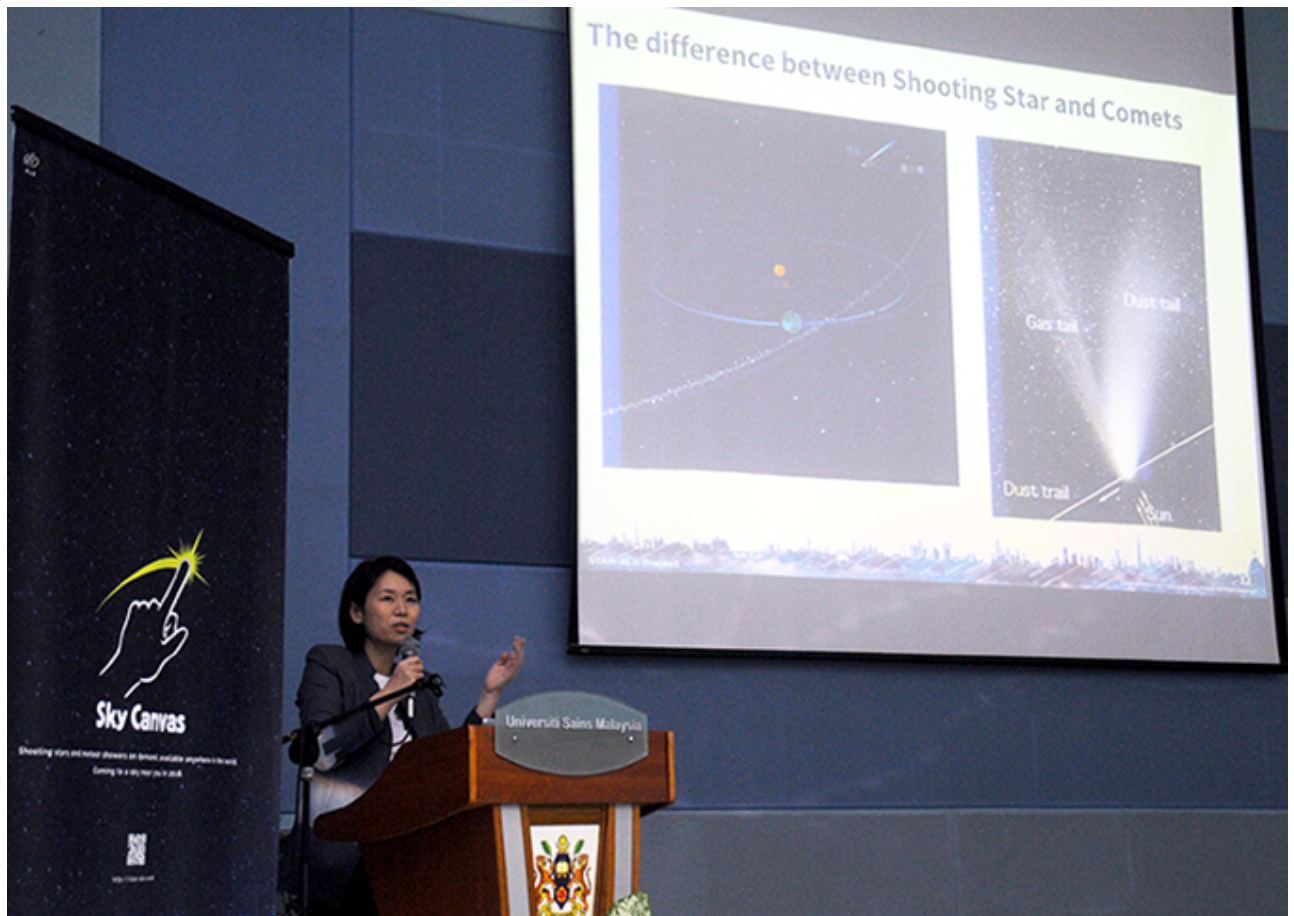


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English News

23 FEB

SHOOTING FOR THE STARS: CEO AND FOUNDER OF SPACE ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY SHARES HER PASSION WITH USM COMMUNITY



USM, PENANG, 23 February 2017 - The Chief Executive Officer and founder of ALE Co. Ltd, Dr. Lena Okajima from Japan was at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) recently to deliver a talk on her childhood passion, which is looking at shooting stars.

Coming to Malaysia for the first time, she was at USM to promote her 'Sky Canvas' project.

In opening the session, the USM Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dato' Dr. Adnan Hussein, who is also the USM Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Development Affairs and Alumni) thanked the Consul-General of Japan in organising the event and bringing the speaker to USM as part of her visit to Malaysia.

“I am sure Dr. Okajima’s project would be an inspiration to all here,” he said.



The project, which is supported by several Japanese government agencies, including the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), Japanese universities and a number of global media companies, utilises modern and creative technology to create artificial ‘shooting stars’ which could be seen in the sky at night time, for entertainment purposes.

Okajima explained that the technology involves the building of microsattellites and sending them into space, and as they are in orbit, the satellites would release environment-friendly particles that would burst with plasma-like glow upon entering the Earth’s atmosphere, creating a ‘shooting-star’ effect.

“The ‘shooting stars’ could be seen within a 200-km radius, and with the night sky as the ‘canvas’, would provide a ‘starry’ and ‘firework-like’ entertainment and attraction which could be seen by an audience located within the radius,” she said.



Okajima had been awed by the stars ever since she was young, in her hometown of Tottori, Japan. While pursuing her studies, she also discovered that the 'shooting star' phenomenon was also significant in different cultures around the world.

She had also been inspired by the Leonid meteor shower event. In realising that the phenomenon is shared by many cultures around the world, she wondered whether it was possible to share such an event together with many others.

In trying to realise her dream, her other inspirations include the successes achieved by the Space X company and ISRO from India in their space-related activities.

"I needed to conduct experiments to see how I could create such a bright and colourful spectacle in conditions where there is no air and gravity. So, beginning from 2009 until now, my company has been conducting tests and experiments to further improve upon our discoveries.

"I hope to launch my science-business-entertainment venture officially during the Tokyo Olympics in 2020. Until then, I would be sharing my ideas with many others in different parts of the world," she added.



There will be a preview of the event, in the form of a 'Shooting Star Challenge', in Hiroshima in 2019. She also hopes then there will a demand in this new field of space entertainment in combination with other areas such as night cruises, sky-gazing flights and other major events such as city-wide celebrations and promotions.

Her talk at USM was organised by the Consulate-General of Japan and with the cooperation of partners such as the USM School of Aerospace Engineering, USM Astronomy Club and the Astronomical Society of Penang.

Others who were present include the USM Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Professor Dato' Dr. Muhamad Jantan; the Consul from the Consulate-General of Japan in Penang, Mr. Kenichi Nishizawa; Corporate Coordinator, USM School of Aerospace Engineering, Dr. Norilmi Amilia Ismail in representing the Dean; students from the USM Astronomy Club and from the USM School of Aerospace Engineering and members of the public.

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