

One hopes to discover many things on a trip to Malaysia; the sight of the Twin Towers silhouetted against the city skyline, experiencing seasickness on expensive cruise ships whilst roaming the (let's say, fashionably) emerald waters in Langkawi, even taking a hike with the low-lying, drifting clouds in the Outdoor Theme Park in Genting Highlands, and lastly but most especially, eating a generous scoop of blue-coloured and blueberry-flavoured candy-floss in a cone in Putrajaya.

What one least expects to discover, it is needless to say, is a French-themed resort by the name Colmar Tropicale Berjaya Hills Resort (admittedly inspired by the original Colmar Village in Alsace, France), furnished with a dusting of sidewalk cafés and restaurants, gaming arcades and a popcorn stand which serves the most deliciously decadent caramel popcorn known to man.

Tucked away a decent 2700-3500 feet away from modern civilisation in Bukit Tinggi, the Resort standing proudly, but not domineeringly so, is led to by an old-fashioned cobblestone path. The gravel path spreading under it is flanked by flowers of uncommon variety, dotting twin rows of knee-length shrubbery on either side of the road.

The road in question leads to a stone stairway down to the enclosed, dirty lakes where swans, of indiscriminate blacks and whites, are swaddled. They make for delightful company, floating close to eagerly peck at offerings of cheese crisps from kind hands, bobbing down gaily to soften them in the water in a gesture strangely reminiscent of that of a mother feeding her toothless child, before swallowing them whole.

The lakes are overlooked by small, comely medieval cottages, their windows winking with the mellow glow of yellow-lit bedrooms which are available for renting in the event that one wishes to explore the village during the night, even though a handful of daylight hours can prove quite sufficient for a thorough excursion through the village.

Whilst traversing the graveled path of the village, expect a tame rain shower as

the general climate is quite cool. The bakeries will tempt you with freshly-baked croissants and garlic and cheese bread, éclairs and white chocolate cupcakes, all of which can be considered

to be of a reasonable price range if one takes into account that they make up for their French quintessence in appearance as opposed to taste.

The restaurants and cafés have



AN UNLIKELY FIND

A medieval French village in Malaysia

NUZHAT BISWAS

outdoor dining spaces in conjunction to the dimly-lit indoors, but they are both very appealingly rudimentary in design with round tables in checkered tablecloths enclosed by wooden chairs on thin legs. One can have a little rest while enjoying a moderately tasteful slice of cheese pizza or a bite of pasta while still remaining privy to the ongoing bustle (and what a bustle it is!) of human chatter and feet. Interestingly enough, if an approximate ratio is to be considered, it is a more popular destination at the end of a long road trip for natives rather than tourists.

Further on, one will find a noble soul in a shockingly orange Jerry Mouse suit, posing obediently for pictures with rambunctious children and elders alike. One curious artifact is that of an equine taxidermy, dressed like something out of a psychedelic dream, peering at passers-by with an unblinking and unsmiling gaze. It, as well as the fountain near which it stands, seem both in and out of place in this teeming town of travellers. The fountain houses small schools of fish and draws the attention of children who blow bubbles into it with the gusto of eager magic-fountain-wish-makers.

The trek back to the Colmar Tropicale Resort will seem a long one for weary feet. Only lodgers, as yours truly had been informed are allowed upstairs, but the lobby is open to all visitors. It has an unkempt and bare look, rather dull and dusty carpets spread across the floor and tables with empty glasses wearing fingerprints and dirty tissue paper. The knights standing motionless in their silver armours too seem lodged in a mistaken time warp. But of course, when I remember, I do not remember any of this, not really.

How can I when the domed ceiling and long windows of the Colmar Tropicale house beautiful mosaic portraits of creatures in various degrees of poignant and cherubic glory, as in scenes from a Biblical fable or play? No, of my travel around this quaint, pseudo-French, treasure of a village, this is what I remember most.

Nuzhat Biswas is the oft-curious hyphen between an incurable humanist.

TRAVEL

OPINION

If Eid is about those less fortunate than yourself, spare a thought this holiday for the often forgotten and even less often remembered people of Guam. A tiny island, officially a US island territory near the absolutely minuscule Micronesia in the Western Pacific, is an important strategic holding. During World War II it was taken over by the Japanese, whose last holdout only surrendered in 1972. Rumours are that they probably would have surrendered earlier, but no one actually thought to relay the news to the island due to its pocket-sized stature.

