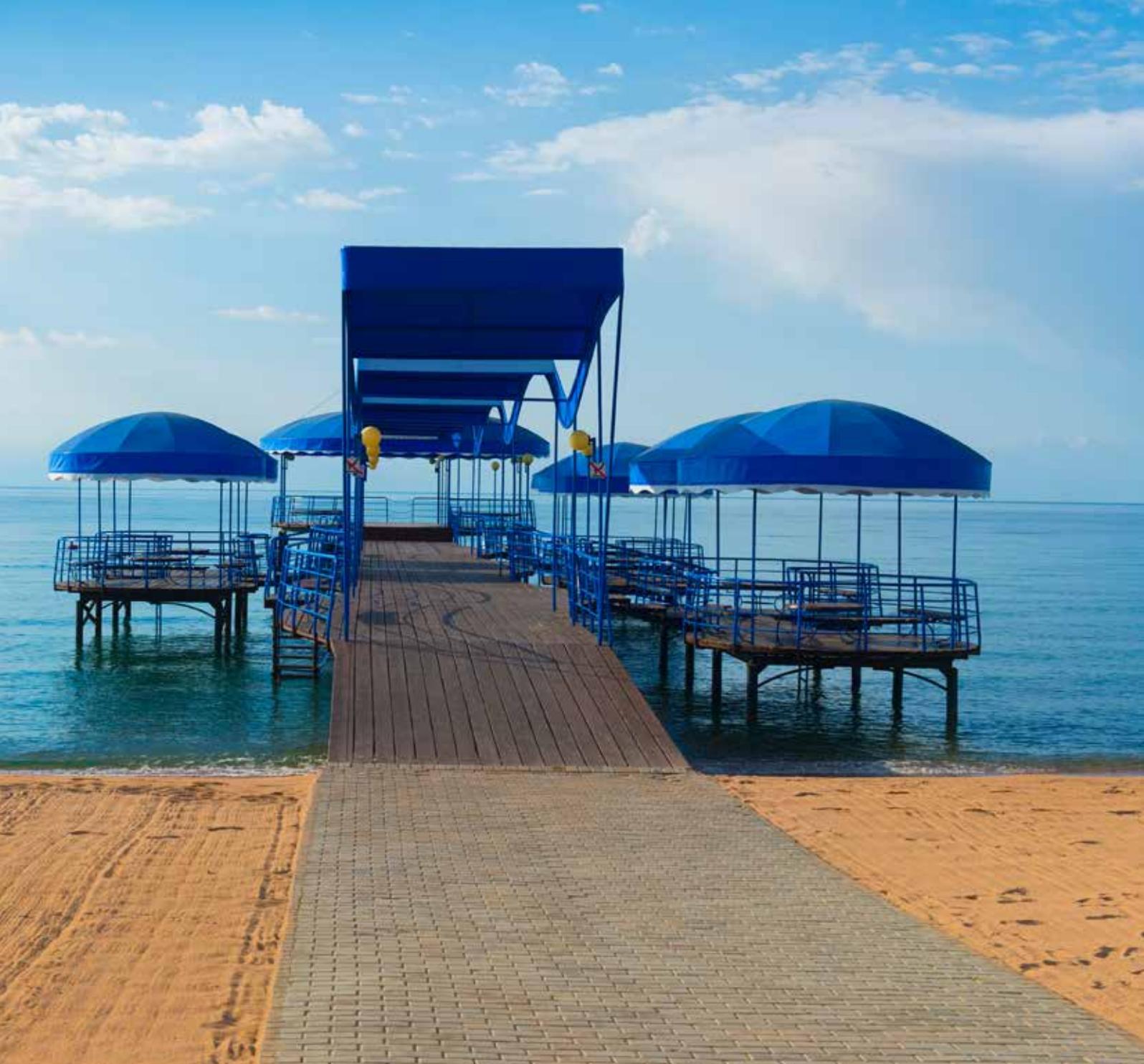
Ancient Walnut Forests

The world's largest naturally-growing walnut forest is in Arslanbob (10,000 hectares) and has been in existence since the time of Alexander the Great. The forest is a great location to take a horseback tour or maybe even help a family gather their annual walnut harvest.

These are just some of the natural wonders of this vast country. It is vast, pristine, refreshing, and truly out of this world.

