

Daulat Tuanku
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 on the occasion of
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ISSUE **118**

● **Another Craze Bites The Dust**



PG 3

● **Enough Tin Ore Deposit to Revive Mining Industry**



PG 4

● **Little India's Face Lift: Mixed Reactions from Traders**



PG 11

● **"Eyesores" In Our City**



PG 14

Tanjung Rambutan

- Awakening From Slumber

By James Gough



Kolej Sains Kesihatan Bersekutu



TR Market



Lost World Of Tambun



Orang Asli Village

Tanjung Rambutan, which was once synonymous with the lunatic asylum in its township, and had existed under the shadow of the communist insurgents' long drawn-out war, is to be awakening from its slumber.

Continued on page 2

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Economic Development For A 19th Century Town

It has been listed by the Perak Government as one of the 14 small towns to be developed to provide balanced development and economic distribution between the urban and rural areas in the state.



TR Market

Under the programme known as *Projek Pembangunan Pekan Kecil* (Small Town Development Project), the one-street town located at the foot of *Banjaran Titiwangsa* (Main Range) in Ulu Kinta just east of the city, will get a boost in the development drive. A number of projects are being planned.

It will undoubtedly remove the town's stigma as a place for mental patients due to the presence of the mental health institution which was known as Federal Lunatic Asylum when established in 1911 and later as Tanjung Rambutan Mental Hospital (now as *Hospital Bahagia*).

Tanjung Rambutan was built towards the end of the 19th century with public offices and government quarters on one side of the main street from the Kinta River to the railway station and 300 building lots on the other side. The Railway Station was opened in 1897 complete with a Post and Telegraph Office, while the first Chinese school, *Tat Choi*, was built in 1922. Apparently, the town proper has remained this way since then even though its outskirts have seen some development.

Ulu Kinta Constituency

The town is within the State Constituency of Ulu Kinta, which has a population of 90,000. The constituency covers Chemor, Tambun, Tanah Hitam and Tanjung Rambutan.

Geographically, it consists of the usual mix of industries in the Kanthan area, farms in between Chemor and Tanjung Rambutan, civil servants living in the area of Taman Perpaduan and an Orang Asli community living above the hills along the main range.

Despite its integrated mix of economic activities, about 20% of its residents or 18,000 are still considered as being in the underprivileged category.

The data was compiled by the elected representative, lawyer Dato' Rusnah Kassim, from the weekly visits by the residents to her service centre for the past two years. According to her, most of the residents are poor and many of them are single mothers.

Residents' Livelihood To Be Elevated

In an effort to elevate their livelihood, she successfully appealed to the state government to include Tanjung Rambutan under the small town development programme last January.

Rusnah is confident that under the programme, the area which has so much untapped potential could be developed with the aim to elevate the socio-economic standards of the residents.

She feels the infrastructure in the constituency needs to be upgraded to contribute to the overall economic development. And, therefore Rusnah will be heading up the Ulu Kinta Council's Development Plan to quicken the development.



Dato' Rusnah Kassim

Bus Service Priority

Early this year, Rusnah together with Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim officially opened a RM25,000 bus stop along the main road in Tanjung Rambutan. Rusnah identified her priority issue as improving the bus service. "There is a bus service, though poor, running from Ipoh to Tanjung Rambutan only and not till Chemor. This causes hardship for the kampong residents there especially for school-going children."

Another project to be developed is to upgrade the town's market at a cost of RM6 million. It is to be located at the main road where the current market now stands. A food court is to be included in the development plan.

Need to Solve Land Issues

The Chief Executive of Perak State Development Corporation, Dato' Samsudin Hashim, who heads the project, confirmed that Tanjung Rambutan had been included in the project this year. "The objective of the project is to develop a small town's infrastructure to be a catalyst for the surrounding area and contribute to economic development," he explained.

However, he said, to achieve the goal it would need to solve the land issues first. Hence the timeline is normally three years, two years for planning and implementation, and one year for delivery. Samsudin nevertheless agrees that Tanjung Rambutan "won't pose too much of a challenge as most of the components, such as infrastructure and community participation, are already in place."

Economic Viability

His sentiment is shared by Perak think-tank Chief Executive of Institute Darul Ridzuan, Aminuddin Hashim, a committee member of the project. Aminuddin indicated that "though we don't have full data yet the economic activities in the area showed dynamism. The main issue is only how to cluster the activities to enable it to be economically viable."

The area has already seen much development over the years. They include the National Stud Farm, Police General Operations Force's brigade headquarters, and Teacher Training College. Various property development projects are in progress in the area. Among them are up-market property developments which include The Haven, a high-end condominium project; Sunway Properties, another up-market housing development which includes its tourist resorts: the Lost World of Tambun, Banjaran Spa and Bukit Kinding Resort nearer Chemor.

Positive Economic Impact

In the middle of this year Kolej Sains Kesihatan Bersekutu, a nursing college set up by the Ministry of Health and located within the sprawling grounds of Hospital Bahagia, will open its doors to 4,000 students. The trickling-down effect will certainly benefit the town.

Famous Limau Bali (Pomelo) orchards at Tambun have been attracting visitors. Meanwhile, Roots Eco Resort, located on the banks of the Kinta River, arranges eco-field trips for local and international students during school breaks, and takes its guests to the Orang Asli settlement nearby as part of its package.

With so much positive feedback, it is almost certain that Tanjung Rambutan will be a vibrant township in the near future, which should be in another three years.



TR Bus Stand

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From the Editor's Desk

● by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

Another Craze Bites The Dust

So another innocuous craze, following in the steps of yoga, bites the dust. I reserve my sympathies for my serving army friends and their wives whose love for the dance knows no bounds.

March has been one eventful month for Malaysians.

It began with the unprecedented Magnitude 9 earthquake that devastated north-eastern Japan, following in its heels was the screening of the sex video clip purporting to show Opposition leader, Anwar Ibrahim and finally, the banning of *poco-poco*, a group dance routine, by Perak Fatwa Council helmed by Mufti Tan Sri Harussani Zakaria. These three events will leave an indelible impression on Malaysians. The one which may have a far greater impact on Perakeans is the banning of *poco-poco*, as the edict is only confined to Perak.

Poco-poco, by all reckoning, is Indonesian in flavour and origin. It is also the title of a popular Indonesian song in the 1990s. The dance, done in a group and to the accompaniment of a song or music, consists of a sequence of steps that require participants

to move from right to left and then forward and backward. It has gained popularity, especially among Malays.

In fact, *poco-poco* is considered the most popular dance routine in the armed forces. No military officers worth their salt will dare claim that they are unfamiliar with the steps. I say this with conviction because I have been roped in, time and again, to join the mass of sweating bodies gyrating on the floor whenever I attend a military function. The craze has taken the armed forces by storm beginning in the early 2000s. It is a must at any military function when a musical band is present. No commanders will dare foreclose a formal gathering without *poco-poco*. It is one way to let down your hair – literally.

The Perak Fatwa Council's reason for declaring *poco-poco*

haram for Muslims is because it "contains elements of Christianity as well as spirit-worship". Based on research, the council claims that "the dance is widely practised in Jamaica (of all places) and has Christian idolatry connotations".

Menteri Besar Perak, Dato' Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir has adopted a conciliatory approach over the ruling. He asked that the edict be respected and that all quarters should not question its relevance.

