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● An Unprotected Nature Park



PG 3

● The Unseen Criminal



PG 4

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PG 6

● IE's 'Dirt Vigilantes' Campaign pays off



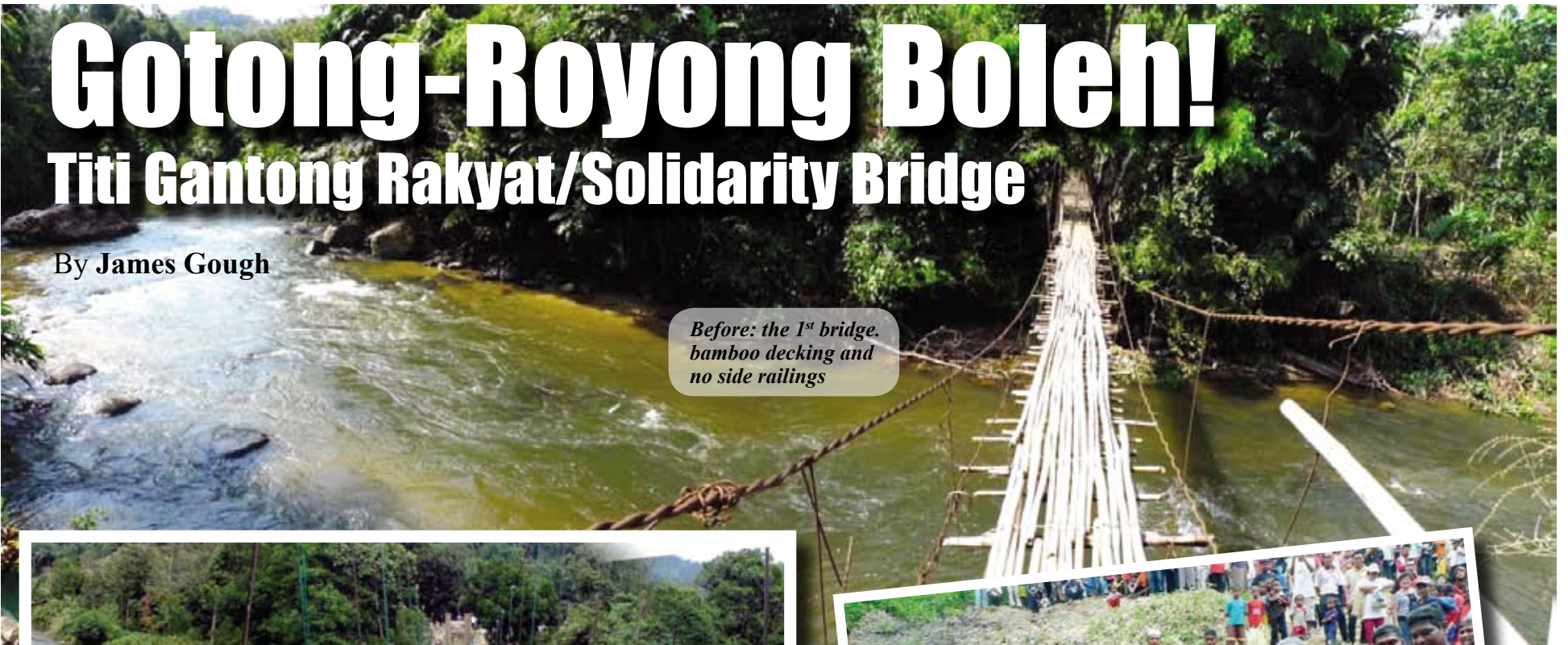
PG 12

Gotong-Royong Boleh!

Titi Gantong Rakyat/Solidarity Bridge

By James Gough

Before: the 1st bridge, bamboo decking and no side railings



Now: the new bridge. Standard wood decking with square mesh railings.



In solidarity. Malay, Indian, Chinese and Orang Asli, 3rd from left Ahamad, next to him the Tok Batin (village chief)

Building a 43-metre suspension bridge over a river in the remote jungle of Sungai Siput without government's funding is not an easy task. But, through the spirit of gotong-royong, an innovative Orang Asli community has shown how it was achieved. Working in coordination with the MP for Sungai Siput, Dr. D. Jeyakumar and various volunteers, with contributions from well-wishers, the bridge across Sungai Pelus, a tributary of the Sungai Perak, was inaugurated recently.

Continued on page 2



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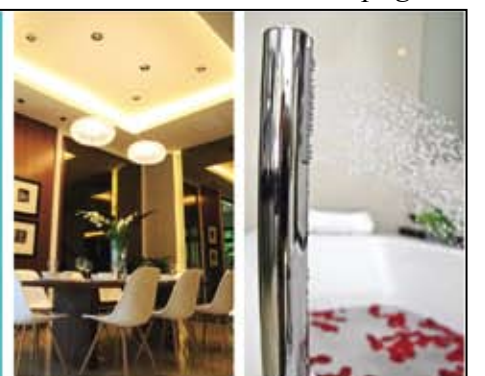
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A Bridge Over Troubled Waters

The bridge, now known as “Titi Gantung Solidariti Rakyat” (or People’s Solidarity Suspension Bridge), constructed in accordance with professional engineering specifications for safety, replaces another built more than 10 years ago about one kilometre upstream.

The Temiar community in Kampong Perjek, Lasah, had, through their own initiative, built a “rickety” bridge suspended by cables discarded by logging companies tied to large trees at both sides of the river, which often swells after heavy rains in the jungle, making it impossible for them to wade across.

Kampung Perjek is located 44 km east of Sungai Siput town. The route is connected with about 17 km of an uphill logging dirt road which requires a 4-wheel-drive to negotiate up to the village. It consists of 50 households with a population of 400. The villagers need to get to the other side of the river daily, where their saka (ancestral hunting ground) lies, to tend to their farms and collect jungle products for their livelihood.

New Bridge Wider and Safer

With the new bridge, getting to the opposite bank is easier as it is wide enough for a motorcycle, and safer with floor decking of wood planks bolted down and joined to the suspension cables with square nettings throughout the length of the bridge. This is supported by 10-metre concrete towers on each side of the riverbank, unlike the old one with bamboo floorboards and no netting at the side. Walking on the old bridge was often a hair-raising experience.

The idea of building a better and safer bridge was mooted about two years ago when the villagers made a request to Dr. Jeyakumar, who was elected as MP for Sungai Siput in the last general elections, for new cables to prop up their dilapidated bridge.

Issue of Funding

Upon careful consideration Dr. Jeyakumar decided that it was an urgent question of safety for the villagers to have a new bridge. “It would be safer to build a new bridge than repair the old rickety bridge,” he said. Knowing well that funding for the project would be an issue, he told the villagers that it would have to be a collaborative effort saying, “*saya dengan kau buat sama-sama*” (I will work alongside with you), as he stressed to the Orang Asli community during one of his regular visits together with Tijah Yok Copil, the Secretary of Jaringan Orang Asal Perak (an NGO of the Orang Asli).

As an opposition MP for Sungai Siput he has not received his constituency allocation of RM1 million per year which by contrast is paid to the BN legislators by the federal government. Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) had subsequently filed suit in the Kuala Lumpur High Court to declare that the special allocation for electoral constituencies must be given to all MPs regardless of political affiliation. The Kuala Lumpur High Court had on February 25 granted leave to Dr. Jeyakumar’s application for a judicial review.

It cost RM70,000 to build the new bridge, which can support 10 people and a fully laden motorcycle at any one time. The funding for the project came from PAS (RM5,000), two Catholic Christian groups (RM10,000), well-wishers (RM20,000) and Dr. Kumar’s MP allowance (RM35,000).

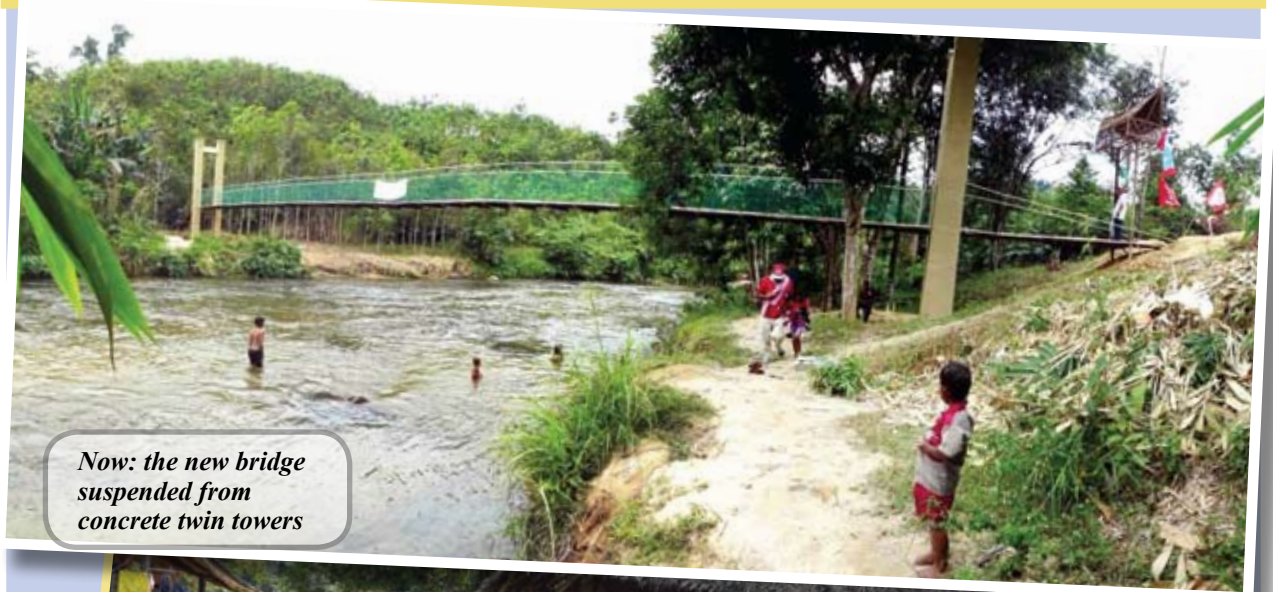
Manual Labour

Dr. Jeyakumar, who describes the Orang Asli as a “very marginalized group that needs a lot of help”, approached a retired army engineer Ahmad Mazlan Othman for assistance. Ahmad, who runs a consulting engineering company in Kuala Lumpur, did a complete study of the site “soil test and all” and identified the location for the bridge. “The design was basic and practical but safe and could be done by a layman. The main cost was for the building material though the cost to transport the material to the site took up a major portion,” added Ahmad.

