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OCTOBER 1-15, 2010

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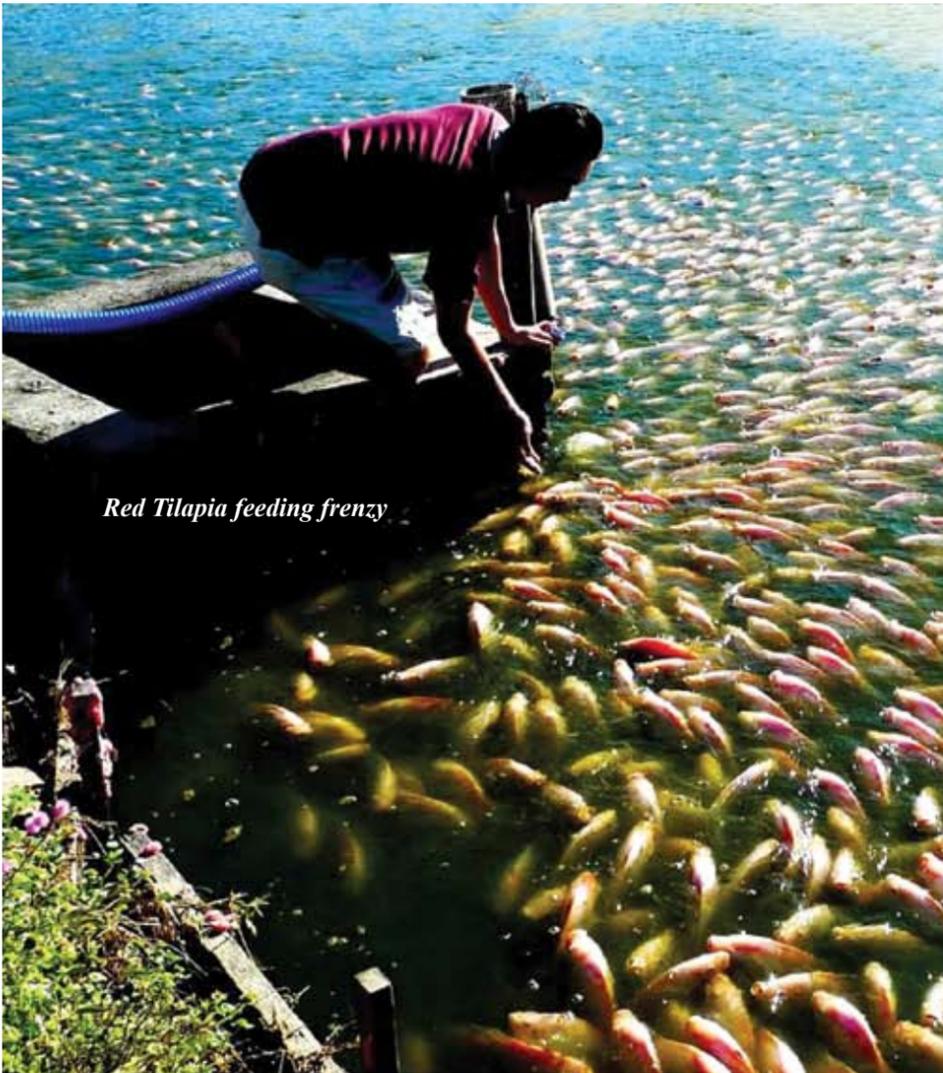


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The Sarawak Connection



## Something Fishy Going On In KINTA VALLEY



Red Tilapia feeding frenzy

*Travellers flying into Ipoh will never fail to notice, as the plane approaches, the numerous white patches of sand with abandoned ponds dotting the landscape below: a testimony that the Kinta Valley was once the largest producer of tin in the world. The ponds may look peaceful and serene but they are far from being abandoned. Instead they are teeming with economic activities, and outstanding among them is the thriving aquaculture industry.*

*Continued on page 2*

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# Aquaculture - ESTIMATED ANNUAL TURNOVER OF RM120 MILLION

The aquaculture industry, which is generating a turnover of revenue estimated at well over RM120 million annually, is divided into ornamental fish and freshwater fish for consumption.

Ninety per cent of the ornamental fish is exported mainly through Singapore. The types of ornamental fish bred are mainly Gold Fish, Koi and tropical fish, while the types of freshwater food fish reared is mainly Tilapia, Haruan, Catfish, Carp and also Jelawat or Sultan Fish. Tilapia is most common because it is easily adaptable to the environment.

Thirty per cent of the fish for consumption is exported to Singapore and Indonesia and the rest distributed to wholesalers in Selangor, Malacca, Johor and Kedah.

## Facing An Uncertain Future

Underneath this thriving industry, an air of uncertainty is emerging over the allocation of land to the operators for a continuation of the industry.

Most of them had started during the depression caused by the collapse of the tin mining industry in mid 1980. Those who did not go abroad to work toiled the ex-mining land, growing vegetables and rearing ducks, chicken and fish.

The then State Government, then under Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib, sympathised with them and allowed them to work on the land to which they have no claim. So, aquaculture which started on an ad hoc basis had grown into a big industry by the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Now, Perak is the biggest aquaculture producer in the country contributing 25% of output with a value of RM2.28 billion from marine fish, aquaculture, ornamental fish and food processing activities. The total revenue from ornamental fish throughout the state last year was RM82.3 million.

## Perak Strong Potential for Growth

Even the director of the State Fisheries Department, Haji

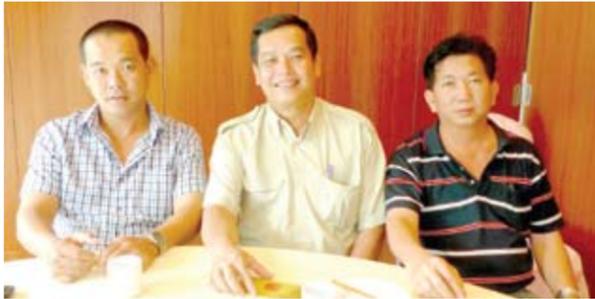


One of the aquaculture farms

Sani Mohd Isa, admits that the aquaculture industry does have a strong potential for growth. The department is very positive about the fish industry in the Kinta Valley and had proposed the setting up of an Aquaculture Industrial Zone in the Kampar District.

Their recommendation is based on the fact that the presence of disused mining ponds makes them a natural choice for an aquaculture industry. Additionally the presence of limestone in the environment contributes to better water quality which enables a healthier ornamental fish crop.

The operators realising that they could make a living off the land, applied for Temporary Occupation License of the land on which they had been squatting.



The association (l-r) Ng Seng Joo (Chairman of Perak Freshwater Fish Breeders Association) Tan (Adviser) and Jimmy Chong (Batu Gajah branch Chinese Chamber Chairman)

Sadly, the over 900 operators in the Kinta Valley are still in a dilemma. They are unable to get titles for their land despite repeatedly submitting their applications.

## Ornamental Fish Farming

Ornamental fish farmer Yeong Tai Sai, 55, has been breeding ornamental fish at his 3.5 acre farm at Sungei Itek in Gopeng since 1993. Yeong only cultivates the Oranda type of Gold Fish.

Yeong feeds his Gold Fish with pellet fish meal and laments that it is the costliest part of his operation. Over the years his investments have amounted to over RM150,000.

At the time of sale the fish are quarantined and segregated to grades A and B with grade A going for export. All fish being exported are given a compulsory Biosecurity test by the Fisheries Department and certified. Yeong sells an average of 2,000 pieces of his Gold Fish weekly.

## Fish for Consumption

Chan Chee Keong from Gopeng rears red Tilapia on his six-acre farm which consists of five ponds. Each pond is capable of producing an average of 12,000 fish with a gross weight of seven tons in each pond. Each harvest takes place every six months thus enabling two harvests per pond per year for total annual sales of 70 tons per year.

Chan's farm has electricity to run the water aerators. Chan also employs one worker to mix the fish meal, feed the fish daily and maintain the farm. His initial investment for the first year was over RM100,000.

Both Chan and Yeong share a similar concern. They are squatting on the land though both had applied to the state for land titles repeatedly, but the result has been negative so far.

