

MediaTitle	Daily Express (KK)		
Date	28 Dec 2012	Language	English
Circulation	30,557	Readership	97,836
Section	Nation	Color	Full Color
Page No	4	ArticleSize	615 cm ²
AdValue	RM 3,168	PR Value	RM 9,505



Kadazan beauty yearning for hosting or acting role

Mary Chin

KOTA KINABALU: With the Miss Universe Malaysia 2013 second runner-up title in her bag, May Salitah Naru Kiob has set her sights on a hosting or acting role.

The 24-year-old Kadazan beauty from Tambunan, who stands at 167cm, said she yearned for a career in the entertainment industry ever since she had the opportunity to emcee for her mother's school concert as a teenager. Mary Kan had trained her daughter in communication skills through storytelling, emceeing and public speaking activities. In fact, Kiob had won prizes in State and Divisional Level elocution contests as a secondary school student.

"I consider my latest accolade as a stepping-stone to realising my dream," said the fresh graduate of Universiti Utara Malaysia with a Bachelor's degree in International Affairs Management.

In this regard, Kiob looks forward to help from Talent Management in getting into the entertainment sector.

Kiob won RM4,000 cash and a full scholarship for a course of her choice at the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology next year.

"I contemplate taking up broadcasting journalism. At the same time, I will most likely be writing for a cosmetic surgery magazine. Earlier this year, I completed a four-month journalism internship at the Star newspaper," she said.

She also bagged the Miss Oris Elegance subsidiary title which earned her an Oris, a Swiss watch worth RM7,000.

Prior to this, Kiob was the State-level Upko Unduk Ngadau (2008), Miss Earth Sabah (2010) and a finalist in the

Miss World Malaysia pageant (2011).

Getting into the finals was no plain sailing. She went through a gruelling five-week reality TV series (which was aired on 8TV) to be among the top eight and then the top four contestants from 17 finalists.

"Each week posed a different challenge from fitness to fashion to communication to catwalk and photoshoot. I could have been eliminated."

During the Communication Challenge, Kiob, who donned the Kadazan traditional costume, was engaged in a debate with the motion "Is it better to be an idealist or a realist?" She chose to be an idealist.

She was reportedly the favourite with the crowd at the catwalk challenge, and required to be in the shoes of Madonna during the photoshoot challenge.

After the series, her next challenge was to collaborate with Groupon Malaysia to raise funds for charity in aid of Yayasan Chow Kit's underprivileged kids.

"This meant promoting Groupon and getting the public to buy deals

from Groupon, say RM10 for every click. I managed to rake in a total of RM4,040."

At the finals' interview, Kiob was asked by the compere, "Why is the sky blue?" Within seconds, she answered, "Everywhere there is a hint of blue in the sky. Blue is the colour of unity amongst us. It reminds the world and Malaysians in particular to remain united (in apparent reference to the Malaysian song entitled *Biru Lambang Perpaduan Kita Semua* (Blue is our Symbol of Unity)."

She wasn't nervous, having been on stage since her primary school days, and represented Sabah in a national-level story-telling competition in KL when she was only in Primary Five.

Kiob, who was chaperoned by her mother during the event in Shah Alam, gave credit to the latter for her overall success. Mary, a childcare provider, had groomed her four daughters with the right etiquette from young.

"We had good grounding since primary school up to secondary level. Mum would coach us in story-telling, public speaking, debate, writing, choral singing and what have you.

"Which is why we have no stage fright. And she advocates beauty with brains, and the importance of walking on the right path of life," she shared.

At this juncture, Mary chipped in to say that mothers are duty bound to monitor their children's activities. "Though I trust my children because they know how to take care of themselves, they keep me posted of what they do," she said, adding that the Miss Universe Malaysia Organisation is a respectable one.

On previous media reports of winners having been shortchanged, Kiob advised potential contestants to know the beauty pageant organisers and the nature of the pageant before taking the plunge.

"Go for the right pageant but not those social club titles where one is required to parade in bikini and things like that. Such participation may not add to your credentials."

She also asserted that beauty queens are "role models" and should live up to this image.

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May with her second runner-up sash.



Flashback to December 10: May (left) with the crowned Miss Universe Malaysia 2012, Carey Ng, first runner-up Natalia Ng Mei Mei and third runner-up Symren Kaur at the prize-giving ceremony at the Setia Alam Convention Centre in Shah Alam.