



Engineering a smile

Cartoonist Shaik Abdul Wahed Rahim sees humour in everything, including in his "serious" profession as an engineer, writes **KASMAH MUSTAPHA**



Shaik shows off his effort

ENGINEERS and humour. To many, that's an odd combination since there is nothing remotely funny about engineers, or engineering for that matter.

However, Shaik Abdul Wahed Rahim begs to differ. An engineer for more than 30 years, he sees the humour in the profession, and it's reflected in his cartoons.

His drawings are based on his experience as a site investigator and consulting engineer.

"People think engineering is serious business. But to me, there is humour in what we do, and I wanted to share that. We can make fun of the profession even when it involves something serious," says the 71-year-old.

He recently launched *The Engineer*, an anthology of cartoons of his view of engineering over the past 30 years.

His early works were published as calendars for his company then, Ground Engineering (M) Sdn Bhd, a site investigating contractor. Some of his works were also published in the Institute of Engineers Malaysia bulletin from April 1976 in the column Shaiky's View.

This self-taught cartoonist had always wanted to be an artist. But his father wanted

him to become a doctor. He opted to pursue engineering instead, with his father's consent, as he was afraid of blood.

"I started drawing when I was 15. At that time, the drawings were about my problems and everyday life. Mostly, they were to annoy the prefects and principal," he says, laughing.

He continued drawing cartoons as a hobby even at college, but he never kept a single piece.

Only when he took his first job as site investigation contractor that he became more serious about his hobby.

"Work as a site investigation contractor can be tough. Part of our job is to take soil samples, examine them, even taste them at times! It's not something we look forward to, but it can be funny. So I draw the humour from my experience."

Ten years ago, some of his works were also compiled into a book that was distributed only among engineers. As his drawings grew over the years, friends encouraged him to publish another compilation, and this is how *The Engineer* came about.

"I think it's easy for non-engineers to understand the humour in the drawings. If

they can smile after looking at the first five cartoons, I'm happy," says Shaik Abdul Wahed.

"To me, there is humour in every situation with the exception of death. There is humour even in religion, but of course, it has to be done tastefully. The moment a cartoon offends people, it's no longer funny."

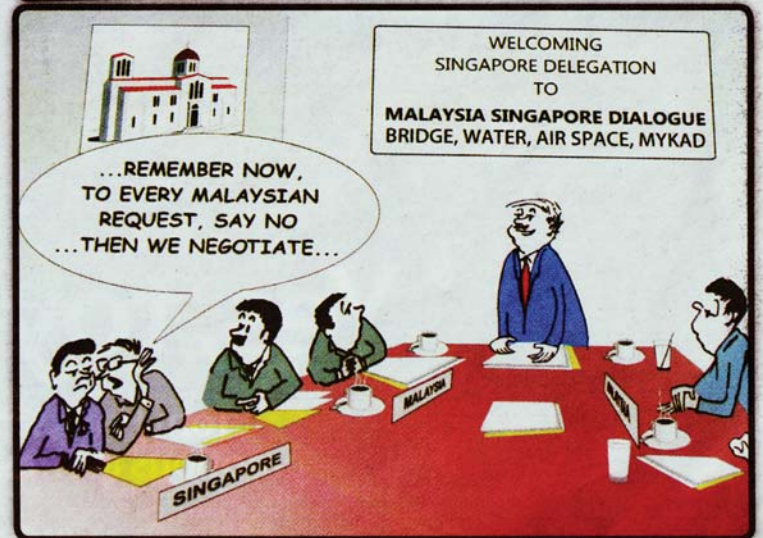
He sometimes draws about politics and current issues and sends personalised greeting cards with his drawings to friends.

He is also thinking of devoting more time to his cartoons and less on his company, Perunding GEA (M) Sdn Bhd.

"I hope to have my cartoons published in the papers. There are so many issues that are just waiting to be converted into great cartoons."

Asked if he sees himself turning into a professional like Datuk Lat, Shaik Abdul Wahed says: "My drawings are not that good. If you look at a Lat cartoon, he can say much in just one line. I have to do 10 lines to say the same thing."

Besides *The Engineer*, he has released the book *Slopes Made Simple*, which offers an insight into slopes and why it's important to maintain them to prevent mishaps.



Samples of Shaik Abdul Wahed's cartoons in *The Engineer*