Ready to go to 'The Stans' for an unforgettable holiday of a lifetime? You'll definitely be 'Stan' by what you see and experience. Using local tour guides and operators may be the best option for most travellers. ♦





Culture

In our totally connected world today, we can access anything for our amusement and entertainment on the Internet in seconds. Anything the world has to offer. So it is hard for us to imagine what entertainment was like to the village folk decades ago, when there were no mobile phones, tablets, WiFi, internet and computers.

Many millennials in this country are blissfully unaware of their cultural heritage. In a few decades to come, the traditional folk entertainment featured in this article will completely disappear unless there are concerted efforts to teach new generations about these folk music and dances. Even today, we are hard pressed to find and watch these performances live.

Dikir Barat

Dikir Barat is one of the very few forms of folk entertainment that is still quite popular among the rural population in the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia, especially in Kelantan. It involves singing in groups, often in a competitive setting. Dikir Barat may also be performed with percussion instruments. The clapping of hands, waving, and rhythmic body movements add a lively energy to the performance. The group sits cross-legged on a platform and there will be



Traditional Folk

a tukang karut (leader) and the chorus group. The tok karut sings pantuns (witty poetry) ranging from current events, social lessons, funny issues or anything that can entertain the audience. He will try his best to outwit the opposing team with his pantun.

Definitely a very energetic and enjoyable performance to watch.

Boria

Boria is an intrinsically diverse and versatile theatrical tradition enjoyed by the northern states of Kedah and Penang. It combines elements of drama and comedy, singing, dancing in unison in a group. The comedy sketch is performed by Boria actors, followed by the musical segment performed by musicians, dancers and led by a tukang karang (lead singer). The tukang karang is backed by a group of kelasi (sailors) who serve as chorus singers and dancers.

Traditional, the Boria was also performed as a sign of protest against the colonists. Today there are very few Boria groups left and it is a dying form of folk entertainment.





Entertainment





Ulek Mayang

Ulek Mayang dance originated from the state of Terengganu on the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Even though, it is ban by the state government because of its 'spiritualism', it is sometimes staged as a cultural performance.

Ulek Mayang is a ritual dance performed to please the spirits of the sea. It is based on the legend of a sea princess who fell in love with a fisherman. The sea princess then cast a spell on him so that he would fall in love with her. But the fisherman's friend sought the help of a spiritual-healer (bomoh) to remove the spell. The sea princess then summoned her 5 sisters to help 'fight' this healer. The climax is when the eldest sister, the 7th princess came and ended this tussle when she freed the fisherman from her sister's spell. The fisherman and friend thanked the princess and the spirits of the sea by offering yellow-coloured rice.

You will be enthralled by the haunting music and song, and the graceful movements of the dancers. A truly riveting performance that will keep you spell-bound.

Joget

The Joget is a dance form that is very popular to this day, and is performed by couples in cultural performances, weddings and other social functions. This traditional dance originated from the state of Malacca (Melaka) down south. It is influenced by the Portuguese dance of Branyo, which is believed to have been spread to Malacca during the spice trade. It is also very popular in Indonesia.

The tempo of Joget is fairly quick with the feeling of teasing and playfulness between the partners. One of the most popular types of Joget is called Joget Lambak and is performed by a large crowd during social functions. It is a fun, lively dance form that one can easily learn the simple steps and join in the fun.

Zapin

Zapin is a Malay dance form that is popular especially in the states of Johor and Pahang. It originated from Indonesia in Sumatera, and is believed to have been introduced by Arab Muslim missionaries from the Middle East in the 14th century. In the olden days, only men were allowed to perform, but nowadays, female dancers are included. It used to be performed exclusively for religious ceremonies but through the years, it has become a form of traditional entertainment. It is danced to very rhythmic music from an ensemble consisting of the gambus, accordion, guitar, bass, rebab, marwas and rebana (drum). There are many versions of the Zapin dance, but all very riveting and rhythmic. It has very precise hands, feet and body movements, so it is not as easy to learn as the Joget. ♦





Ramadan Regenerates THE BODY'S IMMUNE SYSTEM

Every year, 1.8 billion Muslims will begin the month-long fast of Ramadan. This year in Malaysia, we should start fasting from around the 23 of April. Apart from being a religious obligation and the spiritual, psychological and social benefits that fasting brings, the health benefits are also worth considering.

