

# Light up with Daily Chilli

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The Star's latest news portal creating a buzz

»The Daily Chilli is meant to be fun and light reading«

DATUK SERI WONG CHUN WAI

**C**RAVING more adventurous news than the staple diet from your daily newspapers? Well then, you may want to take a bite of *The Daily Chilli*.

It's *The Star's* newest online news portal that serves up breezier news for the young-at-heart.

Aimed at college students and young working adults, *The Daily Chilli* ([www.daily-chilli.com](http://www.daily-chilli.com)) offers diverse and easy-to-read content from human interest stories to the sensational.

Launched on Monday, it has already created a buzz with stories like a coffee joint that fuses the kopitiam and Hooters concepts, and an Indonesian fringe group's plan to invade Malaysia.

Star Publications (M) Bhd group chief editor Datuk Seri Wong Chun Wai says *The Daily Chilli* is essentially part of a larger plan of Star Publications' move into multimedia.

"*The Daily Chilli* is meant to be fun and light reading. We've got enough news portals in Malaysia which focus on politics. The online version of newspapers almost replicates what's offered in the print version.

"We're here to fill in the missing link – a portal that thrives on offering a fresh perspective or slant to any news story with an entertainment value," he says.

He says *The Daily Chilli* wants to be differ-



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ent from other locally-based online news sites. Its stories will have more human interest angle and interesting details overlooked or ignored by other news sources.

"We will include a lot of elements from Twitter and Facebook. I think the younger readers, who are our target, would be able to relate to them," Wong says.

The portal has a section called *Just 140* which features personalities who Tweet, such as Jojo Struys who hosts *Project Alpha*, Malaysia's first online show about the country's top bloggers.

It will also source regional stories from the Asia News Network alliance, of which *The Star* is a member.

"Our main partner is the *New Paper* of Singapore, with whom *The Daily Chilli* cooperates to exchange stories and pictures," he says.

There is also a photo gallery called *Babes and Hunks*.

*The Daily Chilli*, headed by associate editor M. Veera Pandiyan and assistant editor (production) Purwaiz Alam, is still at an experimental stage.

While it is hoped that it will eventually replicate the success of *The Star Online*, which enjoys 55 million page views a month, it is still a long way from that.

"*The Daily Chilli* has created so much excitement in the newsroom of *The Star* that I get many requests for secondment and transfers to it," says Wong.

## Spencer Azizul plays on the emotion in anti-smoking ad

AS this year's Tak Nak anti-smoking campaign enters the final laps, it culminates in showing not just the physical effects of smoking on the smokers but also the emotional toll on both the smokers and their families.

Spencer Azizul Sdn Bhd, the advertising agency tasked with developing the Health Ministry campaign, began the year with graphic ads depicting diseases of smokers.

It has put in more ammunition since July. Spencer Azizul has introduced statistics into the Tak Nak print ads to better convince sceptics and has launched a three-minute TV commercial – the longest TV spot it has ever done.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai told the agency that he wanted the commercial to show not only what smoking did to the smoker but also the effects of smoking on his family and others around him.

"The smoker (with disease) is not the only one who is suffering. That is the kind of message we wanted to send out," Spencer Azizul general manager Mohammed Iqbal tells *StarBizWeek*.

Acclaimed movie director Kabir Bhatia (*Cinta*, *Sepe* and *Setem*) was identified and tapped to direct the commercial, which plays like a mini-movie covering the lives of different people affected adversely by smoking.

Art director Alvin Liew says: "Kabir Bhatia is well-known for being able to bring out emotions from the actors. If you look at his movies, you'd think he is the most capable person to bring that out. If we had gotten a commercial director instead, it would've been just another (visually pretty) TV commercial."

The TV spot, which strives for realism, captures a scene at a hospital as a nurse makes her rounds and



Mohammed Iqbal ... 'There will be no shorter version of the the ad (inset) because we feel that we have a story to tell, so we'd tell it in the nicest manner possible.'

witnesses smokers of various races suffering from mouth cancer, lung cancer and gangrene. Through her eyes, one sees how the smokers' illnesses are not only affecting themselves but also their family members.

A man with lung cancer apologises to his pregnant wife, knowing that he will not be there with her to see their baby grow up. A woman with mouth cancer struggles to communicate with her young son, who is scared of her due to her



badly-deformed mouth and who cannot understand what she is trying to say.

The commercial ends with the nurse walking out of the hospital and seeing her young son putting into his shirt pocket a box of cigarettes that he has just found. She tells him: "Don't break my heart."

The boy crumples and throws away the box. The last frame says "Smoking destroys lives".

The commercial, which made its

debut on Aug 28, will finish its run next week.

According to Iqbal, there would be no shorter version because "we feel that we have a story to tell, so we'd tell it in the nicest manner possible."

Initially, Spencer Azizul had planned to do three one-minute commercials on lung cancer, gangrene and mouth cancer. But it then decided it would be a waste of money to do three different commercials.

"Secondly, how would we buy airtime? When do I run the gangrene commercial and when do I run the other commercials? You (the viewer) may be able to watch the gangrene ad, for example, but you may forget the lung cancer ad. So we decided to do a commercial that has all three diseases together."

Due to its length and budget constraint, the ad cannot be shown frequently, so the agency had to be very selective in the programmes chosen and the periods to air the commercial. It is mostly run during prime time.

Senior copywriter Juliet Tan says now that the ad showcases how families suffer, hopefully the family members of smokers would urge the smokers to stop. "If they get sick, the family members will have to take care of them."

Spencer Azizul has also put this commercial on YouTube, and it has received some 47,000 views so far, with about 30,000 from Malaysia. Some people put it on Facebook and it has spread on the Net.

"You have to talk to the young generation in a language that they understand. They're not the *Buletin Utama* and *Drama Minggu Ini* viewers. They're more on YouTube, Friendster and Facebook," Iqbal explains.

Besides the TV commercial, the Tak Nak campaign also has a print ad showing the positive effects from stopping smoking.

Iqbal says the last phase of the campaign in November-December will involve a nationwide research with a sample of more than 2,000.

"Once we get the research figures, we'll see how the whole campaign fared. There had been research after phase one too, and based on the results, we changed the campaign," he adds.

Account manager Liew Mun Tip says the agency included statistics in the recent Tak Nak ads because people had said, "Is this picture of diseases (in the previous ads) real?" "The statistics prove a point and make the ad campaign more believable," she says.

The agency also uses radio. It is running a quit-smoking campaign challenge on Hitz.FM.

Hitz.FM asked listeners to participate in a 21-day challenge of abstaining from smoking. The five selected listeners stand a chance to win prizes like a Nintendo Wii, a breathalyser and three-month supply of nicotine gum.

Spencer Azizul only has the Tak Nak contract for a year, and it hopes the campaign will continue in the present form even if it is not reappointed as the Tak Nak agency next year.

Executive director Michael Tang says: "I always feel that for any Government campaign, it should be sustained – not just run for a year and then change to the next campaign without continuity. Sustaining a campaign is like building a brand; it takes years for any campaign to be successful.

"For us to be effective in the long term, we must be able to sustain this campaign until the next generation who lights up knows the side effects." – **By M. HAFIDZ MAHPAR**