According to Ahmad work started even before funding was collected. “Except for a cement mixer, all the work was done manually. The Orang Asli built us a bamboo raft to transfer the material across the river. The holes for the foundation for the concrete towers to hold the suspension bridge were dug using spade and *cangkul* (hoe) and pouring the concrete was done in a chain-gang style.



Volunteers form a chain-gang



Now: the new bridge suspended from concrete twin towers



Dr. Jeyakumar (2nd from left) with the villagers



Titi Gantung Solidariti Rakyat Kampung Perjek
Titi Gantung ini merupakan sebuah projek rakyat oleh Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) dibawah naungan Ahli Parlimen Sungai Siput Dr. Jeyakumar, dengan kerjasama Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) dan bersama penduduk Kampung Perjek. Titi Gantung ini disiap bina pada tahun 2011.
Dirasmil pada 20hb February 2011



Orang Asli Network secretary, Tijah (front row 2nd from left)

Working Without Racial Barrier

“We worked on the weekends and supervised the work at every stage. Labour was free and we had Malay, Chinese, Indian and Orang Asli working together. Additionally the villagers were involved throughout and will be able to take care of the basic maintenance in future. It was a wonderful experience and I and the team have come to appreciate each other,” said Ahmad.

Of course, there is nothing extraordinary about building the bridge except that the funding, technical expertise and the labour to construct it was totally

volunteered and most importantly the Temiar villagers themselves were actively involved. Absolutely no government funding was requisitioned.

Anything is Possible

Speaking on behalf of the Temiar community, Saudara Busu, thanked all those involved in the construction of the bridge. He said the villagers could now get across the river to their farms safely.

This success of the Temiar community should be an eye opener to people everywhere that in the spirit of gotong-royong anything is possible.

IPOHecho

From the Editor's Desk



Hamidah releasing Patin into the pond



Sunday..net fishing



Net fishing with results

An Unprotected Nature Park

• by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

Maju Perak has been entrusted with the care of the park but it has neither the means nor the resources to take charge. And since the area comes under the Kampar District Office, the office exercises control over the park.

Dubbed as the largest nature park in the country covering an area of over 900 hectares, the Kinta Nature Park south of Batu Gajah, may go the way of the 'do-do' bird if left to the elements. The park was front cover news in Ipoh Echo Issue 101 (July 16-31, 2010). The reason behind its eminence then was the state government's delay in gazettement it as a nature park. Commercial activities such as sand-mining and fishing threatened wildlife that inhabits the wasteland.

According to the Malaysian Nature Society it has, since the cessation of tin-mining activities in the early 1980s, attracted over 130 species of birds. One of the islands, within the cluster of 14 disused mining ponds, is home to herons and is considered as the largest heronry in the country. Almost 60 per cent of the birds found here are either totally or partially protected under the Protection of Wildlife Act 1972.

And with such a large treasure trove of birds, fish, animals, plants and, perhaps, some other curiosities waiting to be tapped, not for its commercial value but rather its aesthetic and conservation considerations, I find it perplexing that the authorities are dragging their feet.

Granted that this former mining land, after much coaxing, has been gazetted a nature park by the state government last year, the irony is that protection is virtually non-existent. Poachers are free to roam the land. Sand-mining is still rampant, despite claims to the contrary by the Kampar District Office, the authority overseeing the park.

The icing on the cake is illegal fishing. The abundance of freshwater fish in the

numerous ponds dotting the landscape has turned the park into a haven for "inshore fishermen" who come in droves to do justice. It is an open season for fishing, one which, if left unchecked, will have a negative effect on the park, especially Tasek Pucung, the largest of the 14 ponds.

The Kinta Nature Park is Nature's gift to Perakeans. While other natural formations such as limestone outcrops, caves and wetlands may have lost their lustre due to overexposure, this former mining land has still plenty to offer provided, of course, steps are taken to safeguard it from exploitation by opportunists who have little or no love for Nature, let alone their own backyards.

Dato' Hamidah Osman, executive councillor for tourism, was the force behind the drive to get the park gazetted. Maju Perak, a state-link company, has been entrusted with the care of the park but it has neither the means nor the resources to take charge. Since the area comes under the Kampar District Office, the office exercises control over the park but manpower and financial constraints inhibit its capacity to act expeditiously and judiciously on intruders.

In spite of all these negativities, hopes are still alive. During a recent interview with Ipoh Echo, Dato' Hamidah Osman, fresh from her successful forays to Merlimau and Kerdu, revealed that plans are underway to secure the park.

"I'll get some funding for JKK Kampong Pisang to protect the park," she said. Kampong Pisang is the closest settlement to the park and employing the villagers as vigilantes is an appropriate counter-measure considering the many limitations hounding the authorities. "A sum of RM20,000 will be allocated to the village action committee for this programme," said Hamidah, mindful of the damage incurred so far.

My fear is that Hamidah's RM20,000 may not be enough to douse the burning desire of humans, driven by greed, to plunder a defenceless park bequeathed by God to mankind.

Mommy, Where Is Daddy?

• by Peter Lee

With a busy career which requires extensive travelling, Brenda a professional trainer in her early forties decided not to get married but instead become a single mother by adopting Angel when she was 2 months old. Angel is now 4 years old and occasionally asks her mum, "where is daddy?" when she sees her classmates in her nursery being fetched by their fathers. Brenda normally avoids this question. Angel is cared for by Brenda's 60 year old mother. The only other family member is her sister. Knowing that she has a small family unit made her worry about Angel's welfare if she passes away. Therefore, she quickly prepared her own will naming her sister as the sole Executor and her mother the sole Guardian. It was further mentioned that upon her demise, her sister shall finance the living expenses of Angel from the estate until she reaches 21 years old. Not long after that, Brenda met with an accident which left both her legs paralysed. The most important question in her mind now is how is she going to care for Angel financially? Luckily for Brenda, she had purchased an insurance policy of RM1.5 million before this incident. Therefore, she managed to claim for the insurance money. She had another insurance policy of RM500,000 which only covers death. However, with the insurance money received she wanted someone with perpetual existence to hold on to the money and continue funding Angel's monthly living expenses if she passes away, realising that process for her probate to unlock her estate would require some time. The question is how to do it?



In Brenda's case, it is best that she sets up two types of "Trusts". The first one is the "Living Trust" whereby Brenda is the "Settlor" and she appoints a Trustee Company like Rockwills Trustee Bhd. to be the "Trustee". Since Angel is still a minor, Brenda has to name the "Guardian" and Protectors are most likely to be her mother followed by her sister being the substitute. The role of the "Guardian" is to take care of the minor whereas the role of the "Protector" is to act as a watchdog on the "Trustee". After this, Brenda can then name Angel to be the sole beneficiary and specify the condition of distribution for Angel's monthly living, medical and education expenses, the Guardian's allowance and the duration of the Trust. Since Brenda has an insurance policy that only covers death, it is timely for her to execute an absolute assignment for this policy to her "Living Trust". This ensures that this insurance money will be passed to the Trustee for Angel's funding when Brenda dies. The second type of Trust Brenda should set up is a "Declaration of Trust" whereby Brenda is the Settlor and the main Trustee meaning that when Brenda is alive she holds on to her entire estate. But when she dies some of her assets specified in her "Declaration of Trust" such as Fixed Deposits, shares or unit trust shall be passed to the substitute Trustee like Rockwills Trustee Bhd. for distribution to the beneficiary through the Guardian. The condition of the distribution can be similar to the "Living Trust". As for Brenda's will, she must appoint at least two Executors instead of one, just in case her sister also passes away.

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. Website: <http://www.wills-trust.com.my>.

Musical Performance

Registered in mid-2006, the Greentown Indian Culture Society of Ipoh has set its goals high. It plans to introduce Indian cultural performances in Ipoh, from time to time. This is to dispel the notion that Ipoh is "an Indian cultural desert" devoid of any significant links to the community's rich musical heritage. Society founder and patron, G. Sivapragasam, took it upon himself to realise



this by staging a *thavil* (Indian flute) and *nathaswaram* (Indian drum) performance by four maestros from Sri Lanka. The quartet put on a remarkable show in front of a sell-out crowd of Indian fans from the city. The 3-hour show was held at the auditorium of Taman Budaya, Ipoh on Saturday, March 5. The High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Dr. D.D. Ranasinghe and his deputy, Maj-Gen Perera were in attendance along with patrons, G. Sivapragasam and Dato' Dr. M. Majumder. To date the society has staged over 20 such performances involving both local and foreign musicians.

