

Architects urged to **inspire** young generation

Values, creativity and purpose of profession must resonate with group amid shifting career choices: Minister

BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI
 newsdesk@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: The architectural community has been urged to make its work more relevant to young people, as artificial intelligence and high-paying short-term opportunities increasingly shape career choices.

Speaking at the Kuala Lumpur Architecture Festival 2026 yesterday, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Hannah Yeoh stressed the importance of nurturing values and creativity among young Malaysians, while encouraging them to consider careers in architecture.

"If you ask children today what they want to be, many say 'influencers' because they can earn RM15,000 in minutes with a single social media post. Why would they spend five to six years studying architecture and designing for months to earn less?"

"How do you inspire an eight-year-old girl to become an architect for her generation? How will future buildings look?"

"So, our task is to ensure that architects' skills, values and convictions resonate with this generation, showing them that architecture still matters," she said.

Yeoh added that while competing with emerging professions is challenging,

collaboration among professionals driven by a shared purpose can deliver meaningful outcomes.

She highlighted that transforming Malaysia requires time and courage to move away from conventional approaches, urging the private sector and professional bodies to work with authorities to improve public facilities in Kuala Lumpur.

She also said the government would work closely with the Malaysian Institute of Architects (MIA) and other professionals to revitalise public spaces, pledging RM20,000 to MIA to support the initiatives.

"One of the first priorities is improving public shower facilities. If we want to promote a healthy lifestyle, the infrastructure must support it. This is something we will develop together with stakeholders and explore new ideas.

"With only 24 months, I have a very difficult task of turning Kuala Lumpur around. But I know I cannot do it alone and I want to do more. At my first public event as a Federal Territories minister, I am inviting others to walk alongside me," she added.

Yeoh also shared her experience transforming the KL Sports City Stadium, including addressing flooding issues, introducing big screen programmes for football fans and children, opening the stadium for school sports days and optimising idle spaces for concerts and public use.

"These efforts increased stadium revenue and fostered community engagement.

"This shows that transforming Malaysia takes time and courage. It requires stepping out of the norm and being willing to fail at first. But

with persistence and collaboration, results follow," she said.

Meanwhile, MIA president Adrianta Aziz acknowledged the growing influence of AI, but stressed that young architects must adapt rather than resist technological change.

"AI is an essential tool, but it cannot replace the human brain and creativity. Just as AutoCAD transformed architecture in our time, AI is a new innovation that can improve results, but human insight remains central," he said.

Adrianta said architecture was not merely about technical skills or terminology, but about aspiration, inspiration and passion.

"Architecture is not just about teaching terms or following a syllabus. It is about inspiring young minds and helping them understand design, space and urban life.

"At MIA, we have always believed that architecture is ultimately about helping society," he added.

He also stressed the need for architects to balance sustainability, heritage, resilience and local perspectives, ensuring designs respond to future needs while reflecting the values, memories and identities of communities.

"This festival challenges us to ask how we design responsibly, how we honour the past while shaping the future and how we build inclusive, humane and green cities.

"We seek to involve local residents, students, creatives, businesses and communities, because meaningful architecture responds to real people and real places.

"Future culture moves from memory to action. Architecture has the power to transform cities, impact lives and shape our shared tomorrow."



Adrianta (right) and Yeoh during the launch of the Kuala Lumpur Architecture Festival yesterday. — AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THESUN

Penang steps up preparations ahead of Thaipusam

GEORGE TOWN: As Thaipusam approaches each year, Penang takes centre stage with celebrations rich in tradition, spirituality and cultural harmony.

With 14 days remaining before the observance on Feb 1, the Penang Hindu Wakf Board has intensified preparations, with a strong focus on the safety of devotees around the Sri Arulmigu Balathandayuthapani Temple along Jalan Kebun Bunga.

More than one million devotees are expected to throng the temple, popularly known as *Thaneer Malai*.

In an exclusive interview with Bernama, board chairman R.S.N. Rayer said one of the major improvements introduced this year is a special permit system for devotees carrying the *Ratham Kavadi*, a large *kavadi* resembling a small cart usually pulled by several individuals.

He said the system is intended to regulate entry times for the *kavadi* procession to ensure smoother movement and prevent congestion that could compromise safety, particularly during peak night hours.

"We are trying to ensure they do not arrive at the same time. Last year, when several *Ratham Kavadis* entered between 7pm and 8pm, the congestion was so severe it resulted in a complete gridlock," he said when met at the temple.

Rayer added that the board is encouraging senior citizens, the chronically ill and persons with disabilities to perform their prayers and vows earlier, preferably a week before Thaipusam.

He said this year's celebration will feature 175 *Thaneer Panthal* or decorated stalls, along the route leading to the hilltop temple.

Panthal operators were also reminded to strictly adhere to guidelines, including playing only religious songs, ceasing all music by 11pm on Feb 1 and complying with the ban on entertainment music, firecrackers, fireworks and alcohol consumption.

On the movement of the gold chariot belonging to the board and the silver chariot of the Nattukotai Chettiar Temple, Rayer said discussions are ongoing to coordinate their processions to ensure orderly movement, with one chariot leading and the other following.

"Both chariots will depart at the same time between 5am and 5:30am, the silver chariot from the Nagarathar Kovil Veedu Temple and the gold chariot from the Maha Mariamman Temple on Queen Street.

"The most important thing is that we have reached an understanding. We will work together to organise the movement of the chariots to prevent disputes like those that occurred previously," he said.

Malaysia accedes two UN outer space treaties

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has acceded to two key United Nations space treaties, marking a significant step in strengthening the country's commitment to the safe and responsible governance of outer space activities.

The Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry said in a statement that Malaysia is now a party to the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies 1967, as well as the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space 1975.

The ministry said Malaysia's

participation was finalised with the submission of the instrument of participation by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hassan at the United Nations General Assembly in the US on Sept 26, 2025.

It described the move as a continuation of the government's efforts to strengthen governance and regulation of the country's space activities, beginning with the gazetting of the Malaysia Space Board Act 2022 (Act 834) on Jan 25, 2022 and the full enforcement of the Act on Jan 1, 2025.

"The UN Outer Space Treaty provides an international legal

framework that sets out fundamental principles to ensure the use of outer space is carried out safely, responsibly and for the benefit of all humanity," the ministry added.

In the same statement, Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Chang Lih Kang described the accession as an important complement that makes Malaysia's space legal ecosystem more holistic and comprehensive.

"Act 834 is our domestic shield, while this treaty is our diplomatic bridge. The combination of these two can position Malaysia as a trusted and safe destination for

space investment," he said.

Chang added that Malaysia's participation in the two treaties marks the next phase in the development of the country's space sector, which is being implemented in stages under the National Space Policy 2030 launched in 2017.

The ministry said the move also protects national interests and enhances Malaysia's standing as an emerging player in the global space sector, while opening greater opportunities to participate in international outer space programmes, in line with the rapid growth of the industry. — Bernama