

King stresses on national integration, racial unity

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New platform to help job seekers

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ON WEDNESDAY

SEPTEMBER 1, 2021

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**MERDEKA SPIRIT ...** Instead of personal protection equipment, a group of medical frontliners dons traditional costumes at the KLCC vaccination centre yesterday to mark Merdeka Day. - ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN



# Still as zealous

BY ALISHA NUR MOHD NOOR  
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**PETALING JAYA:** While the celebrations were muted, the spirit of Merdeka remains strong in the hearts of Malaysians.

The average Malaysian took comfort in the fact that despite the challenges, people are still ready to take the extra step to help others, even strangers.

Many engaged in activities at home rather than join the crowd in official Merdeka Day celebrations, while political leaders called for change to help the country recover from the worst crisis in its history.

As a nation, there is hope that a better future awaits, free of the health, economic and political crises that have plagued the country for the better part of the last two years.

For HR administration staff Anis Saedah Yahaya, Merdeka Day meant staying home and pottering around in the kitchen, cooking up a storm.

Videos of her culinary exploits have garnered more than 69,000 followers on TikTok and four times as many followers on Instagram.

Her effort has even created a second income for her. She has been collaborating with small and medium enterprises on social media.

The 29-year-old, known as Ciknis on social media, focuses on healthy cooking, an effort that began with her

➤ Despite health and economic crises, Malaysians mark Merdeka with equal ardour

desire to shed the pounds.

"I do it to motivate myself to adopt a healthy lifestyle. I have managed to lose 53kg," she said.

Anis feels that while the Merdeka Day celebrations had been quite low-key, she is thankful that Malaysians are still free to express themselves. "The Covid-19 pandemic has also pushed us to think out of the box just to survive," she said.

Healthcare worker Dr Nureen Iman, 31, told *theSun* that although the battle against Covid-19 is far from over, she realised that the shared pain had been a unifying factor. "Many Malaysians have become kinder and more generous, regardless of race and religion," she said.

She recounted an occasion when a man, who had just been discharged from the Covid-19 ward at the hospital, offered to drive a fellow patient 80km back to his home in Tanjung Karang.

"For many, the reality is painful, having lost loved ones to the virus. For them, life may now be unbearable," she said.

Nureen noted that apart from job

losses that have affected livelihoods, the political crisis had contributed to instability in the country.

"But hope is not lost. There must be light at the end of the tunnel," she said. "We will get through this. It's just a matter of time."

In their Merdeka Day messages, politicians called for better governance and more effective strategies to pull the country out of the current crises.

Petaling Jaya MP Maria Chin Abdullah proposed that a total of 14 parliamentary special select committees be set up to ensure oversight on government affairs and activities, a proposition that received the nod from 55 other MPs, including Tuaran representative Datuk Seri Wilfred Madius Tangau.

Chin said findings from the committees would help MPs make more informed decisions and therefore, have a greater impact on policies and legislation.

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# LY

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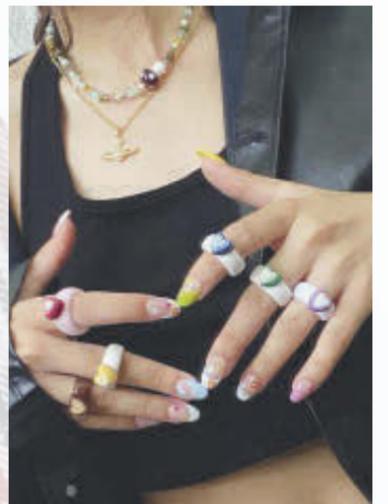
# FFEE

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## A *star from the start*

Dolla's Tabby reveals more about her life, recent collaboration and future plans

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New kitsch on the block

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Daryl Kho writes an uplifting book

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BY MARK MATHEN VICTOR

**W**RITING has always been a passion for Daryl Kho. He told theSun that in his early years in school, he wrote everything from short stories to plays. But that changed after graduation.

After Daryl joined the corporate world, creative writing seemingly left his world, or at the very least, remained in a state of deep dormancy.

"The only thing I wrote (after work life began) were emails and PowerPoint decks. I even stopped reading except for business books and such," he said.

After a life-changing, pivotal experience in his personal and family life, Daryl's creative juices, knack for storytelling and love of words were roused from their slumber.

In 2009, Daryl's father had a stroke, which caused vascular dementia.

The condition robbed senior Kho of his mobility, health, livelihood and memory.

The events that followed led to Daryl's debut, *Mist-bound: How to Glue Back Grandpa*.

From one continent to another and back, Petaling Jaya-born Daryl left secondary school midway in Kuala Lumpur for a Canadian boarding institution and then continued his higher education in the United States.

He graduated just as the dot-com bubble burst and sent him job hunting.

This led to an event that Daryl took as a sign for him to return home.

"I had a job interview opposite the World Trade Centre on Sep 11, 2001," he said grimly.

He called to postpone the meeting, as he was burnt out by all the rounds of interviews.

"The next day, I woke up and New York was on fire," Daryl said, thanking divine intervention for his decision.

Returning to Malaysia, Daryl worked in KL for two years, after which he was transferred to Singapore.

He made his life there for years, leading up to the events that disabled his father.