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Maternity Fashion Show:

10.45 a.m. – 1st session

12.00 p.m. – 2nd session

Morning tea, lunch & hi-tea will be provided.

For more details, call: Jeff Lee at 016-5553860

Website: www.justmum.com.my

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AA Ipoh
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Thinking ALLOWED • by Mariam Mokhtar

When Ipohite Puan Safura received an e-mail from her bank one morning, she thought nothing of it. The e-mail requested her to update her details on her bank profile, via the link that was given in that email.

"I thought it was a genuine email. The e-mail address looked similar to the one from my bank. The message stated that I needed to log in immediately to update my contact information for security purposes," said Safura who unsuspectingly clicked on the link provided.

At noon, she received an SMS from her bank informing her that her account had just made a third-party transaction.

She immediately rushed to the nearest branch of her bank and found that her account had been emptied. All RM4,600 had been transferred out of her account. Sadly, she had just been paid that month and apart from her wages, it included what was set aside to take her children on their annual holiday.

Unresponsive Bank

Although she was quick to report the incident, her bank refused to disclose the details of whose account the money had gone to.

She was asked to complete a complaint form and lodge a police report, which she did. She was told that the bank's 'Fraud Management Team' would contact her, but she never heard from



them.

Instead, she received a letter from her bank a week later, to inform her that they could not compensate her for her losses.

Financial Mediation Bureau

She then wrote a letter to the Financial Mediation Bureau (FMB) or *Biro Pengantaraan Kewangan* to lodge a complaint against her bank. She was also told that investigations would take up to six months.

Six weeks later, when she contacted the FMB, they told her that her bank had not responded to their request and that they would wait a couple more weeks, in March 2011 before they would send the bank a reminder.

A dejected Safura told the Ipoh Echo: "I am new to online banking and I was not aware that such scams existed. I quickly contacted the bank so

that they could help in the police investigations, but the bank seemed slow to act. It is likely that the person, who took my money illegally, has closed his account. Both the bank and the Biro do not seem to take my case urgently.

"To many people, RM4,600 may not seem like a huge sum. I am a single mother and the loss of this money means a lot to me."

Beware of Internet Scams

Puan Safura is not alone, for she is one of the huge numbers of Malaysians who fall prey to Internet banking scams.

According to CyberSecurity Malaysia, a total of 1,426 reports were made in 2010, compared to 634 received in 2009.

Cyber criminals are on the prowl looking for account holders gullible enough to reveal the two most vital pieces of

data – their username and password.

They use fake banking websites, known as "phishing" sites, to try and trap the account holders.

Phishing

Phishing is a way of attempting to acquire sensitive information such as usernames, passwords and credit card details by masquerading as a trustworthy entity in an e-mail or instant messaging.

Communications purporting to be from popular social web sites, auction sites, online payment processors or

IT administrators are commonly used to lure the unsuspecting public. The e-mail or SMS often directs users to enter details at a fake website whose look and feel are almost identical to the legitimate one.

If you have an Internet banking account, like many of us do in this modern IT era, take immediate notice. If you fall for the fake e-mail or SMS, your entire account will be wiped out in minutes, depending on the amount of money you have and the transfer limit set by the bank.

Banks will never contact you by e-mail to ask you to enter your password or any other sensitive information by clicking on a link and visiting a web site. The e-mails are sent out completely at random in the hope of reaching a live e-mail address of a customer with an account at the bank being targeted.

If you receive a suspicious e-mail, please inform your bank as directed on their website and forward the e-mail to their 'report a scam e-mail' address.

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Ruba Rubi Ent 154, Jln Sultan Idris Shah. Tel.: 017-5048531

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Chan Sam Lock Photo Studio, 77-81 Jln Sultan Idris Shah.

M & A Securities Sdn Bhd, 52A Jln Sultan Idris Shah.

Pooven Enterprise (opp Super Kinta), 5 Jln Dato Onn Jaafar.

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Desa Corner (opp Open University Malaysia) Jalan Lim Bo Seng, 30300 Ipoh. Tel: Zulhazmi 019-2724552.

Newsvendor (morning), Opposite Simee Market.

Simee:

Perniagaan Sagayah, 22A, Persiaran Bercham Selatan 8, Taman Desa Kencana. Tel: Maniam (014-3035697).

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By See Foon Chan-Koppen

Musings on Food

seefoon@ipohecho.com.my



SeeFoon goes from social networking to shelter from the storm

A bout of excruciating hot weather had me scratching around for air-conditioned places to lunch and friends obliged by recommending two, each one providing a pleasant respite from the hustle and bustle of your usual hot and crowded coffee shops. Plus, the added attraction was the wide choice on the menu both oriental and western.

My Friendster Café

If their names are anything to go by, the two cafes I visited recently certainly live up to their names. **My Friendster Café** has been open for almost two years and as its name which is borrowed from the popular social networking site Friendster, implies, this Cafe is a place to bring your laptop and network using their free WiFi. This is not an internet cafe per se but with its clean modern decor, it is a great place to network and more importantly to snack, drink or have a full meal.

Their menu is certainly diverse and extensive, offering a cornucopia of chicken and lamb chops done a myriad ways as well as steaks, fish, pasta, fried noodles and rice, soups and innumerable snacks ranging from sausages, chicken wings, french fries, cole slaw, spring roll to onion rings and samosas.

Perfect for Families

This cafe is the perfect family gathering place with something on the menu for everyone from the kiddies to the teens, to the grandma and grandpa and of course for Mum and Dad who may wish to treat themselves to a rib-eye or sirloin steak. Started by two enterprising Ipoh 'boys' Lam Keng Tim being merely 20 years old and his chef/partner Alann Choong who trained in Kuala Lumpur, not much older, they are doing a brisk business acquiring fans from the very young to the relatively senior.

On the day we went, we were a group of 5 and could therefore order a sampling of the various dishes from oriental to western. First to arrive was the **Black Pepper Lamb Chop**, a succulent shoulder chop served with a black pepper sauce. I asked for mint sauce and was promptly given some. Tasty and quite tender – RM14.90.

Chicken Galore

This was followed by the **Cazana Chicken Chop**, a thick slice of chicken rolled around a sausage, sliced turkey ham and cheese – RM19.90. Then we had the **Mongolian Fried Drumstick** (two whole drumsticks) which I found



My Friendster Café (Pork Free)
11 Jalan Tokong.
Tel: 05-243 9657 or 016-5269657
Open: 11.00 a.m. - 10.00 p.m.

Cafe De Ark

Behind the Syuen Hotel, a peculiar triangular-shaped building nestled near a small park with tall trees and walking paths, is **Cafe De Ark** operated by Carol Cheng. As its name suggests, (Noah's Ark where the animals were sheltered and protected from the big storm) Cafe De Ark funds street ministries and children's homes from its profits. As it is a short hop from the Ipoh Echo office and considering that I can eat and be helping some good causes. I will certainly be spending more lunch hours here.

There are about 60 local and western items of food and drink on the menu, from noodles, soups, side dishes, sandwiches, etc. and other house specialties not on the menu. Some of the specialties that we tried were: a generous serving of **Assam Laksa** with ice-cream thrown in for dessert – flavourful and not too spicy – RM8.99; **Fish Head Curry** – cooked nyonya style, a bit on the mild side – from RM15 onwards; **Fried Popiah** with homemade



skin, and yam bean, chicken and egg filling – RM7.99; **Shepherd's Pie** – a choice of lamb, beef or chicken, accompanied with aubergine fritters and fruit salad. Carol also recommends the Tom-yam Fried Noodles.

The Cafe can also cater to private functions, in-house or outside, for 20 to 80 people, at a minimum RM20 pax.

Cafe De Ark (Pork Free)
43 Jalan Dato Seri Ahmad Said, Greentown, Ipoh.
Carol Cheng – 019-5733181
Open: 11.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. except Mondays.

HAWKER FOOD

Curry Puff



From fancy tea parties to fun fairs to potlucks, one can't go wrong with curry puffs. It's one of those one-is-not-enough foods. A spicy savoury potato curry filling is encased in crispy pastry dough. The pastry can be shortcrust or puff. Prices depend on what is in the filling or if there is any meat in the filling. Most 'street' curry puffs are meatless and best eaten hot. Here are a few that you can buy 'on the run'.

Restaurant Sri Ananda Bahwan
(7.00 a.m. - 11.00 p.m.)
7 & 11, Persiaran Bijih Timah, Ipoh (Little India).
Tel.: 05-2539798.

The filling has curry leaves, is flavourful and the pastry is flaky and crisp – RM0.80.

Veranda beside Restoran Hong Kong
(from 12.30 p.m.)
60 Jln Lee Kwee Foh, Canning Garden.
Popular for da pao (pickups); some days the filling is spicier – RM0.50

M.A. Catering & Goreng Pisang Stall (3.30-7.30 p.m.)
25 Lalan Buntong Jaya 8, RPT Buntong 3 Tambahan, Buntong. Tel.: 016-5483622/016-5906597/014-6024283.
At 40 sen the curry puffs are tasty and a good size.

Simee Market – outside the first sundry stall next to the food stalls
The puffs are a good size, filling has meat (non-halal), is tasty and not too spicy. Pastry is crispy – RM1.20.