Unfortunately for Yeong part of his land has been acquired by a company, Safura House of Diamond Sdn Bhd, to initiate the state's Proper Village Planning Programme despite his having toiled the farm for close to 20 years.

## Two Associations

The aquaculture operators are represented by two associations – the Perak Aquaculture Association and the Perak Freshwater Fish Breeders Association. According to Tan Tian Mun, past chairman of the Perak Aquaculture Association and current adviser to the Freshwater Fish

Breeders Association, there are approximately 500 ornamental fish operators and 400 freshwater fish breeders located in the Kinta Valley and Bidor. Only a few of them have received their land titles.

According to Tan the sale of freshwater fish has grown by 30% over the last three years. The possibility for the operators to improve their productivity is good but would involve more investments which none of the operators are willing to do for fear their land could be taken back on short notice at any time.

## Assurances Needed

The positive potential of the industry in the Kinta Valley has prompted Teja Assemblyman Chang Lih Kang to urge the state government to issue land titles to the farmers and not to property developers, while MCA President Datuk Seri Dr. Chua Soi Lek said that the state, by not issuing the land titles, would be "losing out on revenue".

The plight of the aquaculture operators might have sunk in as Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Zambry Abdul Kadir announced recently, after a meeting with the State Agricultural Development Corporation (SADC), that the body would be restructured to enable the state to be a "comprehensive food-producing state" and that aquaculture was a "strategic industry".

More importantly though, when asked if he would look into giving out land titles, Zambry replied, "yes that is part of it".

For the operators who have waited for 20 years, a general statement like that is cause for optimism.

JAMES GOUGH



Yeong showing the painted pole indicating the part of 'his farm' for property development

## An Apology to Dato' Seri Ahmad Husni

Ipo Echo sincerely wishes to apologise to Dato' Seri Haji Ahmad Husni Hanadziah, Member of Parliament for Tambun and Second Finance Minister.

We mistakenly captioned him as State Assemblyman for Tambun in our Hari Raya celebrations' round-up in issue 105.

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# Self Interest Before Others

*UTAR is unlike other public universities. It has no hostel facilities. Is this a genuine oversight or is it deliberate?*

**T**unku Abdul Rahman College or TAR College was the forerunner of Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). Built on a 191-acre site adjacent to Wardieburn Camp, Setapak in September 1972, the college provided Chinese youths opportunities to further their studies upon completion of their secondary education. It was the equivalent of the MARA College in Old Town Petaling Jaya, which catered to Malay students.

## Beginning

In July 2001 the Education Ministry invited the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), the owner of TAR College, to establish a university of its own. A steering committee under MCA President, Dr. Ling Liong Sik, drew up the blueprint while a working committee, headed by the then principal of TAR College prepared the working papers.

To ensure that the institution conformed to international standards an advisory council consisting of eminent scholars was established. The council met on April 15, 2002 to chart its course.

On June 10, 2002, the university received its first intake of 411 students at its Petaling Jaya campus. In August 2002, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad, declared it opened. Today UTAR has over 16,000 students pursuing 91 programmes in nine faculties spread over four campuses – Petaling Jaya, Sg. Long (Cheras), Setapak and Kampar. Of interest is the Kampar campus in Perak.

## Benign Facade

The Kampar campus sits on a 1,300-acre site given by the Perak state government in 2003. Surrounded by lakes and rolling hills, the campus is noted for its aesthetic beauty accentuated by a lush green and vibrant background. It provides an ideal setting for those wanting



peace and tranquillity away from the madding crowd. In short a perfect environment for studying.

The campus' pioneer batch of students reported in May 2007. Although it can accommodate over 16,000 students only about 10,000 are currently enrolled in the 32 programmes on offer.

Behind this benign façade, however, a more ominous tale unfolds; one which is set to hound the university's elders and MCA in the years ahead. In spite of its grandeur, UTAR is unlike other public universities. It has no hostel facilities. Is this a genuine oversight or is it deliberate? It could be both depending how one wishes to view it.

## Custom-Made

Economic considerations topped the agenda when the campus was built. A bustling university with a huge student population means money for those with properties to sell and rent. Lands in close proximity to the university were snapped up and houses built on them. These houses are custom-made for students who, having no other means of accommodation, are forced to rent them.

In one purpose-built housing estate, within striking distance of the institution, the terrace houses come either in two or three storey configuration. The interiors are being partitioned into rooms (cubicules) ranging in size from 86 to 150 sq ft. One terrace house may have as many as 5 or 14 rooms, based on its structure.

The going rate for single occupancy averages about RM300 while twin/triple-sharing about RM200 per student per room per month, depending on the size of the room and amenities available. And since almost all the rooms in these purpose-built houses are taken up, one can imagine the amount of money the owner makes in a month. The reason for this lop-sided deal is obvious – unfettered greed. A paradoxical Shylock exacting his pound of flesh, it seems.

## Rip-Off

One sympathetic Ipohite, concerned for the welfare of the much-maligned students, offered to build a hostel with his own money. Mindful of the havoc the hostel would cause, MCA turned it down citing some incomprehensible reasons.

"It's a rip-off," lamented one dejected parent whose only daughter was accepted into the university recently. "Parents and students have voiced their dissatisfaction but they have fallen on deaf ears."

There will not be a solution in the foreseeable future so long as the self-serving interest of the greedy remains unshackled. It is cronyism at its best. Like all things else, the poor and the marginalised are left to pick up the pieces.

## I Work Like a Dog and He Drinks Like a Fish

● by Peter Lee

**A** wealthy businessman in his sixties has spent 30 years of his life building his trading company from scratch to a multi-million business. He holds 90% of the shares in his company while his wife holds 10%. He has a son who is also helping him in the business but his 25 year-old son is an alcoholic and a big spender and is always bringing him many proposals for businesses which require his funding. Being the dutiful father, he supports his son but each venture inevitably brings losses to his company. The last straw came when his son brought him yet another proposal about investing in a machine where if you push in a pig on one end, the machine will process a sausage at the other end and the father in a rage, retorted that 25 years ago he pushed in a sausage and a pig came out!



Given such a son, he was in a dilemma and confused as to how to preserve his estate when he dies. One of the things he could do for his 90% shareholdings is to prepare a Declaration of Trust giving the instruction to a trustee company like Rockwills Trustee Bhd. to transfer his shares to a private trust when he is no longer around. The mechanism of this concept is that he holds on to this share as a Settlor and main Trustee while he is alive but in the event of death his shares will be transferred to Rockwills Trustee Bhd. being the substitute Trustee by using an irrevocable power of attorney. When Rockwills Trustee Bhd. holds on to the share, then it has to follow the instructions laid down in the Trust Deed.

These instructions would involve how much to give to the son monthly for dividends received from the shares and the duration of the trust. It is also very important to appoint Protectors or the Protective committees for this Trust so that the Trustee could liaise with them on distribution if the need arises and at the same time the Protectors or protective committees could act as a watchdog on the Trustee. Apart from shares, any asset encumbered or not such as residential property, unit trust fund investments and moneys in the bank accounts can be utilized for this type of Trust. This concept does not require the Grant of Probate to transfer the asset into the Trust.

Having his shareholdings sorted out in the above manner, he still has to take care of the rest of his and his wife's movable and immovable estate. That is when he and his wife must do a will to give some money directly to their son when they pass away leaving the rest of the assets to be given to him through a Private Trust. In this case, both their estates would require the Grant of Probate to transfer their assets to their Private Trust.

Once the assets are transferred to the Private Trust, the Trustee company like Rockwills Trustee Bhd. must follow the instructions in the Trust Deed which may differ from the above Trust. On the question of why go through the hassle of doing the will and not put all the assets into the Private Trust, the answer is, yes that is possible provided you are willing to give up all your assets to a Trust during your lifetime and pay for all the transfer fees.

Peter Lee is an Associate Estate Planning Practitioner (Wills & Trust) with Rockwills International Group. He is also an Islamic Estate Planner providing Wills & Trust services for Muslims. He is based in Ipoh and can be reached at: 012-5078825/05-2554853 or [excelsec@streamyx.com](mailto:excelsec@streamyx.com).