Fast forward to 2017, and Guam finally has its moment in the spotlight, but as with most places like it, it is fleeting and for all the wrong reasons. Guam has become the unlikely third wheel on a date that makes the Titanic look like a tremendous success. Kim Jong-un, a man whose infantile demeanour limits his policymaking skills to staring confusedly at whatever he is brought in front of (crops, nukes, execution orders, the undead spirit of Marxist socialism) and



GUAM: THE UNLIKELY THIRD WHEEL

BAREESH HASAN CHOWDHURY

whose haircut tops the UN's list of North Korea's human rights violations, has picked a fight with the only man in world politics who can match both his childlike simplicity and his bad haircut—Donald J Trump.

Donald Trump rode a wave of white supremacist support into office last November, and has also displayed his policymaking skills to be quite limited, relying on unintelligible mouthbreathing to communicate. His first week as President saw him pick a fight with the President of Australia, a country so harmless they lost a war to a flightless bird. Unfortunately, for number 45, that remains the high point of his presidency. His administration has been rocked by

scandal nearly every single week, from a raunchy tape of his last trip to Moscow, employing the worst people ever to subsequently firing them all (RIP Sean Spicy, gone but never forgotten), to rejuvenating Alec Baldwin's comedic career. Just in the last week, he pardoned an Arizona sheriff who tried making a concentration camp in the desert, and looked directly into a solar eclipse without those glasses you need. That sort of stupidity is expected from people like me, but that's also why I am not even president of my own kitchen. It's been a rollercoaster ride, but one that's not that fun, like the one in Fantasy Kingdom.

North Korea has tried its best to be a pest to the US for many years, and the isolationist socialist country has had some success in its nuclear programme. Enough for the big boys of the international military complex to whine and complain and put sanctions on them. Kim Jong-un claims they have the

capacity to fire intercontinental ballistic missiles, and after spending the last few decades starving his people to fund the development of these weapons, he better have the capacity. Otherwise, this will all be seen as a massive waste of time.

Naturally, he has thus threatened to fire his missiles at Guam, a place 96 percent of Americans have never heard of, and the other four percent have only heard of since Kim made these threats. Furthermore, according to a totally legitimate survey, of those four percent, about 89 percent have dismissed this as "Fake News" before firing their rifles coated with NRA stickers into the air and expressing a general distaste for African-Americans.

Whether or not anything will come of this remains to be seen, but as far as diplomacy goes, Guam probably doesn't have any faith. North Korea has teased an assault for a long time, but it has not put out yet. Military action is a

possibility between the US and North Korea, the most possible it's been in a long time. It's times like this when one must look at the positives. As Donald himself said, Guam should be happy with the attention it's receiving from international media, although his claims that this will boost tourism in Guam may not hold up. That being said, Guam has for the first time overtaken <insert irrelevant country here> in number of mentions on Twitter. I don't know if that's true, but let's pretend like it is.

At the time of writing, the situation seems to have calmed down a little bit like every other year when North Korea claims that they'll attack someone or the other. The news cycle has moved on. Trumpland has other problems to deal with. A giant stormy lake has formed where the city of Houston, TX used to be. Neo-nazi rallies are taking place all over the country, rejuvenating the long beleaguered tiki-torch industry. Elon Musk continues to claim that Skynet will happen soon. Game of Thrones has ended for the season, but Rick and Morte is still around. The world could be worse I guess. It definitely could be for Guam.

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ABOUT TOWN

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TASHER DESH
ART EXHIBITION
Organiser: Tasher Desh
Till September 07, 2-8pm, 147/1
Arambagh, Dewanbagh Goli

CELLO-PIANO-AUDIO 2
Organiser: Alliance Française de Dhaka
September 8, 7-8 pm, Alliance Française de Dhaka, Mirpur Road

BIOSCOPE '17
FILM FESTIVAL, EDITING AND STAND UP COMEDY
Organiser: MIST Drama and Film Society
September 9, 8 am - 9 pm, MIST campus, Mirpur Cantonment