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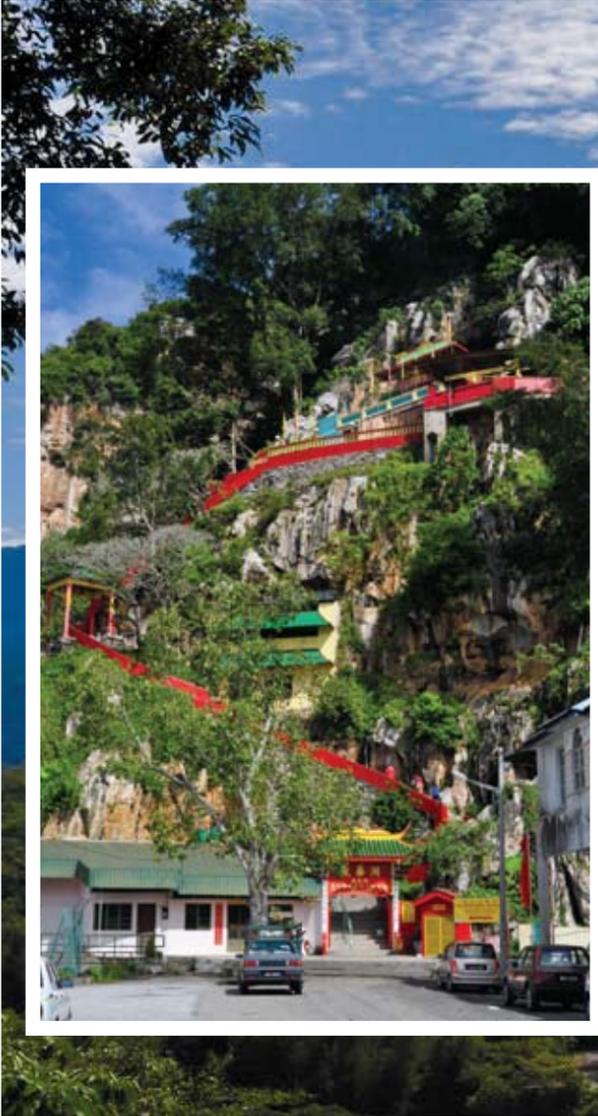
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Story & Photos By Yoon Lai Wan

The Heritage of Chemor



Perak, the treasure trove of peninsular Malaysia is a land full of fascination. Tantalizing food, sun-kissed beaches, enchanting landscapes and heritage trails are some of the examples which make up the heartbeat of this beautiful state. To walk in the footsteps of our ancestors, to feel the ambiance of the past and to learn to appreciate the rich heritage that exists in our own land was the call of the day on a recent Perak Heritage Society (PHS) excursion to Chemor.

Continued on page 2



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Chemor
Railway
Station

Kak Nadimah's 19th century house in
Kg Mandailing, Chemor



Former staff quarters in HBUK but is now converted to
house a few inmates

Neolithic Rock Paintings, Chinese and Indian Temples, On the Chemor Heritage Trail

The event, lead by Law Siak Hong and his team was opened to the public and an enthusiastic group of 14 people turned up for the memorable occasion. In reality, this nostalgic trail is a loop which starts from Tambun and ends in Tanjung Rambutan.

Gunung Panjang

Gunung Panjang, Tambun was our first stop. This place is famed for its Neolithic rock paintings dating more than 2,000 years back. One needs to take a leisurely walk along an overgrown trail and climb a flight of steep concrete steps before reaching Gua Tambun where the Tambun Rock Paintings are found. We were enthralled by the red-pigmented paintings which bears a slight resemblance to the aboriginal paintings of Australia. It has been noted that there are more than 600 prehistoric rock paintings but they are rapidly fading due to exposure to natural elements through time. Illustrations of dugongs, deer, tapirs and wild boars can still be seen and with a vivid imagination, many others may start appearing too.

Flora & fauna is abundant in Gunung Panjang. We took our time to soak in the beauty of nature and were admonished to not deviate from the path as we may unknowingly tread on some artefacts and destroy a part of history.

Tong Wah Temple

Tong Wah Tong or Tong Wah Temple, located along Batu 7, Jalan Ipoh-Tanjung Rambutan was our next stop. Most of Ipoh's cave temples nestled among the many limestone hills in Kinta Valley but this interesting site is wedged half way up Gunung Layang Layang. One has to be physically fit to climb a flight of 168 steps before reaching the main entrance. Do take a breather while ascending as one can be rewarded with a great panoramic view of Kinta.

At the entrance of Tong Wah Tong, two gigantic murals depicting a green dragon and a tiger are paired off on each side of the wall. The murals of the mythical Chinese dragon & tiger are symbolic to ward off evil spirits. Having been there before, I noticed that the green dragon has been repainted gold. I was told by a temple helper that the reason for doing so is that golden dragons represent the most sovereign of the metallic dragons and they are also the most dedicated to defeating evil. On entering, an impressive altar is seen inside the main chamber. We were also shown a meditation centre located on another level.

Tanjung Rambutan

Tanjung Rambutan was our next destination. This is

a multiracial small town where everyone is living in harmony. On the main road, one can spot a *gurdwara* (Sikh temple), an Indian temple, a mosque and a Chinese temple quite close to each other. Pre-war architecture like SJK (C) Tat Choi and the railway station can still be seen. The rustic railway station, built in 1897, has seen better times. Sadly, it will soon be demolished to make way for the new double track. Trains do not stop here anymore but one can still visit this nostalgic place to look at the architecture and try the local delicacies which are being sold around this station. Don't miss the Railway *pasembor* stall which opens from noon till dusk (closes on Friday). The *pasembor* is simply one of the best that I have tasted.

Kampung Mandailing

Kampung Mandailing, Chemor was our next call. Kak Nadimah, a descendent of Raja Bilah, was there to



'Keys', Chemor Railway Station

welcome us to her lovely house built in the 19th century. We were shown her collection of heirlooms. Solid antique furniture, four-poster beds, collections of lamps and bottles, a giant cookie press and the beautiful century-old *tekat* (embroidery) were artistically displayed. Kak Nadimah, being the perfect hostess who not only speaks excellent English but is a fantastic cook as well, treated us to a spread of Malay/Mandailing cuisine which included her specialty, the *Kuih Makmur* filled with pineapple jam. Chronicles of her father, the former head-man of Kampung Mandailing were later shared with us.

Chemor railway station which was built in 1896 was our next stop. Shady trees and wild flowers lined the path leading to the station. Manned by Hassan, the station master, this place has also seen better days but trains do stop as key drops are still carried out here. Hassan graciously showed us around as we noted a phone with



Mechanical lever
frame, railway station,
Tanjung Rambutan



The antique
Birmingham oil lamp



Golden dragon (recently
repainted), Tong Wah
Tong.

single line, antique train 'keys', and mechanical lever frames.