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## thinking aloud

• by Ian Anderson

# A Lesson in Attitudes

Inevitably, when one travels, unconscious comparisons are made between holiday and home. This is human nature, but does not normally become any more than idle thoughts in one's mind. However, having just returned from an extended trip to Colorado, USA and Alberta, Canada and because of certain events that have happened here during the holiday and within the first 24 hours of my return to Ipoh, I am prompted to write about the different attitudes to life in First World North America and Third World Ipoh in the hope that we in Ipoh can resolve to do better. Having said that please understand that I am not saying that everything in North America is perfect – it is not. They have their problems as well, but overall they do seem to have a more pleasant attitude to life than we do.

### Other's Property

So let us start with our attitude to other people's property. The home of friends where we stayed in Colorado is isolated a few miles out of the town and out of sight of any other house, but when they go out they do not lock their door – and have not done so for the last 15 years – ever since their young son broke the key in the lock. Yet nothing has been stolen! In Ipoh we have grills and multiple locks but still housebreaking is a very common crime. To demonstrate the point, while we were enjoying Colorado, our water meter and associated piping was stolen, leaving precious water gushing out until a plumber could be called by our neighbour.

On the same subject, those in Alberta who have open-backed trucks always leave their supermarket shopping in clear view there while they complete their errands in adjacent stores and yet it does not get stolen, but while shopping in Ipoh (at Jusco Supermarket) less than 24 hours after arriving home, my wife's empty, recyclable shopping bag was stolen from her trolley. How small minded can one get!

### Road Safety

Then there is our attitude to road safety. In Alberta, as soon as one places a foot on a marked pedestrian crossing, all traffic stops for you. At junctions where there are no marked crossings or lights, again one foot on the road is all that is required to halt the traffic. But we in Ipoh do it differently. Within an hour of arriving home I was half-way across a marked crossing when two cars raced past just inches away, one in front and one behind me. Fortunately I am still here to tell the tale.

### Indigenous People

Now what about our attitude to indigenous people? In Canada they call the Red Indians the "First Nation", never "Indians" or "Natives". They are respected members of society, treated equally alongside others. They own their ancestral lands and take part in everyday life. Where tourism is involved they are particularly welcome and keep alive their traditions for the benefit of the country. More than one third of Calgary's museum is dedicated to their culture. True, on the reservations they do suffer from the historical problem of alcoholism, but much is being done to try to overcome this. Need I mention our attitude to the Orang Asli? I think not!

### Environment

Next there is the environment to consider. In Alberta despite there only being one garbage collection a week and that limited to two bags unless you pay extra, there are no illegal rubbish dumps and the streets are clean. There are recycle bins absolutely everywhere and people use them constantly. The council has also set up hygienic recycling centres where citizens can take their paper, cans, glass and plastic and get paid for them. As part of the project the garbage collection men actually refuse to collect garbage that is



A Street in the Heritage Park, Calgary, Canada

fit for recycling. Why are we so different? It is our environment too!

### Heritage

Finally there is our attitude to heritage. Alberta's modern history goes back just about as far as Perak's and yet their major cities are thousands of percent more developed than ours, but they still value heritage. Where development is necessary for the good of the people they consider heritage first. But that does not mean zero development. In the smaller towns areas are classified as heritage enclaves where development is prohibited in much the same way as Penang is striving to achieve. Other planned development is allowed up to a specified population density.

In Calgary, a city of about one million, there is nothing but high-rise in the centre, but as far back as 1964 the City fathers nominated a 127 acre green-field site to be their heritage park (<http://www.heritagepark.ca/virtual.htm>.) As necessary development goes ahead, historic old buildings are moved and rebuilt in the park, lock stock and barrel. This project has continued for 46 years and in 2009 two more buildings joined the others, an art deco service station and a late 18th century, small wooden Synagogue. This park must be the best 'living history' museum in the world and with its 1,200 retirees employed as costumed guides it draws millions of visitors every year. Back in Ipoh we have discussed a Tin Mining Heritage Park or gallery for many years, without one jot of progress! Why?

### Ipoh Needs Your Support

I have written this expecting to be told "Well if you don't like it here, then go somewhere else." The problem is that I do like it here and do everything I can to support our city, but I am concerned that the quality of life in Ipoh continues to deteriorate. Something positive must be done to bring us up to the 21st century living standards so often found elsewhere, both inside and outside Malaysia. Why should we fall further behind? To me the lesson is clear, attitudes must change at all levels; Government, the Civil Service, the City Council and the people of Ipoh, you are the key. If you stop condoning these ills; violence and theft, road bullies, mistreatment of others, environmental vandalism and a disregard for heritage, much of which often involves profiteering, you can make the change. A concerted and genuine effort in this direction would allow us to leave the Third World behind us and join the First World, but it needs your support – each and every one of you.

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Ian Anderson, retired Royal Naval Commander and permanent resident of Malaysia, is the man behind *ipohWorld*, a history preservation organisation based at the Ipoh International School in Perak.

This active 71-year-old British who is passionate about Ipoh, devotes most of his time managing *ipohWorld* which was established to promote awareness and appreciation of Perak and its unique, diverse and rich heritage. The education-based, not-for-profit organisation has its particular focus on Ipoh and the Kinta Valley.

Since its inception in 2004, the organisation has collected a broad variety of items and information on Ipoh and Perak from worldwide sources. *ipohWorld* goes through a systematic method of disciplined recording and preservation of old photographs, documents, interviews, artifacts, books and videos. These are archived in the organisation's digital image database available for public viewing through its website ([www.ipohworld.org](http://www.ipohworld.org)). A total of 4,700 items have been secured in the database thus far.

Ian is often seen regularly traversing around town – from the markets to the city council, more often than many locals. One high-ranking civil servant once had this to say about Ian, "Here is a man who cares more about Malaysia than most Malaysians."



## Musings Health

seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

# SeeFoon checks out FAR INFRARED TECHNOLOGY AND ITS HEALTH BENEFITS

Ever sat in a sauna and felt like your heart and lungs are going to burst from the excessive heat? Oh yes, the fitness gurus tell you how important sweating is for your health and how a good sweat in a sauna will detoxify your body. But for how long can you stand the torture?

Given that we live in the Foodie paradise that is Ipoh where temptations abound at every street corner, how do we minimise some of the excesses of the table and retain a modicum of concern for our health?

### Sauna For Health

Well help has arrived in Ipoh in the shape of the Far Infra-Red (FIR) sauna. When the offer of a free trial came, I, being ever the curious one and forever researching on health matters (this is my way of compensating for my gluttony), jumped at the opportunity.

I was given a very detailed form to fill out on my health after which I was put on something resembling a bathroom scale which measured my body mass index, my epidermal and visceral fat content, my weight (of course!), my metabolic rate, hydration factor and metabolic age.

I was then escorted to the single sauna (they have saunas to accommodate from one to four people) and was left in complete privacy to sweat it out. Being brand new, the towels provided were pristine and I only hope that they will remain so for the future.

### Pleasant Experience

The temperature in the sauna was very pleasant. Starting at 38 degrees Celsius, it slowly climbed to 45 degrees and stayed there. What was amazing was the profusion of sweat that poured out of me within a mere 3 minutes and continued through the next half hour. Now normally, I can barely last 12 minutes in a regular sauna without dashing out and gasping for breath. But in the FIR cabin, I was comfortable throughout. A glass of water was available and I was encouraged to take sips during the session.

The big surprise came when I got on the scales again. Half a kilo drop in weight was to be expected as it was all water but my fat content had diminished albeit by a minuscule amount and my biological age by two years!! 'Wow' I thought to myself, "this is just after one session! Will I get to be sweet sixteen again?" Dream on I chided myself but nevertheless the machine did measure fluctuations in some of the health indicators, all towards the favourable.

### Detoxification

So what are far infrared rays? FIR is a form of light energy emitted from the sun which we feel as heat. FIR rays penetrate to approximately 1.5 inches and transforms to heat energy, causing blood vessels to dilate and promoting better circulation as the heat rids the body of toxins through sweating. FIR warms the body without heating the air in-between the source and the object and is the reason I could sit comfortably for half an hour while sweating profusely.

The benefit of profuse sweating for detoxification has been very much underestimated. In conventional saunas, sweat is 95-97% water while with FIR, it is 80-85% plus cholesterol, fat soluble toxins, heavy metals like mercury and aluminium, sulfuric acid, sodium, ammonia and uric



acid.

