Star Special

THE STAR, THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER 2025

DAULAT TUANKU

Eight decades of wisdom

Malaysians wish Selangor Ruler Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah blessings and good health on his official 80th birthday today.

The royal couple posing for a snapshot at the Larian KITA X Pesta Kelaut @ Pantai Kelanang 2025 photo booth in Banting in July. — IZZRAFIQ ALIAS/The Star

Sultan Sharafuddin delivering his speech during the launch of Menara Zakat Sultan Idris Shah in Shah Alam in January. — IZZRAFIQ ALIAS/The Star

The royal couple greeting people at the Tengku Ampuan Jemaah Mosque in Shah Alam on the first day of Hari Raya Aidilfitri in March. — Photo from Selangor Royal Office Facebook page

Champion of harmony

By WANI MUTHIAH
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Sultan Sharafuddin, accompanied by Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin and Tengku Amir Shah, arriving for the opening ceremony of the state assembly in Shah Alam in February. — KK SHAM/The Star

SELANGOR Ruler Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah has consistently spoken up whenever issues arise that could undermine unity and communal harmony in the state.

For Tuanku, unity, peaceful coexistence and mutual respect among the people of Selangor are essential foundations for the nation's growth and well-being.

In 2022, Sultan Sharafuddin openly defended the Japanese Bon Odori celebration after the then Minister in the Prime Minister's Department in charge of religious affairs, Datuk Idris Ahmad, advised Muslims not to attend the event on grounds that it contained elements of another religion.

The Sultan promptly issued a statement urging Idris to distinguish between religion and culture. His Royal Highness stressed that the Bon Odori Festival is a cultural celebration held in Selangor to strengthen ties between Malaysians and the Japanese community.

Tuanku also directed the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (Jais) not to obstruct the festival in any way.

This year, the Sultan has spoken on many significant issues concerning not only the community, but also the governance of the state.

In his royal address at the First Meeting of the Third Session of the 15th State Assembly, Sultan Sharafuddin reminded state officials and civil servants to steer clear of corruption and misappropriation.

His Royal Highness specifically called out those in district offices and local authorities, emphasising that department heads must prevent abuses of power.

"I do not want to hear any more stories about fraudulent land transfers or the issuance of business licences for personal gain," Tuanku said, referring to the case in which seven staff members of the Klang District and Land Office were among 17 civil servants arrested over illegal land transfer activities.

The Sultan had advised Selangor's elected representatives to serve the community wholeheartedly and design programmes that enhance the people's well-being.

"I want to see my government and the public service in Selangor carry out their responsibilities with full integrity, efficiency and competitiveness," Tuanku added.

In his royal address for the country's 68th National Day celebration, Sultan Sharafuddin reminded Malaysians that independence is a profound responsibility entrusted to every citizen – one that must be safeguarded with unwavering commitment, unity and a strong sense of national identity.

Tuanku had expressed hope that the spirit of independence would inspire Malaysians to pursue personal growth alongside the progress of their families and the nation.

His Royal Highness had called on the public to return to the core values of the Rukun Negara and practise them in daily life.

Sultan Sharafuddin has always stressed the need to preserve harmony among Malaysians of diverse races, religions and cultures, urging everyone to cultivate a strong national identity and respect the democratically elected government for the sake of stability and prosperity.

The Ruler also rejected a proposal to introduce guidelines for Muslims attending non-Muslim celebrations.

"As the head of Islam in Selangor, His Royal Highness believes the proposal comes at an inappropriate time, especially when Malaysians of diverse backgrounds are working to strengthen goodwill and foster national unity," the palace had said in a statement earlier this year.

The Sultan had felt that the proposal had caused public unease and risked disrupting existing harmonious relations.

His Royal Highness reminded Malaysians that in a diverse society, religious tolerance must be upheld, while emphasising that Islam must continue to be respected as the religion of the federation, as enshrined in the Constitution.

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Following the launch of the Bandar Teknologi Kajang Mosque in Semenyih in March, Sultan Sharafuddin presented contributions to the underprivileged. — Photo from Selangor Royal Office Facebook page

Daulat Tuanku

SEMOGA ALLAH LANJUTKAN USIA DAN MERAHMATI PEMERINTAHAN TUANKU

DULI YANG MAHA MULIA
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IBNI ALMARHUM SULTAN SALAHUDDIN ABDUL AZIZ SHAH ALHAJ

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SULTAN DAN YANG DIPERTUAN NEGERI SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN
SERTA SEGALA DAERAH TAKLUKNYA

Sembah Tahniah Dan Ucap Selamat

Sempena Ulang Tahun Hari Keputeraan Yang Ke-80
Duli Yang Maha Mulia Sultan Selangor
Pada 11 Disember 2025 Bersamaan 20 Jumadal Akhirah 1447H

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Sultan Sharafuddin and Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin joining the victorious Selangor Selection team to celebrate their win at this year's Sultan of Selangor's Cup in September, marking the Red Giants' 12th title. — Photo from Selangor Royal Office Facebook page

Sultan Sharafuddin signing a board to mark the launch of Yusof Ghani's Cenderawasih: Energy & Emotion series at Tapak Gallery, Shah Alam, in June, as the artist looks on. — IZZRAFIQ ALIAS/The Star

Leading with grace and compassion

> FROM PAGE 2

The Ruler has consistently expressed concern for the rights and well-being of the Orang Asli community as well.

In his address at the opening of the state legislative assembly in 2009, Sultan Sharafuddin called for the restoration of Orang Asli rights, particularly those related to their ancestral land.

The Sultan noted that the community had experienced a gradual erosion of its identity, and emphasised that resolving land issues was essential to restoring their rights and dignity.

"I wish to stress the importance of recognising and preserving Orang Asli land that has been taken from them over the past few years," the Sultan said.

The Ruler is also known for his relaxed approach to protocol and formality.

Businessman Shekh Imaduddin Hakmi Shekh Yahya Hakmi recounted to *The Star* in 2016 how he initially did not recognise Sultan Sharafuddin during the Road to Mandalay Rally in 2015, unknowingly addressing him as "pak cik (uncle)".

Shekh Imaduddin said he had met another group participating in the rally at the Thai–Myanmar border when a gentleman from the group asked if he was from Malaysia.

