

FOLKLORE ON CANVAS



EASIEST PIECE: 'Krishna and the Naga Kaliya', the story on how Krishna and Vishnu defeat the wicked serpent

By YUSRI AZMIN

PAINTER Syed Thajudeen had his daughter read him books on Malaysian folklore late last year before coming up with six oil paintings.

He completed the last painting seven months later and his efforts have not been in vain — his paintings will be featured in the 1990 calendar of Shell Companies in Malaysia.

Significantly, the calendar is to promote Visit Malaysia Year 1990.

"The hardest part is to read and understand books on folk stories that are close to the country's various communities," said the father of two.

"But my wife and 14-year-old daughter were

Paintings to be featured in Shell calendar

always around to read them to me and discussed their contents."

The next difficult step is to visualise the stories on a 1.8-metre-by-1.2 metre-canvas.

"My first work is the *Mahsuri* legend, which put me in a dilemma as I had to tone down its violent aspects relating to her execution and her subsequent curse," said Syed Thajudeen.

He finally opted for the romantic side of the

blood-stained legend and said: "I had to make this choice because Mahsuri is featured in the first two months of the calendar."

His next hurdle was the Chinese lore of the *Cowherd and the Girl Weaver* — a love story between two stars, Vega and Altair.

"I had never dabbled in Chinese painting," said Syed Thajudeen, whose forte is the mural-like cave or temple painting styles that he mastered while studying in India.

He managed to execute Chinese brush-strokes on the piece and proceeded to *Fairy Cloak*, a Sabah tale of a Murut who married a fairy princess and left a legacy of cherished relics, and *The Owl that Marries the Moon*, an Iban folklore.

Syed Thajudeen — born in India but who has been living in Penang since he was 13 — breezed through the easiest piece, *Krishna and the Naga Kaliya*.

It's about how Krishna, an incarnation of the



Syed Thajudeen: The hardest part is to read and understand books on folk stories

Hindu deity, Vishnu, defeated the wicked serpent, Naga Kaliya.

The series ended with the legend of Hang Tuah, locked in mortal combat with his one-time friend, Hang Jebat.

On whether he had tourists in mind when he was at the easel, Syed Thajudeen said he was only concerned about putting the message of each folklore across the canvas.

By the looks of the calendar, foreigners who chance upon it may be curious enough to visit the country.

DEVELOPER TO REMOVE CAVEATS

THE developer for Taman Sri Muda in Shah Alam, New Acres Sdn Bhd, is taking steps to remove 183 caveats on the property.

An official said yesterday the encumbrances made it difficult to apply for sub-division of the land necessary for the issuance of individual titles.

The developer had paid \$1,153,055 survey fee to the Land Surveyors Board since 1983.

He said the caveats lodged are by the respective end-financiers for loans granted to purchasers and that it is a legal instrument which protects the party's interest.

"There are still 183 caveats to be lifted and we will inform the respective caveators to

have them removed for purposes of sub-division," he said.

He could not say how long this will take. The land was charged to the Standard Chartered Bank as stated in the Sales and Purchases Agreement.

"The respective properties have been issued 'Disclaimer of Interest' letters from the Standard Chartered Bank to ensure that no foreclosure action can be taken against the respective lots which have been redeemed from the Standard Chartered Bank," he said.

The loan taken from the bank, he said, had been repaid and all the properties are unencumbered.

He was commenting on a Dec 11 report

that Taman Sri Muda Houseowners and Residents Association had lodged a police report against Newacres for delaying the issue of individual titles.

Association president Domingos de Souza lodged the report at the Klang police station on Dec 10.

He claimed that meetings with officials from the Housing and Local Government Ministry and Newacres over three years have been fruitless.

Mr de Souza was reported to have said that the absence of titles had affected 6,000 houseowners. They are facing problems in mortgaging properties for bank loans and in reselling their house.