The next stage is to have it gazetted. Harussani will not budge in spite of calls for a review. Most are of the opinion that *poco-poco* is purely an exercise routine similar to line dance, which has a huge following in the country. Banning it will only restrict avenues available to Muslims to exercise.

Former Perlis Mufti Dr. Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin said there was



no rational reason for the dance to be banned if it is done "for health reasons without elements of alcohol and free sex."

Sisters-in-Islam said it regretted that "religion was being used to justify the imposition of arbitrary and intrusive policies in every aspect of Muslims' lives."

Datuk Dr. Mashitah Ibrahim, the Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department took

a less conciliatory view of the ban. She too considered it as just another form of exercise and, therefore, should not come under the hammer. Mashitah, however, turned philosophical when she declared, rather poignantly, "It'll only be in Perak, as the decision was not the collective decision of muftis nationwide."

So another innocuous craze, following in the steps of yoga, bites the dust. I reserve my sympa-

thies for my serving army friends and their wives whose love for the dance knows no bounds.

They are, however, at liberty to *poco-poco* to their hearts' content; no, not in Perak but outside of the state. They may have to find another form of group dance to satisfy their urge to boogie, once the music hits a crescendo. Hopefully, line dance will not suffer the same fate since it is largely performed by *kafir* (infidels).

I Will Always Love You

● by Peter Lee

Tim and his wife Sandra in their mid-sixties retired from Government service 10 years ago. They have two sons and one daughter in their early thirties. The youngest son is mentally retarded and requires constant care. Due to his condition, he was placed in a special home for the disabled. When this home was destroyed by fire, Tim and Sandra took care of him. The eldest son is suffering from a mental disorder. He is capable of taking care of himself but his erratic behaviour is a problem for the family. He was working for some time but is now jobless. Due to his condition, he receives a monthly allowance from Socso but his finances are managed by his parents. The daughter is normal with her own career.

At times, Tim and Sandra have found it mentally and physically strenuous to take care of both their sons but as parents, they have accepted it as their life journey with a feeling that "I will always love you". However, they realise that feelings alone will not help in the event of their demise unless they plan now to choose a Guardian and secure continuous funding for their sons. At the moment, their main source of income derives from their monthly pension and they do not have any insurance coverage.

Based on Tim and Sandra's predicament, a will and trust is essential. Firstly, the appointment of Executor/Trustee is of utmost importance. They are strongly advised to appoint a Trustee Company like Rockwills Trustee Bhd. as the main Executor/Trustee because it has the expertise, impartiality, professionalism and most importantly perpetual existence. The appointment of a Guardian is also equally important whereby an immediate family member like the daughter can assume the role. However, Tim and Sandra must immediately identify a special home for their sons in the event when both of them are dead the guardian may not be able to cope as a caregiver at a later stage. Since the eldest son is receiving money from Socso, they have decided to give all their pension funds to the youngest son if both of them pass away. Therefore, they have to apply to the Public Service Department for approval because a government pension fund cannot be willed away. When approval is obtained, then the Public Service Department will pay directly to the disabled child's account upon the demise of both parents. But in the youngest child's case, a special account is required to be opened under another family member's name who would most likely to be the guardian. Tim and Sandra decided to give to each other their entire estate first and if both die, then everything will be distributed equally among their three children. They must draw up a "Testamentary Trust" in their will for each of their sons' 1/3 portion and specify an amount for their monthly living and medical expenses. The Trust would end either upon the exhaustion of the fund or if the sons die. It will be easier to manage their estate if everything, except for the house they are staying in, is converted into cash. While I am writing this story I can't help but wonder how many out there in the same position would be as lucky to receive funding from Socso and a Pension Fund? As such, wouldn't it be safer to have extra funding in the form of Insurance for your family and safeguard it with a "Living Trust" if you are in this position?

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>.



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Business

Enough Tin Ore Deposit to Revive Mining Industry

There is a significant amount of tin left in the country which can be mined profitably, but that ore is in the hard rock or primary deposit.

This was disclosed by the first director of the Southeast Asia Tin Research and Development (SEATRADC) Centre, Dato' Dr. Abdullah Hasbi B Hj Hassan, who was in Ipoh recently for a reunion with old colleagues of the Centre.

According to him, a renowned tin geologist, Professor Roger Taylor of James Cook University, Australia, was engaged to make a study of the Eastern Tin Belt of Peninsular Malaysia.

"He came to the conclusion that there is a good chance of finding a Renison-type primary tin deposit in Terengganu, but that detailed exploration needs to be carried out," he said in response to question whether it is viable to revive the tin industry in the country.

Renison mine, located in Tasmania, Australia, is an underground tin mine which at its peak production was the biggest underground tin mine in the world. However, to Dato' Dr. Hasbi's knowledge, no one to-date has done any further exploration as a follow-up to Professor Taylor's work.

Dato' Dr. Hasbi added that some five years ago, the mineral exploration company he is associated with commissioned another Australian geologist to make a study of the mineral potential of Peninsular Malaysia. He made a study of the available publications contained in the libraries of the Department of Minerals and Geoscience Malaysia and concluded that there is good potential for primary deposits of tin, gold and base metals.

"We made numerous applications for exploration licenses to the various state governments, but until today have not received a single approval," he said. "The powers that be in the states concerned seem to have forgotten that tin mining was at one time one of the twin pillars of the Malaysian economy."

"On the other hand, some countries such as Mongolia, Chile, Peru and some African countries have welcomed international mining companies to conduct mineral explorations and have started to reap rewards from the boom in commodity prices."

He said when SEATRADC Centre was established, the Malaysian tin



Former staff of SEATRADC



Dato' Dr Abdullah Hasbi, former Director of SEATRADC

mining industry was booming and Ipoh was the centre of this boom. Hence, Ipoh was chosen as the site for the regional research and training centre for the tin industry supported by the United Nations.

SEATRADC, established in Ipoh in 1977, was funded by three major tin-producing countries: Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, with assistance from the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). The centre closed in 1994, when tin was no longer a primary industry, but during its operation, it fulfilled its main function of doing research and training in exploration, mining, mineral processing and smelting of tin.

There were about 60 personnel of professionals, from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, Malaysian supporting staff, and UN experts. Also present at the reunion was the Centre's last director, Mr S. Senathi Rajah.

Commenting on their first reunion, Senathi Rajah said "A memorable event after 17 years...hoping to have one next year". While former UN Team Leader, Emeritus Professor Dr. W.K. Fletcher quipped, "Glad to be back with team SEATRADC". Others came from as far as Thailand.

Will the glorious days of tin come back? For the ex-staff of SEATRADC Centre it will not matter. What matters to them is that friendships were made across borders...kept...and renewed once again.

VWSL

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Pak Hosni the Shoe Doctor

Hosni Padal, 57, or "Pak Hosni" to his friends, has been mending shoes for nearly a decade now. Beneath his relaxed exterior is a tale of ups and downs that had dogged him since he left school in 1970. He started off as an office-boy at the Prime Minister's Department in Kuala Lumpur. "You know, I served Najib's father, Tun Abdul Razak," he told Ipoh Echo.

From delivering letters and running errands for the high and mighty along the corridors of power, he took a job as a kitchen hand at a 5-star hotel in the city. Since the heat in the kitchen was unbearable, he quit and became the personal bodyguard of an executive of a private firm in the capital. This too was not to his liking. "My responsibilities were quite extensive, leaving me with little time for my family." Obviously, he was not cut out for these jobs. "Kuala Lumpur offers little prospect for a family man like me."