Adequate exposure to far infrared (FIR) rays is claimed to promote healing by energising and rejuvenating the cells, improving blood circulation, and increasing metabolic rate.

### Cardiovascular Benefits

It has a Passive Cardiovascular Conditioning Effect making it possible for people in wheel chairs, those unable to exert themselves or those who won't follow a set exercise regime. It is also useful for skin rejuvenation, as the infrared rays are known to stimulate collagen and elastin synthesis, which in turn make the skin firmer and younger.

However, the increased metabolism also means more energy is burnt and some of the weight loss is real fat loss.

By having an "exercise-like" effect, regular use of the far infrared sauna is also claimed to help control blood sugar and cholesterol levels. The profuse sweating detoxifies the body, and is a good way to get rid of uric acid and prevent or get relief from gouty arthritis.

### NASA Research

Medical researchers confirm that the use of sauna provides cardio-conditioning as the body works to cool itself and involves substantial increases in heart rate, cardiac output and metabolic rate. As confirmation of this, cardiovascular conditioning research by NASA in the early 1980s found it an ideal way to maintain cardiovascular health in American astronauts during long space flights.

Packages for sauna sessions are available.

**ZAZEN Health Solutions**

Tel. no.: **05-5483918**

## RECIPE

### Nasi Briyani



In conjunction with World Heart Day on September 26, here is a healthy recipe. (Courtesy of the Dietetics Department of Hospital Fatimah Ipoh)

#### Ingredients (A)

5 shallots  
3 big onions (blend)  
5 cloves of garlic  
20ml water

1 stick cinnamon  
1 pc star anise seed  
3 cloves

#### Ingredients (B)

500g Basmati rice (soak before for 30 mins)  
3 tbsp (42g) Canola Oil  
5cm ginger

4 cardamom seeds  
1 stalk pandan (screwpine) leaf  
1 stalk lemongrass  
3 tbsp curry powder  
1 tsp turmeric powder



#### Method:

1. Wash and soak the Basmati rice. Put aside and blend Ingredients (A).
2. Heat oil. Add cinnamon, star anise seed, clove, cardamom seeds, pandan leaf, lemongrass stalk and Ingredients (A). Sauté until brown.
3. Add curry powder, mini-

mum salt to taste and turmeric powder with 1 bowl of water.

4. Sauté for 3-5 mins.
5. Add the rice and stir until well mixed.
6. Put all the ingredients in the rice cooker and add 2 bowls of water. Leave until rice is cooked, stirring occasionally.

#### Nutritional value per serving

Calories: 182kcal  
Carbohydrate: 30g  
Protein: 3g Fat: 5g  
Cholesterol: 0mg  
Sodium: 1.7mg  
Fibre: 1.5g

## HAWKER FOOD

### Thosai



The thosai is a fermented crepe made from rice and black lentils. It is a typical dish in South Indian cuisine, eaten for breakfast or dinner, and is rich in carbohydrates and protein. Thosai is a popular breakfast diet for local Indians and other races alike, and can be found in most Indian and *mamak* stalls and restaurants around town. There are many variations for the thosai, and some of the more popular ones include *paper*, *masala*, *rava thosai* and *uthapum thosai*.



Some recommended places in Ipoh:

**Krishna Bhawan Restaurant (KBR), 8 Jalan Lahat (Old Town)**

7.30 a.m. - 9.30 p.m.,

closed every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month.

Krishna Bhawan is a full-fledged vegetarian restaurant and serves up to 17 variations of thosai all day. Recommended ones include their rava special (RM2, with onions), uthapam special (RM3, extra tomatoes) and their kerala thosai (RM3.50) which has four types of pounded spices.

**Restaurant Ipoh Padang Curry House (93 Jalan Raja Ekram)**

5.30 a.m. - 7.30 p.m., open daily.

This popular Indian restaurant serves thosai the whole day and offers up to 9 variations on the menu. The masala thosai is particularly delicious and this, together with other variations of rava, onions, egg, Planta, ghee and paper thosai are priced at RM1.50 each. Their chutneys are also very delicious with a variety of coconut, *pudina* (mint) and tomato available.

**Thillai's (Stall No.25, Stadium Perak)**

6.30 a.m. - 2.30 p.m., closed every Sunday.

Thillai's is a popular breakfast and lunch choice for many local Indians and other races alike. They serve a good, thick and fluffy traditional thosai or paper thosai on banana leaf for breakfast beginning at RM1 a piece. Their coconut chutney is also very tasty.

## Find Out What "Resorts World™ Sentosa Singapore" Has In Store



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# Letters

## Does Anyone Know this Family?



Gardner-Joseph wedding



Wedding of Kenny & Helen Joseph

"I am researching my family history and trying to find out as much as possible – good and bad – about my mother's family. She was born Joan Marjorie Joseph(e) in 1930, in Ipoh, one of 13 children to a family of, I believe, tin miners. Amongst her siblings were Clarence, Clive, Kenny, and Patricia. In

1957, she married James Gardner, a rubber planter who had managed plantations in Ipoh and later at Rasa.

"The Gardner-Joseph wedding photo is, of course, my parents' wedding. You'll see that my Auntie Pat (next to the bride) has been scratched out – my mother's doing, I'm afraid! I would be particularly interested in identifying the other people shown and where it took place."

These additional photographs feature Vivian and Joan Joseph and the wedding of brother Kenny to a lady named Helen.

Finally we have a single photo of "Auntie Girlie" as an officer in the Malaysian prison service,



Vivien & Joan Joseph

in Ipoh in 1967. Her badge of rank is one pip on her shoulder and she is wearing a medal with a crown in the centre. Recognise her? If so please let us know.

Judy Wild



Auntie Girlie

In the collection of photographs sent by Judy, in addition to the above, there are 5 more taken after her parents had been transferred to Rasa. They include the names George Joseph and Angela, Egbert and an Auntie Sim. There is also a copy of the Government Gazette of June 9th 1949 which records the award of the Malayan Volunteer Reserve Efficiency Medal to Sapper James Rowland Gardner J. V. E. If anyone believes they know anything about this family we shall be happy to provide the additional photographs to help with identification. We look forward to your help.

## "Outrage Over Culling of Dogs"

We refer to the news item 'NEWSFOCUS – Banting Murders' in the New Straits Times of September 21.

We, a group of animal lovers of the horse-racing fraternity of the Perak Turf Club in Ipoh, were extremely shocked and aggrieved to read about the senseless murder of the 9 dogs, which were – it pains us to note – healthy animals callously put down by the Kuala Langat District Council, and justified by its President Abdul Razak Jaafar on the grounds that "it was done according to procedure".

We commend the various organisations for their prompt and rightful response to the outrage. We hope this tragic and unfortunate episode serves as a reminder to all well-meaning Malaysians, and makes us adopt more humane and compassionate measures when dealing with animals in future.

Perak Turf Club

The letter carries 41 signatures

To read the whole letter, please go online to: [www.ipohecho.com.my](http://www.ipohecho.com.my)

## 1Malaysia Perak Heritage Buildings Photography Contest

It was wonderful to see my photographer and friend, Andrew Ng Keat Seong, win the top prize at the "1Malaysia Perak Heritage Buildings Photography Contest 2010" (Ipoh Echo Issue 105). This comes as no surprise for anyone who has worked with Andrew, his passion for photography borders on the ridiculous and combined with his professional work ethics have made him into one of the best photographers in Ipoh. I attach a mood photo taken by Andrew in one of my architectural works. His pictures need no words. My heartiest congratulations.

Ken Yeh



## news roundup

# Malaysia Day cum Onam Celebration

The Perak Malayalee Association (PMA) celebrated Onam (Harvest Festival) concurrently with Malaysia Day on Thursday, September 16. The event, held at the Ipoh Town Hall, was attended by over 600 members, guests and VIPs. The celebration was also to honour members for their achievements in the field of education and services to the community. Cash and certificates were given to 31 students who excelled in the 2009 public examinations. Topping the list was Ms Balakavitha who obtained 5 As in STPM, the first ever by someone from the association. Other notable recipients were Ms Anita Padmanathan who was conferred the Global Employee



Award 2009 by DHL Europe and Ms Dhanya Poduval who was awarded the Indian Council for Cultural Relations by the Indian High Commission. President of PMA, K. Letchimanan Nair, gave

away the awards and certificates. Present to grace the occasion was Dato' Hj Nadzari Ismail, Adun for Manjoi, who promised to provide some financial support in recognition of PMA's contributions to society.

