



EPiCxChange

Your Home Away from Home

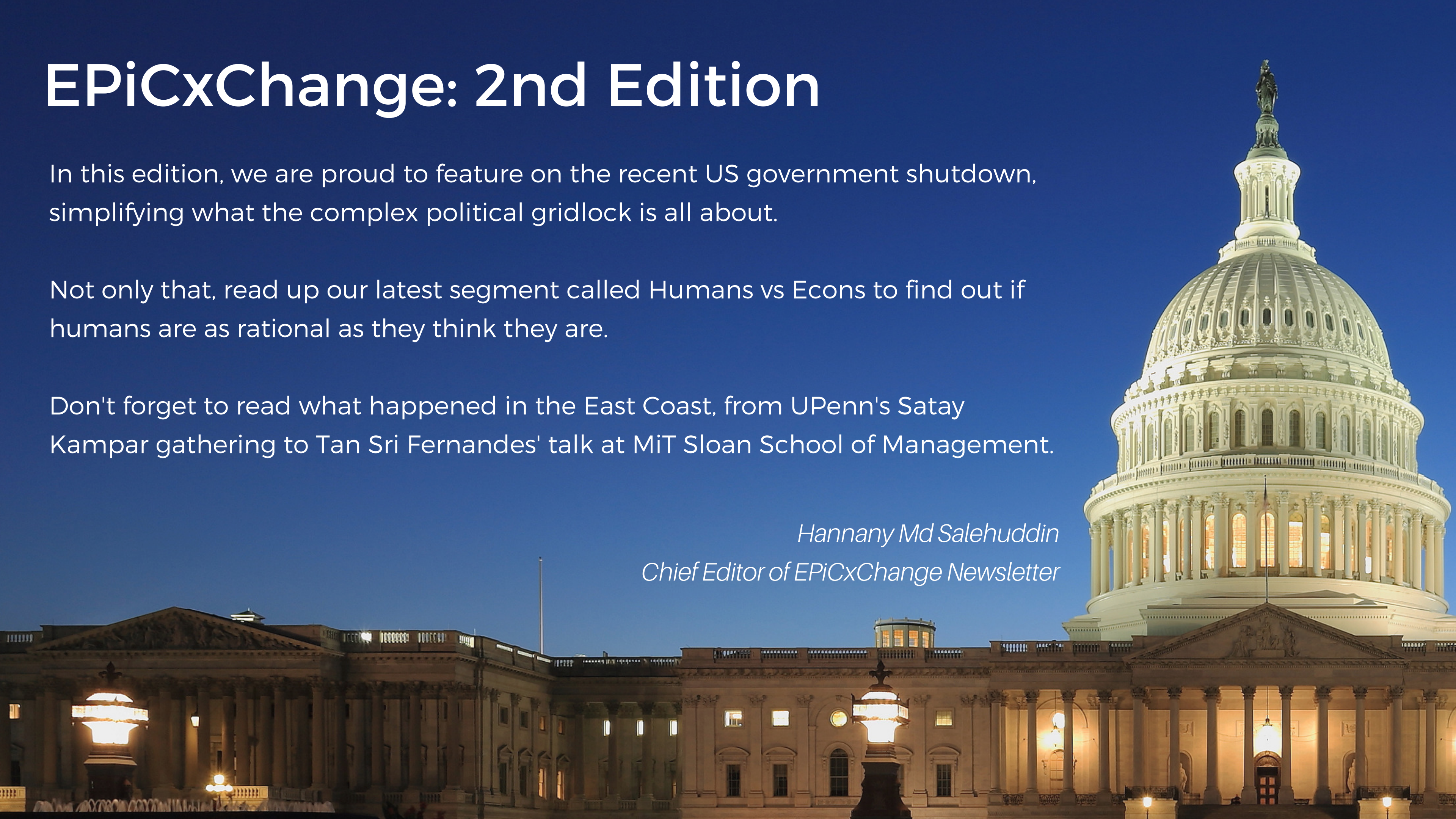
EPiCxChange: 2nd Edition

In this edition, we are proud to feature on the recent US government shutdown, simplifying what the complex political gridlock is all about.

Not only that, read up our latest segment called Humans vs Econs to find out if humans are as rational as they think they are.

Don't forget to read what happened in the East Coast, from UPenn's Satay Kamar gathering to Tan Sri Fernandes' talk at MIT Sloan School of Management.

*Hannany Md Salehuddin
Chief Editor of EPiCxChange Newsletter*





"Mahu tidak mahu, kunci utama, formula, jambatan untuk kita menuju Wawasan 2020 ialah pendidikan. Untuk membentuk masyarakat yang bersatu padu, pendidikan ialah titik mulanya. Untuk melahirkan masyarakat yang demokratik, bermoral, beretika dan penyayang, pendidikan ialah terasnya.

Pendidikan ialah jalan sebenar menuju ke Wawasan 2020."