Hosni had the advantage of learning a trade while attending a vocational course at Institut Kemahiran Belia Negara, Dusun Tua in 1971. He learned how to mend shoes. And since a career in both the



public and private sectors was not forthcoming, Hosni decided to try his luck at cobbling for a living. He moved to Ipoh to seek his fortune.

"It is less stressful in a provincial town like Ipoh and, moreover, opportunities are aplenty," he reasoned. The rest, like they say, is history.

Pak Hosni plies his trade in Strawberry Park parking himself underneath a tree at the main road leading into Rapat Setia, Ipoh. His makeshift stall, with its trademark beach umbrella, is most conspicuous to passersby, coming in and going out of Rapat Setia.

Hosni has built a reputation for himself by being a conscientious cobbler who takes pride in his job. "Customers' satisfaction is my priority not money," he said matter-of-factly. Hosni's fees are very reasonable prompting many to ask whether he was charging them properly. "If they're happy, they'll keep on coming."

"I am satisfied with his work. My worn-out shoes look as good as new," said Zamri Osman, 42, one of Hosni's many avid customers. Hosni's client base consists of the rich and the not-so-rich. "Their continued patronage is what keeps me going."

His routine involves patching, stitching, gluing and replacing. "I receive all kinds of shoes, branded and non-branded. Even stilettos, boots and bags!" he exclaimed. Hosni's delivers what he promises. That is what endears him to his customers.

Pak Hosni operates his open-air stall seven days a week between 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. This affable doktor kasut can be contacted on his mobile at 017-581 5560. "I welcome all customers with open arms," he remarked.

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Musings on Food

seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

SeeFoon Finds Eclectic Menu at Flavours

I wrinkled my nose in disdain when asked by our marketing manager Ramesh if I'd like to check out a 'newish' restaurant opposite ACS school in Jalan Lahat. "What type of food?" I asked, and on being told it was a mixture of Indian, Western and Malaysian Chinese, I was immediately put off as I suffer from this prejudice that a restaurant that tries to be all things to all people cannot serve good food.

After eating at Flavours Restaurant, I've had to eat my words as both the Indian and Western dishes I've tasted were well up to my 'foodie' standards, some items well surpassing them. Their menu claims to be the 'One Stop Restaurant' serving authentic South Indian cuisine as well as western and Malaysian cuisine. Pork and beef free, their chickens are slaughtered by Muslims while their mutton is either from Australia or fresh locally.

Driving Force Alice

Proprietor M.S. Sebastian, his wife Josephine and his daughter Alice Selvi Sebastian, who is the main driving force in the kitchen, operate Flavours in an old two-storey shop house that can accommodate 50 for banquets upstairs and 50 for diners downstairs in high ceilinged airy premises, (with air-conditioning) kept spotlessly clean.

Alice who has a Diploma in Patisserie from City and Guilds and trained in western food preparation, is an avid baker and makes all the cakes, cheesecakes and other desserts on offer. Her breads are freshly baked daily and are available for sale and takeaway from a counter at the front of the restaurant. I was intrigued by her low-



glycemic-index bread and asked to try some. I found it very tasty and even bought a loaf home.

Authentic Chettinad

The Indian food is authentically Chettinad, prepared by a Chettinad cook from India who whips up **Thosais, Parathas, Puris, Uttapams**, plain or otherwise and served with two delectable chutneys, as well as sambar. The good news is that unlike a large majority of Indian restaurants, these are served all day. From RM1.20 for a plain Thosai to RM3.00 for an onion and tomato Uttapam.

Their **Mutton and Chicken Masala** packs a fair sizzle on the palate and are as tasty as they come. Served in value sets at RM6.50 for the chicken and RM7.50 for the mutton (they also do fish curry) that comes with **Sambar** (a kind of dhal gravy), **Rasam** (a sourish soup) two types of vegetables, this is a great value meal; while their chicken curry made from Alice's own home-blended curry powder, is mild and great for those who prefer less pungency - RM6.

Signature Briyanis

Their pièce de résistance though has to be their Brians. Available on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only, their Brians are prepared 'Dum' style, that is the rice and either vegetables, chicken or (mutton only on advance special



order) are a quarter cooked on the stove top and then sealed in the pot and finished cooking with hot charcoals on the lid. A curry gravy can be requested to go with the **Bryani**. The portions are very generous and at RM6 for a vegetable Bryani, RM 8 for the chicken and RM9 for mutton, this is the place to go on weekends.

Western Dishes

For those with no palate for the 'hot stuff', Flavours also serves up creditable Western standards like **Chicken Chop** and **Fish and Chips** RM12.90; an **American Mixed Grill** with chicken and lamb chops, sausages and egg RM29.90; **Chicken Maryland** RM13.90; and **Chicken Cordon Bleu** RM15.90. I tasted this dish of **Chicken Breast** stuffed with chicken ham and cheese and served with salad and mashed potatoes. This came with a gravy that Alice described as home-cooked from scratch, the traditional French way: bones and vegetables are baked in a low oven for one and half days, before deglazing and all the flavours extracted to make the sauce. Flavourful and satisfying.

With all the care and attention that goes into the preparation of food and especially with the assurance that no MSG is ever used in the kitchen, Alice and her parents are set to garner a corp of loyal diners. May they continue the standards already set.

Flavours Restaurant

56 Jalan Lahat, 30020 Ipoh
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Wellness

Living with Arthritis

By Dr. Manuel K. Punnia Raj

Arthritis is a non-specific term denoting acute or chronic inflammation of a joint resulting in pain, swelling, stiffness, and limited movement.

Many forms of arthritis

Osteoarthritis – Is a degenerative, non-inflammatory joint disease characterised by destruction of articular cartilage and formation of new bone at the joint surfaces and margins.

Rheumatoid Arthritis – Is a chronic inflammatory fleeting poly-arthritis, involving small and large joints, of longer duration and other systemic involvement. Most patients have an insidious and slow onset over weeks to months, often accompanied by complaints of fatigue, malaise, anorexia, weight loss, and morning stiffness.

Infective Arthritis – It is the invasion of a joint by any infective agent like virus or bacteria.

Gout – Is caused by excess uric acid in the body. Crystals of uric acid form inside a joint and cause inflammation, which makes the joint red, hot, swollen and painful.

Charcot's Joint – Any condition resulting in decreased peripheral sensation and fine motor control would lead to gradual destruction of a weight bearing joint. It is marked by bone collapse.

Management of Arthritis

Prevention and management is the need of the hour. Patients should be educated about weight control and avoiding activities such as kneeling and squatting that increase stress to weight-bearing joints. The best chance for preventing joint deformity and disability begins with early diagnosis and treatment.

Medical Therapy – Currently treatments for Arthritis are aimed at controlling the symptoms of pain, using pharmacotherapy, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and topical analgesic creams. Surgery is the final option which your orthopaedic surgeon may recommend.

Physical Therapy Rehabilitation – Physical therapy has an important role in the management of Arthritis. Exercise programs can be designed to achieve various goals. Modification of the patient's lifestyle is also important; measures may include weight reduction, restriction of vigorous activities and use of supportive devices. An appropriate plan can reduce joint pain and stiffness while improving muscle strength, joint flexibility, balance, coordination, and endurance. A physical Rehab professional is able to assess each patient individually and teach the patient how to perform a range of motion exercises, strengthening exercises, and aerobic exercises.