**Glass half full**

Inspired by his parents and daughter, Daryl explained that *Mist-bound* is very much a fairytale that is based on a true story.

Being close to his father, Daryl was tremendously affected by his father's dementia. The condition sets in suddenly, unlike Alzheimer's disease.

"His memories went away, just like that," Daryl said.

Adding salt to the wound, the



# Tribute to father

➤ Malaysian author delves into grief and the experience of dementia in the family to write an uplifting book

stroke occurred several months before Daryl's daughter, Alexis, was born. His father was looking forward to the birth of the baby girl.

"He had the first stroke around the time when we were looking at the early scans of my wife's belly. After the stroke and dementia, he was never himself. And in a way, for me that felt like my dad and daughter never got to meet".

Another inspiration for the book was Daryl's mom, as she had to take care of her husband. Daryl said being a caregiver is really tough.

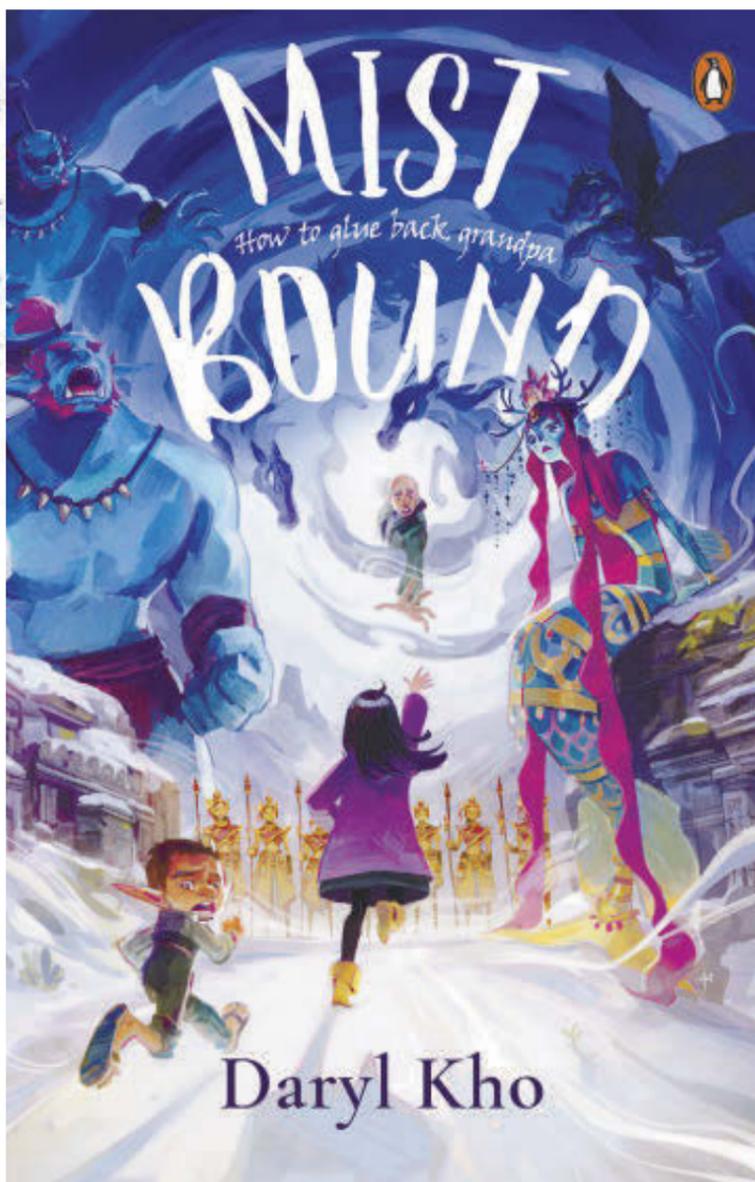
"She had to mostly do it all on her own."

These events, coupled with him finding his old writing passion, which reminded him that he used to know how to write and that he enjoyed writing, were the triggers that brought forth *Mist-bound*.

As a personal project, Daryl never intended his book to be about dementia or a medical book.

"It started originally as a personal story for my daughter and for me to read out to my dad," he said.

"I wanted to write her a story about my dad because all this



Daryl said *Mist-bound* is not a sad book, but one that is full of hope, love, imagination and adventure. - PICTURES COURTESY OF DARYL KHO

while, I wanted my daughter to get to know my dad before he had dementia. I was trying to paint him in that picture, how he was before, how he was full of stories and life."

Daryl also came across a quote that served as a guideline for his book: "When an old person dies, a library burns to the ground."

**More than a children's novel**

Although Daryl began *Mist-bound* with the goal of reading it to his father, the experience never came to pass.

The elder passed away midway through the book's completion.

"I almost gave up, but decided to carry on. I'm glad I did," he said.

Writing the book became an avenue for Daryl to process his grief, guilt and regrets.

Becoming more than a hobby, Daryl's debut title served as a catharsis. Once he secured a publishing contract, the writer wanted his work to do something beyond just entertain.

The book has started conversations on dementia, and drawn support from Singapore's TOUCH Community Services and Dementia Singapore, along with Alzheimer's Disease Foundation Malaysia.

"People who have gone through similar experiences, when they read my book, told me that they couldn't stop crying and how it has touched



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