RECIPE By Margarita Lee

Lemon Chicken Wings

Ingredients:
12 chicken wings
2 tbsp light Soya sauce
1 tbsp dark Soya sauce
1 tbsp oyster sauce
¼ cup water
3 inches piece brown cane sugar
1 lemon (cut into thin slices)
2 cloves garlic (crushed)

Marinade:
1 tbsp light Soya sauce
2 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp oyster sauce

Method:

- Clean chicken wings. Pat dry with kitchen towel.
- Marinate chicken wings with light soya sauce and oyster sauce.
- Leave for 1 hour.
- Sauté garlic with oil, put in chicken wings.
- Add in lemon slices, light & dark soya sauce and oyster sauce, stir fry for 5 minutes.
- Add water and cane sugar; simmer for 10 minutes with low heat.
- Cook another 3-4 minutes with high heat until the sauce thickens.



particularly yummy with a battered crisp outer skin and delicately juicy inside – RM18.90.

Still to come was the **Roasted Chicken with Parmesan Sauce** which tasted just like a Bolognese sauce served with pasta that was quite 'al dente' – RM 18.90.

To round out the meal, we had the grilled **Rib Eye Steak** which was a generous portion and quite tender – RM18.90. All their beef is apparently from either Australia or New Zealand and all their main courses are served with French fries and coleslaw which I found to be very fresh and flavourful.

We then had to taste their **Kampung Fried Rice** which came with a generous serving of prawns and given the added piquancy of curry leaves. The rice was grainy, flavourful and not overly oily – RM5.50.

By this time we were groaning from excess but we still had time to put away a portion of **Ice Kacang** – RM4.00, and **Lengkok Ice** – RM3.90. The milk shakes are worth mentioning too with the **Honeydew Milkshake** being the top of my list RM4.90. A good place to be spoilt for choice and a treat for the family without breaking the bank.

Eco-Tourism

Quest for Rafflesia

Perak, the land of grace, is truly blessed with mesmerizing nature trails. Anyone can be spoilt for choice when it comes to the splendour of nature. Certain towns like Simpang Pulai, which lies 10 km away from Ipoh, has its own laid back charms too. Famed for crystal clear streams and hot springs flowing along the periphery of this rustic town, Simpang Pulai is also the gateway to Cameron Highlands and Lojing Highlands.

Lojing Highlands, Kelantan, is situated just across the border of Perak. Tucked away in the evergreen hills, Lojing Highlands is a paradise to nature lovers. The *Rafflesia kerrii*, which is the second largest flower after *Rafflesia arnoldii* can be found thriving here.

A 'parasitic affair' with the 'Queen of the Forest', as *Rafflesia* is known, was organised by David Foon and his wife, Janice. Such a great opportunity is hard to come by and I, being a fanatic for *Rafflesia*, was the first to sign in. Armed with enthusiasm, 10 of us headed for Simpang Pulai on a lovely Sunday morning. The journey to Lojing Highlands took 1½ hours and it was simply delightful. The road we took winds through evergreen forested hills coupled with breathtaking views.

On reaching Lojing Highlands, two Orang Asli guides from the Temiar tribe were waiting for us. We were taken up a logging trail and into the fringes of the enchanting rainforest.

Away from the concrete jungle, life was at its own pace. The air was fresh and invigorating. Mist was still shrouding part of the forest and dew drops were glistening like diamonds in the early morning sun. Colourful fungus, wild orchids and ferns were abundant. The droning of insects provided the perfect backdrop to birds giving voice to song, wild and free. Medicinal plants like *Jarum Emas*, *Kacip Fatimah* and the famous aphrodisiac, the *Tongkat Ali* were seen. The forest was certainly alive!

The terrain of the forest was undulating. We had to cross bamboo bridges and clamber over logs which were colourfully decorated with fungus. In spite of trekking deep into the



40cm bud

virgin forest, our spirits were never down as this 'Garden of Eden' was rich with flora and fauna. Soon we arrived at an area which was forested by bamboos. Edible bamboo worms were shown to us by our guides but none of us had the courage to gobble them down. We were told that they are juicy and tasted like peanuts. Bamboo rats, which are supposed to taste better than chicken, are known to forage this place when dusk envelopes the forest. Thankfully they are nocturnal creatures; otherwise they will be caught for the cooking pot!

With the cool mountain wind gently blowing, the susurrant of bamboo leaves and wild flowers, we felt transported into the Mesozoic era. If only Kitaro was playing his music, it would have synchronized beautifully with the bamboo forest.

Braving dense foliage, we soldiered on in the hope of catching a glimpse of the world's biggest flower. Soon, the gushing sound of water was heard. There were streams and waterfalls nearby. The spray of water from the falls burst into a rainbow spectrum, creating a celestial ambiance which was simply magical. Where was the leprechaun with his hidden pot of gold?

Once again, we followed upstream and into the primary forest. This time we were told to look out for *Tetrastigma* vines. These vines are woody forest liana and they support the growth of the parasitic *Rafflesia*. Combing the forest floor with utmost care, we soon came across a few small balls resembling little brown cabbages protruding from the forest liana. They were *Rafflesia* buds! Ah! There 'she' was, the beautiful lady in red! The Queen of the Forest...the ravishing *Rafflesia kerrii*, all 40 inches of it in full bloom was just ahead of us.

We found our pot of gold! It was like Mother Nature's resurrection and this reddish-orange flower with warty patches on its perigone was a rare beauty to behold. Looks like our little party in the stunning wilderness of Malaysian rainforest paid off, for one has to be there, amidst the great beauty of the *Rafflesia* to truly appreciate nature's gift to mankind.

Yoon Lai Wan



Rafflesia kerrii - 41 in in diameter

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements must be sent by fax: **05-2552181**; or email: announcements@ipohecho.com.my, by the 9th or 23rd 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.

- **2nd Perak Education Expo 2011** – Talks & Lucky Draw Session, March 19 & 20 (Saturday & Sunday), Stadium Indera Mulia, Ipoh. Free Admission.
- **Kiwanis Down Syndrome Foundation Ipoh Centre Open Day**, on March 19 (Saturday) from 10.00 a.m. till 1.00 p.m., at 2, Persiaran Bercham Selatan 27, Taman Sri Kurau, 31400 Ipoh. Everyone is welcome to find out about what they do, check-out the facilities or even volunteer their services. Location map can be found on our facebook page: www.facebook.com/downsyndrome.ipoh. Web: www.kdsf.org.my or call: **05-5468386**.
- **Soroptimist Ipoh Oscar Night – Charity Dinner & Broadway Entertainment** on March 19 (Saturday), 7.15 p.m. at Crystal Ballroom, Impiana Hotel. For enquiries or reservation, contact: Witzi – **012-5088818** or PSPA – **05-5487814**.

Email: pspa2011fest@gmail.com.

- **'Cultural Landscapes – Tangible & Intangible Heritage'** presentation by Emeritus Professor Ken Taylor, March 24, 11.00 a.m. at Ungku Omar Polytechnic, Jalan Raja Musa Mahadi, Ipoh. Free Entry.
- **Exploring Shakespeare** on March 25 (Friday), 8.00 p.m. at ACS Auditorium, Ipoh. For enquiries or reservation, contact: Witzi – **012-5088818** or PSPA – **05-5487814**. Email: pspa2011fest@gmail.com.
- **Ipoh Parade Digital IT Show 2011 co-sponsored by MBI and Five Star Event**, March 31 (Thursday) till April 3 (Sunday) at Concourse Ipoh Parade from 10.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. daily. Launching by Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim on March 31 (Thursday) at 3.50 p.m. Open to all.



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Wellness

Be Smart about Scoliosis

In my own experience as a Specialist Physiotherapy & Rehabilitation professional I come across scoliosis and related back pain issues on a regular basis.

What is Scoliosis?

Scoliosis is a disorder in which the spine curves away from the middle (C-shaped) or sideways (S-shaped). Whenever there is a deviation with this curve right or left, it is called a scoliosis. An indication of scoliosis is if one shoulder of a person appears to be higher than the other or their pelvis appears to be tilted.

Causes for Scoliosis

- Congenital (present at birth) scoliosis is due to a problem with the formation of the spine bones (vertebrae) or fused ribs during development in the womb or early in life.
- Neuromuscular scoliosis is caused by problems such as poor muscle control or muscle weakness, or paralysis due to diseases such as cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida and polio.
- Idiopathic scoliosis is scoliosis of unknown cause.

Signs & Symptoms

Though hard to detect visually, one may notice both shoulders or hips not being at the same level. A person with scoliosis is likely to experience backache or low-back pain. After a long period of sitting or stand-

ing, they are also likely to feel fatigue in the spine. Severe scoliosis, where the curve in the spine is greater than 100 degrees, can cause breathing problems. Back pain can also manifest in the young, during growth spurts, especially if there is congenital scoliosis present. This pain can be anywhere from mild pain to heavier more debilitating pain and is often felt in the musculature directly surrounding the spine instead of in the spine itself. Due to this muscular compensation stiffness of the back and neck can also occur, especially if the curve in the spine is located higher up in the back.

Scoliosis Treatment

Treatment depends on the cause of the scoliosis, the size and location of the curve and how much more growing the patient is expected to do. The rehabilitation specialist does Spinal manipulation, prescribes therapeutic exercises which help slow the progression of the spinal curve.

Spine Rehabilitation

Physical therapy rehab encompasses manual therapy or manipulation to target issues arising from the joints and nerves, prescribe exercises to improve movements, stretching out tight muscles, as well as strengthen weak muscles. Last but not least correcting posture is also very important. Advanced treatment techniques include



Dr. Manuel K. Punnia Raj,
Consultant Physio &
Rehabilitation

myofascial treatments, deep tissue tappointment, neuromuscular trigger point release and muscle energy technique which help to release tight muscles arising from reduced spinal mobility. Specific sets of corrective therapeutic exercises are prescribed for different types of scoliosis curve. This will improve the muscle function which contributes to achieve the correct posture.