Activities of daily living can be made easier and efficient by:

- Keeping joints and muscles in the optimum position for performance of a function
- Providing leverage to give you more power
- Extending your reach if your range of motion is limited
- Low-impact aerobic activity (endurance exercise)
- Range of motion exercises for flexibility
- Strength training for muscle tone
- Avoid holding one position for too long that place extra stress on your affected joints.
- Modify your home to make activities easier. E.g., have grab bars in the shower, the tub and near the toilet.
- Lose weight, if you are overweight. Weight loss can greatly improve joint pain in the legs and feet.

Joints protection often means changing old habits and this may take perseverance and time. However, the prolonged good functioning of your joints will be well worth the effort!

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



Computer Vision Syndrome...Do You Have It?

In our continuing series on Eye Health, Consultant Ophthalmologist Dr. S.S. Gill talks to us about the effect of computers on the eyes.

In today's world, millions of people do their daily work and socialising on a computer, iPad or smart phone. Almost every urban person today uses a computer for long periods of time, thus requiring the constant use of near vision.

With the permeation of such devices in everyday life, more and more people are now experiencing a variety of ocular symptoms related to computer use. However, most people do not notice the symptoms and just brush them off as having had a tiring day at work.

In actual fact, it is the prolonged computer use that results in symptoms like irritation, tired eyes, redness, blurred vision, eyestrain, tearing, photophobia (unable to tolerate light) and even blurred vision. In some patients, this can progress to chronic headaches as well. These symptoms are collectively referred to as **computer vision syndrome (CVS)**.

Although there is no conclusive scientific evidence proving that computers are harmful to the eyes, it has been noted that anyone who stares at a computer monitor for more than two hours a day is likely to experience CVS to some extent. Computer vision syndrome is estimated to be 40 times more common than carpal tunnel syndrome, which is another health condition affecting computer users but involving the wrist and hands instead.

Letters on the screen (digital text) are formed by tiny dots called pixels which have less sharp edges compared to the solid image in well printed material. This makes the eye work a bit harder to keep these images in focus. When this happens over a long period of time, it can result in the symptoms of CVS. Clinical studies have shown that viewing text on the computer in comparison to viewing hard copy documents results in significantly worse symptoms of fatigue.

Keeping CVS at Bay

One of the most common mistakes we make is to place the monitor of the computer too high. The ideal viewing angle is roughly 10 to 20 degrees below the eye. Thus, a screen that is placed too high can lead to dry irritated eyes because it forces us to constantly keep our eyes wide open and invariably blink less. It is therefore recommended to follow the rule-of-thumb of having the top of the monitor screen placed at the eye level.

Glare from surrounding lamps and lights can also lead to eyestrain. Removing direct light sources that reflect off your screen, moving your computer station, or installing blinds or shades can reduce glare. Another way of eliminating glare is to use anti-reflection computer screens.

If you wear reading glasses to read, consider making a special pair of reading glasses adjusted for computer use as the focal distance would be adjusted for your comfort. The use of lubricating eye drops can also help relieve symptoms of dry eyes associated with CVS. These eye drops can be instilled before, during and after using the PC. Preservative-free artificial tear eye drops are best.

Remember also the 20-20-20 rule to decrease eye strain. For every 20 minutes of computer use, look away for 20 seconds at an object about 20 feet away from you.

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



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

"Slipped Disc" – the "Golfer's Curse"

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

The words "slipped disc" strike fear into the hearts of golfers throughout Malaysia and around the world. Often golfers with disc problems in the lower back or neck are told that they are no longer allowed to play golf by their doctors.

New methods and technologies for the treatment of slipped disc now offer hope for the golfer with slipped disc. Among them is a new decompression table system known as DTS which aids discs to recover and help you to return to the golf course.

How do you know if you have a "Slipped Disc"?

You will feel varying degrees of pain from mild to severe in the lower back or neck along with numbness or weakness in the corresponding organs, arms, or legs. Normally there is increased pain with movement.

What Causes "Slipped Disc"?

There are basically two causes of slipped disc – namely sudden overload and repetitive strain. Sudden overload is when you bend forward to lift something heavy and you feel a sudden pain arise in the back. Often you are completely unable to move and when you stand you are bent to one side. Repetitive strain is the "wear and tear" or micro-trauma that you sustain from regular daily activities such as long hours sitting and sports activities. A typical scenario here is the hardworking businessman; sitting in meetings all day and then goes to the driving range and hits 200 balls with all his might. The following morning he wakes up in excruciating pain and wonders why.

How to treat "Slipped Disc"

There are many treatment options for slipped disc, with most of them aimed at symptomatic relief of the pain. Among them are the use of medication, conservative treatments and surgery. Conservative treatments include massage, exercise therapy and physiotherapy. Chiropractic care is popular for the relief of pain and for its drug-free approach. Surgery is viewed as a last resort for many people. Few therapies are able to make significant changes to the disc herniation however decompression traction studies do show changes to the disc as well as helping with pain relief.

Decompression traction involves applying fifteen 60 second periods of traction of just over one half body weight in twenty to forty one-half hour sessions. A recent study reported good or excellent relief of sciatic and back pain in 86% of 14 patients with herniated discs and 75% of patients with facet joint arthrosis. An MRI study of 20 patients treated with the decompression table showed up to 90% reduction of herniation in 10 of 14 patients. Some rehydration of the disc also occurred and torn annulus (outer disc) repair was seen in all.

How to get back on the golf course!

If you have a slipped disc and wish to start playing again, you need to do the following steps:

1. Visit your doctor and get the correct diagnosis. You can determine most accurately the condition of your spine with an MRI scan.
2. Seek the most appropriate treatment. The latest approach to dealing with slipped disc in an effective way is the "integrated physical medicine centre". An integrated centre combines the various specialty practitioners that deal with pain, such as chiropractors, orthopaedic surgeons, physiotherapists, and rehabilitation and decompression technology.

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



PCSH International Women's Day



Perak Community Specialist Hospital (PCSH) organised an International Women's Day – "Healthy Women, Healthy Lifestyle" on March 26.

A "Healthy Exercise" was held in the morning to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of International Women's Day. Besides this, PCSH provided free blood pressure check, blood glucose test, bone density test, promotion counters, door gifts and light refreshments.

The Guest of Honour was Senator Puan Heng Seai Kei, Deputy Minister of Woman, Family and Community Development. PCSH's President Dato' Lee Hau Hian and Datin Lee, Medical Superintendent Dato' Dr. Y.C. Lee and Datin Lee, member of management committee Mr. Tham Chee Phing, CEO of PCSH Mr. Rajindar Singh were invited to attend the balloon cutting ceremony.

In conjunction with the International Women's Day, PCSH is providing special offers for Mammogram and Pap Smear, valid from March 26 to April 26.

Daulat Tuanku

Sembah Tahniah Dan Ucap Selamat Semoga Allah Lanjutkan Usia Tuanku



**Duli Yang Maha Mulia
Paduka Seri Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah
Ibni Almarhum Sultan Yussuf Izzuddin Shah
Ghafarullahu-lah**

D.K., D.K.M., D.M.N., D.K.A.

**Sultan, Yang Di-Pertuan Dan Raja Pemerintah
Negeri Perak Darul Ridzuan serta jajahan takluknya
Sempena Ulang Tahun Hari Keputeraan Baginda yang
Ke - 83 Pada 19hb April 2011**

**“Semoga Allah Memberkati Pemerintah Berjiwa Rakyat Duli
Yang Maha Mulia Tuanku”**

**With Utmost Sincerity and Best Wishes
from**

**Board of Directors,
Management, Consultants and Staffs of**



KPJ IPOH
SPECIALIST HOSPITAL



Care For Life

Daulat Tuanku Heartiest Congratulations

Duli Yang Maha Mulia
Paduka Seri Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah
Ibni Almarhum Sultan Yussuf Izzuddin Shah
Ghafarullahu-lah

D.K., D.K.M., D.M.N., D.K.A.