While the health merits of fasting have always been spoken about, there have not been much scientific examinations of its many medical benefits. In recent years, studies undertaken by scientists at the University of Southern California (USC), as well as by many other renowned scientists and institutions, have discovered that fasting has some very important medical advantages in terms of regenerating the body's immune system.

Valter Longo, professor of gerontology and the biological sciences at USC found that fasting was able to regenerate one's entire immune system. Fasting, he pointed out, is beneficial for everyone, especially the elderly whose immune system degenerates with age.

He pointed out that when you starve (fast), the system tries to save energy. One of the things that the body does is to recycle a lot of the immune cells that are not needed, especially those that are old or damaged. Prolonged fasting will force the body to use stored glucose, fat and ketones, and also break down a significant portion of white blood cells. It's likened to discarding a plane of excess cargo.

White blood cells are the workhorse cells of the immune system to defend the body



against foreign invaders. In the bloodstream, there are about 600 red blood cells for every one white blood cell. Any reduction in white blood cells can have a detrimental effect on the body because they are very important to fight infections.

Longo and his research team made a surprising discovery. They found that as the prolonged fasting brought down the white blood cell count, the re-feeding flipped a regenerative switch – triggering a stem cell-based regeneration of new white blood cells. This comes about as prolonged fasting reduces the enzyme PKA. PKA needs to shut down so that the body can regenerate more white blood cells. It gives the OK for stem cells to

go ahead and begin proliferating and rebuild the entire system, a new immune system.

The good news, he added, is that the body is able to get rid of the parts of the system that might be damaged or old, the inefficient parts, all during fasting. While this research focused on prolong fasting (48 – 72 hours), one may hypothesize that if there is no overeating at the beginning and the end of the daily fast, it may also contribute to the “starving” required to stimulate regeneration of the immune system. Not to forget that Muslims are fasting in this manner for 30 consecutive days.

Breaking fast in Ramadan emphasizes on small, simple meals, yet many ignore this injunction and consume large amounts of food. And this may negate the benefit of the



fasting
of the Body
is Food for
the soul





body creating a new immune system, as the body is not under prolonged stress necessary for stimulating stem cell regeneration.

It is also interesting to note that at the end of the fasting day, because of hunger pangs, one thinks that one is able to eat much more than one normally does. However, that is not the case according to the Crescent International news magazine.

After a few days of fasting, one begins to notice that one is unable to finish the food in one's plate. This is because as the fasting days increase, the body undergoes a physiological change as the stomach begins to shrink. And no matter how much one desires to eat more food, the shrunken stomach limits the amount of food that can be consumed. It is crucial that one heeds the body's signals and not consume huge amounts of food as this is totally contrary to the purpose of fasting and hampers the stomach from achieving its full shrinking potential.

More importantly, it will not help the body to regenerate a new immune system. All of our body systems or parts need rest. Sleep is one way for some organs to achieve this like the eyes, mind and muscles. The heart and digestive system achieve their rest by actively slowing the system or reversing the system operation. Standing on one's head provides a good rest for the heart because it reverses the pull of gravity against the normal flow of blood. For the digestive system, fasting offers the best rest.

So let's greet and embrace Ramadan to strengthen our spiritual, mental, ethical and moral self, and at the same time rebuild a new immune system for a healthier body. And remember to eat less. ♦

Malaysian Petroleum Golf Classic Championship

22 Feb 2020
TPC Kuala Lumpur

A bumper turnout of 144 golfers once again underlined why the Malaysian Petroleum Golf Classic is THE golfing bash in the oil & gas industry.

Organised by the Malaysian Petroleum Club, the premier oil & gas event proved a roaring success with captains of the industry having the opportunity to mingle and network with fellow oilmen while competing for fabulous prizes in a friendly setting.

A memorable weekend began with a cocktail reception in the skies on February 21 before the participants descended to the highly-rated TPC Kuala Lumpur the following day for a splendid round of networking golf.

Beautiful weather welcomed the players to Malaysia's top golfing facility as they enjoyed the pristine playing conditions and exceptional aesthetics of the award-winning West Course.

The post-golf presentation ceremony provided another avenue for participants to foster friendship and camaraderie while enjoying a sumptuous lunch spread.

In his welcome address, Malaysian Petroleum Club president Tan Sri Wan Zulkiflee Wan Ariffin shared that the Golf Classic continues to have an extremely positive and professional impact on the community through the support of participants and sponsors.

He later presented the prizes to the winners with the pair of Datuk Fariz Nazrul and Hamizan Mohd Derus walking home as the champions with a combined Stableford score of 62.