Hospital Bahagia

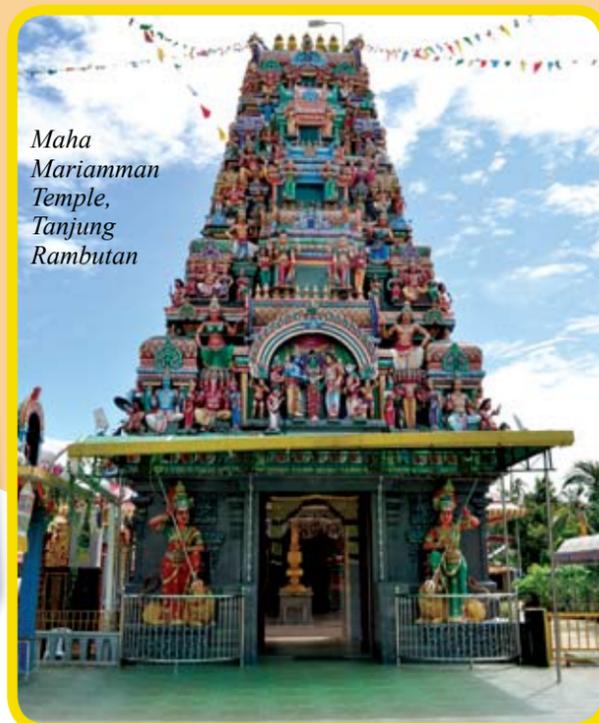
Our final stop was back to Tanjung Rambutan. This time we headed for Hospital Bahagia, Ulu Kinta (HBUK). With Gunung Korbu, the second highest peak in west Malaysia standing majestically within a short distance, one can feel the invigorating fresh mountain air blowing gently in the valley invigorating and refreshing the soul. This place is indeed the perfect location for a psychiatric hospital.

HBUK, built a century ago on 503 acres of land, was formerly known as Central Mental Hospital, Tanjung Rambutan. We were much honoured to be escorted by James Anthony, the supervisor of HBUK, around the vicinity. A brief history of this place was shared with us and we were taken round in a bus to visit the wards, gardens and lovely old colonial buildings which have stood the test of time.

Heritage trails evoke a sense of nostalgia. I hope that we will not let the old world charm disappear from our lives. As we are living on borrowed time, it is imperative that we preserve the rich culture and heritage found in Perak for future generations to appreciate.



Railway Pasembor stall, Tanjung Rambutan



Maha
Mariamman
Temple,
Tanjung
Rambutan



Tambun rock paintings

IPOH **echo**

From the Editor's Desk

● by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

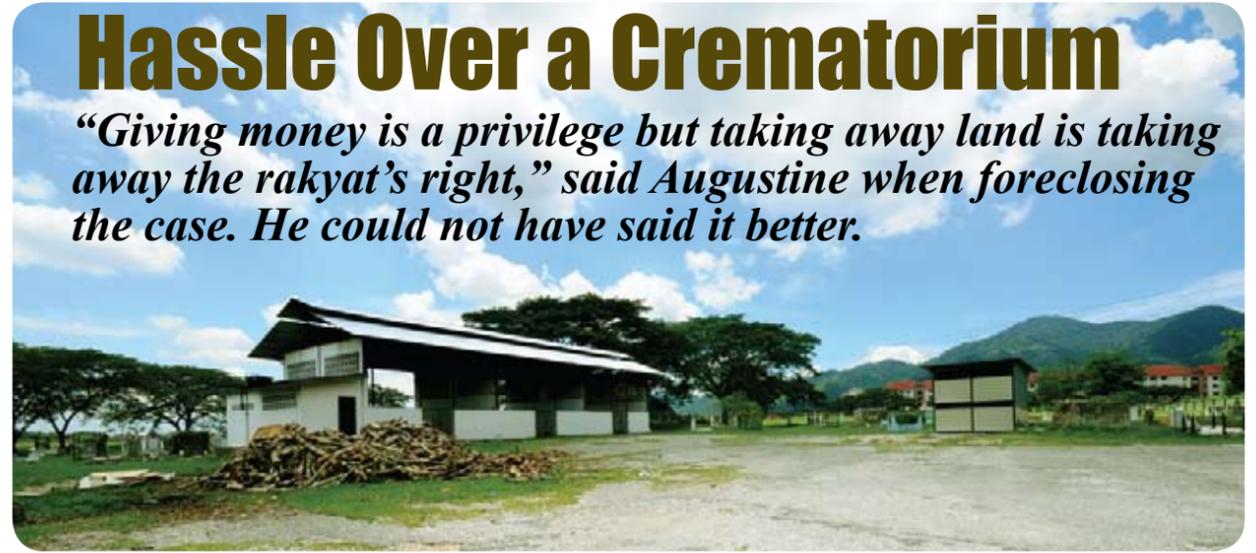
Cool heads finally prevailed, thus ending a protracted battle over a piece of land measuring 120ft x 120ft at the Hindu burial ground in Buntong. Had the wrangling continued unabated, tension would have built up resulting in more problems than ever imagined.

The root cause of the misunderstanding, unassuming though it may be, is the unending quest for a suitable public crematorium for use by non-Muslims in Ipoh. The issue is nothing new but it has gained momentum over time mainly due to procrastination by those entrusted with its implementation. The authorities should bear a major portion of the blame for giving too many false hopes and leads. I apportion the blame to politicians too for making a mess of the matter purely to score brownie points.

The Buntong burial ground is a gazetted piece of land "for the purpose of interment for the dead – to wit, a burial ground for Tamil community of Ipoh, to be maintained by the President, Vice President and Secretary of the Ipoh Hindu Devastana Parplana Sabha and their successors in office." This is an excerpt taken from a notification made under Section 9 of the Land Enactment 1911, which was promulgated in Taiping on June 24, 1919.

This clause is explicit but in making its intention known, the state government had resorted to a little arm-twisting by demanding, in a letter dated May 3, 2011 and addressed to the Chairman of the Hindu Devathana Paripalana Sabah (HDPS), that in order for the crematorium to be built, the society was required to surrender the 120ft x 120 ft where open cremating is presently being carried out, inclusive of the building. A special committee would then be formed under the auspices of the Executive Councillor for Non-Islamic Affairs, Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon. The special committee would oversee and manage the crematorium and HDPS would be given a seat on the committee.

The cost of building this public crematorium was originally estimated at RM1.5 million. That was the figure quoted during a meeting of the *Majlis Mesyuarat Kerajaan Negeri* on April 7, 2004. The amount sud-



Hassle Over a Crematorium

"Giving money is a privilege but taking away land is taking away the rakyat's right," said Augustine when foreclosing the case. He could not have said it better.

denly jumped to RM14.7 million when the issue was raised by the Opposition during question time at the State Legislative Assembly sitting on August 3 of this year. The proposed site had shifted to Lahat and Papan. The reason behind this abnormal amount, according to the ruling party, was for the building of a modern facility, incorporating the latest cremating techniques.

The terms proffered by the state government, as a pre-condition for building a crematorium on the Buntong burial ground, did not go down well with the Hindu community in Ipoh. What many found wanting was the requirement for the society to surrender the piece of land to the state government.



Augustine Anthony

The matter was again raised during a subsequent sitting of the State Legislative

Assembly on August 15 of this year. The ruling party's reply was equally perplexing. It countered by saying that the state "had no desire to annex the piece of land but was intending on helping HDPS to upgrade the open cremating site provided it was agreed by members of the society." The new crematorium would "then be able to be used by all non-Muslims". The new site once completed "will be re-gazetted".

For use by all non-Muslims and re-gazetting? These addendums are definitely alien to the Hindu community of Buntong. Soon alarm bells were sounded. It took the sound legal mind of Augustine Anthony to defuse the situation, which had by then, reached saturation point.