In patients where the curve of the spine is 40 degrees or greater, surgery is required. This is to avoid worsening of the condition, which is likely to take place even if bone growth has stopped. Post operative rehabilitation care is mandatory to restore the corrected spine. Adolescents who develop this condition struggle with issues of self confidence and self image which emanate from having to wear a brace and receive treatment. It is important to give emotional support and understanding, as teenagers need this especially during this time.

Light Up Your Eyes

In our continuing series on Eye Health, Consultant Ophthalmologist Dr. S. S. Gill talks to us about how lighting may affect the health of our eyes.



Dr. S.S. Gill
Resident Consultant
Ophthalmologist,
Hospital Fatimah

Does reading in dim light do any harm to our eyes?

Reading in **dim light** does not change the function of our eyes in any permanent way but it does stress the eyes out! The best lighting conditions for reading are **ambient**, rather than direct, and there should be **no glare** in a reading area.

Reading in dim light can cause **eye strain** which could make the reader uncomfortable, and therefore it is a good idea to set up a **well lit reading space** to make reading more enjoyable. The eye often finds it hard to focus in dimly lit conditions, which can be a cause of eye strain. People also tend to **blink less** while reading in dim light because they need to pay more attention to discern the details on the page, which can result in a dryness of the eye which feels unpleasant.

How do you feel after working in your office all day? Are you fatigued or tense? Are your eyes tired? Or do you feel relaxed and peaceful? Your physical comfort has a lot to do with the **lighting** in your office and your work station. Getting proper advice and understanding the **principles of proper home and office lighting** has an impact on the way people work in it. "Simply said, if you don't feel good in a space because of its lighting, you won't work as productively."

Does the kind of lighting make a difference?

Warm white light gives off yellowish light that helps enrich the warm colours around us. They have a calming effect and help to relax an individual. You will find areas like bedrooms, lounges and hallways are better off with warm white light.

The **cooler white light** on the other hand is crisper under higher colour temperatures and appears more 'normal' in high lighting level situations. As a matter of fact, 'cool white' light gives off a bluer light that improves our ability to see contrasts making it good for work areas such as kitchens, laundries, workshops and offices.

However, although cool white light enables better contrast in vision, the output in the predominantly blue portion of the light spectrum does exacerbate glare. This is because light in the **blue part of the spectrum** and **UV light** have peaks which are very close together (approx 3500K), and this **works the eye (photoreceptors) at a much higher rate** than that of the warm white (2700K) light. This means that your eyes may not be as relaxed in this environment if you are working long hours under this lighting.

In a natural sense, most people do tend to prefer 'warm white' light. In fact, we have been **conditioned** to find warm appearing lamps 'normal' at low lighting levels, since it mimics the colour of fire which we have used as a light source for thousands of years.

So, if you find that you are always having **tired eyes**, you may want to try changing your room or work space lighting to warm white and it should help make it less stressful for the eyes.

Based on scientific research, it is now known that **excessive blue light damages the retina** (back of the eye) contributing to diseases like age related macular degeneration. Yes, our eyes need light to work, but too much of the wrong kind of light and UV, and too little light can damage the eyes.

For more information on Eye Health, contact Gill Eye Specialist Centre at **05-5455582**, email: gilleycentre@dr.com or visit www.fatimah.com.my.

For more information on physical health contact your right health partner:
PHYSIO BEYOND – The Physical Rehabilitation Specialist @ **05-5478786**

World Down Syndrome Day On March 21

Every year on March organisations around the world celebrate World Down Syndrome Day. The date was chosen to signify the uniqueness of Down Syndrome in the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome and is used synonymously with Down Syndrome. Since the inaugural launch of WSD on March 21, 2006 in Singapore, it has grown into a truly world-wide celebration.

The objective of WSD is to promote awareness and understanding of Down Syndrome and related issues and to mobilize support and recognition of the dignity, rights and well being of persons with Down Syndrome. The desired outcome of WSD is to highlight the potentials and abilities of people with Down Syndrome to be an integral part of an inclusive community. There are many ways organizations around the world celebrate this day, some of which include raising funds and advocating for those with Down Syndrome, charity run/walk, pot luck with games and activities, press conference highlighting the condition, just to name a few.

To mark WSD, the Kiwanis Down Syndrome Foundation (KDSF) Ipoh Centre is holding an open day on March 19. KDSF Ipoh Centre is a non-profit organization with tax-exempt status. It was set up in 2006 to cater to the needs of children below 7 years old. Initiated by the Kiwanis Club of Bandaraya Ipoh, it implements the Early Intervention Programme (EIP), a special needs programme run in a kindergarten-like environment. The programme emphasizes the following areas: self-help skills, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, speech and language development, social development, perceptual-cognitive skills and pre-academic skills. The KDSF Ipoh Centre is one of 7 centres around the country.

During the open day, we hope to create greater awareness in first-time parents and members of the public that children with Down Syndrome are educable from as early as 2 months old. We would like to give everyone the opportunity to understand and familiarize themselves with the services and facilities that we offer. The programmes in use at the centre are adapted from the curriculum devised by Robert Deller, a noted clinical psychologist.

Contact details: Kiwanis Down Syndrome Foundation Ipoh Centre
2, Persiaran Bercham Selatan 27, Taman Sri Kurau, 31400 Ipoh, Perak
Tel: **05-5468386** Email: ipcentre@kdsf.org.my Web: www.kdsf.org.my
www.facebook.com/downsyndrome.ipoh



Shockwave Therapy Brings Relief to Ipohites

By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

Therapy that aims to heal injured body tissue with targeted sound waves may bring pain relief to people with orthopaedic and sports-related injuries, a study of professional athletes suggests.



Dr. Leigh
Murrant

The treatment, known as shockwave therapy, delivers pulses of sound waves to areas of injured body tissue, via a hand-held probe placed on the skin.

Shockwaves have also been studied, as an alternative treatment when more conservative therapies fail. These include heel pain caused by a condition called plantar fasciitis, as well as tennis elbow, Achilles tendon injuries, stress fractures and "frozen" shoulder.

In the U.S., shockwave devices are approved for treating plantar fasciitis and tennis elbow. The therapy is more widely used in Europe, where it was developed.

Now available in Ipoh for the first time, the newly opened "The Spine and

Joint Specialists" Centre is offering Shockwave Therapy where conventional physiotherapy treatments have failed to bring relief.

Australian trained Consultant Chiropractor Leigh Murrant, says, "A shockwave is a purely mechanical wave, not an electric one. The treatment initiates an inflammation-like condition in the tissue that is being treated. The body responds by increasing the blood circulation and metabolism in the impact area which in turn accelerates the body's own healing processes. The shockwaves break down injured tissue and calcifications. Documented international results show an overall result rate of 77% of chronic conditions that have not been cured with other kinds of treatment."

Shockwave Therapy is applied without medication, for example Cortisone injections. The treatment stimulates and effectively supports the body's self-healing mechanisms. It is usual to experience immediate pain relief following



Treatment on knee

the treatment and hence improved movement. Reported side effects are minimal. It takes 5-10 minutes to administer 2-3,000 shockwaves per treatment.

Sometimes the treatment is a bit painful, but most people can stand these few intense minutes without medication.

Even though the response to shockwave treatment normally is exceptionally good within a few weeks it may take several months before maximum effect is achieved.

I can certainly vouch for its efficacy having had a series of treatments to both knees and my shoulder. The pain in these areas had been plaguing me for some months and although the first session left me with residual pain, the second and third sessions appear to have taken care of the problem.

The Spine and Joint Specialists – Ipoh
71 Medan Ipoh 1A, Medan Ipoh Bistari, Ipoh.
Tel: **05-5467670** Email: drleigh@tonikasia.com
Web: www.spineandjoint.com.my
Mention Ipoh Echo for "10% Off on Shockwave Therapy Package"

news roundup

DEMOCRACY AND THE CONSTITUTION

During the recent dinner talk organised by Perak Academy at Syuen Hotel, a notable figure from the legal fraternity, Dato' Dominic Joseph Puthuchery, gave a talk entitled "Democracy and the Constitution".

A former Member of Parliament, Dominic has written a research paper on Constitution and Democracy in Malaysia.

During the talk he gave an insight into the origin of democracy in Malaysia, insisting that "democracy is Malaysia" and it is the "first political culture of our nation". He highlighted the dangers facing it such as the threat to the freedom of speech and expression due to legitimacy given to the Printing and Publications Act 1984 and its amendment in 1987. He also spoke on the constitutional history in the political context of pre-Independence and the Constitution as it is framed today.

Dominic alluded to the proposed People's Constitution drafted by three intellectuals – William Kuok, Samad Ismail and John Eber – which was rejected by the British and subsequently became a forgotten piece of Malaya's history.

Dato' Dominic is currently writing his book "Waiting for Democracy".

LYW



Greening Ipoh



Plans are afoot to beautify the city's 14 roundabouts to a tune of RM600,000 as part of the council's greening programme. Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim said this to reporters at the launching of the tree-planting campaign at Taman Rekreasi Sultan Abdul Aziz (Polo Ground) recently. The campaign was sponsored by Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank Corporation (HSBC). Some 20 heavy-foliaged trees were planted along the jogging cum walking track in the city's premier park. The trees symbolised the number of contributions by HSBC in the development of Ipoh city.

The greening effort is synonymous with the national-level campaign, launched last year, to plant one million trees nation-wide. The council has so far planted 903 trees while private developers and government agencies accounted for 2,407 trees.