"Yes, I am from Malaysia, pak cik," he replied – only to be nudged by a friend, who whispered that he was addressing the Sultan of Selangor.

Summoning his courage, Shekh Imaduddin then approached the Sultan to apologise.

"I apologised profusely, but Tuanku simply smiled graciously and said it was all right," Shekh Imaduddin recalled.

Sultan Sharafuddin is also an avid reader with an extensive personal library housing books on nearly every subject imaginable across his palace and several other locations.

His Royal Highness has contributed generously to public libraries by donating a significant number of books.

In an earlier interview, his private secretary Datuk Mohamad Munir Bani noted that the Sultan devotes almost all his spare time to reading.

"Tuanku is constantly reading whenever he has a moment to himself. Tuanku even reads while travelling in the car," Mohamad Munir said.

Sultan Sharafuddin was born on Dec 24, 1945, at Istana Jemaah in Klang as Tengku Idris Shah to the late Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, then the Raja Muda, and his first wife, Raja Saidatul Ihsan Tengku Badar Shah.

Sultan Sharafuddin became the Raja Muda of Selangor at the age of 15 in 1960 when his father ascended the throne. Tuanku himself became the Sultan in 2001 upon his father's passing.

Tuanku received his early education at the Malay Primary School in Jalan Raja Muda, Kuala Lumpur, before continuing at St John's Institution.

In 1960, he attended the Hale School in Perth, Australia, followed by Langhurst College in Surrey, England, in 1964.

Upon returning to Malaysia, he served as a civil servant at the Selangor state secretariat, the Kuala Lumpur district office and the police department.

He is also the Captain-in-Chief of the Royal Malaysian Navy.

Sultan Sharafuddin has three children – Tengku Zerafina, Tengku Zatashah and the Raja Muda of Selangor, Tengku Amir Shah – as well as a granddaughter.

Tuanku is married to Tengku Permaisuri Selangor Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin.

May Sultan Sharafuddin, who celebrates his official 80th birthday today, be blessed with good health and many more years ahead.

Daulat Tuanku!

Sultan Sharafuddin, Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin and other guests of honour joining in the tossing of yee sang at the Fo Guang Shan Dong Zen Temple in Jenjarom during the Selangor Chinese New Year Celebration 2025. — SHAARI CHEMAT/The Star

Sultan Sharafuddin shared the rich history of the Selangor Sultanate with Yang di-Pertua Negeri Melaka Tun Dr Mohd Ali Rustam during his visit to the Sultan Abdul Aziz Royal Gallery in July, guiding him through exhibition materials curated from the personal collection of his late father, Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah. — Photo from Selangor Royal Office Facebook page

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(From left) Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin cuddling a stray cat during the Selangor SPCA World Animal Day 2025 celebration in Ampang Jaya in October; sharing a joyful moment with children during the launch of Yayasan Insan Istimewa Selangor (Yanis) in Shah Alam in August; and congratulating UiTM graduates during the 102nd convocation ceremony in Shah Alam in September. — Photos from Selangor Royal Office Facebook page

Royal advocacy for positive change

By WANI MUTHIAH
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TENGKU Permaisuri Selangor Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin is highly regarded by animal activists and rescuers for consistently championing the humane treatment of street animals.

In 2023, the Tengku Permaisuri directed the relevant authorities, including municipal councils, to upgrade and improve the management of the animal pounds within their jurisdictions.

This followed the circulation of viral photos showing dogs in dire condition at a Selangor municipal council dog pound.

Her Royal Highness noted that if existing standard operating procedures were truly effective, such videos depicting dogs being mistreated, neglected or poorly managed would not exist.

Her remarks were conveyed through the Selangor Royal Office's Facebook page.

Not long ago, Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin also took the Shah Alam City Council (MBSA) to task over its proposed three-day stray dog round-up plan.

Expressing sadness over the proposal, the Tengku Permaisuri stressed that there are more humane and effective ways to manage stray animal populations, including neutering.

"I have repeatedly stressed that I strongly disagree with the catch-and-destroy method carried out by any local authority, including MBSA," she said.

Her Royal Highness added that alongside an extensive neutering programme, local councils should consider establishing stray animal shelters in every housing area, supported by animal lovers within the community.

"Local councils must make it compulsory for housing developers to construct such shelters," Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin said.

The Tengku Permaisuri Selangor also called on authorities to re-examine the Housing and Local Government Ministry's circular on SOPs for capturing and culling stray dogs to better reflect current needs.

As an animal lover, Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin has established a mini cat sanctuary, aptly named Casa De Cat, in Shah Alam to house rescued street cats.

(Clockwise from top) Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin's community engagements in 2025 included October's Pink Ribbon Run 2025 in Putrajaya with Health Minister Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad to promote breast cancer awareness; the 2025 Selangor Branch Malaysian Girl Guides Association Awards Ceremony in Shah Alam in April; and the 19th Petaling Jaya City Anniversary Celebration in June, where Her Royal Highness tried her hand at making eco bricks from single-use plastics to promote sustainability. — Photos from Selangor Royal Office Facebook page

Unfortunately, much to the frustration of animal rescuers and activists, many local councils appear to have paid little heed to Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin's calls for humane treatment of street animals and continue to resort to cruel methods under the guise of stray population management.

Beyond her advocacy for animal welfare, Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin – who is also Universiti Teknologi Mara's pro-chancellor – is a strong proponent of effective and high-quality teaching.

During one of the university's convocation ceremonies, Her Royal Highness emphasised the need to enhance teaching and learning at the tertiary level to ensure both staff and students have adequate expertise and access to the latest learning tools.

"Universities also need to introduce preparation programmes so that students can compete globally.

"This includes programmes incorporating aspects of language, culture and technical expertise," Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin said in her royal address.

Her Royal Highness further highlighted the importance of mastering "sharp skills", including the ability to analyse data using the applications widely available across various media platforms.

During a 2022 convocation ceremony, Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin also reminded graduates that as intellectuals, they have a responsibility to safeguard Malaysia's sovereignty and prevent the nation from falling into chaos.

"One way is for us Malaysians to remain united.

"If we are not united, we will not be able to defend our country from the various threats posed by those who wish to see it collapse," the Tengku Permaisuri said.