Amanat Menteri Pendidikan 2019
"Pendidikan Untuk Semua, Tanggungjawab Semua"

What exactly is a government shutdown?

The US government operates like any other business.

This means that at the end of every fiscal year, from October 1 of the previous year through September 30 of the current one,

Congress approves the amount of funding each department will receive to pay for staff and other day-to-day expenses.

While the budgets are usually straightforward, lawmakers from both political parties often use the process to get their desired policies or special spending needs approved.

Since these inevitably lead to extended debates, the funding deadline often gets pushed back. Most years, lawmakers approve short-term bills to keep agencies and departments operating until a longer-term agreement is reached.

Most countries have installed specific mechanisms to prevent such political gridlock. However, the US Government relies on the Congress to agree and pass 12 appropriation bills.



Okay, so why did the government shutdown?

The 2018–2019 budget process was running smoothly until mid-December, when lawmakers, trying to approve funding for Homeland Security, disagreed on the amount to allocate for security along the Mexican border.

Republicans wanted to set aside \$5 billion to build a wall, while Democrats were only willing to approve an additional \$1.3 billion to pay for the state-of-the-art technology and increased communication capabilities recommended by experts.

With the holidays approaching, the US Senate passed a short-term spending bill on Wednesday, December 19, 2018 to keep the affected departments running through February 8, 2019, giving lawmakers time to reach a compromise when they returned in the New Year.

However, President Trump refused to sign the bill unless the Democrats agreed to fund the wall, leaving agencies scrambling to set in motion their plans to cease — or partially cease — operations by midnight December 21, 2018.



So, now what?

On January 25th, President Donald Trump agreed to a deal to reopen the government for three weeks, backing down from his demand that Congress give him money for his border wall.

Both the House and Senate approved a bill funding the government until Feb. 15. If a compromise is not made by then, well, it is unclear what could happen next.

“We really have no choice but to build a powerful wall or steel barrier,” President Trump said.

“If we don’t get a fair deal from Congress, the government will either shut down on Feb. 15,

or I will use the powers afforded to me under the laws and Constitution of the United States to address this emergency.”

Hopefully, US lawmakers will reach a compromise, that will make both parties happy, soon.

Written by

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Co-Editor of EPiCxChange
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Malaysia's New Agong

Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah took the oath as the country's 16th Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

Previous Agong, Sultan Muhammad's final decree to Malaysians as Agong was to "continue together in maintaining unity, tolerance and join hands in bearing the responsibility for this sovereign country so that Malaysia remains peaceful and harmonious".

ETIAS Visa

Malaysia respects the decision made by the European Union on their implementation of the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) in bid to strengthen border control and minimise threats to Schengen countries.

The ETIAS is a new immigration process which is set to commence in 2020. Malaysians are required to pay a fee of EUR10 (RM47.10) for the application.

Countries that require ETIAS online authorisation include Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.





Corruption-Free Malaysia

The government has launched a five-year National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP) with the aim of making Malaysia a corrupt-free nation by 2023.

The plan has 22 strategies and 115 initiatives, with strong focus given to six main sectors, namely: politics, public procurement, law enforcement, public sector administration, legal and judiciary, and corporate governance. Minimum penalty for graft, anti-lobbying law are among the highlights of the plan.

The Deal with the East Coast Railway Link

Malaysia will be "impoverished" if the government proceeds with the East Coast Railway Link project, says Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"We are burdened with heavy debts. We seek understanding from all parties. We will be impoverished by the project if we go on. The huge compensation for cancelling it is not as huge as the amount we have to carry for the next 30 years," he said to reporters after launching the National Anti-Corruption Plan on Tuesday.

The official status of the project will be announced by the Ministry of Finance soon.



THE BITS AND BITES OF THE EAST



Penn State's Malaysian Students' Club held their Annual General Meeting at the start of the semester, serving hot plates of Nasi Lemak for all who attended.



Malaysian Students Association of Ohio State University held a junior reception and semester kickoff in early January.

They welcomed all the incoming Malaysian juniors into their big family and enjoyed Nasi Kerabu (like, legit blue-coloured rice) for the night.

Malaysian students of University of Pennsylvania missed their homes, gathered at Satay Kamar and enjoyed plates of Satay.

Future events were discussed during the meeting, especially their upcoming Malaysian Cultural Night.

The executive board of EPiC met each other for the first time at Wilcox, PA.

The board also met the Director of Education Malaysia Washington DC to discuss upcoming events for the year.

Stay tuned for the events!
PS: That's a real (dead) moose head wall mount.

Bo Jio!
(Tak ajak in Hokkien)





AirAsia Group CEO, Tan Sri Anthony Francis Fernandes was invited to deliver a lecture at the MIT Sloan School of Management on January 16th.