A sum of RM2 million has been set aside for building new and restoring old playgrounds in Ipoh. This is part and parcel of the council's plan to improve the landscape of the city. Roshidi has added greening as part of his quest for administrative excellence.

Ed

New Chairman for Ipoh City Watch



Robert Ee Hock Lye (pic, 2nd from left) has been elected chairman for Ipoh City Watch during the annual general meeting held in Old Andersonians' Clubhouse. K. Ramesh as the secretary and A. Jeyaraj remains as the Vice Chairman.

Outgoing Chairman, Augustine Anthony in his address stressed that ICW needs a strong committee of willing members who must have specific expertise in a given field. The committee must be transparent and be mindful that members are entitled to ask all questions affecting the society.

AJ

New Tourism Icon For Ipoh



A statue of Siva, the Supreme Hindu God, sitting on a boulder on the slope of a limestone hill about 100m above the ground in Gunung Cheroh at the end of Jalan Lang in Padang Tembak is the latest tourist attraction in the city. The more than six metres high Siva with trident in right hand and a torch in the left is part of the Shri Raja Muneeswaran Temple complex. On either side of Siva, portrayed as a yogi are smaller statues of 18 *siddhas* or those who have attained enlightenment.

Dato' Muthaiyah s/o Chelliah, a contractor, said it cost more than RM100,000 to build the statue at the temple, which is owned by the Chelliah family. It was built at a height as a gesture to bless the temple and devotees. The temple itself has many beautiful sculptures.

K. Venkatasalam, the priest of the temple added that about 50 tour operators bring more than 700 tourists per month from all over the country to see the statue.

The kudamulluku or consecration of the temple will be held in July after which the temple would be officially opened to the public. Dato' Muthaiyah hopes Tourism Perak could include the statue in their tour guide to attract more tourists to Ipoh.

AJ

A Fun-Filled Trip to Taiping

Nineteen children from orphanage Joyful Home in First Garden, Ipoh, were taken on an enjoyable day-trip to Taiping recently. It was organised by Ipoh Riverview Club, a branch club of Lions Club of Sunway. Club president C.A. Lau said that the children were first taken to the zoo, which waived the entrance fees and provided two rangers to explain to the children about the animals and their habitats.

After lunch, the children went to the playground of the Lake Garden, followed by a visit to the newly renovated Taiping Museum. The children were awed by the artefacts on display and asked plenty of questions.

After a long day in Taiping, the group returned home where delicious food awaited the children. It was a fun-filled day for the children but beyond this day, what will their future hold? It dawned upon the members of Ipoh Riverview Club that besides the fun and delicious food, love and affection were equally needed. Can more of us share and give?



Lord Krishna Temple's Anniversary



Lord Krishna Temple in Lahat Lane, which was built by the north Indian Hindu community, will celebrate its 91st Anniversary on March 26.

The community had pooled their resources to buy a wooden house in 1920. When it was destroyed by fire, a new building was built. The present building, which was constructed in 1998 at the cost of RM500,000, is the largest North Indian Temple in the northern region serving the North Indian community all over the country. Aside from religious ceremonies, the temple also fulfils their social and cultural needs.

An elaborate programme has been drawn to celebrate this historic occasion. In the morning there will be a Havan, Flag raising ceremony, balloon releasing, prayers and speeches followed by lunch.

Dato' S. Veerasingam has consented to grace the occasion. In the evening, a grand dinner will be held at the Red Crescent Hall. About 500 guests and well-wishers are expected to attend the function. Besides speeches and entertainment there will be a cake cutting ceremony and lucky draws. The objective of this grand dinner is to bring together the community.

Tellk Raj Sharma

More Rubbish Collection Woes

Residents, Teoh Seng Kok and Ng Kum Seong of Taman Arena Kepayang, whose complaints about garbage collection had not been responded to by the city council for almost a year, had to approach Dato' Lee Kon Yin of BN's Public Complaints Bureau for help.

They said the garbage contractor had been piling collected wastes from the roads and placing it at a collection point next to their front gate adjoining their neighbours.

Ng had complained to MBI twice in the last two months saying some mornings the rubbish pile blocked him from reversing his car and that he had to hose down the area later due to the smell leaked onto the road.



He also suggested that the contractor place the collection point at the end of the block next to an open

space. However their requests were ignored.

Dato' Lee who alerted the media about the visit suggested that the residents contact their zone councillor of their problems. However the residents did not know who their councillor was or his contact number.

Lee would now contact the respective council's department in charge regarding the complaint. Lee also suggested that city council erect a notice board at a strategic location indicating the name and contact number of the councillor complete with a photo for residents to contact whenever they had any community issues.

Ng also requested Lee to help get city council to clear a 800-metre jogging path along the Kinta River which is over grown with undergrowth for years. "When the jogging path was tarred 12 years ago the residents used it every evening but gradually stopped thereafter when no maintenance was forthcoming."

JAG

personalities

New GM for Impiana Hotel Ipoh

● By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

He is fun, he is affable and Carl Isaac is all set to once and for all get Ipohites to recognise the Impiana name. "People I meet in Ipoh still ask me where the Impiana Hotel is! Then when I explain, they'll burst out with 'Oh you mean the Casuarina?'"

Since the hotel was acquired slightly more than a year ago by the Impiana Group which has hotels in Malaysia (KL, Ipoh and Cherating) and in Thailand (Phuket and Koh Samui), it has been a daunting task for the management to educate the Ipoh public on the name change.

When a name has been so embedded into the collective Ipoh psyche, it looks like a Herculean task ahead for Carl but this does not faze this seasoned hotelier who has had other equally challenging tasks in his previous assignments which has taken him to many S.E. Asian countries.

Carl holds a Bachelor of Business from Curtin University in Western Australia and it was during his university years that his interest in the hospitality industry developed. Working his way through, first as bartender and subsequently in restaurant management, he worked for the Sofitel group after graduation, first in Australia, followed by Vietnam and Thailand.

A hankering to return to his home and family in Malaysia saw him arrive during a downturn in the economy and he found himself 'playing mah-jong for 3 months' with no prospect of a job. Through sheer persistence and constant hounding of the HR manager, he landed the job of Wedding Co-ordinator at the then newly-opened Palace of Golden Horses in Sungai Besi. He was responsible for setting up the Wedding Co-ordination department while learning the ropes which soon saw him land himself the position of Sales Manager at Cyberview Lodge. He

has since moved up the corporate ladder and became General Manager seven years ago, the first time at the Sedona Menado in Indonesia.

Carl has not looked back since. A stint in the Sedona Mandalay saw him finally succumb to the charms of the then Director of Sales and marriage and children have finally brought Carl home to roost.

"It feels good to be back in Malaysia and work here. It's a great opportunity to be able to work, live and enjoy the community and the quality of life that Ipoh offers. Now, my aim is to maintain Impiana Hotel Ipoh's pride as the most efficient, effective and favourable for our clients. I will also uphold and upgrade our service commitments to provide the best possible customer support service in Ipoh," says Carl when asked about his vision and



goal for Impiana Hotel Ipoh.

And he hasn't been cooling his heels either. Already in the three months since his arrival, he has renovated 97 rooms and turned 66 rooms into Club rooms on two designated floors. He has the distinction of being the first GM to open a Club Lounge both for the Impiana Group as well as for Ipoh. The Royal Suite has been upgraded as has the Kinta function room. A small fitness room has been put in, and all in all the Impiana is moving towards becoming a 5-Star hotel charging 4-Star rates to cater to the rate conscious market that exists in Ipoh.

Welcome to Ipoh Carl!



property

Dream Homes in a Green Lung



Nestled among lush flora and fauna, the houses in the Bandar Seri Botani Township, located at the southern part of the city, are the perfect places to call home. The township is developed within the Eco Park concept which emphasises living among and within nature's bountiful gifts of nature and fresh greenery.

With a wide range of bungalows, semi-detached houses, townhouses and link houses to choose from, buyers can select from various designs to accommodate their personal tastes, requirements and of course, budget considerations.

Taiko promises home buyers excellent quality in their houses which, while being aesthetically pleasing and attractive with modern facades and designs, are functional and practical as well.

Understanding the homeowner's requirements, the developer strives to meet as many of them as possible and the homes are also equipped with extra electrical points.

These, together with spacious driveways, landscaping and good finishing, concealed cables and wiring, are all aimed at enabling a hassle free moving in.

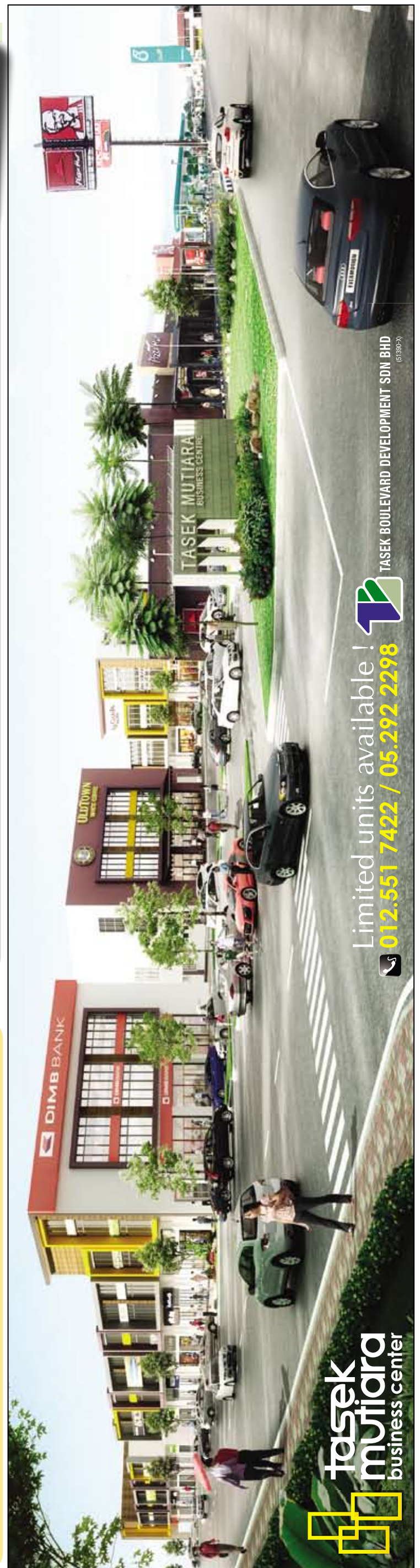
Among its wide range of facilities which have been incorporated into the area are numerous shop/offices as well as a school. The entire project sitting on 1,200 acres, will see the development of more than 6,000 residential & commercial properties within a fully integrated township.