FZB

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# young PERAK

## Dean Awards



A total of 122 students of the Mara Polytechnic College, Ipoh were conferred the college's dean awards for securing 3.5 points and above in their CGPA scores. The top achievers were Nurul Ruslan and Intan Suraya Rokam who obtained a score of 4. Rector, Dato' Yusoff Harun, gave away the awards at a simple ceremony attended by students and parents recently at the college hall. "Hopefully, the recognition given would spur students to strive harder," said Norizan Nordin, the college director. Mara Polytechnic College Ipoh has been in operation since 2003 replacing the former Kolej Yayasan Mara and Kolej Info-Tech Mara. It offers courses in multi-media for students seeking a meaningful career in ICT.

RM

## Study Grants for the Poor



Study grants worth RM500,000 were given to TAJ International College, Ipoh to enable children from poor families to pursue courses at the college. The grants were disbursed at a simple ceremony attended by the donors' representatives and guests at the college hall recently. Dato' Tajuddin Abdul Rahman, Chairman of TAJ International College, received the grants. The donors were Umno, Umno Youth, MCA, MIC and Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan. According to Pn Tina Tajuddin, CEO of TAJ College, the grants would be used to help needy students, regardless of their ethnicity, to pursue courses at the college in line with the 1Malaysia concept.

RM

## 1Malaysia Road Run



Forty primary school students from Sungai Siput participated in the 4th edition of the 1Malaysia Road Run in Kuala Lumpur recently. The run was held to mark the nation's 53rd Independence Day celebration. Its objective was to inculcate the spirit of togetherness among the various races in the country. "The fact that the students are of Indian origin speaks volumes of the participants' desire for racial integration," said Datuk Ahamad Pakeh Adam, Adun for Lintang, in a speech before handing over the Jalur Gemilang to the local team leader. The ceremony was held at Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan (Tamil) Gandhi, Sg. Siput.

RN

### SCENE & HEARD

#### JAZZ WITH MAC & ZEL @ THE BISTRO

Mac & Zel, a two-piece Jazz Duo is now performing at The Bistro of Impiana Hotel Ipoh.

Razel (Zel) the lead singer has strong vocals while Marcos (Mac) is an experienced yet multi-talented musician both on keyboard and guitar.

Catch their performance at The Bistro from 8.30 p.m. to 12 midnight nightly, except Sundays.

For reservations and enquiries, please call 05-255 5555 ext. 8008.



# Upgrade community GUNONG LANG says MB



Menteri Besar Perak, Dato' Seri Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir, wants Ipoh City Council to upgrade Gunong Lang into a recreational cum tourist spot for both local and foreign visitors. "I've

asked MBI to find ways to improve the park so it will become a viable tourist attraction," he told reporters after opening Ipoh City Council Hari Raya get-together at the Gunong Lang Park on September 25. In

the past, such events were held at the council swimming pool across Perak Stadium. This year's gathering witnessed a different theme altogether. Instead of the usual food and cookies spread on tables, this time around it was done ala hawker stalls operated by departmental staff. Zambry took time to interact with the stall minders and tasted the food prepared by the staff. While the invitees ate, the adventurous ones took to the water on boats and mini ferries.

RN

## CHARITY PREMIERE



Charity premiere, "Eat Pray Love" with Julia Roberts in the lead role, played to a full house at Kinta City's TGV cineplex on Sunday, September 26. Perak Women for Women's Secretary, Ms Yip Siew Keen, thanked patrons for their support. "We sold all 250 tickets. The proceeds will help fund our society's programmes," she told Ipoh Echo when met at the foyer. Incidentally, the screening was the only show in Ipoh. "The story portrays women's predicaments in general and, as such, was an appropriate pick for a premiere screening," said Dr Sharifah, the society's president.

FZB

### 感恩園

**FORGET ME NOT ZONE**

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**sport****A 15-Year Hiatus**

After its last victory 15 years ago, the Perak cricket team emerged as champions in the Premier League organised by the Malaysian Cricket Association. Perak Cricket Association President, Mohammed Iqbal Ali, in his address, mentioned that the win was a long awaited one for Perak, as that was his promise on assuming presidency of the association in 2007. He requested the kind support of Majlis Sukan Negeri and guest-of-honour, State Chairman for Sports, Youth and Culture Encik Zainol Fadzi, to provide the team with a natural turf to train. Currently, the state team trains in Kuala Lumpur and this is costly. Having a natural turf allows the players to train more frequently and is also cost effective. Zainol Fadzi congratulated the team and promised to seek a solution to its problem. The team consists of 14, including six foreign players. Under the guidance of head coach, M. Muniandy and his assistant, Mr. Thushara Kodikara, the team, which was only formed in November 2009, has done exceptionally well. The future of cricket in Perak looks promising.

DK

**2010 Perak Wushu Championship**

The Perak Wushu Championships held in Ipoh recently attracted a record number of participants from throughout the state compared to previous years.

The two-day weekend event was held at the State Sports Complex. The championship was divided into two categories, Taolu and Sanshou. One hundred and twenty-two athletes signed up for the Taolu category and 47 for the Sanshou category.

An athlete is permitted to enter multiple events hence, there was a total participation of 262 entries for



the various Taolu events. The Taolu competition is an individual performance of a fixed set of movements similar to how Tai Ji Quan is practised.

Unlike Taolu, the Sanshou competition is a full-contact combat performance between two individuals but guided by rules and regulations.

The overall champions for the Sanshou event were Team Chi-Ke Chuan followed by Team Utar from Kampar.

According to the secretary of the Wushu Federation of Perak (WFP), K.W. Lam, the participants enjoyed an entertaining weekend of skilful exchange of punches, kicks and throws.

JAG

**NANYANG ALUMNI Gather In Ipoh**

The Class of '58

Over 1,100 graduate members of the Nanyang University Alumni Association, NUAA, congregated in Ipoh on the weekend of September 3-5 for their 12th Global Reunion.

Nanyang University (NANTAH) started in 1955 as a Chinese-language University in Singapore and had offered courses in the arts, sciences and commerce.

In 1980 it was merged with the University of Singapore and was renamed the National University of Singapore (NUS) with the medium of instruction being English.

In 1981, its grounds were taken over by a new technical institute, the Nanyang Technical

Institute and in 1991 was upgraded to university status as Singapore's second English-medium university, the Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

Although the original university has been defunct for thirty years the spirit of its alumni has not diminished as evidenced by its well attended biennial Global Reunion.

According to Ipoh businessman, David Chiew Cheng Hee, 70, a graduate of Nanyang and currently the President of the NUAA Perak as well as the organising chairman for the event, other than Singapore and Malaysia, alumni came from Australia, Canada, Europe, USA, Hong Kong, Thailand and Indonesia to "get together, renew friend-

ships and develop contacts".

From among the 1,100 attendees, more than 100 were PhD holders, Research Professors and prominent businessmen.

On a personal note, Chiew felt he wanted to do something for Ipoh and had proposed Ipoh as the reunion venue at their last gathering in 2008. Chiew, an ex-student of Yuk Choy School Ipoh left to study at Nanyang in 1958 after his Senior Middle 3 exam to major in Economics.

Besides enjoying the good Chinese restaurant food in Ipoh the participants were treated to Ipoh street food at Jalan Bandar Timah (Leech Street). The 2 blocks on the street where Kong Heng Coffee Shop is located were sealed and tents were erected on the road for the guests until 4.00 p.m.

Ipoh Echo salutes David Chiew, for doing that "little something" for Ipoh. Hopefully there are more of you around.

JAG

**Royal Couple's Train Ride****news roundup**

at 4.20 p.m.

They were accompanied by KTM's Electric Train Sdn Bhd (ETS) COO Azizullah Kinayatullah and ETS Customers' Services Manager Puan Rozimah Mahyuddin.

According to an ETS spokesman, the royal couple's decision to use the train was impromptu and was probably prompted by their second son Raja Ashman Shah, who had tried the service before Hari Raya.