"The clause in the Land Enactment 1911 is crystal clear," he reasoned. It is for the interment of the dead of those from the Hindu Community. "Giving money is a privilege but taking away land is taking away the rakyat's right," said Augustine when foreclosing the case. He could not have said it better.

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.

Perak Bar Committee Talk – 'Undang-Undang Syariah in Malaysia', Friday November 18 at Tower Regency Hotel, Ipoh. Free for the public. For registration, call: Perak Bar Secretariat at 05-2537590 or 2415457.

Amnesty International Malaysia, Ipoh – 'A Night of Rights', Saturday November 19, 7.00 p.m. at Banquet Hall I, ICC, Jalan Raja Permaisuri Bainun (Kampar Rd.), Ipoh. New members welcome. Contact: Sdr. Hj Zakaria b Hj Yahya 019-5057086, Sdr. Sethupathy 012-6290223 or Sdr. Punnia 019-3363224.

Wawasan Open University Open Day, Sunday November 20, 10.00 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. at the Ipoh Regional Office. Counselling sessions will be provided for January 2012 intake. Enjoy 50% discount for Processing & Administration fee, fee rebate with special gifts upon registration. Contact: 05-2426323/2436323.

A Guitar Concert with Berta Rojas, Tuesday November 22, 8.00 p.m. at Auditorium, Creative Music Academy. Workshop is from 5.00-6.30 p.m. For enquiries and tickets, call: Creative Music 05-5479828, PSPA 05-5487814 or Ricky 016-5036472.

'Jesus Heals' Miracle Healing Rally (Chinese interpretation), November 24 & 25, 7.30 p.m. at 14th Floor, Excelsior Hotel. Free admission. Call: 05-5472994.

Pantai Hospital Ipoh Antenatal Class, Saturday November 26, 2.00-6.30 p.m. at Dahlia Utama, Pantai Hospital Ipoh. Free Admission. For further information or registration, call Ms Renuka or En Harith at 05-5405712/5405715.

'Circle of Love' and the Musical 'Hairspray' by City Ballet; a fund-raising project for Klinik Lutheran. Saturday November 26, 8.00 p.m. at Dewan Leong Wan Chin (Perak Girls School). For enquiries, contact: Witzl 012-5088818, PSPA 05-5487814, City Ballet 05-2537114 or Klinik Lutheran 017-5782026.

Kinta Craft Trail (Art & Craft Fair), December 10 & 11, 10.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. at Garden Villa. No. 5, Jalan Gopeng Road, Ipoh. Various interesting and unique handmade crafts, souvenirs, mementos, knick-knacks, etc. Crafters in Perak can contact: Dolly at 016-5516018. Email: dollyquah@gmail.com.

Citizen's Action in Response to Emergencies (Care Programme) by Perak Medical Practitioner's Society and St John Ambulance Perak, Sunday November 27, 2.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. at Ipoh City & Country Club Ipoh. Talks given: Choking, Insect Bites, Minor Wounds and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). Registration: RM20.00 per person. Contact: Dr Harbaksh 05-3216922, Wendy 05-2426549 or St John Ambulance Perak 05-2545946.

Cry Me a River and Yet It Runs Dry

● by Peter Lee

Ananda, a widower, nominates four of his children as beneficiaries of his insurance policies and EPF in equal shares. His children are aged 5, 8, 10 and 12. After his wife's passing two years ago, his parents in their mid 60s had been taking care of his children while he worked. He had been working very hard to provide for his children. One day, he suffered a stroke and went into a coma where he died one week later. His parents then discovered that he died without a will. Although he had nominated his four children as the beneficiaries of his EPF, they would not be able to receive it because they are still under 18 years old. He did the same nomination for his insurance policies and because the children were still minors at the time of nomination, he chose his wife to be the Trustee in the nomination form. However, he did not change the Trustee when his wife died. As a result, the insurance money was disbursed to Amanah Raya Berhad (ARB) (as the Public Trustee). Ananda's parents as the guardians can liaise with ARB to have some of the proceeds released periodically. The children will be able to obtain any balance when they reach 18 years old. The insurance proceeds are simply not enough and the heavy responsibility of funding now falls on the shoulders of Ananda's parents as his other assets are frozen and can only be unlocked after his family obtains the Letter of Administration. This tragic and sometimes unexpected situation can befall anyone and his children's position is like cry me a river and yet it runs dry.



Nomination of beneficiaries in EPF and insurance, like Ananda's case, is vital because it provides immediate funding for his family. However, his estate encounters another set of problems because his children are still minors. If he was alive, he could minimise the problem by drawing up his own will. In his position, it's strongly advisable to choose a Trustee Company like Rockwills Trustee Bhd. to be the Executors/Trustee of his estate. Then it's natural that he chooses his parents as the guardian for his children since they have been taking care of them. However, he must also choose a substitute guardian just in case anything were to happen to his parents. The appointment of guardian is extremely important because they can also claim a certain amount from EPF for immediate funding while the whole estate is frozen. EPF would definitely investigate who the rightful guardian is. So it helps by mentioning the name of the guardian in his will. As for distribution, he must specify a monthly amount to be paid progressively for his children's living, medical and education expenses until at least the youngest child attains the age of 21. This is what we refer to as a "Testamentary Trust". As for the Insurance policies, it is always important to review the status of the beneficiaries and Trustee whom he has chosen. Since immediate funding is always the biggest concern for all families upon the demise of the breadwinner, it is of great importance that he sets up an Insurance Trust during his lifetime whereby he, as the settlor, must assign all his insurance policies to a Trustee company like Rockwills Trustee Bhd. so that when he dies, Rockwills Trustee will receive it immediately and pay for his children's expenses.

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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Thinking ALLOWED • by Mariam Mokhtar

At a Loose End in Ipoh (part II): The Firefly Tour

After the tour of the charcoal factory and the various activities in the nearby kampung, we drove to a little roadside café and had a few drinks and some snacks before the main attraction of that day – the firefly tour.

“Shall we be the first in the queue for the firefly boat?” asked one of the children in our group.

“Will it be dangerous? It’s so dark,” said another.

“You talk too much,” moaned one teenager. “The crocodiles will jump out of the water and bite you.”

We arrived fifteen minutes early at the jetty at Kampung Dew. There was a parking attendant who told us we could park our cars outside someone’s house. He assured us that it was safe to leave it there and beckoned us to follow him along the path to the jetty.

At the jetty, there were at least six people waiting to receive us. We were each handed life jackets, and given a safety briefing.

Boat Ready, Guide Wasn’t

The boat was ready but our guide, was nowhere to be seen. I was reluctant to go without him and this caused some friction with the jetty crew. I wondered whether this was my intended boat or we were being hounded by touts.

No one seemed to know where the guide was, although he turned up twenty minutes later. It was a shame that the communication between the jetty and the guide was so poor. The jetty crew were very apologetic about his lateness. We set off on the boat and made our way downriver.

History, Habitat

The crew and guide were wonderful. They were friendly and told us the history of the fireflies, their habitat and how many different types there were. They showed us which type of tree the fireflies liked to live in and they told us the dangers that the fireflies faced. One of the crew explained that a professor from a local university was a regular visitor, and had taken many samples for one of his studies.

For the first half hour or so, we were on full alert looking for the fireflies. We were fortunate that it was not raining and as we sped up the river, felt the warm breeze on our faces. Surprisingly, there were no mosquitoes or other bugs.