The event was proudly presented with the kind support of main sponsors Petronas, Dialog, PTTEP and supported by Boskalis, Conoco Phillips, Deleum, Exxon Mobil, Halliburton, HESS, Hibiscus Petroleum, KPMG, MISC, Mitsubishi Corporation, MRA International, Petra, Shell, Schlumberger, Velesto Energy & Volvo. ♦





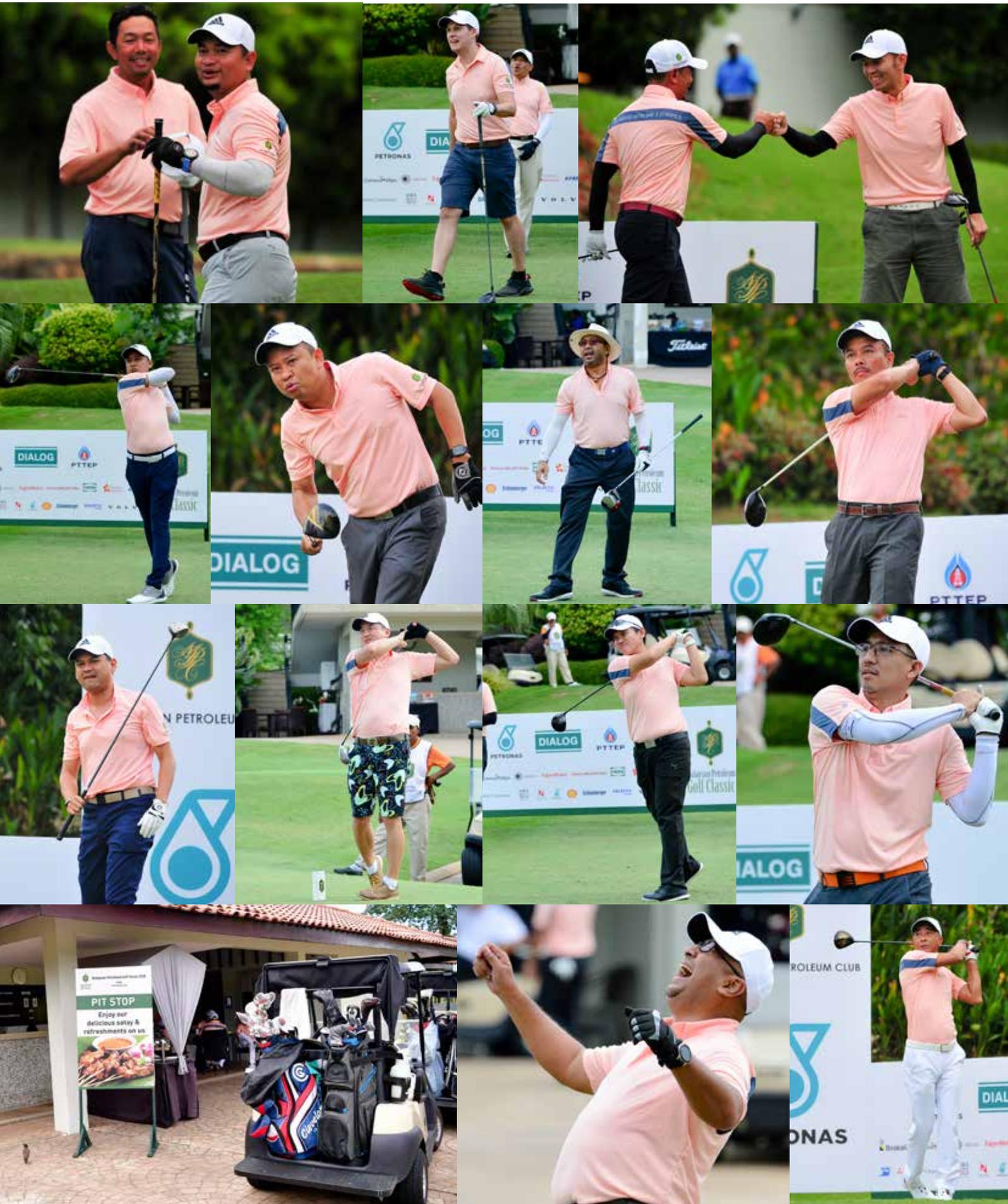


















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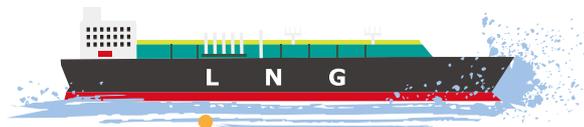