In his lecture, he shared lessons that he had learned about finding opportunity in adversity, and building a culture around people. He addressed the reason behind AirAsia's marketing boost during a variety of catastrophes, from 9/11 to the Indonesia AirAsia Flight 8501 plane crash.

“Most companies cut marketing during a crisis, which is actually a huge mistake,” he said. “Adversity is a great time to build a business.”

Read more at :

<https://mitsloan.mit.edu/ideas-made-to-matter/why-airasia-boosts-marketing-during-a-crisis>

A black and white photograph showing a close-up of a hand dropping a coin into another hand that is holding a stack of coins. The background is blurred, suggesting a table with more coins scattered on it.

HUMANS VS ECON

In our everyday lives, choices have to constantly be made.

And after 20 years or so at it, we tend to feel that we are good at it. We like to think that we make the right choices every time. That our choices are calculated and will turn out the way we calculated it. We like to think that our choices serve a purpose and have an underlying logical reasoning to it.

In other words, we like to think that humans, for the vast majority, are rational.

But are we really?

*Written by
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HUMANS VS ECONS

Richard H. Thaler, a 2017 nobel prize winner for his contribution for behavioral economics, thought otherwise during his teaching career. He wanted to distinguish students who really mastered the materials from the middle group who understood the basic concepts and from those who simply did not understand - He made the test difficult. He found that his students were angry at him when the average test result was 72 out of 100. Instead of making the test easier, he made it so that the test would be out of 137 points. Everybody was happy when the average was 96 out of 137 (70%).

In the eye of an Econ, a hypothetical rational beings, no one should be happier with 70% when compared to a 72%. Thaler should have gotten more complaints. But the complaints stopped mainly because of two things. First, the average of 96, with some students scoring above 100, produced a positive effect on the students. Second, dividing a number by 137 is not natural for the mind. Nonetheless, the students were acting irrationally.

In future editions of the newsletter, the Humans vs Econs series will explore more cases that touches on the irrational behavior that Humans make in their everyday lives. We will touch on some basic behavioral economic concepts that will hopefully shape the way you make decisions for the better.

We hope that you had enjoyed this mini-intro. But before you go, we have a tiny economic quiz for you. (here: bit.ly/humans_econs).

Nothing nerdy, trust me.

You also stand a chance to win a \$5 Starbucks gift card! Results and the winner of the quiz will be released in the next segment of Humans vs Econs.

Stay tuned!

EPiCxMiT Renewable Energy Symposium

16 February | Massachusetts Institute of Technology | 10 AM

We are proud to announce a symposium that promises robust discussions on critical issues surrounding renewable energy potential and policies of Malaysia, ASEAN, and United States.

Join the conversation with Dr Rozzeta Dolah, energy experts and researchers of MIT, as they cover the necessary technology and economic-political framework to march into a greener era.

Register here: bit.ly/renergysym19

Stay tuned for more updates of the symposium: bit.ly/epicxsymposium

EPiCxMIT Symposium Speakers



Michael Davidson

Energy Systems Engineer
and Policy Researcher at
Harvard Kennedy School



Patrick Brown

Postdoctoral Fellow at
MIT Energy Initiative



Rozzeta Dolah

Postdoctoral Fellow at MIT



Apurba Sakti

Research Scientist at
MIT Energy Initiative



Wendy Duan

Director of MIT's
Asia Pacific Energy
Partnership Program

Register here: bit.ly/renergysym19

Stay tuned for more updates of the symposium: bit.ly/epicxsymposium



ICMSxEPIC VENTURE CHALLENGE NORTH AMERICA

A BUSINESS CASE COMPETITION

Theme: Navigating a Changing Global Environment

February 9-10, 2019

The Ohio State University, Columbus

ICMSxEPiC Venture Challenge (IVEC) is back for our third instalment at the Ohio State University.

With the theme “**Navigating a Changing Global Environment**” the competition will be an immersive experience to learn what makes a sound global business strategy in an increasingly interconnected world.

Enhance your analytical abilities, critical thinking skills, and leadership and business skills, along with presentation and persuasion abilities as you develop the best solution to a business case.

Register at bit.ly/RegisterIVEC2019

Stay tuned for more updates at bit.ly/IVEC_2019



Have any opinions or thoughts to share?

About Malaysia? The community? The economy? The world?

Or are you raising awareness on a cause?

On Mental health? The injustice of the world?

Here at Jom Sembang Corner, we celebrate the importance of expressing opinions. So, write an article of 150-300 words on **anything**.

No idea what to write?

The next edition of the newsletter will be featured on **renewable energy**, so give us your thoughts on the green energy revolution.

Submit your writings to us at **ecprescouncil@gmail.com**

If appropriate, not only will the article be published, you will also stand a chance to receive a gift as a courtesy from us.

So let your thoughts be heard. **Write away.**

More Events Coming Soon



Instagram: @usepic

Email: ecprescouncil@gmail.com

Facebook: @MalaysiaEPIC

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