During the day the boat is used to transport mangrove logs. At night, it is used for the firefly tours.

As we relaxed on the chairs and stools, arranged on the deck of the boat, we scanned the riverbanks for wild animals. Even after we had gained our night vision, it was difficult to detect other signs of life. But we were told that there would probably be monitor lizards, snakes and birds.

Large Christmas Tree

When we turned round one bend of the river, we saw what looked like a



large Christmas tree in the middle of nowhere. It was so startling it took our breath away.

The younger children shouted with astonishment at the blinking fairy lights whilst the older ones tried to take pictures. We continued down the river and found more colonies on the riverbanks.

The spotter at the front of the boat was very knowledgeable and gave us a running commentary. As he could not speak English, his companion helped to translate, for the benefit of the children who did not understand Malay. We stopped at one *berembang* (*Sonneratia caseolaris*) tree, so that one child could retrieve a leaf and flower for her ‘show and tell’ sessions at school. After an hour, the boat turned round and we headed back to the jetty.

Fumes and Noise

It was only on the return journey that the fumes from the diesel boat irritated us. Even the noise of the diesel engines was beginning to drown our conversations. Perhaps, the driver of the boat was at top speed to rush back. Or had we been so excited about seeing the fireflies that we did not notice the fumes and noise before?

Is there an allocation under VPY 2012 for the villagers/tour guides to purchase quieter and cleaner engines for a truly memorable experience?

Protection for Habitat Critical

The encroachment of oil palm plantations may soon destroy the habitat of the fireflies. There was only a small buffer zone to protect the natural habitat of the riverbanks, and according to the villagers, who acted as the crew and guides, the plantation workers clear the trees on which the fireflies live.

The crew claimed that they had protested about the lack of protection for the habitat of the fireflies and of their new source of tourist income.

Perhaps, their complaints have fallen on deaf ears.

If the Perak state authorities are serious about empowering the villagers to promote village life and eco-tourism, they must help protect the villagers from the big-industrial players which promote their own interests and increase their profits with ruthless efficiency.

It isn’t just the oil-palm plantations which are destroying the habitat of the fireflies and the villagers’ new livelihood. The glare from the powerful lights on the nearby highway may also kill-off the firefly colonies, as there is nowhere for them to move to and breed. The oil-palm plantations are encroaching upon the whole length of the riverbank.

In the next instalment, join us as we embark on the Taiping night safari.

Community Scooter Convoy an Annual Event

Visit Perak Year 2012 may prove to be more colourful now that the scooter convoy, dubbed Konvoi SYM Gear Ipoh, has been declared a calendar event of Ipoh City Council effective next year. This was announced by Mayor Dato’ Roshidi Hashim during the gathering of scooter lovers at Dataran MBI recently. A total of 178 Taiwan-made SYM scooters (VPS 200 and EVO 250) were on parade.

“City Council will allocate RM5,000 for this event, which will subsequently be known as Konvoi SYM-MBI Gear Ipoh,” Roshidi told reporters. The event will be incorporated into the Ipoh Day celebration in 2012.

Event organiser, Jaspal Singh was thrilled by the mayor’s announcement. It was a right decision, he said considering that Ipoh is located in between KL and Penang. “Biking enthusiasts from all parts of the country can converge on the city for this event.”

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The Ipoh Echo can be picked up for free at various locations around town. For information, call the office at 05-249 5936.



This mammoth gathering of scooter lovers was made possible through the initiatives of Jaspal, a proud owner of a VTS 200. In spite of the huge turnout only five bikers were from Perak, Jaspal being one of them. “The majority were from Kuala Lumpur and Selangor.”

The dearth of sponsors did not deter Jaspal from making this event a reality. “I am proud that in my hour of need there were those who came out to help and this includes the Menteri Besar who bought us pomeloes,” said Jaspal to Ipoh Echo.

Due to the size of the convoy Jaspal could only take the riders past the Tambun pomelo orchards, Little India, Ipoh Railway Station and a stopover at Dataran MBI before proceeding to Ulu Chepor. The riders’ last stop was at the organiser’s house in Tanjung Rambutan.

Readers can call Jaspal at 016-521 0611 for details on next year’s gathering, which is slated for May 2012 in conjunction with Ipoh Day celebration.



Musings on Food

seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

Photos by Oscar Mazzarello

SeeFoon HEADS FOR THE HILLS

While most of Ipohites head Hills for their workout, I prefer the more route for a visit to its foothills. The later the better.

Either the acoustics of this is particularly bad or the early there between 6.30-9.00 p.m. talk the decibel level is almost unbearable occasion when I went there and couldn't to the food. However, with my taste buds tickled, I was determined to return to savour more of this restaurant's signature dishes and understand the reason for its extreme popularity.

So on another evening a group of us ventured out but this time we booked in advance and deliberately made an effort not to arrive before 9.00 p.m. Ahh the blissfulness of being able to hear ourselves talk!

Mun Ji was certainly worth the return visit. The directions are pretty straight forward. Take the Lumut highway and 300 yards before the Menglembu traffic lights, turn right. A brightly lit sign for the Hotel Kledang Menglembu is clearly visible amongst all the brightly lit stalls and coffee shops on the left. Continue past all these busy stalls heading straight. At the second junction, turn left and left again. Mun Ji is a corner lot facing an empty space and opposite some private housing.

Phoon is the owner cum chef who picked up his cooking skills in Singapore as well as many other locations. His signature dishes are many



and once you've placed an order, expect the dishes to come all at once. They do not stagger the order, so expect some waiting time and immediate gratification

HAWKER FOOD

Tom Yam Seafood Noodles



It has been said that the most popular dish in Malaysia is the Thai tom yam soup, as you can easily spot a 'Gerai Tom Yam' anywhere you go in Malaysia. Thai soups are wonderfully flavoured and are known to be healthy and nourishing, due to its potent combinations of herbs and spices.

Easily the most popular soup in both Thailand and Malaysia, the local version of the mouth-watering *Tom Yam Seafood Noodles* is usually served with rice vermicelli (*beehoon*), a combination of prawns, clams and squid, and may sometimes include vegetables such as cauliflower and carrots.



Places to try:

'Sukho Thai' stall, Kedai Makanan Sumto

Lorong Bercham 1, Bercham (corner coffee shop at the end of Yoyo bus office) An authentic and flavourful version, with generous servings of seafood and vegetables. Stall operated by Thai people.

RM6.50. Opens daily 12.00-3.00 p.m., 6.00-9.00 p.m. except Wednesdays.

Restoran Fai Kee

28, Jalan Seenivasagam, Greentown

Originally famous for its seafood noodles, the stall's tom yam version uses a homemade paste garnished with lots of fresh basil leaves, giving the seafood-laden meal a full, aromatic flavour.

RM6. Opens daily, 7.00 a.m.-4.00 p.m.

Maxwell Restaurant (Halal)

Maxwell Road (directly opposite Syariah courts)

A close-to-authentic Thai version of the clear tom yam soup, but less spicy.

RM5. Opens daily 11.00 a.m.-3.00 p.m., 6.00-10.00 p.m. except Fridays.

Restoran Sri Hat Yai Tomyam (Halal)

92, Tambun Main Road (right hand side of main road after traffic lights at Tambun town)

A sumptuous and flavourful Thai red curry tom yam, which includes chicken meat on top of seafood and vegetables. Operated by Thai muslims.