Born Norashikin Abdul Rahman on June 4, 1971, at the military hospital in Terendak Camp, Malacca, the Tengku Permaisuri Selangor is a former Malaysian Airlines flight attendant.

Her Royal Highness then joined RTM over decades ago as a newsreader before becoming Selangor Ruler Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah's consort.

During her tenure as a newscaster, Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin won the Seri Angkasa Award's Best TV News Presenter title in 2001 and 2005.

In 2017, Universiti Putra Malaysia named a newly discovered species of orchid *Vanilla Norashikiniana* after Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin.

Sultan Sharafuddin and Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin were married on Aug 31, 2016, at Istana Alam Shah in Klang.

Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin was appointed as the Tengku Permaisuri Selangor by Sultan Sharafuddin the following month.

Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin has a daughter and a son from a previous marriage.

Daulat Tuanku

MAY ALLAH THE ALMIGHTY BLESS OUR SULTAN

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(Above) Tengku Amir Shah flagged off several running events at the Shah Alam City Council anniversary celebration in August, including the Merdeka Run, the Rakan Muda Kaler Fun Run and the Selangor Youth and Sports Department's Disabled People's Association Run. (Right) The royal couple posing for a photo with children during the People's Sports Programme in Shah Alam in November. — Photos from Selangor Royal Office Facebook page

Bridging royalty and community

The Raja Muda delivering the keynote address at the 2025 International Symposium on Education for Sustainable Rural Development at Beijing Normal University in China earlier this month.

Tengku Amir Shah with participants of the TVET Open Day hosted by YRMS in Hulu Langat in November, which showcased innovative technology and vocational education. — Photos from Selangor Royal Office Facebook page

By WANI MUTHIAH
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THOSE who know Raja Muda Selangor Tengku Amir Shah will attest to his humble and down-to-earth personality.

Former Selangor Youth Community (SAY) and Yayasan Raja Muda Selangor (YRMS) chief executive officer Izhar Moslim said in a 2017 interview that the Raja Muda is also a very considerate person.

He recalled that when Tengku Amir Shah attended the Smart City Expo World Congress in Barcelona that year, the royal had picked up his own tab despite representing the state and carrying out official duties.

During the same trip, the Raja Muda and Izhar had also travelled to London to meet officials from The Prince's Trust – the organisation that inspired the creation of YRMS by Tengku Amir Shah's father, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, when he was the Crown Prince.

SAY was conceptualised and launched by Tengku Amir Shah to reach out to the youth in Selangor and provide a platform for them to explore opportunities for self-growth and improvement, while also serving the community.

During a 2021 SAY event, Tengku Amir Shah praised the participants for making meaningful contributions to society through the various programmes laid out by the organisation.

"I am proudest of the impact you have made, especially during the community project stage," the Crown Prince said.

Tengku Amir Shah highlighted how one group of participants had engaged with an Orang Asli community, while another group had held an online forum on mental health.

His Highness also praised a third group that had helped homeless individuals at a shelter and a fourth one that organised a forum on domestic violence.

Tengku Amir Shah added that witnessing young people strive to uplift their communities while improving their own prospects is deeply inspiring.

In a previous interview, YRMS and SAY trustee Syed Haizam Hishamuddin Putra Jamalullail, who is also Tengku Amir Shah's first cousin, said the Raja Muda had worked to create a bridge between the royal institution and the community.

According to Syed Haizam, Tengku Amir Shah believed the people would be closer to the monarchy if protocol was reduced at selected events.

Apparently, this had led to a system whereby protocol requirements were ranked one to five, with five representing full ceremonial observance at palace functions.

However, Tengku Amir Shah can also be stern when the need arises, such as when the Raja Muda took over the reins of the then troubled Football Association of Selangor in 2018.

At the time, Tengku Amir Shah had acted swiftly to resolve internal conflicts, and introduced a new structure to stabilise operations.

The Raja Muda had also duly dealt with those responsible for the disputes by reprimanding them, while also emphasising that unity was essential in building a strong football team.

Earlier this year at the Shah Alam Sports Complex (KSSA) development's approval letter submission ceremony, Tengku Amir Shah said in his royal address that the complex is a development programme in entirety for the people.

"It's more than a stadium. It's a space for everyone, a place where people can come together to be involved in sports, in culture, in the arts and learning.

"It's designed with the people in mind, built for the future, but steeped in the values and traditions we Selangorians hold dear," Tengku Amir Shah had said.

He added that the new KSSA is an integral part of a vision and journey that had taken him seven years to realise.

"I envision a Selangor that is more inclusive, forward-thinking and focused on long-term sustainability, where everyone has the opportunity to grow, thrive and prosper," said Tengku Amir Shah.

His Highness also shared his dream to make the KSSA amongst some of the world's most renowned sites.

"I envision KSSA standing proudly among the world's most iconic destinations and alongside places like the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London, the Melbourne Sports Precinct or Marina Bay in Singapore.

"Not just as a stadium, but a living, breathing tapestry of voices, colours, and dreams," the Raja Muda added.

Tengku Amir Shah was installed as the Crown Prince and heir to the Selangor throne on May 3, 2002, when His Highness was just 11 years old, and was officially proclaimed as Raja Muda on Oct 8, 2016.

During his installation ceremony, the Raja Muda underwent the traditional rites affirming his accession as Selangor's heir apparent, took his oath as Raja Muda and signed the decree, witnessed by his uncle Tengku Laksamana Selangor Tengku Sulaiman Shah and other state dignitaries.

Born on Dec 12, 1990, in San Francisco, Tengku Amir Shah is the youngest of Sultan Sharafuddin's three children, as well as the only son.

He received his early education at Alice Smith School in Kuala Lumpur before continuing at Wellington College in the United Kingdom from 2004 to 2009.

A graduate of Leeds University with a degree in Ecology and Environmental Biology, Tengku Amir Shah also trained at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

In June 2016, Tengku Amir Shah was commissioned as a Leftenan Muda in the 17th Battalion of the Royal Malay Regiment at Terendak Camp, Melaka.

The Raja Muda, who was once regarded as one of the country's most eligible royal singles, ended his bachelorhood when he married Datin Paduka Seri Afzaa Fadini Datuk Abdul Aziz in October this year.