Sultan, Yang Di-Pertuan Dan Raja Pemerintah
Negeri Perak Darul Ridzuan

on the occasion of His Royal Highness's

Birthday

From

The Chairman, Board of Directors,
Management and Staff of

KINTA PROPERTIES

Building Homes, Developing Communities



Daulat Tuanku

Heartiest Congratulations

Duli Yang Maha Mulia
Paduka Seri Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah
Ibni Almarhum Sultan Yussuf Izzuddin Shah
Ghafarullahu-lah

D.K., D.K.M., D.M.N., D.K.A.

Sultan, Yang Di-Pertuan Dan Raja Pemerintah
Negeri Perak Darul Ridzuan

on the occasion of His Royal Highness's

Birthday

From

The Board Of Directors, Management & Staff



Wellness

Grand Old Lady Transforms into Blushing Debutante

by See Foon Chan-Koppen



Kinta Medical Centre (KMC) has certainly put its money where its mouth is. In the November 15, 2010 (IE 109) issue, KMC announced that it was in the throes of an extensive RM5 million refurbishing programme that will see all its facilities and

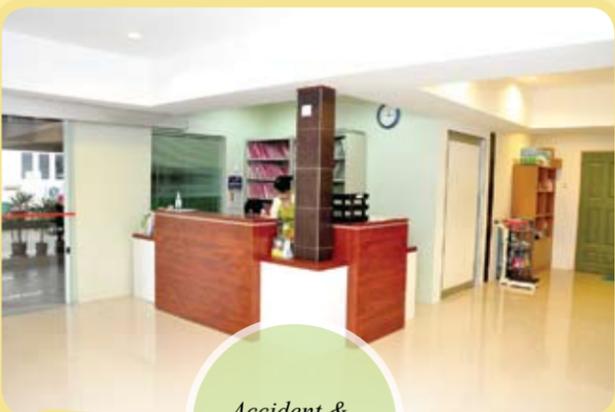
around, upgrade, improve performance, efficiency and profitability of the organisation.

The hospital came into being when the late Mr. Foo Yet Kai, a renowned Ipoh philanthropist, bought the Chung Thye Phin Villa from the family of a late Kapitan and donated the property for setting up of a private hospital known as Our Lady's Hospital run by the Congregation of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood. The hospital was for the benefit of people of all races and creeds who require hospital treatment at affordable rates. It has been open to the public since September 1963.

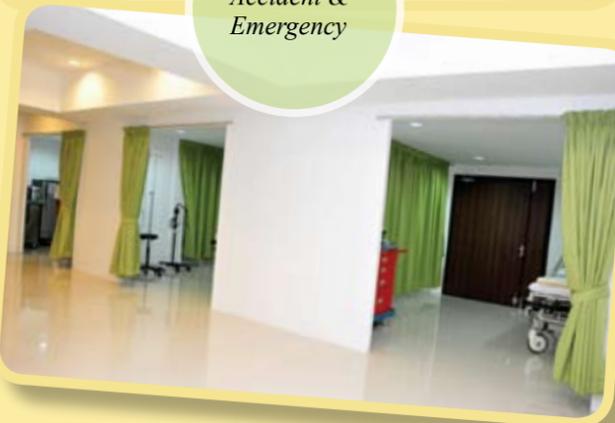
The new Day Care Ward for elective day surgeries is one of the main focuses of Dr. Suresh's attention these days. Coupled with a new operating theatre painted in cheerful and healing green and being the pioneer private hospital in Ipoh to have a formal day care ward, KMC is all set on an aggressive marketing drive to attract non-attached medical Specialists to apply for consultant status either as resident or visiting consultants. "We're talking to cosmetic/plastic/orthopaedic and general surgeons, where the trend in the United States is moving towards Day Care for the elective surgeries", said Dr. Suresh. "If a patient could have their surgery done and



Double Rooms



Accident & Emergency



medical services upgraded over a two-year period. Begun in January 2010 when a new management team was put in place, this 48-bed hospital has been busily renovating its physical premises. Today, the hospital can proudly show off the fruits of its labours in the past year, having completed Phase 1 of its ambitious upgrading plan.

This 'boutique' hospital now boasts a new Accident and Emergency facility, Day Care facility and completely refurbished and upgraded Operating Theatre.

All its single and double rooms have been tastefully refurbished to create a cosier ambiance, with the aim of removing some of the usual clinical feel to alleviate patients' anxiety. Additionally, new sofa beds have been added to enable patients' family members or carers to sleep in the same room with the patient.

With room rates at RM80-85 for a double and RM150 for a single, KMC looks set to bring back the glory that once earned this hospital the accolade of being the premier hospital in Ipoh offering affordable medical care. Along with this cosmetic upgrade, orders for new equipment such as a 32-slice CT scan, new X-ray machines and new Mammogram equipment have been ordered and await delivery. Plans are also in the offing for a refurbishing of the heritage facade.

With the vision to be a customer driven and patient-centred organisation, dynamic man-at-the-helm, Executive Director (Operations) Dr. Suresh Sammanthamurthy who is also a Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon based in Kinta Medical, is inspiring team members to turn



Operating Theatre



be discharged home within the same day it would mean a reduction in cost to the patients as well as allowing them to recover from surgery within the comforts of their own homes", he added.

"We have a full pharmacy and attendant diagnostic facilities at our doorstep and it would make much better economic sense that other independent specialists register as consultants with us than to incur additional overhead costs on their own. With sufficient support, we can activate our plans to build a block of Specialist medical clinics on our premises for which we have ample land", he continued. "Our Paediatric Ward is currently

being upgraded and we're also hoping to attract more paediatricians to join us", he added.

Kinta Medical Centre offers a wide range of outpatient and inpatient services and facilities supported by dedicated medical consultants, nurses and other support staff. Resident specialities at Kinta Medical include Orthopaedics, General Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Internal Medicine, Medical Oncology, Radiology, Anaesthetic services, and a 24-hour emergency centre.

Although no effort is being spared to upgrade all existing facilities to current modern standards, the emphasis for Kinta Medical is for it to be known as a 'Boutique' hospital with all the attendant personalized services that a boutique operation implies.

In IE 109 we called KMC the 'grand old lady', ready to step into the 21st Century. Today, it appears as if the 'grand old lady' has undergone a rejuvenation and is now the blushing debutante waiting to be presented to society.

Kinta Medical Centre

20 Jalan Chung Thye Phin, 30250 Ipoh.

Tel: (6)05-2542166 Fax: (6)05-2543264



Daycare Ward



Single Rooms



community

A Welcome Relief



Moi Yuen Sing, 38, owner of a shoe-making factory at Bukit Merah, Lahat, can heave a sigh of relief. She was granted micro-credit worth RM20,000 by Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan (YBU). Moi is thankful to YBU for coming to her aid.

A cheque for the said amount was presented to Moi at her factory-house in Bukit Merah by Nur Syakrin Abdul Fauzi, the officer-in-charge of micro credit on Wednesday, April 6. "I plan on improving production by buying new machines," she told Ipoh Echo.