RM5. Opens daily 5.00 p.m.-3.00 a.m.

Kedai Kopi Kwong Hing Woh

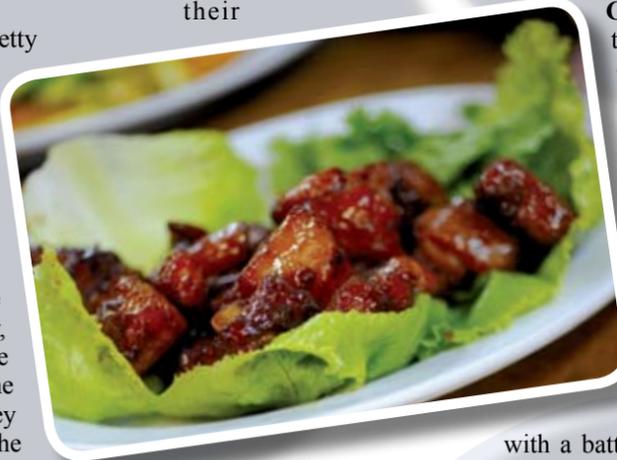
Corner of Lorong Bercham 7, Bercham

A more sour rendition, with very generous servings of seafood and vegetables.

RM6. Opens daily, 5.00 a.m.-2.00 p.m.

our energetic for the Kledang early morning 'couch potato' in the evening.

Mun Ji restaurant diners who flock especially loudly, but as I discovered on the first stay long enough to do justice to



here.

As I ate there twice, I will list the dishes in no particular order, focusing only on the ones that made an impression on my palate. The live steamed **Tilapia** was nicely steamed with a black bean and chilli topping. Good quality but not outstanding – RM22.

The **Tong Poh Yoke**

(braised pork belly in soya sauce) is one of their signature dishes. The pork belly was wobbly and almost jelly-like in consistency, floating in a thick sauce that had hints of (*Nam Yu*) – RM12. Another signature dish is **Claypot Fish Head Curry**, a dish so popular that every table in the house will inevitably order it. The fish head which was Garupa, was cut into pieces and cooked in a very mild, very 'lemak' (rich in coconut milk) gravy with ladies fingers and *brinjals*. The gravy was so 'umami' I was spooning it up like soup – RM20.

Other signature dishes include the steamed **Wu Sou Kai** (a special breed called in Chinese, Whiskered Chicken) – RM16; the ginger **Kampung Chicken**, tender morsels smothered in an aromatic ginger paste – RM16; and their **Nestum Prawns**. These were medium-size prawns coated

with a batter made from Nestum flakes and deep fried. Crunchy, and crisp enough to eat some of the shell – RM25. Other dishes I would recommend include the **Pai Kwat Wong** (deep fried pork ribs) coated with a treacly dark sauce that was not too sweet and was succulently tender – RM15; the **Tofu topped with Choi Po** or preserved radish and minced pork, the crunchiness of the *Choi Po* offsetting the soft smoothness of the tofu – RM10; the **Petai**

Sambal Belacan Prawns were particularly piquant, the prawns fresh and the **sambal belacan** sauce extra spicy. I took some leftovers home and the next day, the petai dish was still deliciously flavourful – RM12.



Mun Ji Restoran Makanan Laut

No.1 Laluan Rasi Jaya 48, Taman Rasi Jaya
N 04° 34.331' E 101° 02.103'
Closed 2 days a month on weekdays.
Call to check:
Phoon 016-5437707

RECIPE

By Shanthi Ganeshan



Lemongrass Drumsticks

Ingredients:

500g cleaned prawns, well drained
20 sticks of lemon grass lightly pounded at the root
Dash of Chilli powder (to taste)
½ tsp. Turmeric Powder (to taste)
1 tsp. Salt
Sesame seeds

Method:

* Purée fresh prawns with a dash of chilli powder, turmeric powder & salt. Lightly pound the lemon grass with a pestle.
* Wrap the prawn puree around the thick part of the lemon grass with the aid of greased fingers leaving about 4-5 inches of the top exposed.

* Sprinkle with sesame seeds.

* Pan fry on lightly greased pan 6-8 mins.

* Serve immediately.



News Roundup

In Aid of Thalassaemia



Pertubuhan Thalassaemia Perak (PTP) organised a charity sale at SJK(C) Yuk Choy recently, as part of its fund-raising campaign. Funds are in short supply to aid Thalassaemia patients, especially children, to meet their medical expenses.

Thalassaemia is a disease of blood cells and can only be diagnosed by a blood test. It is attributed to either one of the parents who is a carrier.

President of Baiduri, Datin Seri DiRaja Saripah Zulkifli who graced the event, praised the society for its efforts in aiding Thalassaemia patients, especially the young and the poor. Baiduri contributed RM2,000 towards the fund.

Society President, Chin Yoon Fook, expressed his gratitude to sponsors and donors for their generosity. He said a large amount of money is needed to help the patients, as they have to undergo blood transfusions once every three weeks.

Raja Nur Mastura, 14, and her brother, Raja Aznan Shah, 12, have been receiving aid since they were 9 months old. Both were full of praises for PTP. Besides assisting them in medication and treatments, PTP also took them out on vacation trips and other activities.

SH



Debut Performance

Thirteen-year old Vanya Verma, an Indian national residing in Ipoh, is a Year 10 student at the Ipoh International School. But unlike other 13-year olds who more commonly spend their time on Facebook and hanging out, she recently performed her *Bharatanatyam arangetram* accompanied by accomplished musicians. *Bharatanatyam* is an Indian Classical dance. *Arangetram* is the term used for the full repertoire solo debut performance by a student of this art form. This marks a milestone for Vanya, as she has been learning the nuances of this art form since she was 3½ with dedication, discipline and diligence under the tutelage of Guru Smt. K. Puvaneswary at the Ipoh Nattiya Kalanjali Dance Academy. Following tradition, this solo debut performance was dedicated to the Lord, the Guru and invited guests comprising art connoisseurs, family and friends.

Having completed her learning, and ready for public performance of the full repertoire, as demanded by the tradition of the art, Vanya performed with expression and grace. Indeed, her parents Dr. Varun Jeoti, a Professor at Universiti Teknologi Petronas, and Ms. Vijaya Varun, an Executive Committee member of the Ipoh Fine Arts Society, are very proud of her.

VWSL

Dog 6 Months in Manhole, Rescued

A dog, which had fallen into an uncovered manhole and remained trapped for six months, was rescued after all attempts to get the authorities' help had failed. Cold and lonely, it had survived on the kindness of the residents in the area, who regularly lowered food into the manhole.

No one knew when the year-old Miniature Pinscher fell into the manhole at the back lane of Cempaka Sari 4, in Taman Cempaka. Its barking, months ago, had attracted the attention of the residents. Some kind soul then tied a plastic container (pic) for the residents to fill food and lower into the manhole for the dog.

Its plight came to the notice of an animal welfare NGO, Noah's Ark Ipoh, last week. An



animal rescuer, Victor Oates (pic) immediately went to the scene. Using a pole with a loop attached to it, he successfully brought the dog to the surface. "It is now being boarded and treated by Noah's Ark," said Oates, a 66-year-old retired gas engineer. "If not for the kindness and ingenuity of the neighbours, the dog could not have survived this long."