The company's latest launch is its Phase 1.7B comprising 122 units of double storey link houses with a lot size of 20' x 70', built-up 1,760sq.ft and priced from RM233,800.

Another phase of double storey link houses which is open as well is Phase 1.6A, 154 units of 18' x 60' houses, built-up 1,330sq.ft, priced from RM170,000. This is the last phase of 18' x 60' link houses in Bandar Seri Botani.

All these houses come with features such as plaster ceiling, security metal grilles and adequate power points. Meanwhile, the company is offering free legal fees on S&P Agreement and Transfer for the above-mentioned phases. House buyers are also able to enjoy lower interest rates and loan margins up to 95% with selected banks.

For details, contact: 05-3236622 or visit: www.bandarseribotani.com.



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LETTERS

We reprint some of our reader's comments from our online paper. Go to <http://www.ipohecho.com.my/> to read more. The views expressed in these letters are not necessarily shared by the Editorial Board. We reserve the right to refuse or modify the letters we publish.

Old Railway Stations: Going, Going, Gone!

We, the Perak Heritage Society are very concerned about the eventual total loss of the evidence of our railway history, a heritage that belongs to all Malaysians. It appears that in the upgrading of the railway infrastructure, none of the first stations and bridges will be retained.

As the double-tracking and electric rail project of the northern line from Ipoh to Padang Besar progresses towards completion, we lament that no stations, not even those over a hundred years old will be safe from demolition, despite promises that selected stations will stay. Stations over one hundred years old are antiquities; they are supposed to be protected by law.

Railway stations are critical components of our industrial heritage. It is a fact that the first railway was built in 1885 to transport tin to Port Weld (now Kuala Sepetang) for smelting in Penang and then to England for industrial applications, especially in the canning of food. Soon, as the country grew and prospered, more lines to the ports were built, and then towns were linked for the transportation of goods and people. Why can't these historical buildings be incorporated by design into the new station as a museum piece? They have been strategic landmarks in their town for over a hundred years.

We understand that the royal town of Kuala Kangsar wants a new, modern station. Despite good intentions of saving the 1899 station for posterity, problems with acquiring adjacent land for a new station became reasons for its removal. As saving grace, the new station should prominently display well-researched and designed panels with stories and photographs of the old station.

As for the Chemor station, it is incomprehensible that while the Ipoh Local Draft

Plan 2020 earmarks it for preservation, KTM has decided to go ahead with demolishing it. Are the authorities working in tandem or are they engaged in a power game?

The PHS suggests that these charming old stations be retained, including those in Batu Gajah and Tanjung Malim on the southern Ipoh-Kuala Lumpur stretch. They can be commercially viable, creatively adapted into local history gallery, reading room, eatery, visitors' centre, or some other happening place for community-linked activities, to help promote the culture of sustainable living. In the case of Chemor, the railway quarters there can become 'homestays'.

For all the effort that KTM has put into saving the paraphernalia of railway, it has sorely missed out on the most important and obvious of its services: the original, charming, well-constructed historic railway stations of the FMS (Federated Malay States Railway), the precursor to KTM (Keretapi Tanah Melayu).

It is our fervent hope that decision makers at KTM and the powers that be rethink the demolition of their historic buildings in Perak. Let us not deprive the future generations of this heritage in the name of "upgrading" and development.

Let us, instead, inculcate in the young the love for our shared heritage by preserving what ought to be preserved and not destroying them in exchange for all things new and gleaming. As long as our no-maintenance culture continues unabated, the new will soon tarnish while our love for heritage and history takes another beating.

The understanding and reconsideration of KTM in the matter is of utmost urgency for this is the last chance to save the last of the stations. What is gone is gone forever.

The PHS is prepared to work with KTM in finding ways to involve local businesses and community groups in bringing about the suggested re-uses and adaptations.

Mohd Taib Mohamed
President of Perak Heritage Society

young perak

Main Convent Sports Day

SMK Convent held its 64th Annual Sports Day recently at Stadium Perak. The event was officiated by Dato' Ir. Dr. Safry Kamal, Chairman of Parent-Teacher Association. The event began with a march-pass of the participating contingents. Their ability to march in sync with the music impressed the crowd of on-lookers and supporters in the stadium stands.

The highlight was definitely the inter-school 4x100m race between the host, SMK Methodist (P), SMJK Ave Maria Convent, SMJK Perempuan Cina Perak and SMK Jalan Pasir Puteh. SMK Convent and SMJK Perempuan Cina Perak clinched the Under-15 and Under-18 titles, respectively.

Unique to the event was the cheerleading competition which drew much attention from the crowd. In line with the school's vision to become one of the top 200 schools in Malaysia by 2012, the principal, Mdm. Lim Swee Kew, said that achievements in sports and academics were key criteria in achieving the position.

The march-pass competition was won by the Kadet Remaja Sekolah while Red House was the adjudged the overall champion. Ong Zong Lin and Cheng Zen Li were crowned Main Convent's Sportswomen of the Year.

LYW





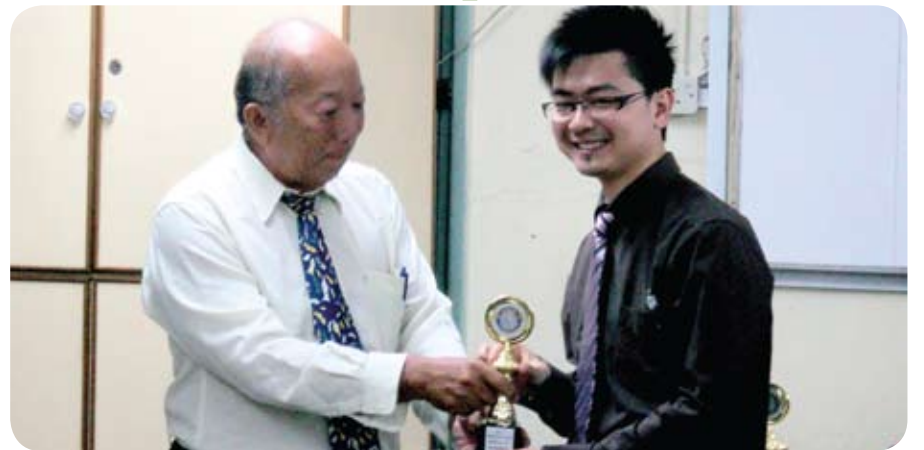
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Toastmasters' Speech Contest



An opportunity for Toastmasters to learn by observing more proficient speakers who have benefitted from their training, came in the form of the International Speech and Table Topics Speech Contests held at the ACS library recently. Organised by Area H1 Toastmasters, the contest was chaired by Nor Aida and May Foo. Contestants in the International Speech Contest impressed the crowd with their oratory skills, while the Table Topics Speech contestants were posed with a tough topic, based on a quote by Albert Einstein, for their impromptu speech. Marcus Chee and Selvaraj K.S. Maniam emerged champions in their respective categories. They will advance to the division level contest which will be held in Taiping on April 9. Also present were the SMK Gunung Rapat Gavel Club members and its president, Low Rui Shan, who were there to gain experience and to learn how to conduct such events in the future.

LYW

Thumbs Down



Entrance To Memory Lane Blocked By Motor Cycles



On Sunday mornings motor cycles are parked along Jalan Sultan Idris Shah (Brewster Road) blocking the entrance to Horley Street where the weekly Flea Market is set up. They are also a nuisance to motorists. MBI has named this stretch of road "Down the Memory Lane" and it is popular with Ipohites. Visitors from other states and foreign tourists come to see what knick-knacks are being sold.

Enforcement officers from MBI go about checking the identities of the traders, but do not bother to take action on the motorcycles blocking the entrance. MBI should ensure that the entrance to Horley Street is not blocked and also relocate traders who block the road.

A. Jeyaraj

community

photos by ed shahir



Calling On Volunteers

Yayasan Bina Upaya (YBU) plans on expanding its volunteer base from its current strength of a hundred to a thousand. Recounting this recently, Chief Executive Officer, Khairul Azwan Harun, said that the increase would enhance the foundation's mission of spreading its wings state-wide in tandem with its mission of aiding the poor and the marginalised. "It's not confined to helping the poor only but the stateless, as well," he told Ipoh Echo. "Without documentation these people are deprived of many privileges offered to citizens."

The volunteers, known by their designation Skwad Ikon Bina Upaya or Skwad IBU, will each carry a special pass as a form of identification. The pass bears the holder's personal details and his photograph. "This is to facilitate identification should a need arise," said Khairul.