Daulat Tuanku

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(Left) The royal couple attending the People's Sports Programme in Shah Alam in November; (above) Afzaa Fadini addressing the audience during an event at Tsinghua University in the same month. — Photos from the Selangor Royal Office Facebook page

Selangor welcomes new princess

By WANI MUTHIAH
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WHEN it was announced that Raja Muda Selangor Tengku Amir Shah was getting married, Selangorians were curious about who his intended bride was.

This curiosity persisted even after the akad nikah, as the palace had decided to release the bride's biodata only after the bersanding ceremony.

When Datin Paduka Seri Afzaa Fadini Datuk Abdul Aziz Mat's biodata was finally released, people were impressed and happy that their Crown Prince had found a very compatible match.

The newest member of the Selangor royal family was born on April 11, 1993, at Pantai Hospital, Kuala Lumpur. She is the third child and only daughter of Datuk Abdul Aziz Mat and Datin Rosmawati Ismail.

Afzaa Fadini received her primary and secondary schooling at the Garden International School in Kuala Lumpur and went on to pursue her A Levels at St George's, Ascot in the United Kingdom.

She then went on to obtain an undergraduate degree in Development Studies & Economics from University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).

Later, she pursued a postgraduate degree in Sustainable Cities at King's College London which was propelled by her keen interest in urban resilience and sustainability.

As a student, she was actively involved in student leadership and community initiatives, and served as president of the SOAS Malaysian Society.

An ISA-certified arborist, Afzaa Fadini's work covers ecology, urban design and community engagement within both non-profit and private sector spheres.

She has also contributed articles to *The Star* on rainforest conservation and sustainability.

Afzaa Fadini has supported food security efforts for indigenous communities through her volunteer work with the Free Food Society, and has also advocated human rights through her involvement with Amnesty International.

An avid tennis player and a Formula 1 fan, Afzaa Fadini is a Professional Association of Diving Instructors advanced diver and an enthusiastic hiker, in addition to completing both the Bath and Cardiff Half Marathons.

(Above) Tengku Amir Shah and Afzaa Fadini posing for a group photo with other participants after playing batu seremban during the People's Sports Programme in Shah Alam in November.

The royal couple were all smiles during a rakyat engagement programme at Dataran Kemerdekaan Shah Alam (left) and during the Crown Prince's participation in the 35th Raja Muda of Selangor International Regatta (below), both held in November. — Photos from the Selangor Royal Office Facebook page

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THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF THE
STATE OF SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN

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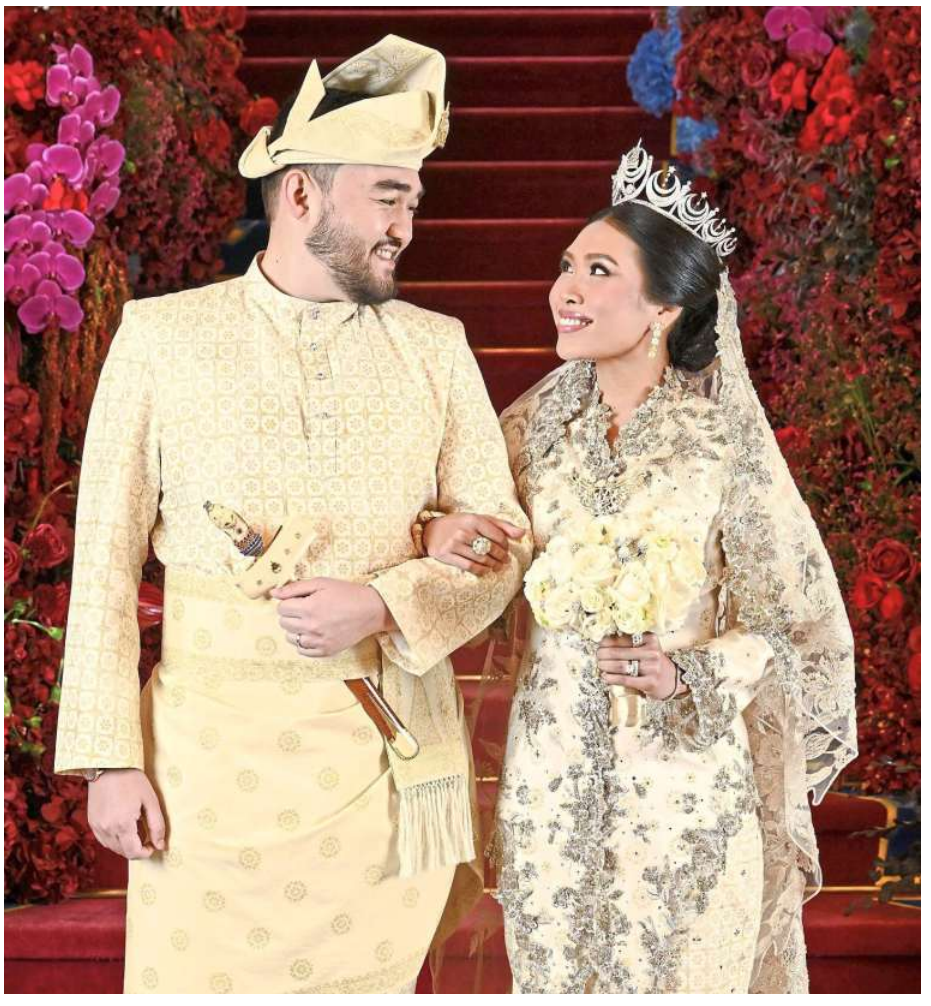
CREATING TOMORROW & BEYOND

EWI CAPITAL
BUILDING VALUE, SHAPING TOMORROW

Sultan Sharafuddin and Tengku Permaisuri Selangor Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin joining the newlyweds for a photo after their solemnisation ceremony at Istana Alam Shah, Klang. — All photos from Selangor Royal Office Facebook page

Tradition and simplicity in royal style



Tengku Amir Shah and Afzaa Fadini sharing a moment during their wedding ceremony at Istana Alam Shah.