Oates, who had taken on the role of a rescuer of animals in distress, has been taking on the task seriously for the last four years. "Since I have retired, I decided to take on the role and have found great pleasure in helping the poor animals," he added.

All animals that have been rescued are neutered and treated. If no home can be found for them, they are later released at the locations where they were found.

On the claim by the Ipoh city council that it is "not practical" to adopt humane methods to overcome the problem of stray animals, Oates says that it all comes down to "dollars and cents". "The city council probably finds it cheaper to pay for a bullet," he said.

Jerry Francis

Innovation Day 2011

The three-day Hari Inovasi Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh 2011 (Ipoh City Council Innovation Day 2011) held recently ended with the presentation of prizes to winners of a competition on innovative ideas. The competition was divided into nine categories. Winners received cash prizes and certificates of appreciation from Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim.

The primary objective of the innovation day, themed "Inovasi Merealisasikan Transformasi" (Transformation through Innovation), was to obtain innovative ideas from the public and council staff. These ideas, in turn, could help the council serve the community better.

This is the first time that MBI has held such a day which saw keen participation from both Ipohites and council staff. The Council plans to hold the event annually, considering the interest it has generated.

EL



Charity Concert



Ipoh-born Hong Kong actress and singer, Choo Mi Mi, a former student of SMJK Yuk Choy, Ipoh, will helm a charity concert at the Plenary Hall of the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre on December 18. Johnny Yip from Hong Kong will be her guest artiste. The proceeds will go towards the 2011 SMJK Yuk Choy New School Building Fund.

This was announced at a press conference held at the school recently, where Choo Mi Mi made a special appearance and conducted a motivational session for students of the school.

The objective of the concert is to raise funds for the construction of a RM8-million five-storey multi-purpose building. It will be located at the back of the school compound and is scheduled to be completed early next year.

Tickets for the concert are priced at RM100 and RM200 each. Those who donate at least RM1,000 will receive a free VIP or VVIP ticket and be eligible to participate in a lucky draw and stand to win a Mercedes Benz. Concert tickets are sold online by ticketing agent, MY TicketCharge Sdn Bhd at www.ticketcharge.com.my.

For more details contact Liew Thiam Seong at 012-505 3829.

EL

Study Tour for Students

The 3-hour journey by bus for 73 school-going children was not a problem, as they were more excited with what awaited them at the end of the trip. The students were adoptees of the MB Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir and were on a study tour of Putrajaya and Kuala Lumpur, courtesy of Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan (YBU).

"I am fortunate to be selected for the programme," said Norhidayah Zulkifli, 12, a Standard 6 student of Sekolah Haji Mahmud, Chemor. "It's a dream come true," she added, mindful of the efforts by the foundation in making her dreams a reality.

The students were taken on a guided tour of Putrajaya which included a visit to the PM Department and his official residence. Later they were taken to Kuala Lumpur to see the many wonders the capital city had to offer. The KL tour took them to the National Museum, Petronas Twin Towers, KLCC and other famous landmarks.



Foundation CEO, Dato' Zainal Abidin Omar, when addressing the students at Continental Hotel Kuala Lumpur, where they were billeted, reminded them of their responsibilities. "Being adoptees of the MB you have to uphold his good name and image," he warned. They were told to be on their best behaviour while on the four-day trip which began on October 28 and ended on October 31.

RM

News Roundup

Andaman Group Fund Raising Concert



The Jazzy Sounds of Teresa Teng concert, sponsored by Andaman Property Management Sdn Bhd (Andaman Group), played to a packed audience of more than 400 at the Bentley Auditorium in Kuala Lumpur earlier this month. The charity concert was part of Andaman Group's corporate social responsibility objectives to give back to the community in the area of education, and this it did by raising RM100,000 for SMJK (C) Sam Tet and Yayasan Pendidikan

John Moh.

Andaman Group Executive Chairman Dato' Patrick Teoh, a Perakian and proud alumnus of SMJK Sam Tet Ipoh himself, said that sponsoring The Jazzy Sounds of Teresa Teng concert presented a good opportunity to contribute not only to his alma mater, Sam Tet School, but also to help promote the work of "some seriously talented young Malaysians", referring to Leslie Loh, producer of the concert, as well as the performers Winnie Ho (soloist), Tay Cher Siang (pianist) and Roger Wang (jazz guitarist).

The concert in KL raised awareness for Sam Tet School beyond Perak, and paid tribute to Rev Brother John Moh, the dedicated and longest serving principal of the school (1959 to 1992).

Ipoh folks will have a chance to catch a second concert, also sponsored by Andaman Group, when it comes to town on November 25. [Tickets are available at Friendly Music Ipoh, or contact Miss Man at 012-6288819.]

According to concert producer Leslie Loh, this second concert, titled 'In the Mood for Love', will feature the same exciting new genre of Chinese jazz music as the concert before it.

"The two concerts appeal to both Chinese and English speaking audiences of all ages as the songs are perennial favourites performed in a contemporary jazzy style.

"Audiences can look forward to an entertaining repertoire by lead vocalists Lydia Chew and Z Yan, two talented local 'discoveries' who will thrill audiences with their smooth sultry vocals," said Leslie.

All funds gathered from the two concerts will be shared equally between the two beneficiaries, Sam Tet and Yayasan John Moh, and will be used for school maintenance, upgrading of facilities, school activities and to provide aid to needy students. The all-boys SMJK (C) Sam Tet, a household name in Perak, was built in 1934. Yayasan Pendidikan John Moh, a private foundation, was formed by the alumni of Sam Tet School in 1995 to recognize and remember Brother John Moh's tireless efforts and lifelong dedication to the school.

At press time, there were very limited seats left for the 'In the Mood for Love' concert, so hurry up and get your tickets today. Call Leslie Loh at **012-2083790** or **012-6288819** for tickets and further information.

Deepavali Cheer

Members of the Red Crescent Society of Gopeng/Kampar branch went on their annual round to distribute essential food items and goodies to poor and needy families in the district in conjunction with the recent Deepavali celebration.

Led by branch's vice-president Mr Desunda Singh (pic, in red) and secretary Ms P. Maheswari, the team visited over 20 homes.



"We've been doing our part to bring some cheer and joy to the poor every year. During Deepavali, we visit Hindu homes, Muslim homes during Hari Raya and Chinese homes during Chinese New Year," said Desunda. "These are being made possible by the generosity of the well-wishers in the district. They responded to our appeals by donating in kind and cash."

Desunda thanked those who had donated to the cause. "The aim of the Red Crescent's branch is to continue with the distributions during festivals every year," he added.

JF

Teacher Retires



Mr Zulkarnain Bin Abdul Kader, who taught at SMJK Yuk Choy Ipoh for 13½ years, retired on November 6. A special

function was held in his honour for the dedication and commitment he had. During his retirement function, students and teachers performed songs in English, Mandarin and Bahasa Melayu. The school's 24 Chinese Season Drums Club gave a spectacular and lively performance.

Mr Chan Hen Huan, Principal of SMJK Yuk Choy mentioned that the

school had lost a dedicated and committed Science teacher. He was well loved by his students. During his farewell speech, Mr Zulkarnain urged SMJK Yuk Choy students to

study hard and his fellow colleagues to give their best to their students. He also felt glad that the school administrators are dedicated, caring and committed to making

SMJK Yuk Choy Ipoh a better school. After serving more than 34 years in the education service, he reiterated he will miss all his students and fellow colleagues.