The enterprising lady started her shoe-making business about three years ago assisted by her husband, Yeong Lee Fong, 38. Her efforts to expand her business were curtailed by poor returns. There were no economies of scale, as production costs far outstripped income from sales. No financial institution was keen on giving the couple a loan. As if to add insult to injury, Moi was diagnosed with breast cancer and had to spend a substantial amount of their savings on treatments.

"This is all behind me now," said Moi, "I can now concentrate on fulfilling my dreams." She will repay her loan after two months with a monthly instalment of RM345 over a period of 5 years.

RM

KPJ ISH's Second Baby

KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital (ISH) Baby Hatch received its second baby at 12.45 p.m. on April 5. The adorable baby boy, estimated to be about 3-4 days old, weighing 2.4 kg, was found active and in good health. The baby, believed to be a Muslim, was found with a copy of the *Surah Yassin*. The baby has been examined by the hospital's consultants and has been certified healthy and normal, and will be surrendered to the safe hands of the Social Welfare



Department.

A baby hatch is a place where mothers, who are unable or unwilling to take

care of their babies, can leave them in a safe environment where they can be cared for in collaboration with the Social Welfare Department of Perak (SWD). Many of these babies die in places such as toilets and dustbins; they are innocent and have a right to live. The Baby Hatch is equipped with various facilities and supported by the management of KPJ ISH and its medical consultants. KPJ ISH is the first hospital within the KPJ Healthcare group to set up a baby hatch.

LETTERS

'Royal' Belum

It was with great interest that I read your front page article, "A Tropical Retreat Fit for a Prince", in Issue 117 for as you may recall you published a review of my visit to Temenggor and the same Island over February and March last year. Furthermore, my friends and I also revisited the island and spent time in Royal Belum over the last Christmas period. It was therefore very easy to mentally share the Prince's adventures in Northern Perak – until I discovered, with some mixed feelings, that the whole thing was an April Fool's joke existing only in the mind of the author.

I have to say that the article was so well written that I fell straight into the trap you set. I would like to think that this was not because I was naïve, but because of my secondary interest in the article, the Prince himself, who I met on a few occasions while serving in the Royal Navy. He is a man for whom I have great respect. I remember him particularly as an outstanding helicopter pilot, who, during the Falklands war, deliberately put his life at risk to decoy missiles away from our ships. I was therefore very interested to hear his views of Temenggor and Royal Belum, when compared to mine, as reported in my review.

Here I believe the tone of your article was exactly as I would have expected him to respond – with justified and forthright expressions of regret about the litter at Pulau Banding jetty and the ugly government works in the Orang Asli village. Similarly, he would not have minced his words about the indiscriminate logging and destruction of the rainforests. Nonetheless, even though these were not his words, what saddens me is that, in reality, these blemishes on our landscape are still with us one year after I highlighted them. Surely, it is about time the, "powers that be" do something, at least about the litter and continued logging?

According to your author's imagination the Prince ended his interview with the words "Whatever happens you must preserve your treasures – Belum and Temenggor." I have no doubt that, as the caring man he is, this would have been his stance if he had actually visited us. Would anyone have listened? I doubt it, for a year ago I ended my review somewhat differently asking the people of Perak to do something to stop all these problems decimating our environment by supporting the relevant NGOs and employing democracy. It seems my pleas fell on deaf ears.

What is wrong with the society we live in? Don't we care about the future of our world?

Ian Anderson

Example of a Dedicated Councillor

On a Wednesday morning when I went to open the gate of my house I noticed that the road in front was littered with cow dung and the place stank. For the past few months I have been complaining to MBI about the stray-cow problem in my area and no action has been taken. My complaints have fallen on deaf ears. As a last straw I decided to call my councillor and at 9.00 a.m. I phoned Dato' Daniel Tay Kwan Hui and explained my problem. He said that he would make an appointment with MBI and when would I be free. When I said I would make myself available anytime, he called back by 10.00 a.m. and told me to meet him at the MBI lobby.

When I met him, he had already phoned a number of enforcement officers. In the morning all the enforcement officers were on their rounds and no one was in the office. However, we managed to meet En Razak and Dato' Daniel Tay requested him to solve my problem.

Many friends have told me that it is very difficult for them to contact their councillors and even if they manage to speak to them, he/she would tell them that they are too busy to attend to their problem. In the midst of such people we do have a dedicated councillor. All councillors should emulate Dato' Daniel Tay and try to solve the problems of helpless residents.

A. Jeyaraj

sport

Revival of Batu Gajah Hockey



Thevaratnam presenting a memento to Veteran A. Rajan

Many have never heard of an Astro Turf hockey pitch in Batu Gajah but as Ex Batu Gajah veterans a fortnight ago initiated the revival of hockey, more people will be familiar with this two-year-old pitch located in the vicinity of the new Keretapi Tanah Melayu complex near Kampung Pisang at the southerly end of town.

A friendly match was played between the veterans' team coached by former Malaysian coach V. Maniam played against the Sultan Yussuf School (SYS) hockey team under state coach S. Yogeswaran recently.

The event, organised by former secretary of Batu Gajah Hockey Association K. Rajasegaran, attracted more than 150 enthusiasts and their families from as far as Kuala Lumpur and Sungai Petani, who turned

up for the inaugural match which was won by SYS 3-2. The match was officiated by former World Cup and Olympic Umpire Amarjit Singh Jessy. Former Batu hockey vice-president K. Thevaratnam graced the occasion and presented the mementos to the winners.

Batu Gajah in the 80s was a nurturing hothouse to the State and National teams with its high supplement of players. Among those who represented the country were Olympians Datuk R. Yogeswaran, Anthony D'cruz, Kamaruzaman Karim, Annuar Mushadat, A. Vijian, K. Sasidharan, Christopher Lye and V. Maniam. The notable state players were S. Yogankumar, K. Yogeswaran, S.N. Mohan Dass, Akhiar Ismail, K. Balakumresan, A. Rajan, Satwinder Singh and V.

Ragoo to name a few.

Batu Gajah had an established pre-war Government English School, which was renamed Sultan Yussuf School (SYS) after the war. The current Sultan of Perak, DYMM Sultan Azlan Shah is a former student of the school. The school was the powerhouse and the turf that nurtured the many hockey players, back then.

Hockey in Batu Gajah, now known as Kinta Hockey Association came to a stand-still a couple of years back, due to the lack of interest and proper playing hockey pitches around the district. A new pro-tem committee has been established to revive the game. As for future plans, K. Rajasegaran said he hoped that with the turf at hand, there will be no more excuses but to reactivate the hockey powerhouse status in the District with the league as its first agenda. He also hoped that the 2012 edition of the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup could be held at the Batu Gajah Hockey turf, which would start a new chapter in Kinta Hockey.

Amarjit Singh Jessy

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news roundup

Drive-In Service



Rate payers of Manjung municipality can now pay their utility bills from their cars. The council has built a drive-in facility, adjacent to its office, for the convenience of residents. The primary reason, according to council president, Zamri Man, is to provide the feeble and the aged easy access to the payment counter without having to park their cars and walk to pay their dues. "This will have an impact on revenue collection," he told Ipoh Echo. Within a month of its introduction over a million ringgit was collected.

The Manjung Municipal Council is the best managed local council in Perak. Last year the council collected almost 95 per cent of its outstanding assessment rates, a record of sorts. The council's exemplary performance is the benchmark for other councils to emulate.