By WANI MUTHIAH
wani@thestar.com.my

THE biggest celebration in Selangor this year is, without any doubt, the wedding of the Raja Muda of Selangor Tengku Amir Shah and Datin Paduka Seri Afzaa Fadini Datuk Abdul Aziz Mat.

Both the akad nikah and bersanding ceremonies, though characterised by an air of elegant simplicity, were befitting of Tengku Amir Shah's stature as the state's beloved Crown Prince.

The Raja Muda's first cousin, Engku Panglima Setia Diraja Datuk Syed Haizam Hishamuddin Putra Jamalullail, had told *The Star* ahead of the akad nikah that the bersanding ceremony "would be rich in tradition, adhering to the adat of the Selangor royal family, yet would maintain an understated elegance".

The akad nikah ceremony, which was held on Oct 2 at the Istana Alam Shah in Klang, saw the Raja Muda making his way to the venue in a motorcade procession flanked by palace officials and escorts carrying symbolic royal regalia.

Members of the public came from various parts of Selangor and lined the streets to congratulate Tengku Amir Shah and extend their best wishes to him and his bride.

Upon the conclusion of the akad nikah, Selangor Ruler Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah conferred the Darjah Kebesaran Kelas Pertama Seri Paduka Mahkota Selangor, which carries the title Datin Paduka Seri, on his daughter-in-law.

During the bersanding ceremony, which was held at the same venue, the royal couple looked resplendent in their matching coloured outfits.

Designer Hana Sallahuddin crafted Afzaa Fadini's wedding attire using French lace and silk in a refined champagne hue.

The kebaya came with Selangor's official flower, the bunga tanjung as its main motif, and was also embroidered with delicate Japanese beads.

(Left) Tengku Amir Shah's wedding motorcade was accompanied by palace officials and flanked by escorts bearing symbolic royal regalia. (Above) People from across Selangor gathered along the streets to congratulate the newlyweds.

Daulat Tuanku

MAY ALLAH THE ALMIGHTY BLESS OUR SULTAN

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SULTAN AND RULER OF THE STATE OF SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN AND ALL ITS DEPENDENCIES

Heartiest Salutations And Congratulations

In Conjunction With His Royal Highness' 80th Birthday
On 11th December 2025

WITH UTMOST SINCERITY

Chairman, Board of Directors, Management and Staff

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we invest in better

KUMPULAN PERANGSANG SELANGOR BERHAD [197501002218]

Best wishes on a special day

Selangorians come together to extend heartfelt birthday wishes to state Ruler Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah. May Tuanku's special day be filled with joy and countless blessings. The people of Selangor express their gratitude for his steadfast dedication to the state's welfare and development. Happy Birthday, Tuanku!

"Wishing Tuanku good health and longevity in conjunction with his 80th birthday. Your Highness will always have the people's loyalty and love. Daulat Tuanku!"

S. Jegatheeswaran
Businessman

"May Tuanku always be granted good health, well-being and an abundance of blessings. Respectfully wishing Tuanku a very happy 80th birthday."

Nooraini Jailani
Selangor civil servant

"Thank you, Tuanku, for your compassion for special children and persons with disabilities, and for supporting initiatives aimed at enhancing their lives through inclusive education, innovative programmes and financial aid. Under Tuanku's guidance, Selangor has indeed become a vibrant and caring state. Have a blessed birthday!"

Datuk Fatimah Saad
Charter President
Kiwanis Club Taman Tun Dr Ismail

"Thank you, Tuanku, for your continuous concern and support for the mental well-being of Selangorians. This has greatly contributed to increased awareness, compassion and access to care. May Tuanku always be blessed with continued good health, wisdom and longevity. Daulat Tuanku!"

Datuk Dr Andrew Mohanraj
President
Selangor Mental Health Association

"Warmest birthday greetings to His Royal Highness. May Tuanku be blessed with continued health and prosperity. Tuanku's wisdom, guidance and benevolence will continue to unite and uplift Malaysians near and far."

Hamdan Mohamad
Director of Sarawak Affairs
AirAsia

"Heartfelt birthday wishes to Tuanku and my sincere appreciation to Tengku Permaisuri Selangor Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin for her dedication to animal welfare. This day also holds personal meaning as it is my late father's birthday."

Amanda Chong
Founder
Petsavers

"Wishing Tuanku a very happy birthday. May Tuanku enjoy many more years as the Ruler of Selangor. Thank you for being a voice of reason whenever there is a need for your intervention. We appreciate and value His Royal Highness' role in propagating unity among the masses. Daulat Tuanku!"

Kavitah Ganasan
Coordinator
MDDB Canine Welfare Organisation

"Wishing Tuanku a blessed and joyful birthday. I am deeply touched by His Royal Highness' love for the stray cats under your care. Tuanku's compassion and appreciation for living beings continue to inspire many of us working in animal welfare. May Tuanku be granted lasting health, wisdom and happiness. Daulat Tuanku!"

Kelvin Cheah Kheng Tatt
General Manager
SPCA Selangor

"Happy birthday, Tuanku. May His Royal Highness be blessed with continued good health, wisdom in leadership and enduring peace and prosperity for the whole royal family. We, the parents and teachers of SJK(T) St Joseph, pray for the continued progress and harmony of Selangor under your guidance."

Ganaprakash Varalharajoo
Parent-Teachers Association
SJK(T) St Joseph

"May Allah SWT continue to bestow our beloved Ruler with blessings and enduring good health, and guide Tuanku's reign with wisdom, justice and peace. We, as loyal subjects, remain ever grateful for your distinguished leadership and deep concern for the people of Selangor. Daulat Tuanku!"

Nor Fariza Daud
Selangor civil servant

"Wishing Tuanku a blessed 80th birthday, and our heartfelt thanks for His Royal Highness' leadership in prioritising the well-being of Selangor's communities. We also honour Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin's dedicated compassion for animals, a noble complement to the royal household's commitment to a more caring society. Daulat Tuanku!"

Asther Lau
President
Animal Kindness Coalition

"Happy birthday, Tuanku. May His Royal Highness be blessed with good health, happiness and continued strength to lead Selangor towards greater harmony and progress. Daulat Tuanku!"