Wellness

Eye Health – Cataracts

Ipoh Echo's Eye Health Series continues with Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S.S. Gill talking to us about Toric intraocular lens implants during cataract surgery.



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

Intraocular Lens (IOL)

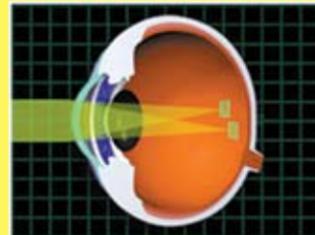
An intraocular lens (IOL) is an artificial lens that is implanted in the eye during cataract surgery as highlighted in the previous issue of the Ipoh Echo. IOLs may be grouped simply as follows:

1. Monofocal IOLs – covered in the last issue of the Ipoh Echo
2. Astigmatism-correcting monofocal IOLs (Toric IOLs)
3. Presbyopia correcting IOLs
4. Presbyopia & Astigmatism correcting IOLs

In order to understand what a Toric IOL is, you will need to understand a condition called **astigmatism**.

What is this astigmatism?

Astigmatism occurs when the transparent part of the front of the eye (cornea) is irregularly shaped. The cornea needs to have a spherical and even shape in order to focus the incoming light rays exactly onto the back of the eye.



Astigmatism – 2 focal points on the back of the eye

If the cornea is irregular (astigmatism), it will distort the vision making it fuzzy because there will be more than one point of focus on the back of the eye (retina). In short, this astigmatism if present, will contribute to blurred vision.

Many people who have short sightedness as well, quite often may also have astigmatism at the same time. In these people, both will need to be corrected in order to have good vision.

What about astigmatism in those who have cataracts? Can we correct or reduce astigmatism in these patients during cataract removal?

Toric Intraocular Lens (Toric IOL)

In recent years, technology has advanced rapidly, so we now have astigmatism correcting IOLs called **Toric IOLs**. These Toric IOLs help in reducing to some extent, the astigmatism after cataract surgery so that distant vision becomes clear without having to depend too much on spectacles.

The Toric IOL technology was introduced into the IOL market approximately 4 years ago. Before this, should a person have any uncorrected astigmatism, he or she would have to wear spectacles or contact lenses in order to correct the astigmatism after cataract removal. But now, with the introduction of Toric IOLs, it has made correction of astigmatism during cataract surgery so much easier.

In short, should a cataract and astigmatism be present together, then just correcting the cataract alone without reducing the astigmatism will result in the vision not being completely clear. It is best that the astigmatism is corrected at the same time if the astigmatism has been detected before you undergo surgery for cataract. This can be done by implanting an appropriate Toric IOL.

The cost of these Toric IOLs is still relatively affordable for most, being only slightly more expensive than conventional Monofocal IOLs.

Dr. Gill will discuss more on various IOLs in the next issue of the Ipoh Echo.

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

Indian Chamber's Tussle Not Over



The long-drawn tussle between two "legitimate" committees of the Perak Indian Chamber of Commerce (PICC) is far from over. Although the Ipoh High Court recently ruled in favour of Haji Sultan Abdul Kadir as the legitimate president, the rival committee lead by B.K. Kumar has appealed against the decision to the Court of Appeal in Putrajaya.

Responding to our report (published in IE128 in September), Kumar claimed that it was misleading as the case has not come to an end. He added that he had made a police report alleging that the rival faction had submitted false documents and showed a letter from the Ministry of Home Affairs informing that the matter is being investigated.

IE's earlier report was based on the announcement made to the media, during a Hari Raya open-house gathering by Haji Sultan, that the High Court's decision "will remove all doubts regarding the legitimacy of my presidency and that of the Perak Indian Chamber of Commerce."

Meanwhile, when contacted, Registrar of Societies (ROS) informed that for the time being, as per their register, Haji Sultan is the legitimate President of PICC; until the verdict of the Appeal Court.

AJ

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.

Rape of the Polo Ground

I am a resident of Ipoh who enjoys a bit of nature by way of some brisk walking at the Polo Ground and regular climbs up Kledang Hill where we can still be blessed with some fresh air and greenery and a suitable place for sweating it out after a long day of work and fatigue.

But sadly this faint bit of luxury and leisure seems to be fast diminishing, which brings me to write this letter to our dear Ipoh Mayor, c/o Ipoh Echo.

I strongly believe it is high time our Mayor and his council come to one conclusive decision as to whether he wishes to keep the Polo Ground as a place for exercise and relaxation for Ipoh folks or as the latest hawking centre for Visit Perak Year 2012? I dearly wish that the Mayor and his councillors can take some time off their busy meeting schedules to observe the goings-on at the Polo Ground at different hours of the day.

I have it up to my neck by now and I just have to voice some of my observations and indeed grievances.

The hawking activities at the Polo Ground have spread like a disease uncontrolled. Firstly, there is the obvious hawking by the roadside, van after van, with tables, chairs and stools, even huge shade umbrellas, all springing up like the wild *lalang* weeds after the monsoon rains, depriving genuine exercise-lovers of precious parking space, attracting drive-by customers who would double-park to eat or even to 'tapau' some. Then, there is also hawking in the Polo Ground itself, with ice-cream hawking, balloon hawking, kite hawking, soap-bubble tube hawking, toy hawking, *kuih-muih* hawking, *kacang-putih* hawking, syrup drink hawking, T-shirt hawking, etc. As if that is not enough, even at the public toilet, the attendant is hawking some kind of medicated oil or stuff like that in bottles of different sizes and shapes...OMG!

And so, along with all these hawking activities, the whole park compound is littered with plastic containers and spoons, polystyrene plates & bowls, soft drink cans, plastic bags of all shapes and sizes and of course unfinished food of all types and lots of used tissue paper.

Some are left on the park benches, some on the children's playground, some are left hanging from the poor, undernourished trees, some are simply being kicked around till they eventually become a part of the park landscape. The ones who have a bit of conscience throw the polystyrene into the dustbins which are forever overflowing. And huge black garbage bags by the tens of them form a

permanent temporary feature of the Polo Ground, being nicely and strategically placed every 10 to 15 feet apart. And not forgetting the aroma of exercise sweat mixed with rancid oil and spoiled food permeating around the so-called green lungs of Ipoh. How about including this as a special on The Sights and Sounds of Ipoh for Visit Perak Year 2012?

And I have yet to mention the unnecessary traffic congestion arising as a result of all these hawking activities!

And talking about vehicle traffic, why are so many motorbikes allowed into the Polo Ground compound? These young bikers ride into the compound along the walking paths meant for people who walk and they not only pose a threat to the latter's safety but they are indeed also another source of air pollution! On the evening of October 24, my eyes nearly popped out when I witnessed a white Kancil, full of passengers, driving into the Polo Ground along the walking path all the way to the toilet area! What exactly is happening to the civic-mindedness of Ipohites? Something is indeed very amiss with our whole education system!

While this rape of the Polo Ground is being played out, I sincerely hope that the other green lung of Ipoh, Kledang Hill in Menglembu, will be spared a similar fate. We, as true sons and daughters of Ipoh, should do our best to prevent the hawking disease from blatantly spreading anywhere else. After all, we all know that there is a time and place for everything in life, including exercising and eating.