Meantime, Azizullah stated that another return Kuala Lumpur-Ipoh trip had been added, bringing the total to six return trips daily, as from September 8. The number of return trips will be increased to eight next month.

The fare of RM30 one way will be maintained till Chinese New Year and would be reviewed thereafter.

**MALAYSIA DAY Celebration**

The first Malaysia Day Celebration was held at Dataran MBI in Ipoh on September 16. The Sultan of Perak Sultan Azlan Shah, Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir and several state dignitaries were present.

Zambry in his speech stated that the meaning of Malaysia Day needed to be disseminated and remembered, for unlike Merdeka Day, Malaysia Day was when the different ethnic communities throughout the peninsula and Sabah and Sarawak became one and created what now constitutes Malaysia.

The evening events included a pantomime (pic)



depicting the formation of Malaysia with references to the Confrontation with Indonesia and objections by its other neighbours.

JAG



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## news roundup



# MISS MALAYSIA

## Model of the WORLD 2010



(l-r) First runner-up Edwina Yong, winner Baxter and second runner-up Bridger

It was full house at the Grand Ballroom of the Syuen Hotel on the night of the finals of the Miss Malaysia Model of the World recently.

Sabah student 19-year-old Marie Bibiana Baxter beat 17 other finalists to walk away with the winning title.

Baxter, of mixed Eurasian and Kadazan

parentage is a final-year student of Interior Design in Kota Kinabalu. Baxter whose hobbies include swimming and travelling had last year represented Sabah in the Miss Malaysia contest. She also won the title of Miss Congeniality.

The first runner-up was a finance and accounting student, Edwina Yong. Yong, 22 years, hails from

Miri, Sarawak. This was her first beauty contest.

The second runner-up was 22-year-old Rachel Alessandra Bridger from Tawau, Sabah. Bridger, of mixed British, Menado and Kadazan parentage stated that she enjoyed the charity activities organised for the contestants while in Ipoh and "thoroughly loved the food here".

Bridger is currently a model and has ambitions to become a successful businesswoman.

Mention must be given to the organisers of the beauty 2010 pageant, Star Avenue Production. This is the eighth consecutive year that it has been held in Ipoh, which according to its Producer and Director Veandra Voon is beneficial for business in Ipoh town.

The international finals of the Miss Model of the World pageant will be held in China in November this year.

JAG

# COUNTDOWN TO 2020

## THE RIGHT TO SIGHT

### WORLD SIGHT DAY 2010 – 14 October



Visual impairment is a term used to describe any kind of vision loss to the extent that even with conventional forms of correction or treatment, the person's vision remains poor.

"Being visually impaired can be frightening, especially when it affects those who once had good vision," says Dr. Gill, who is based in Hospital Fatimah in Ipoh. "In fact, just taking into cognizance the facts on visual impairment should send the message that we cannot take our eyes for granted".

#### What Causes Visual Impairment?

Many factors can cause visual impairment. "Cataracts, or the clouding of the eye's lens preventing light from passing through to the retina, are common causes for loss of vision," says Dr. Gill. "Because cataracts form slowly, causing gradual vision loss, it may not be noticeable to the patient". **Cataracts** usually affect people in their 60s and 70s, but may sometimes appear earlier in people who are excessively exposed to sunlight.

"Many of my patients who present early are golfers and sports people who are not in the habit of wearing sunglasses. The general rule is that you should always wear good sunglasses whenever you go out during daylight hours." Symptoms of cataract include double vision, cloudy or blurry vision, difficulty seeing in poorly lit spaces, and when colours seem faded. Early detection and replacement of the eye's natural lens with an intraocular lens (IOL) implant through cataract surgery usually restores vision in these cases.

"If you have diabetes, you need to be screened regularly for **Diabetic Retinopathy**, which is a condition where the tiny blood vessels in the retina (back of the eye) are damaged due to diabetes. People with retinopathy may not have any problems seeing at first. But if the condition gets worse, they can become blind." To help prevent retinopathy, people with diabetes should avoid smoking, keep their blood pressure under control, and keep their blood sugar at an even level.

Another common cause is **Glaucoma**, a condition where an increase in pressure inside the eye impairs

*In conjunction with World Sight Day on October 14, Ipoh Echo talks to Consultant Ophthalmologist Dr. S.S. Gill on ways to prevent visual impairment and the importance of early screening in eye disease management*



Dr. S.S. Gill  
Resident Consultant  
Ophthalmologist

vision by damaging the optic nerve. "Any damage to the optic nerve is irreversible so it is important to find out if there is any history of glaucoma in your family as the condition is hereditary. Early detection and treatment is crucial or the vision will gradually deteriorate over time to a small tunnel vision, and then blindness can occur," emphasizes Dr. Gill.

Most people may also find it surprising to note that **injury** is one of the commonest causes for vision loss. Examples like getting hit with a hockey ball or a shuttlecock, or children playing with sharp objects, and injuries from car accidents are common factors. These incidents are potentially devastating and a drastic accident can cause blindness. "I always advise parents to avoid buying toys with sharp edges and prevent children from playing with chopsticks or pencils. Prevention is always better than cure!"

**Macular degeneration** is a gradual deterioration of the macula (centre point at the back of the eye), which is the most sensitive region of the retina. The condition leads to progressive loss of central vision (the ability to see fine details directly in front). Excessive exposure to sunlight and smoking can increase the risk for age-related macular degeneration. Symptoms may include increased difficulty reading or watching TV, as vision becomes distorted and straight lines appear wavy or objects look larger or smaller than normal.

In children, **amblyopia** or "lazy eye" in early childhood can drastically reduce vision in an eye if the weak eye is not corrected. It is important to detect and

treat the lazy eye before the age of 7 or 8 years, before the "vision centre" in the brain completes development.

#### Preventing Visual Impairment

For a large number of people who develop visual impairment in their 50s and later, it usually begins with a preventable disease, unless vision loss is caused by cataracts which can be reversed with surgery. A disease like glaucoma for instance, has to be detected early and treated or damage is irreversible.

Some final words from Dr. Gill: "Many people will have some type of visual problem at some point in their lives. It is important that if you have an underlying condition like diabetes, hypertension or glaucoma that you visit your ophthalmologist regularly and comply with prescription medication and eye drops to prevent further vision loss."

For more information, contact **05-5455582** or email [gillyeyecentre@dr.com](mailto:gillyeyecentre@dr.com) or visit: [www.fatimah.com.my](http://www.fatimah.com.my).

#### The World Health Organisation (WHO) facts:

- \* Approximately 314 million people are visually impaired worldwide and 45 million of them are blind.
- \* Every 20 seconds, someone in the world becomes visually impaired.
- \* Most people with visual impairment are older, and females are more at risk at every age, in every part of the world.
- \* Cataract remains the leading cause of blindness globally, except in the most developed countries.
- \* Correction of refractive errors (short and long sightedness) could restore normal vision to more than 12 million children between the ages 5 to 15.
- \* About 85% of all visual impairment is avoidable.

*Next Issue: Part 2 – Tips on How to Look After Your Eyes and Maintaining Good Eye Sight*

# Mid Autumn (Lantern) Festival



Pantai Hospital Ipoh's Heritage Trail of Unity Walk



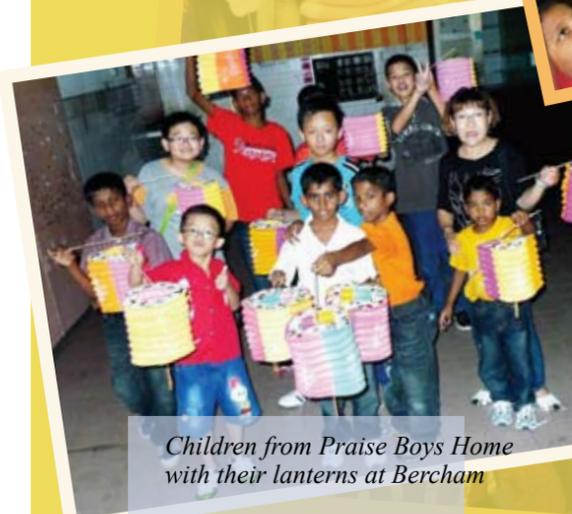
Kelab Anak Malaysia Batu Gajah Lantern Festival



St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Pengkalan



Eager children before the Heritage Walk



Children from Praise Boys Home with their lanterns at Bercham



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements must be sent by fax: **05-2552181**; or email: [announcements@ipohecho.com.my](mailto:announcements@ipohecho.com.my), by the 9<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> of every month in order to meet deadlines. Announcements by phone will not be entertained. Ipoh Echo reserves the right to verify any announcement before it is published.