Donald Jesse Lim
Legal adviser
Selangor Mental Health Association

Daulat Tuanku

SEMOGA ALLAH LANJUTKAN USIA DAN MERAHMATI PEMERINTAHAN TUANKU

DULI YANG MAHA MULIA
SULTAN SHARAFUDDIN IDRIS SHAH ALHAJ
IBNI ALMARHUM SULTAN SALAHUDDIN ABDUL AZIZ SHAH ALHAJ

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SULTAN DAN YANG DIPERTUAN NEGERI SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN
SERTA SEGALA DAERAH TAKLUKNYA

Sembah Tahniah Dan Ucap Selamat

Sempena Ulang Tahun Hari Keputeraan Yang Ke-80
Duli Yang Maha Mulia Sultan Selangor
Pada 11 Disember 2025 Bersamaan 20 Jumadal Akhirah 1447H

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Charting dreams across open seas

Fernandez receiving a warm welcome home from Tengku Amir Shah and other RSYC members upon his return from his remarkable 32-month solo sea voyage on his boat *Destiny 12* in October. — Photos from Royal Selangor Yacht Club Facebook page

By WANI MUTHIAH
wani@thestar.com.my

SAILING is a highly important activity in Selangor, given that the ancestors of the state's royal family were prolific Bugis adventurers and seafarers.

Recently, Raja Muda Selangor Tengku Amir Shah completed the 35th Raja Muda Selangor International Regatta (RMSIR).

The regatta, which is the second oldest in Asia, was conceptualised and initiated by Selangor Ruler Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah in 1989, when he was still the Crown Prince.

Sultan Sharafuddin, an avid sailor as well as patron and life commodore of the Royal Selangor Yacht Club (RSYC), made history two decades ago by circumnavigating the world in 22 months on his yacht *SY Jugra*.

Recently, another RSYC member also made headlines when he sailed around the world in 32 months on his boat *Destiny 12*.

Upon his return two months ago, Fabian Fernandez was welcomed with much pomp and revelry by Tengku Amir Shah and other RSYC members.

Fernandez left Malaysian waters on Feb 6, 2023, and returned on Oct 11 this year, making him the fourth Malaysian to successfully circumnavigate the world.

The 54-year-old took on the challenge due to "a mix of curiosity, challenge and a deep love for the sea".

"I knew this wasn't going to be just another voyage as it had to be something unique and meaningful.

"I also planned and executed everything myself, which makes this feat the greatest achievement of my life," he said.

He added that accomplishing the circumnavigation at 54 is proof that age is not a barrier and that dreams do not come with an expiry date.

"Completing this journey is not just about sailing around the world – it's about showing that with determination, resilience and faith in yourself, you can rise above doubt and make the impossible possible."

He noted, however, that his round-the-world sojourn, which covered a total distance of 35,000 nautical miles, came with many challenges.

> "I knew this wasn't going to be just another voyage as it had to be something unique and meaningful."
>
> Fabian Fernandez

The most difficult part was sailing around the Cape of Good Hope, which has a reputation as one of the world's most treacherous ocean crossings, and through the Mozambique Channel.

"The seas there are unpredictable, with strong currents, storms and fierce winds converging.

"It demanded every bit of planning, seamanship and mental strength I had," he recalled.

"Making it through successfully was both a relief and one of the most defining moments of the entire circumnavigation."

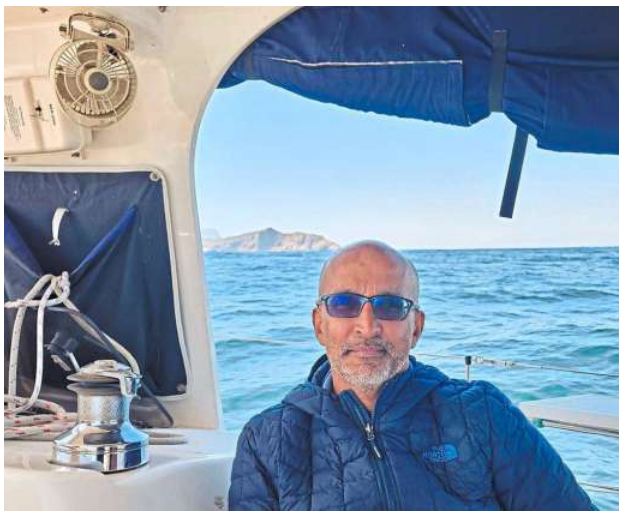
Navigating squalls at sea also tested his limits as the skies would turn black, the winds would shift direction and he would be hit with driving rain and "confused seas" all of a sudden.

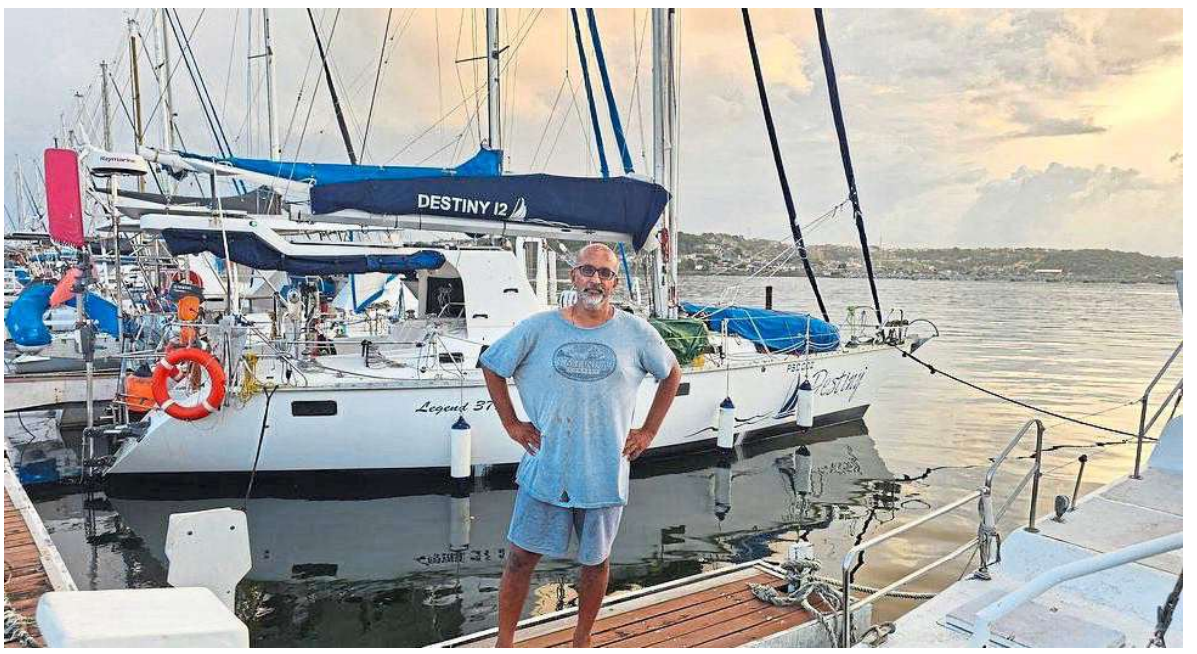
"It pushes you physically because you're constantly trimming sails and steering, but also mentally because you know there's no escape," he added.