Khairul asked that public and private agencies, political representatives, salutatory bodies and concerned parties be more empathetic of the volunteers' needs and not to turn them away when approached. "Please help them to help the needy," he implored.

Those keen on becoming a YBU volunteer can call Cik Isna Ezuana Ismail at the foundation's office in Ipoh: 05-2555945/2555946 or access its website www.yayasanbinaupaya.com.

RM

Start-Up Capital for Orang Asli

Achu Nyah, 39, of Kampong Sungai Plantok, Ulu Kuang is one enterprising Orang Asli who subscribes to the belief that hard work and a little help from friends is the gateway to success. This father of three was relentless in his search for a rewarding job to eke out an honest living. Prior to being the proud owner of a provision shop, Achu did odd jobs to earn enough to support his family. During one of his forays into Chemor he overheard that Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir, had set aside RM4 million to help the poor and the marginalised in Perak.

Micro-credit facility, he was told, is being provided by Yayasan Bina Upaya (YBU), a state-link agency established for the purpose of eradicating poverty in Perak. "I applied, and after the routine screening, my application was approved," he told Ipoh Echo.

Achu was given a RM15,000 interest-free loan, as capital to start a provision shop in his village. Kampong Sungai Plantok is home to about 400 Orang Asli and Achu's



shop is the first in this Semai settlement off Chemor. He has been operating the shop since January and now makes a tidy profit of between RM30 to RM50 a day. The shop, which is open between 7.00 a.m. to 10.30 p.m. daily, is well patronised by villagers. "I've gained acceptance by the village folks and this is a plus point," he said after a simple ceremony to mark the opening of his shop, "Achu Ngah Enterprise" by Adun of Lintang, Dato' Ahamad Pakeh Adam recently.

"Hopefully, my success will be a motivating factor for my people," he remarked. Achu has five years to settle his loan and at the rate things are going he feels he can settle the loan much earlier than anticipated.

Yayasan Budi Upaya has received three applications to build similar shops in other Semai villages, one in Simpang Pulau and two in Grik. "We've plans to open up shops in 255 Asli settlements in Perak," said Ismail Saffian, a member of the foundation's board of trustees. The plan complements the state government's ongoing programme to improve the living standards of those on the fringes of society. "Some of the other ventures we've in mind are motor repair, hair grooming and food supply," Saffian added.

"We'll provide them with both practical and management skills to start their small businesses," said Ghafaruddin Usulddin, chief of YBU's micro-credit division. The extent of the assistance is not confined to finance alone but entrepreneurial know-how as well.

RM

VOLUNTEERS TO THE FORE

The plight of three Indian families would have gone unnoticed had it not been for a chance encounter by volunteers of Yayasan Bina Upaya (YBU). The volunteers, led by Palaya Periasamy, found these unfortunate souls living in a rented house in Taman Che Wan, Ipoh. They have been living under a single roof for the last six months and are bereft of basic necessities for a decent living. Their pitiful conditions according to unit chief, Elango Vadiveloo, are attributable to the family heads not having proper jobs and documentation. They are among the many stateless citizens of Perak, who, due to no fault of theirs, have to suffer the ignominy of being treated as outcasts in their own country of domicile. "I immediately alerted YBU of their problem," said Elango to Ipoh Echo.



In the days ahead Yayasan Bina Upaya will, with the assistance of the National Registration Department, document those from among the three families who are without papers. Four of the children do not have birth certificates while three adults, including two of the fathers, are without identity cards. The men, Sarathrajan Raman, 29, and Murugan Ratnam, 33, are odd-job workers without a steady income. YBU has agreed to foot all bills incurred in processing applications for birth certificates and identity cards.

Another beneficiary, Rathiga Ratnam, 33, will be awarded micro-credit facility worth RM5,000 to help her start a small business. Rathiga is in dire straits as her husband is temporarily indisposed due to illness.

The mother of two was visibly moved by the gesture. "This is totally unexpected," she remarked. "I wish to thank the state government, especially YBU, for answering my prayers."

Yayasan Bina Upaya will endeavour to help those living on the fringes of society, regardless of their ethnicity and beliefs, to be on their feet again. Its volunteers are constantly on the look out for them.

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My Say



• By **Jerry Francis**

IE's 'Dirt Vigilantes' Campaign pays off

We are thrilled with the prospect that Ipoh is moving towards restoring its image as one of the cleanest cities in the country. Mayor Datuk Roshidi Hashim's recent declaration that the city council will intensify enforcement against litterbugs and illegal dumping of rubbish in the city has given us that hope.

It also indicates that the Ipoh Echo's on-going "dirt vigilantes" campaign, which was launched in December, 2009, has achieved its desired effect on the city council.

We have even advocated that those irresponsible residents who throw rubbish indiscriminately be made to pay for clearing the thousands of illegal rubbish dumps, and not from the ratepayers' money as was the case at Rapat Setia where several thousand tonnes of rubbish from illegal dumps were removed by a contractor who was paid by the city council.

Our online poll has also received good response from the residents who suggested that plainclothes enforcement officers be stationed at strategic locations in the city to nab those who illegally dump rubbish and fine them heavily. They should be made to pay for their actions.

The time for appeals and warnings are over, as the irresponsible residents continue to ignore them despite the presence of notice-boards. Among the steps announced by the Mayor are to clean up the city and improve garbage waste management. The city council is also to go after those who pile up rubbish at non-designated areas and force them to bear the costs of cleaning up the mess and as well, be slapped with the maximum compound of RM250.

He said 14 enforcement officers have been appointed recently to regularly patrol the city's 22 zones and take action against litterbugs and illegal dumping.

"There will be no compromise even for those who litter while walking and throw rubbish out of vehicles. I'll suggest to the committee that the names, addresses and car registration numbers of repeat offenders be exhibited at the city council building for all to see," he was quoted to have said.

Meanwhile, various locations of illegal rubbish dumps in the city, including Taman Medan Ipoh in Ipoh Garden East, are being cleared.

Syabas! Datuk Roshidi. This is what we have been waiting to hear for a long time. This announcement must have been accelerated by the concern shown by the Raja Muda Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah who insisted on inspecting the site of the location of illegal rubbish dumps in Taman Rapat Koperasi at Rapat Setia last September.

I hope Raja Nazrin Shah will keep up with his concern on the cleaning up of the city to put the city council on its toes all the time, as all our past efforts had failed to get its attention.

It is now up to the Mayor to "walk the talk" and seriously make a sustainable move to achieve his mission to clean up the city and improve garbage waste management by next year.

The city council must set an example by regularly collecting all domestic wastes and as well as clear clogged drains. And, the residents need to co-operate by restraining from throwing rubbish indiscriminately. If they have large items, such as broken beds or old furniture, they can request the city council to help them dispose of the unwanted items.

I sincerely hope that getting the city to restore its image is not just wishful thinking, but will become a reality through the joint efforts of both the city council and residents.

Maturity Makes a Difference

We talk about desire for victory but are there barriers in our current state football team that inhibit its quest for success? We insist that big-names are needed to put the oomph into the game. You can still recall a Perak side with the likes of Keita Mandjou, Ahmad Shahrul and Yusri Che Lah. They played pivotal roles in the team, as winning then was compulsory rather than a target. But times have changed.

The financial difficulties encountered by the state football association at the end of 2008 resulted in the migration of its star players to other teams. For a moment it seemed like the end of the road for a club that was riding high on the league table. The only hope then was the players' youthfulness.

M. Karathu was drafted to optimise the raw talent at his disposal. Everyone knew it was no ride in the park for the Seladangs.

Under Karathu, Perak finished 10th in the Super League table in 2009. Raja Azlan Shah Raja Shuib did no better last year ending the season at 11th spot. The inclusion of fresh blood like Norizan Abu Bakar and Akhmal Rizal Rakhli, who once played for RC Strasbourg, did not make much impact either.

Notwithstanding this, the young team has taken the Super League by storm this season. It has remained unbeaten so far (till March 10) chalking impressive wins over Negeri Sembilan and Pahang. I am impressed with their style of play. They show much maturity on the pitch.

Youth is a consideration but whether maturity should be the overriding factor, is debatable. The players are professionals. Ability, therefore, is not the cause of their misfortunes. Maturity, to my mind, is the *raison d'etre*.

The Perak team has shown that it has what it takes to be successful. The difference between the previous team and this crop of youngsters is maturity. We are definitely in for an interesting season. Keep your hopes high, fans. Our young Seladangs are on a rampage.

Keesh



Sport Ladies Golf Open

The Royal Perak Golf Club organised its inaugural Ladies Open Amateur Golf Championship recently. The event which attracted 89 entrants from over 20 clubs throughout the country also had four international entrants from Bandung Indonesia, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Switzerland.

The winner of the event was Asha Krishnan (Malaysian Ladies Golf Association/ Royal Johore Country Club). Second place was June Yap (Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club) and third, Nurul Shima (Kinta Golf Club).

Winner Asha, 16, from Johore is a Sec 4 student with Methodist Girls School Singapore. She described the course as "OK, the fairways narrow and the greens fast". Her ambition is to play the LPGA (Ladies Professional Golf Association).

According to Royal Perak Golf Club Ladies Golf Representative Mardianah Yusuf, the competition was very friendly with over 80% of the competitors being seniors while the youngest contestant was 10 year old Ally Yee Jung-Ya (Royal Perak Golf Club).



The Top 6 (l-r): Asha Krishnan (the winner), Nor Islamiah (4th), Ashvin Kaur (6th) and Nurul Shima (3rd)

JAG

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