**Wellness Talks by Ayur Centre Ipoh and Cohen Lifestyle Malaysia** on October 2 (Saturday) at 2.30 p.m. at Banquet Room 1, M Floor, Ipoh City & Country Club, 283 Jalan Raja Permaisuri Bainun, Ipoh. Free admission with refreshments. Talk I: 'Significance of Ayurvedic Oil Therapy in Health and Illness' by Dr Shiva Prasad; and Talk II: 'Weight Loss and Wellness through Nutrition – The Cohen Way' by Puan Sri Siew Yong Gnanalingam. For registration, contact: Ms Helen via sms/phone: **016-5928112 / 05-5473299** or email: [csc.helen@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:csc.helen@yahoo.co.uk).

**Pertubuhan Sri Dayananda Saraswati Fund Raising Food Fair.** Sunday October 3 from 9.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. at Rayan Cultural Hall, Jalan Tun Perak (Connolly Rd.). In aid of needy school children. Coupons at RM10 per book. Call: **05-8074458** or **016-5321087**.

**Budi Utama Siagian's 'Love, Dream and Hope 2010' Solo Oil Painting Exhibition** on October 3-10, 11.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m., at Garden Villa, No. 5, Jalan Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah (Gopeng Road), Ipoh. Official opening by Tan Sri Dato' (Dr.) Hj Ahmad Azizuddin bin Hj Zainal Abidin on Sunday October 3 at 11.00 a.m.

**Dinner Talk on Pranic Healing, "You Can Heal!"** Tuesday, October 5, 7.30-10.00 p.m. at Syuen Hotel Ipoh, Room Bonzai A, Level 4. Admission by invitation only. Call Mrs Lee at: **012-5727766**.

**FMM ICT& Industrial Innovation Conference and Exhibition 2010**, "Innovation: Moving Up the Value Chain – Compete for Success". October 5 & 6 from 8.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. at Impiana Hotel Ipoh. A free-of-charge full day's programme with meals provided. For registration, contact: Chamber Office (**05-2555558**).

**Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP) CONVOFAIR'10** from October 14-17 (Thursday to Friday), 9 a.m.-12.00 p.m. at Universiti Teknologi Petronas, Bandar Seri Iskandar, 31750 Tronoh, Perak. For details call: **013-5930710/019-5221617/019-5205909**.

**Ipoh Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPCA) Food Fair** on Sunday November 7 at St John's Ambulance HQ Ipoh, 134 Jalan Raja Aziz, Ipoh. Stall sponsorships, donations and volunteers are welcome. Coupons will be on sale. For details or enquiries please contact: **016-5608905** (Doreen) or **016-5279515** (Rani).

**MBI's Community Affairs Department** (Jabatan Hal Ehwal Komuniti) is now relocated to Wisma Bougainvillea (6<sup>th</sup> Floor), across Central Market Ipoh. As such, all dealings relating to bookings of sport halls, sporting facilities, community halls, tents etc are to be made at Wisma Bougainvillea. The department's new phone number is **05-242 2640**.

## Ops Payong Set Up For Tarcisian Convent School



The police have finally set up Ops Payong (OP) for the Tarcisian Convent School. For quite some time The Residents Committee and Rukun Tetanga of Lim Garden has been requesting the police to set up OP at the school. With so many abductions and snatch thefts, the residents were worried for the safety of students. The students in this school come mainly from Lim Garden and Kampong Manjoi and a number of them walk or cycle to school. The parents and guardians are relieved now that the students are relatively safe under the watchful eyes of the police.

The residents are thankful to Inspector N. Ramesh for implementing the system. Inspector Ramesh has held a few meetings with the residents, explaining what the police are doing to prevent crime. He also explained how the public can help the police in reducing crime. He has set a good example that the police do listen to the public and are friends of the community and can be trusted.

A. Jeyaraj

## Forgotten Stretch of Kinta River Bund



Walking on the bund of the Kinta River from Jalan Leong Boon Swee to Lahat Lane, I was shocked at the condition of the stretch hidden from the sight of the general public.

The drainage system has failed and is not functioning. The drain from Jalan Sultan Yussuf (Belfield Street) running along the bund which discharges into the river in Lahat Lane is silted.

In many sections it is overgrown with shrubs and the water is stagnant. A concrete dam is also built across the drain. New drains have been built to discharge into this clogged drain. In fact along some stretches it is convenient to walk on the silted drain.

There are many mature trees growing along the side of the bund which is overgrown with shrubs and creepers. The slope is a mini jungle. The top of the bund is also full of shrubs and is used as a rubbish dump.

Without further delay enforcement officers from MBI and JPS must visit the place and bring it back to the status it was in the fifties. It is an eyesore to have such a neglected place just next to the city centre.

A. Jeyaraj

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# letter from ulu kinta • by Mariam Mokhtar

## THE SARAWAK CONNECTION

Sarawak, or “Land of the Hornbills”, is a place which evokes romance and adventure. The White Rajahs, Borneo headhunters, nipah lowlands, Niah and Mulu caves, are pleasant reminders of a vast green country. On the downside are the displaced peoples, the destruction of the rainforest and oil palm plantations stretching into the horizon. Sarawak is where several indigenous people come from, but few realise that Ipoh is also home to around 500 Sarawakians.

### The Ibans

The Ibans are very hospitable and fearless. They are simple, yet adventurous, and the males pursue the tradition of *bejalai* – a walkabout or ‘travelling long distances in search of work and adventure’. Back in the longhouses, Ibans lead a democratic life based on communal sharing and a noble tradition of kinship. They have deep respect for the jungle, the land and supernatural forces.

In Ipoh, the Ibans belong to the Ranger battalion at Camp Syed Putra, the ancillary units of the army brigade and the General Operation Force Northern Brigade in Ulu Kinta.

### Ujang

Ujang was born in Ipoh, twenty three years ago. His father was an Iban commando with Vat 69 (Very Able Troopers 69) of the Northern Brigade. VAT69 is modelled after the British Special Air Service Regiment and formed in 1969 to counter the communist terrorist threats prevalent then.

Apart from 5 years, when his father was transferred back to Sarawak, Ujang has been in Ipoh all his life. He received his primary schooling at Sekolah Chung Hwa and speaks the Iban language, Malay, Mandarin, Cantonese and English.

Ujang’s fondest memories are of life in Ulu Kinta: “My friends and I would explore the countryside, setting traps for birds or small animals. Sometimes, we’d fish. Hunting reminded us of the jungles back in Sarawak.”

He compares his outdoor thrills with the children of today, who prefer computer games and are missing out on the best years of their life.

### The Future

As a young adult, he worries about his future: “Life is difficult in Sarawak.

Ibans are not business minded. After toiling in the fields, I cannot understand why we exchange our home-grown *padi* for the one the Chinese trader sells in his shop. Isn’t our own produce superior? Why not exchange our crops for essential goods instead?”

Other young Ibans, he claims, share his views, “There’re few jobs in Sarawak. The wages are low. A day’s work at the sawmill will bring between RM8 and RM12. There are few opportunities available and so we migrate to Semenanjung.”

### Ipoh is Home

“I was born in Ipoh. My friends are here. Ipoh is my home. The older people may miss Sarawak, but the younger Ibans love it here.”

Ujang remembers the Sunday services at St. John’s Church in Jalan St. John and the Iban community spirit of his childhood: “We looked forward to Sundays. The Iban would *berkumpul* for a big *makan*, after church. The family unit is very important.”



Ujang showing off his traditional Iban tattoos

“Nowadays, we hardly mix. People keep to themselves. The young ones refuse to speak Iban at home. We are losing our *kebudayaan*.”

### Lack of an Iban voice

Ujang has another reason to be sad: “There is no Iban voice in Ipoh. Even if the Iban population is transient, our children must not forget our traditions.”