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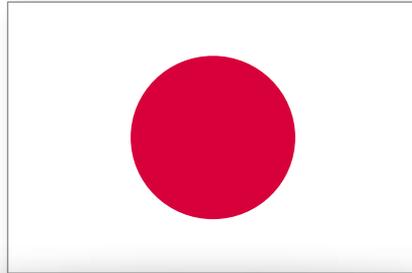
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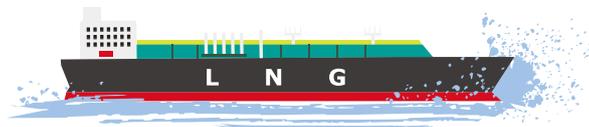
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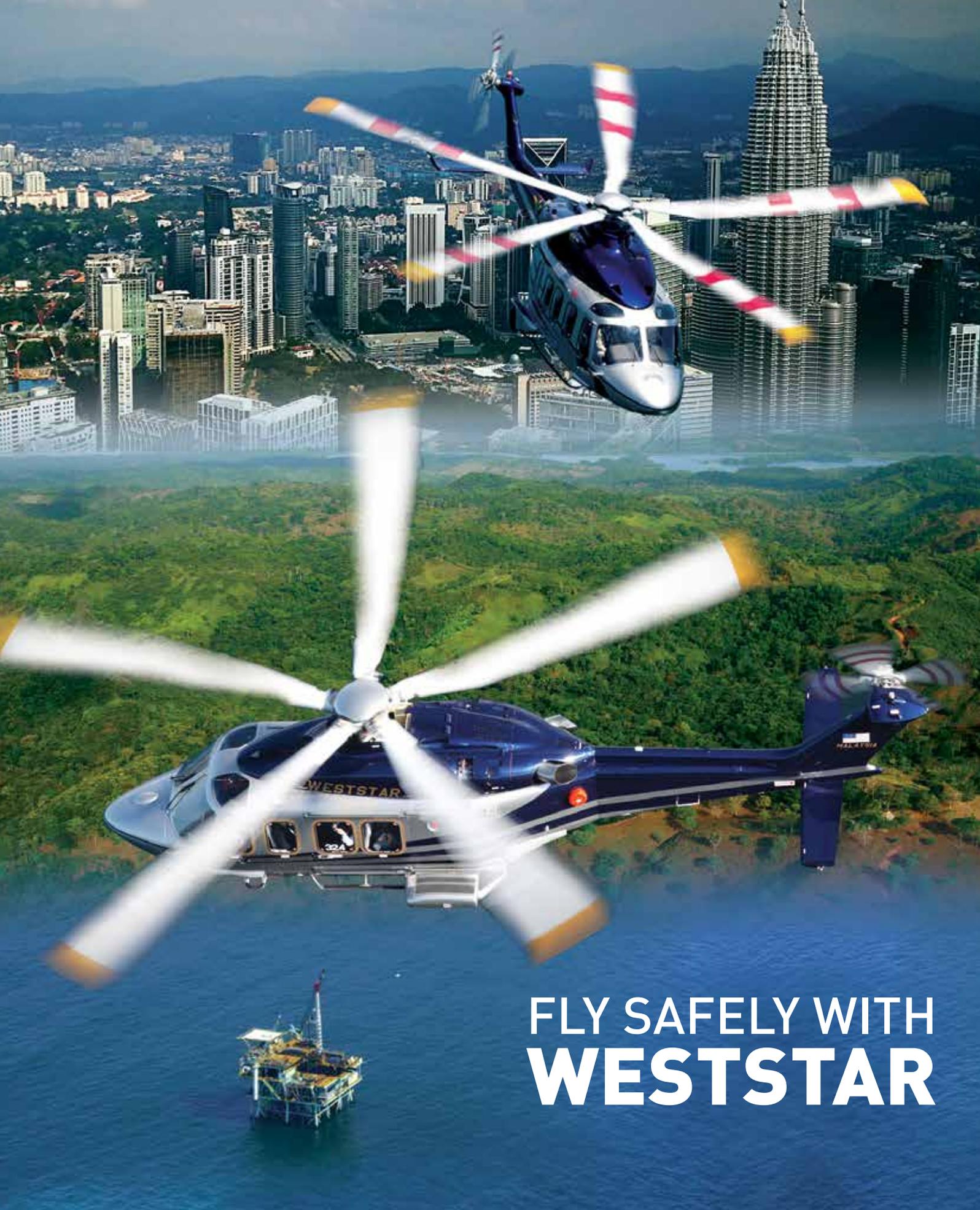
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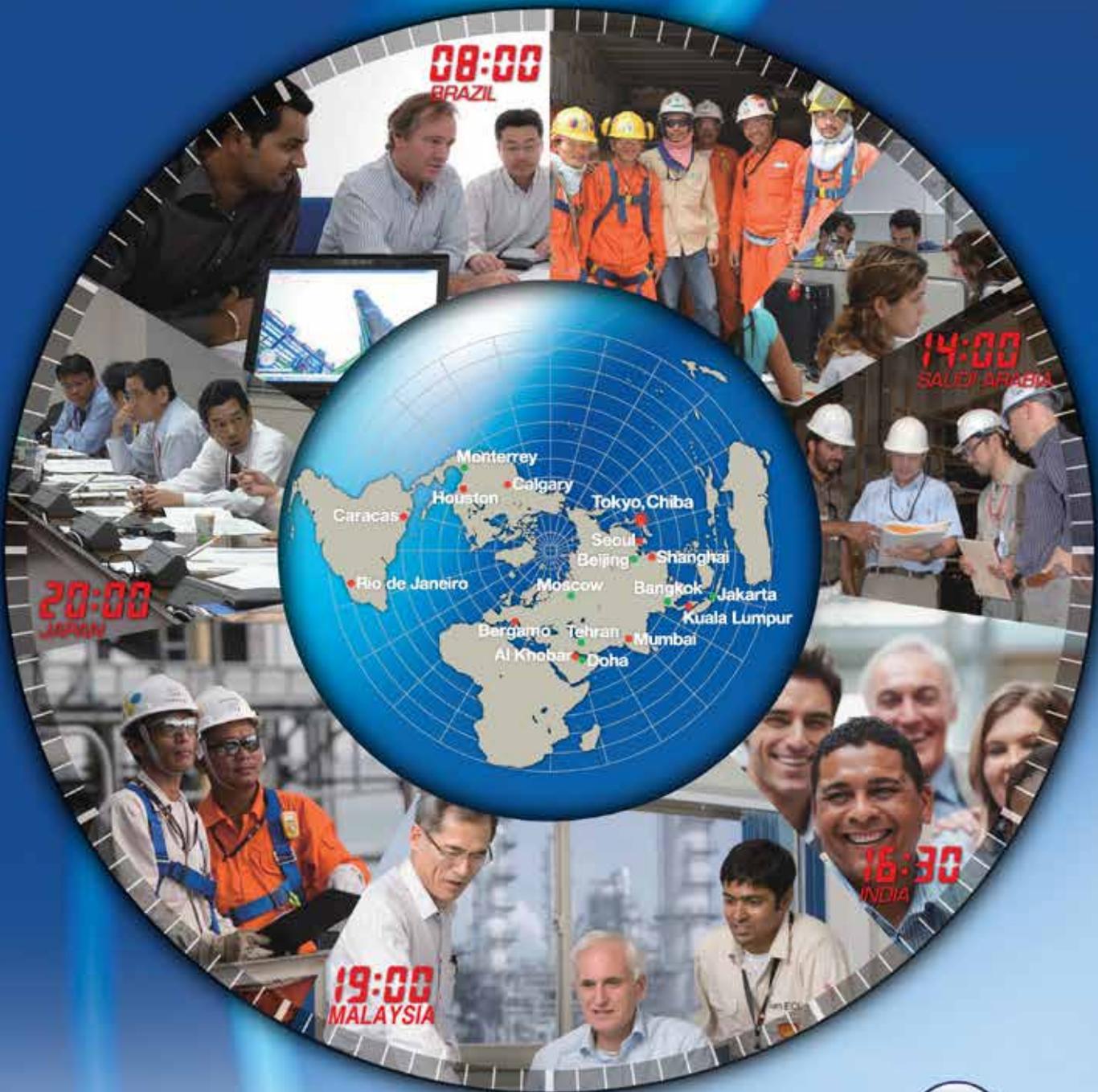
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