Now that he is back home, Fernandez – a former marine engineer and plantation manager – wants to start a company to provide training, motivation and personal development to help people of all ages and backgrounds discover their potential through discipline and clarity.

He also plans to launch social media channels to share insights and stories from his seafaring adventure, aiming at inspiring others to face their fears and pursue bold, ambitious goals.

Tengku Amir Shah and his crew onboard the *Maduzi* during the 35th RMSIR. — Photo from Selangor Royal Office Facebook page





Fernandez: 'Completing this journey is not just about sailing around the world – it's about showing that with determination, resilience and faith in yourself, you can rise above doubt and make the impossible possible.'

DAULAT TUANKU

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SULTAN AND RULER OF THE STATE OF SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN
AND ALL ITS DEPENDENCIES

HEARTIEST SALUTATIONS AND CONGRATULATIONS

In Conjunction With His Royal Highness's 80th Birthday
On 11th December 2025

WITH UTMOST SINCERITY

YAB DATO' SERI AMIRUDIN SHARI
THE CHIEF MINISTER OF SELANGOR
THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF THE
STATE OF SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN

Addressing mental health stigmas

(From left) Sultan Sharafuddin touring Tanjong Karang Hospital alongside other dignitaries following the hospital's official opening on Feb 9, 2023; an exterior view of the hospital. — Photos from Selangor Royal Office Facebook page

By WANI MUTHIAH
wani@thestar.com.my

IN 2023, during the launch of Tanjong Karang Hospital, Selangor Ruler Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah spoke about the plight of those suffering from mental illness.

"Individuals who are physically fit may not necessarily be mentally fit.

"Hence, I urge everyone not to ostracise or stigmatise those who face mental health problems such as depression and acute anxiety," Sultan Sharafuddin said.

Tuanku added that those suffering from mental health issues must be given appropriate treatment, just as treatment is provided to people suffering from physical ailments.

His Royal Highness also said that everyone must play a role in the healing process.

Following this, a group of mental health experts and enthusiasts got together to set up the Selangor Mental Health Association (SMHA) the same year.

Its president Datuk Dr Andrew Mohanraj said the organisation was established to educate the public and address the challenges faced by those suffering from mental health issues.

"SMHA wants to respond to the unique challenges faced by M40 and B40 families in Selangor, which is one of the nation's most densely populated and industrial states.

"Stay-at-home mothers and wives in many M40 and B40 households struggle to stretch limited incomes while juggling childcare and household responsibilities.

"These pressures are often compounded by difficult family dynamics, which can take a serious toll on their mental health," explained Dr Mohanraj.

He added that SMHA provides affordable and compassionate counselling at just RM10 per session and if that fee is a barrier, sponsorships are arranged so that no one is turned away.

Dr Mohanraj said SMHA plans to broaden mental health services across Selangor and extend its reach.

Hue said Miles for Minds was more than just a run – it was a movement built on compassion, solidarity and courage. — ART CHEN/The Star

Beyond counselling, the association also organises community activities in neighbourhoods with high concentrations of B40 and M40 families to build support networks, strengthen well-being and create accessible resources where they are needed the most.

To extend its reach to more people, SMHA also participates in various community-based activities and collaborations.

Recently, it took part in the Miles for Minds Run 2025, an initiative that promotes togetherness and encourages Malaysians to move, support one another and normalise conversations about mental health.

(Miles for Minds is a youth-led movement which utilises running as a tool for healing and social change.)

SMHA treasurer Joyce Hue said the event was not merely a run but a movement of compassion, solidarity and courage.

"Every participant, volunteer, partner and supporter played a part in breaking stigmas and opening doors for better conversations around mental health," said Hue, who is a psychologist.

Hue said she witnesses every day, in her line of work, how stigmas continue to hold people back from seeking the support they deserve.

She added that it is very disheartening to witness individuals suffer in silence when mental healthcare is a universal right.

"This is why initiatives like this matter so much," she added.

Meanwhile, Dr Mohanraj said that SMHA has plans to expand mental health services across Selangor and extend its reach, including working closely with the Selangor state government.

He added that the Selangor Speaker's office has been an informal patron of SMHA since Datuk Ng Suee Lim held office last term.

The current Speaker, Lau Weng San, is similarly very supportive.

"One of SMHA's priorities for 2026 is to formalise the Speaker's office as an official patron," said Dr Mohanraj.

Sultan Sharafuddin inaugurating the official opening of Tanjong Karang Hospital, witnessed by Selangor Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari (second from right) and other dignitaries. — Photo from Selangor Royal Office Facebook page

> **"I urge everyone not to ostracise or stigmatise those who face mental health problems such as depression and acute anxiety."**
>
> Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah

Daulat Tuanku

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Tengku Amir Shah taking a tour of PDK Damansara Damia, with Izhar highlighting its early intervention programmes for underprivileged children.

Filling a gap in autism care

By WANI MUTHIAH
wani@thestar.com.my

RECENTLY, the Raja Muda Selangor Tengku Amir Shah officiated a centre for autistic children in Kota Damansara which was co-founded by his friend Izhar Moslim.

Izhar, who had worked closely with Tengku Amir Shah in his capacity as the chief executive officer of the Selangor Youth Community (SAY) and Yayasan Raja Muda Selangor (YRMS) some years ago, set up the centre to help autistic children from B40 families.