The municipality is 302 sq km in size and has a population of over 170,000 or 80 per cent of the population of Manjung District. Its growth rate is second only to Kinta Valley.

Infrastructure developments are designed with the comfort of the rate-payers in mind. One other area which the council president is keen on improving is landscaping. "A touch of greenery will enhance the aesthetic beauty of the municipality," Zamri remarked. **SN**

Little India's Facelift: Mixed Reactions from Traders



The Federal Government's funded facelift to Little India here has been completed. The area covering parts of Jalan Leong Boon Swee, Jalan Lahat and Jalan Sultan Yussuf, is brighter now with the buildings given a new coat of paint and the roads and pavements laid with coloured pavers. And, at its Dataran Little India, where the residents would usually relax and interact after sunset, a stage, toilet, a police pondok and an arch have been constructed.

Yet, despite the RM1.5 million grants spent on sprucing up the area, most traders have mixed reactions to its transformation.

They unanimously agreed that the parking problem was not addressed and is getting worst and prospective customers are avoiding the area due to this. The rental has gone up, but business is as usual.

Hong Khee Ching of Foong Heng Spare Parts feels that it is a waste of public funds to replace the newly paved road with tiles. The tiles are uneven and pose danger especially to motor cyclists. He sees no rational for replacing the tarred road.

Inder Singh of Libaas said that the new pavements are not user friendly for the handicap and elderly since no provision is made for them. There are tripping hazards along the pavements. There are concrete patches in between the tiles.

The plan was to replace the existing interlocking bricks on the pavements with pavers having motifs characteristic of Little India. This has not been done. In fact there was nothing wrong with the old pavements and there was no necessity to replace them.

Harbajan Kaur of Bollyster Fashion is of the opinion that the colour scheme does not reflect Indian culture.

The colours used are too pale and not attractive. She said Indians like bright colours as shown by the materials on display in the shops.

Ameer Batcha of Malliga Enterprise complained of the flooding in the section of road in front of his shop. S. Anant of Sethu Sdn Bhd said the problem was brought up at a meeting with Ipoh City Council (MBI), but no action has been taken. The section of road in front of Dataran Little India gets flooded. He said that there are fourteen goldsmith shops and the newly constructed Pondok Polis is not manned.

K. Sagadevan, branch secretary of Malaysian Indian Business Association, feels that the place has been spruced up and has been given an identity, but he is not happy with the removal of the fountain. Hj Sultan Abdul Khader, president of Perak Indian Chamber of Commerce, is satisfied with what has been done.

Generally, no one is happy about the demolition of fountain and in its place the stage and toilet were



constructed. The building is not compatible with the surrounding. The stage would be used only during Deepavali. Is it necessary to build a permanent stage just for an annual function? The building would not be maintained and eventually become an eyesore for people passing through the area.

Already drug addicts are making use of the stage at night leaving behind their litter. The traders fear the stage would become another 'white elephant'.

It appears there is a lack of communication between MBI and the community when public funds had been used for projects resulting in people's needs not being met. When a blueprint for a project is ready it should have been made available for the public to comment. The heritage site should have been restored, instead of being renovated. Little India has lost its identity. **AJ**

Vaisakhi Nite



Vaisakhi, a Sikh religious festival, marks the beginning of a new solar year and a new harvest season. It falls on the first day of

the Baisakh month in the solar Nanakshahi calendar, which corresponds to April 13 in the Gregorian calendar. It also commemorates the establishment

of Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh. In India the day is marked by ritualistic bathing in sacred rivers like the Ganges.

In Malaysia, however, the festival is celebrated on a much smaller scale by both the local Sikh community and well-wishers, where the participation of all races is encouraged.

Not wanting to miss out on this opportunity, the management of the Ipoh City and Country Club, celebrated Vaisakhi by organising "Vaisakhi Dance Nite 2011" within its premises on Friday, April 1. Participants were feted and entertained to Bollywood and bhangra dances, music and songs performed by a bhangra troupe from Penang.

"We want the uniqueness of Vaisakhi to be felt by all and sundry. It helps in unifying our society," said Dato' Wan Azahari bin Yom Ahmad, the club's public relations committee chairman in his welcoming remarks. It was a fun-filled night for the 500-odd audience consisting of members, their families and guests. Many walked away with prizes won during a lucky draw. **Ed**

Exploring Shakespeare



After a one-month exposure to Shakespearean plays, students of Main Convent, Methodist Girls' School and Ipoh International School put their skills on display at the ACS Auditorium recently.

The month-long "Exploring Shakespeare" workshop by Perak Society of Performing Arts is the brainchild of Dato' Richard Small and Chin Yoong Kim. "The purpose of the workshop," said Datin Rosalina Ooi, President of PSPA, "was to introduce Shakespeare to Ipoh students. His plays are still relevant today."

Main Convent and MGS performed several extracts from Twelfth Night and King Lear while IIS performed a Bollywood adaptation of Julius Caesar. With less than one month to prepare, the students were encouraged to focus on the words, diction and stage works rather than on props and costumes. The crowd was enthralled by the impressive performances.

Judging the students were Kolej Yayasan UEM Headmaster, Neil Sutherland and his wife, Carol. Carol was impressed with the masterly performances despite the short period of preparation.

Yong Sook Yan, Alia Amira and Balakarhik Balaravi were adjudged best actors of their respective plays. Coincidentally, Alia and Balakarhik played the lead roles. Sook Yan who performed a lengthy soliloquy for her role as the comical Malvolio said, "It's all about practising and understanding my lines. I took less than two weeks to memorise everything." **LYW**

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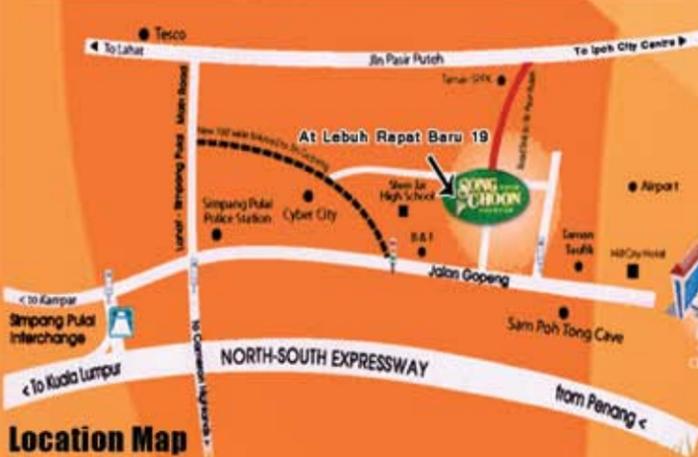
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TARIKH DIJANGKA SIAP : DISEMBER 2013 PEGANGAN TANAH : 99 TAHUN SEHINGGA 9/2/2091 & 24/5/2106 JENIS 12(1) 99 TAHUN HINGGA 24/5/2109 JENIS 12(2) GADAIAN (JIKA ADA) : TIADA SEKATAN KEPENTINGAN : KEBENARAN MB

Spreading the Goodwill

Seventeen non-governmental organisations representing charities and welfare homes in Perak received cash donations worth RM200 each during a ceremony at YMCA, Ipoh recently. Dato' S. Veerasingham, advisor to the Perak Menteri Besar, gave away cheques to representatives of the NGOs on behalf of Persatuan Wira Kinta (Kinta Heroes' Society).

"The poor, the handicapped and the underprivileged need to be cared for too," said Dato' R. Thambipillay, President of Persatuan Wira Kinta to Ipoh Echo.