He brightens up, remembering how Sarawakians from the army and police camps used to (but no longer do) interact during Gawai celebrations. “There was plentiful *tuak* and *bamboo chicken pansuh* to feast on. The highlights were the *ngajat* (ceremonial warrior dance) and the *kumang gawai* (beauty contest).”

He looks into the distance and says, “Like most Ibans, I am musically inclined and play the guitar and drums but not the traditional instruments. My warrior spirit is still with me but I have modern skills in taekwondo and muay thai.”

### Calling All Ibans

This young man, who also excels in rugby and football, asks, “Do you think an enterprising Iban might form an association so young Ibans can be in touch with their roots? If we don’t do something soon, I fear our social values and culture will become extinct.”

## behind street names

### Jalan Foo Choong Nyit

#### Where?

The narrow road between Indulgence and ILTI.

#### Who was Foo Choong Nyit?

Mr. Foo Choong Nyit was born in 1860, in Ying Dong, a town in the Fujian (formerly known as Fuzhou) province of China. He arrived in Penang at the age of 14, and worked in a business shop. Three years later, in 1877, he moved to Ipoh, worked as an apprentice in tin-mining, for Mr. Foo Choo Choon. In 1890, aged 30, he started his own tin-mining business at Batu Gajah, and held shares in several tin mines at Pusing, Tg. Tualang, Ipoh and Menglembu. He was also the General Manager of the Foo Brothers Hydraulic Gold Mine, the Fook Ban San and the Fook Ban Foh Tin Mines.

He was a former President of the Perak Chinese Maternity Association, Adviser to the Perak Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Committee Member of the Perak Chinese Protectorate. He was appointed as the Justice of Peace in 1936. As a well-known philanthropist, in 1937 he donated a 7-acre site at Kampar Road, together with Mr. Foo Nyit Tse and Mr. Chang Chong Siew, for the construction of the new Perak Chinese Maternity Hospital building. He was also one of the founders of the Perak Hakka Association also known as the Perak Khek Community Association. He passed away in 1937.

#### Did you know?

During that era, there were a couple of well-known and wealthy Fooks, especially in the mining industry and many people tend to think that they are all related. The truth is they were not.

Yeun Yin Fong



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## my say



● By Jerry Francis

## Proposed Advisory Board WILL CREATE MORE BUREAUCRACY

**“If we have the best, then there is no reason for them to be advised by some other advisory body”**  
 ~Augustine Anthony, ICW President

**T**he Perak Government's proposal to establish advisory boards in every district to hear public views from a broad spectrum in determining the state's direction, appears to be a good idea.

However, why is it necessary now? Is the state government admitting that what had been done in the past was not according to “public opinion and feedback” and therefore it needs to form the advisory board comprising NGOs and media representatives? Or, it is merely to satisfy those aspiring to hold official post?

This is the impression I got when state chairman for local government, Dato' Dr. Mah Hang Soon, recently explained that the advisory board is merely to channel public opinion and feedback on issues and problems faced by the people. “Its role is only to give opinions and advice from their respective field of interest,” he stressed.

The creation of an advisory body was first disclosed by the Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Zambry Abdul Kadir last year, although he labelled it as a civic society council. “What is good is that it would involve the whole community in social development where the NGOs chosen will be representing all the bodies which focus on poverty eradication, welfare and development,” Zambry had stated.

### Appoint Only Knowledgeable Councillors

In an immediate reaction to the proposed move, President of Ipoh City Watch (ICW), Augustine Anthony, described it as “creating more bureaucracy”.

According to him if the local government had followed section 10(2) of the Local Government Act 1976 when appointing their councillors then there would be no need to set up such an advisory board.

“At present the Councillors are mostly from political parties who perhaps are clueless in the affairs of the local council matters and the fact that there is a suggestion that there should be an advisory body only compounds the belief that they are so,” he said.

Augustine pointed out that under the said section, the councillors appointed must have wide experience in local government affairs, have achieved distinction in any profession in commerce or industry, and are capable of representing the interest of their communities in the local authority area. “It is for this reason we have always

asked the local government to follow the spirit of section 10(2) and that is to appoint the best brains in the community. And if we have the best, then there is no reason for them to be advised by some other advisory body,” he added.

### Two Heads Rather Than One?

It appears that the present corps of local councillors in the state is incapable of getting opinions and feedback from the people and therefore it is necessary to have two heads rather than one? How can such an advisory board be relevant to the local authorities when its members can only provide lip service, as they have no voting rights.

Certainly the state government has sufficient expertise and the machinery to undertake development projects which are beneficial to the people without having an advisory board to pass on opinion and feedback.

Creating an advisory board will just encourage discussion after discussion, and waste time as well as public funds, without achieving its objectives. Take for instance the various state government's sponsored tourism seminars and symposiums held in the past with the view to get “opinions and feedback” from private sector and individuals to promote tourism to the state. I was invited to attend a number of them. Lengthy discussions were often held and views and suggestions were compiled and reported to the state government.

The same views and suggestions repeatedly emerged at subsequent seminars and symposiums. Yet, nothing came out of such discussions, just a waste of time and money.

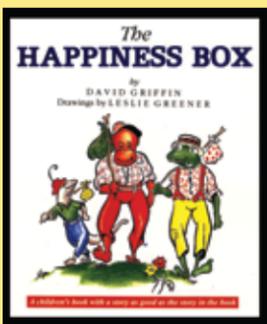
### Need For Honest Intention

Therefore, there is no doubt that the proposed advisory board will end up the same, unless the state government has the honest intention to hear the “opinions and feedback” of the people.

The state government has all the trained professionals and agencies, including the State Economic Planning Unit, State Development Corporation, and various local councils to plan and implement suitable projects. All the state government needs is for their elected representatives, councillors and officers to be dedicated and sincere in carrying out their responsibilities, and for the authorities, to honestly and fairly implement all viable requests from the people, irrespective of opposition controlled constituencies.

## book review

● by Wern Sze Gill



**O**riginally written to boost the morale of child prisoners of British and Australian families incarcerated in Changi Prison during WWII, The Happiness Box is as delightfully inspirational and entertaining today as it was first written in December 1942.

The Happiness Box, a children's story book, tells a captivating story of how three jungle friends; Winston the lizard, Martin the monkey, and Wobbley the frog, discovered a magical box and how they learned the secrets to happiness in it.

The idea for creating this children's story first came about when the Australian POWs convinced their Japanese captors to agree to them sending Christmas gifts to children incarcerated together with the women in Changi Prison. Twenty-seven year old Sgt. David

Griffin, one of those recruited to make toys for the kids, couldn't make toys.

But he could write stories. Thus came the idea of writing a book for Changi Jail's child prisoners.

Griffin set about creating the story and enlisted his friend and fellow inmate, an accomplished artist, Leslie Greener, to do the illustrations. When completed, the pages were bound into a little book which went on display along with the toys.

However, when Gene-ral Saito arrived to conduct an inspection of the toys before they were sent out to Changi, he became immediately suspicious of the book after noting that a key character in the book, Winston the lizard, bore the same name as the British leader of the day, Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Thinking it contained secret coded messages between the prisoners housed outside Changi Jail and the civilians within, they ordered the book confiscated. The Australians, however, managed to cart the book away and eventually hid it in an ammunition container which they buried within the grounds of the prison camps.

Following the liberation of Singapore in 1945, The Happiness Box was dug up and returned to the author. The original copy survives, and is today kept in the State Library of New South Wales in Sydney Australia.

In 1990, a historical research team from Media Masters rediscovered Griffin's work and produced the book for public release. In 2006, the Great Libraries of Australia declared The Happiness Box a “National Treasure”. The book has since been a best-seller, and proclaimed “a children's book with a story as good as the story in the book”.

More than just a charming children's book, The Happiness Box is a unique piece of history for all who treasure the human spirit's will to survive and to prevail.

The Happiness Box, 32 pages, is retailed at RM18 and is available through Ipoh Echo for individual purchase or through Media Masters Publishing for bulk orders. Call Ipoh Echo at **05-2495936**, or email: [info@mediamasters.com.my](mailto:info@mediamasters.com.my) for more information.

## THE HAPPINESS BOX, the Book They Buried In Changi Prison



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