Izhar said he was motivated to set up the centre after his eight-year-old daughter, Danielle Damia, was diagnosed with mild autism at the age of three in 2020.

"We found it is very costly to provide effective therapy for an autistic child, so my wife and I planned to start a centre for the underprivileged for this purpose," said Izhar.

Aptly named PDK Damansara Damia, after Izhar's daughter, the centre is supported by the private sector and the Welfare Department.

It currently serves 40 children from the B40 community.

PDK (Pemulihan Dalam Komuniti) is a community-based rehabilitation programme initiative by the government to rehabilitate, integrate and provide opportunities for the disabled community.

According to Izhar, families with autistic children face many problems and roadblocks.

"Firstly, conventional kindergartens and schools are not suitable for neurodivergent kids as their environment, teachers and other children are not equipped or knowledgeable on how to manage such children.

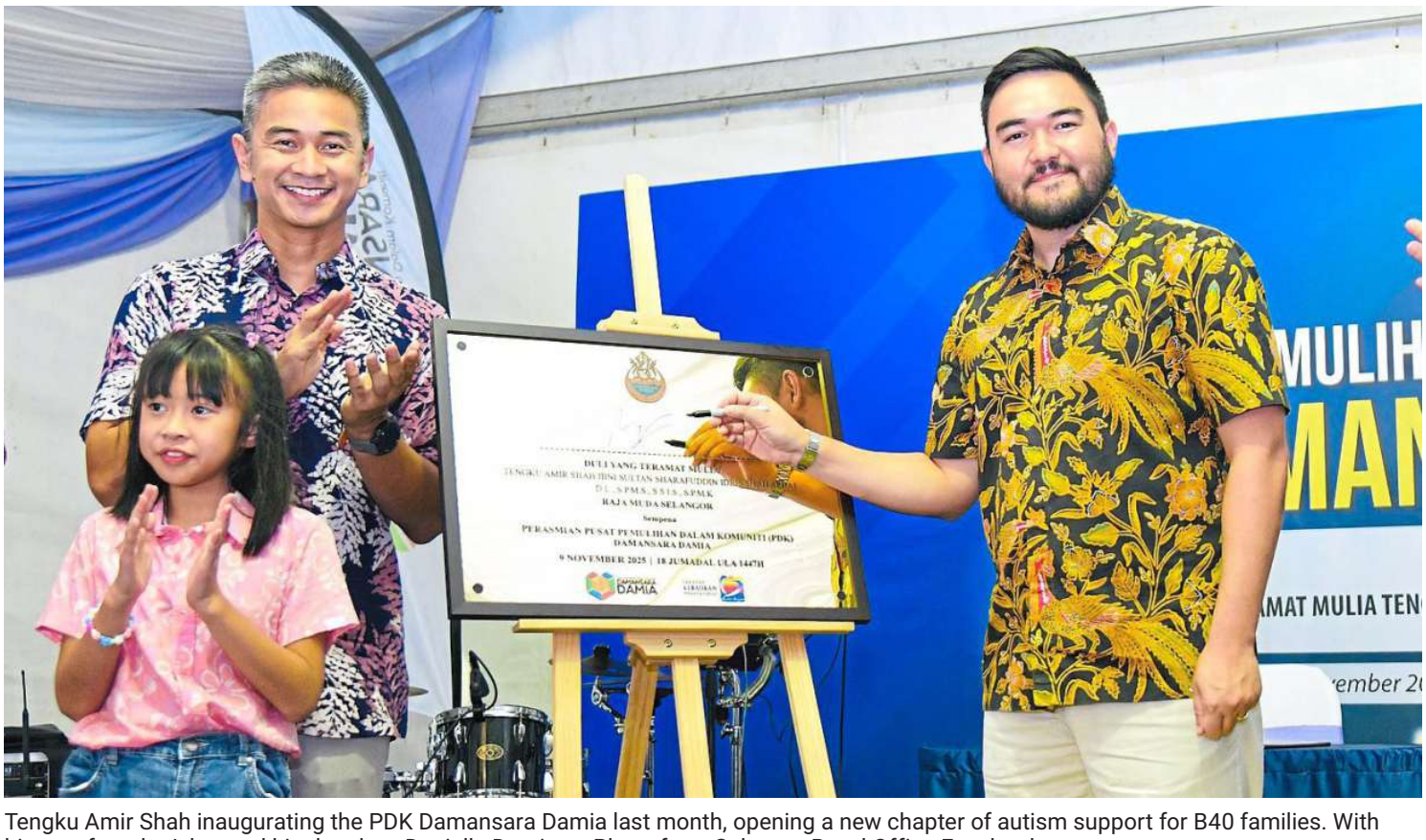
"Secondly, government facilities are limited and parents can only get one 30-minute session every six months if they are lucky.

"Thirdly, private therapy centres are very expensive, with hourly rates ranging from RM150 to RM250, which can add up to thousands of ringgit each month," said Izhar.

His centre's early intervention programmes currently cater to children aged seven years old and below.

Families are not charged to enter the programme.

Once the children receive the RM300 allowance they are eligible for from the Welfare Department, they pay a mere RM100 monthly commitment fee.



Tengku Amir Shah inaugurating the PDK Damansara Damia last month, opening a new chapter of autism support for B40 families. With him are founder Izhar and his daughter Daniella Damia. — Photo from Selangor Royal Office Facebook page

According to Izhar, the Raja Muda has been very supportive of the initiative from the moment he first learned about it.

"I did not tell Tuanku about the centre when I set it up last year, but told him about it early this year during a casual chat.

"The Raja Muda not only consented to officiate the centre, but also expressed that he would be happy to support the initiative," Izhar recalled.

At the end of the event, the Crown Prince congratulated Izhar and his team on doing something impactful and critical for the community.

"Tuanku also told me privately that he was very proud to see what I have done – starting from something small, expanding organically and bringing in both the private sector and the government to support and make the initiative a success," said Izhar.

Izhar said he was inspired to establish the centre after his daughter was diagnosed with mild autism at age three in 2020. — Photo from Selangor Royal Office Facebook page

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