Thambipillay took the opportunity to thank the state government for its RM10,000 contribution to the Ipoh Cenotaph Remembrance Committee. The money will be used to organise this annual memorial service scheduled for in June. The service is dedicated to those who died while defending the country during the two world wars, the Malayan Emergency and Confrontation.

RM



Optimising Youth Potential



Two hundred youngsters of all races from various parts of Perak had completed a 3-day volunteer cum leadership programme organised by Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan (YBU) in March. The short course was conducted at Sri Malaysia Hotel, Ipoh and was tutored by staff of YBU. At the end of the course the trainees were feted by Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir at his residence on Saturday, April 2. The invitees treated themselves to the generous spread

laid out for their consumption. Zambry thanked the trainees for their having taken the challenge to become volunteers. "The objective of the programme is to train youths to assist in developing backward areas in the state which are out of mainstream developments." These young volunteers will be co-opted into YBU's team of volunteers and will then be assigned areas of responsibility. "It's imperative that when fulfilling their duties they should do so with passion and without prejudice," said the MB, mindful of lingering inequalities affecting communities, presently. Zambry was appreciative of the foundation's initiative in organising this programme, which he felt would be beneficial to youths in the long-term.

RM

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young perak

Windfall for Tamil Schools

The state government has allocated RM50,000 for Tamil schools in Perak. The money will be utilised to improve students' performance via custom-made programmes aimed at achieving a definitive target. Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan (YBU) has been tasked to organise, conduct and coordinate these programmes based on current needs.

The emphasis, according to Dato' Mohammad Zahir Abdul Khalid, executive councillor for Education, Human Resources and ICT, will be on motivation, tutorials and related co-curriculum activities of relevance to the students. "We'll concentrate on rural Tamil schools, especially those in the estates which are out of mainstream developments," said Mohammad in his address at the close of the 1Malaysia Seminar held at YBU hall in Greentown Square, Ipoh recently.

The one-day seminar was attended by 130 headmasters of Tamil schools from outlying areas of Perak. The objective of the forum was to impress upon the participants the responsibilities they play as educators within the Indian community.

"The school heads will act as agents to disseminate information on development programmes to estate folks. They'll also be our sources of information," said V. Elango, YBU's 1Malaysia Unit chief. More of such seminars will be held in the months ahead. "We'll invite Indian NGOs to participate in the next seminar."

The seminar, among others, dwells on the concepts of 1Malaysia and Perak Amanjaya. The discussion is being conducted by staff of Institute Darul Ridzuan.

On a related matter, YBU has produced a song book in English and Tamil along with a CD for distribution to



Tamil pre-school pupils in the state. "These educational aids can help enhance pupils' performance," Elango remarked.

RM

Ipoh – Ramin's Haven



Many of the younger generation prefer the excitement that Kuala Lumpur offers. But to Ramin Krause, between KL and Ipoh, the latter is his choice. "I like Ipoh more. It's not so busy yet there are plenty of activities," he declared.

Ramin is an exchange student from the American Field Service (AFS) Intercultural Programme and is in Malaysia on a one-year stint. He hails from Cologne, Germany and has been in Kuala Lumpur for 6 months before being sent to Ipoh. He now lives with Evon Yew, a teacher from Poi Lam Secondary School.

The best thing about Malaysia, according to Ramin, is its food. "In fact Ipoh's food is better than KL's," said the seventeen-year-old to Ipoh Echo.

He was enrolled in the Anglo-Chinese School and was adapting well before AFS transferred him to

St Michael's Institution recently. Ramin was actively involved in water polo when in ACS.

He finds the Malaysian education system traditional with too much emphasis on rote-learning. "There's little room for creativity," he said. "I wish it's more creative and interactive. You can learn plenty this way."

The German youth has visited many places in Ipoh such as the famous limestone caves and Kellie's Castle. A notable experience was following the entire Thaipusam route last January, which he described as "amazing".

Ramin, who runs an online photo blog, finds Ipoh a haven for shutterbugs. "There are so many beautiful buildings. Some of them are so old and are falling apart. It's sad that no one cares to preserve them," he said. "If I had the money, I'd do it!"

Ramin's sojourn in Ipoh ends in July.

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My Say

• By Jerry Francis



How many of us have counted the number of condemned, dilapidated and vacant business premises in the city centre? I have, and not to my surprise the number is quite alarming. If this trend continues, the old city centre will soon become "a ghost town". As many property owners have discovered, it is more lucrative to convert the pre-war buildings for swiftlets. A testimony of this is the recorded chirpings of the birds heard in the new and old town sectors.

The main contributing factor to the deterioration of the old city centre's economic activities is the lack of parking spaces, as well as the area being not pedestrian-friendly. No doubt, some efforts have been made by property owners to touch up and give a new coat of paint to their old buildings for new businesses; others were bought by speculators for future redevelopment.

Sprucing up the city's centre, just as what had been done to its "Little India" alone will not inject economic activities and boost redevelopment. The city council needs to carry out a comprehensive study to rejuvenate it by looking into every aspect of the issue.



"Eyesores" In Our City



Just look around and you will undoubtedly get the picture. Already about 10 per cent of the business premises along the two main thoroughfares, Jalan Sultan Idris and Jalan Sultan Iskandar Shah, have either been vacated or condemned.

There are many other such business premises in the city centre. To add to this gloomy picture, buildings destroyed by fire about a decade ago still stand out as "eyesores" in the city centre. The city council appears to be helpless, except for putting flimsy partitions around such buildings. While others, though occupied, are seen with their roof tiles and wooden window frames hanging loosely and precariously, just waiting to fall. Wild plants are growing on the walls and roofs giving the impression of a dilapidated "hanging garden."

I dread the day that debris or parts of the buildings will fall and cause casualties among motorists and pedes-

trians, just as the tragedy at Fair Park did two years ago, when part of a building being demolished collapsed on a car killing two and injuring another. Are we waiting for yet another mishap before we start to talk about what can and must be done?

The excuse given by the city council that it could not trace the owners of the buildings or have received no response from them, is a lame one. If this is the case, certainly the city council could revoke some provisions in the building by-laws to ensure the buildings are safe or if not, demolish them completely.

After being much criticised over the issue (including from Ipoh Echo), the city council finally announced at its last full board meeting that owners of old and dilapidated buildings, who ignore reminders to carry out maintenance at their premises, might have their property torn down and slapped with demolition fees. Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim said the city council would obtain a court order to tear down the structures found to be a safety threat to the public. It appears that the city council has finally realised that it has the power to act on the matter. The city council has identified 1,500 run-down buildings and classified approximately 90 of them as "dangerous".

Those occupants of shop-houses, who were once successful traders, are too old to carry on or their children are not keen as they see a bleak prospect in the city centre. Thus, many of the business premises are either empty or abandoned, painting a gloomy picture of a city that was once vibrant.

Laying new pavements is not sufficient to boost economic activities in the city centre; it needs more to inspire them: such as a good public transportation system, pedestrian-friendly walkways and parking facilities. Perhaps, even construct covered walkways along the Jalan Sultan Iskandar and Jalan Sultan Idris Shah bridges, as well as wider pavements at certain strategic business locations. These will encourage pedestrians to park their vehicles at either the old town or new town sector and walk to their destinations.

The city council could also offer some form of incentives, such as waivers or give discount on certain fees, to induce owners of vacated and condemned properties to redevelop and rid the city of the "eyesores".

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