

Halloween carnival



Children wearing costumes pose for a photo during Halloween carnival at a shopping mall in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — AFP

Thai rappers cause stir with anti-junta lyrics

A group of Thai rappers has touched a nerve with an impassioned and now-viral music video lobbing fiery rhymes at the ruling junta, as police mull filing charges against the lyricists. The generals that toppled Thailand's democratic government in 2014 have kept a tight lid on dissent but creative criticism through music and arts has been harder to control, even if its impact on political life has so far been minimal. The song "Prathet Ku Mee" (Which is My Country), uploaded to YouTube on October 22, has racked up more than 6.4 million views and tens of thousands of comments since it went live on the platform, prompting authorities to take notice. "It's under consideration by investigators, and it will take a few days because it's a sensitive issue," Siriwat Deephor, the police spokesman for the Technology Crime Suppression Division, told AFP when asked whether they would file charges.

He also said the probe could decide whether those who share the video could be targeted. "If this song violates the Computer Crime Act by uploading false information, those who share would be prosecuted and face the same punishment with those who uploaded it," he said. The act, which rights groups say has been used to crack down on online dissent, carries up to five years in prison.

Shot in black and white, the video features rappers from the Rap Against Dictatorship collective dishing out barbs about the military and blasting corruption, censorship and the lack of elections, which are tentatively scheduled for February after many delays. "The country where you must choose to suck truth or a bullet," one rapper says, wearing sunglasses with a bandana wrapped around his mouth. Several lyrics appear to go after junta leader Prayut Chan-O-Cha. "The country where the people do not read books, particularly the leader," one verse says, a thinly veiled allusion to Prayut, who has boasted about being widely read.

Straying into historically sensitive areas, a dummy made to look as if it has been lynched and strung up comes in and out of shot, a reference to the massacre of dozens of student protesters and civilians by security forces on a Bangkok campus in 1976. The only color appears on a guitar whose body is painted to resemble the Thai flag. Journalists and an academic have joined the debate, with one person comparing it to the rapper Childish Gambino's macabre "This is America" video about racism and violence earlier this year. But not all are fans. "Get out of this country if you don't like it," a Facebook user wrote.

Jacoboi, one of the group's founders, told AFP this week that those who appear in the video are artists who want to talk about politics. "They are the things we heard people say on social media and in real life," he said. "I'm not afraid of the authorities because I believe that nothing in this song has breached the law." — AFP

Japan releases American DJ David Morales after drug arrest

American DJ David Morales was released from Japanese custody without charge Friday, his representative said, following the Grammy Award winner's arrest earlier this month on suspicion of drug smuggling. Morales, 56, was detained at Fukuoka airport after a customs officer found him in possession of a tiny portion of the drug MDMA, better known as ecstasy. "We're delighted to confirm that David Morales has been released without charge," a representative for the DJ in London said in a statement sent to AFP.

"David is well and has asked that we pass on his love and gratitude to all those who have shown their support," the said, without giving details on why he was released or how many days he had been detained. Local police declined to confirm the release. Authorities allegedly found five granules of MDMA-weighing 0.3 grams-in Morales' carry-on suitcase but he denied the allegations, according to local media. He was scheduled to perform at events in Fukuoka and Tokyo. Morales was an influential figure in the New York dance scene during the 1980s and 1990s. He has remixed and produced releases for artists including Aretha Franklin, Michael Jackson and Janet Jackson, according to his website.

Morales was nominated for his first Grammy in 1995 as a producer for Mariah Carey's album "Daydream". Three years later, he won the Grammy for "Remixer of the Year." Japan has strict anti-drug laws where even possession of minute quantities can lead to jail sentences. Possession of ecstasy for personal use, however small the quantity, carries a maximum jail sentence of seven years and a three million yen (\$26,000) fine. In arguably Japan's most infamous music drug bust, Paul McCartney spent nine days in a Tokyo jail in 1980 after being caught at the airport with a bag of marijuana in his suitcase. — AFP



Lulu Hypermarket launches 'New Colors of Winter' promotion

Lulu Hypermarket, the premier lifestyle shopping destination, is giving shoppers a chance to bundle up for the winter season during its latest promotion, the 'New Colours of Winter'. The promotion was launched at the hypermarket's Egaila outlet on 25 October in the presence of top Lulu management in Kuwait and a large gathering of shoppers and well-wishers.

A special 'Kids Winter Fashion Show' was held on the occasion to lend added excitement and enjoyment to the event.

Similar Winter Collection Fashion Shows are slated to be held on various dates at other Lulu hypermarket outlets. In addition, a 'Bloggers Meet' was arranged at the Egaila outlet so that Kuwait's online opinion-formers could review and comment on the event, while also allowing shoppers to meet and interact with their favorite bloggers.

The 'New Colors of Winter' promotion, available at all Lulu Hypermarket outlets, includes a diverse and exciting range of winter clothing and accessories at very

special prices. Everything from fashionable winter garments to comfy footwear, and designed to provide warmth and style during the cold winter months, are on offer during the promotion period.

Discover quality winter-wear at unbeatable prices from popular brands such as Arezzo, Cortigiani, Debacker, Eten and John Louis during the promotion period. Among the hot-selling items on offer are a number of stylish jackets, sweaters and winter clothing accessories that combine affordability with style. Also, the wide range of winter-wear choices for children, including collections that are fun and casual, allow kids to make a fashion statement at very special prices. Lulu Hypermarket has a loyal and passionate customer base that continues to grow year after year. The secret to this strong brand adherence lies in the hypermarket's steadfast commitment to offer shoppers the widest range of high-quality products, from around the world, at very competitive prices, and in an ambience that provides for an enjoyable shopping experience.

