

Saturday February 14, 2009

## 116-year-old school gets heritage status today

KUALA LUMPUR: While the city folk celebrate Valentine's Day today, another big event will be taking place here.

The iconic Victoria Institution or more popularly known as VI, which will be 116 years old this year, will become the first day school in the country to be awarded national heritage status.

Founded by Sultan Abdul Samad, William Hood Treacher, Loke Yew, Thamboosamy Pillai and Yap Kwan Seng on Aug 14, 1893, VI has steadfastly maintained a record of academic excellence and produced many leaders and luminaries.



School with a long history: Victoria Institution seen as it stands today in Jalan Hang Tuah, Kuala Lumpur.

Those who passed through its hallowed halls include Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei, Cabinet ministers then and now like Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz, Datuk Seri Zulhasnan Rafique, Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal, Datuk Seri Dr Ng Yen Yen and former judge Datuk Mahadev Shankar.

Other former students include corporate giants like Tan Sri Shamsuddin Abdul Kadir, T. Ananda Krishnan and Tan Sri Francis Yeoh while in the field of sports the school has produced luminaries such as Datuk Dr M. Jegathesan, the late Mokhtar Dahari, Datuk Misbun Sidek, Foo Kok Keong, Datuk P.S. Nathan and Ishtiaq Mubarak.

During the Second World War, VI was used as the administrative headquarters by the invading Japanese army and after Japan's defeat in the war in 1945, the handover ceremony of the administration of Malaya to the British was also held there (on Feb 22, 1946).



The founders: (Clockwise from top left) William Hood Treacher, Yap Kwan Seng, Loke Yew and Thamboosamy Pillai.

Unity, Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal will present the award to VI this morning in a special ceremony at its school compound and many of its former students are expected to be present to witness the historic event.

It will also hold a special meaning to Shafie, himself an alumnus of VI.

Zulhasnan, the Federal Territories Minister, said: "I would not miss it for the world. It is such a great honour for VI and as a former student, I am particularly glad VI is the first school to be awarded the status.

For Zulhasnan, Feb 14 this year also holds a special meaning as it will mark the third year that he has been Federal Territories Minister.

For VI's Parent-Teacher Association president, Raja Amir Shah Raja Abdul Aziz, VI's main goal after getting the status is to continue with its tradition of excellence for hundreds of years to come. — Bernama