I rest my case for now. I pray that our Mayor and his team of councillors can and will find the time to look into this matter and make a firm decision as regards the future fate of the Polo Ground. By taking up this case, hopefully he can arrest the disease and prevent it from further metastasis.

Tan Hwai Chin

Tin Mining Living Museum

I am inclined to agree with Jerry Francis that an allocation of RM5 million of tax payer's money to promote Kellie's Castle is rather misplaced (IE issue 131). Ipoh came into existence in the 1820s and gained great prominence because of its tin resources. The money allocated may be better used to recreate a 'living museum' of Ipoh as a tin mining town i.e. a tin mining town setting with tin dredges, Kopitiam, how tin is processed, activities to encourage visitors to participate, for example, dulang washing, etc. (too many to list)...more importantly effectively promoting it.

This brings to mind another place, similar yet different, which I have fond memories of. Sovereign Hill in Ballarat, Victoria, Australia was a gold mining town in the old days. When the gold ran out, the Ballarat Town Councils, with the help of the Victorian government, decided to re-enact the nostalgia of the gold mining town with many interesting exhibits, costumed folks, and visitors' participation. Today, it attracts 450,000 paid visitors each year and employs 350 with 250 volunteers who help bring the outdoor museum to life. Do visit their website to get the creative juices flowing - www.sovereignhill.com.au.

We are not expecting the Perak Tourism Board (PTB) to re-create a live museum of a tin mining town with tin dredge in large scale. It may be started on a smaller scale and gradually grow bigger. I would personally love to visit and re-live those days in the early 1900s when tin mining was at its peak. I am sure the younger generation, who can only read about the nostalgic days when Ipoh was a booming tin town, will thoroughly enjoy the experience of such a place.

This will be timely for VPY 2012. No doubt historians specialising in tin mining and its era will be of great assistance to the PTB. There will be challenges but I have absolute confidence in PTB to effectively put in place an action plan with KPIs to successfully promote Perak, especially Ipoh (I am biased, being an Ipoh gal myself), in 2012.

Kim Ching Low

More Upgrades for Little India?

I refer to the report 'Deepavali bash strengthens ties' (NST, Nov 5, 2011). It is stated that MB Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir presented MIC Ipoh Barat branch RM100,000 to upgrade Dataran Little India. Only about a couple of years ago MBI spent RM1.8M to upgrade Little India, including the Dataran. The traders are complaining that the acute parking problem and frequent flooding in the area have yet to be solved. This is tax payers' money and MIC Ipoh Barat has no right to unilaterally carry out any so-called upgrading. They must call for a public hearing and gather suggestions from the people. They should not repeat making stupid mistakes like building the public toilet in the centre of Little India. They must be transparent and inform the people beforehand what they are going to do. The money must be spent wisely to the satisfaction of all people.

A. Jeyaraj

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weekday | 10am - 6pm
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Tel: 05-323 6622 (Hunting lines) Fax: 05-323 6633
Website: www.bandarseriobotani.com

Wellness

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

O is for Orthoptics and Optimal Vision

There are 4 O's in Eye health. Most people have heard of ophthalmologist, optometrist and optician. An ophthalmologist is a medical doctor who treats diseases of the eye, the optometrist tests and prescribes corrective lenses which are then made by an optician. Yet most people have never heard of an orthoptist.

While orthoptists are also eye-care professionals, they specialise in a different area of vision health. "We are responsible for sussing out any malfunction or imbalance in the eyes that may prevent optimal vision," says Melanie Yeoh who is Ipoh's one and only Orthoptist.

What is Orthoptics?

Orthoptics is an allied health profession specialising in diagnosis and management of disorders of eye movements and associated vision problems and rehabilitation of patients with vision loss.

In performing these functions, orthoptists are an integral part of the eye health team providing investigative testing of diseases such as glaucoma, assessment and management of eye movement disorders (for example, following a head injury) and rehabilitation of persons with sight loss due to eye diseases such as age-related macular degeneration. Orthoptic treatment of certain conditions can relieve visual symptoms and enhance visual performance. Orthoptists serve patients of all ages, but because of the nature of many binocular disorders, the majority of patients are children.

Ipoh Girl

"My main role is to check the alignment of the eyes for optimal vision in order to correct problems like squints and lazy eye, misalignment and double vision," explains



Melanie who despite the fact that she practises most of the time in Kuala Lumpur, comes back a minimum of once a month and attends to patients at the Lee Eye Centre.

Born and bred in Ipoh, Melanie attended school in Main Convent and completed her Bachelor of Orthoptics in Australia. Currently she is studying for her Masters in Optometry at UKM (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia) which she does in spite of her very busy schedule.

"Most of my patients here in Ipoh are children, accounting for almost 80%. Parents may not notice that their children have vision problems and it takes someone like myself to detect it and prescribe remedial action. Lazy eye for example must be corrected before the age of 7 or 8. Otherwise the condition can remain permanent."

She advises parents to pay close attention to young children's vision habits. Are they squinting to see or do they tilt their heads when looking at something. Even if the child appears to have perfectly normal vision, it is advisable for them to have at least one interaction with an eye specialist at a relatively young age. According to Melanie, a child's vision can even be checked as early as one year old provided the eye specialist has been trained in Orthoptics, a rather special discipline not offered by many Universities around the world.

Melanie does not deal exclusively with children. Her patients include adults who may want to correct their double vision (usually due to head trauma after an accident), muscle weakness after a stroke or systemic problems like thyroid disease and patients requiring rehabilitation after eye surgery. Her patients are usually referred by ophthalmologists and eye surgeons.

For more information contact: **Lee Eye Centre**,
Tel.: 05-2540095 or email: enquiry@lec.com.my.

LEC Activities for World Sight Day



In conjunction with World Sight Day 2011, Lee Eye Centre organised a public forum, a free eye screening session and a mini exhibition on eye diseases on Sunday, October 30 at Dewan Serbaguna Taman Meru. The day started with the forum on "Eye Diseases in Old Age" followed by the eye screening. More than 130 persons were screened by the Lee Eye Centre Team which included Dr Lee Mun Wai and Dr Umami Kalsom Mohd Ali. The mini exhibition also attracted

many members of the public who were eager to know about relevant eye diseases and their prevention/management.

As a public service, Lee Eye Centre provides regular public forums on various eye diseases and organizes free eye screening in different parts of Perak. More information about eye diseases can be obtained from www.lec.com.my or from the doctors at Lee Eye Centre who can be reached at enquiry@lec.com.my. Response from them will be within 48 hours.

Oncologist, The One Doctor You Never Wish To Meet

And yet, when greeted by this dashing, fit (obviously someone who takes good care of his body) and charming doctor, I was swept off my feet as he proceeded to elaborate on the role an oncologist plays in caring for patients with cancer.

Dr Lum Wan Wei is both an oncologist and radiotherapist. "Oncology has shaken off the doom and gloom of yesteryear. No more the guaranteed hair loss or sickening nausea accompanying chemotherapy or the burns that may result from radiotherapy. Today oncology is tailor-made for each patient, the drugs being less harsh in side effects, the radiotherapy finely targeted and the medical journey for a cancer patient is filled with care and consideration."

Education

Dr Lum has been with KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital since 2006. He received his MBBS (First Class) in India and was registered with the Malaysian Medical Council in 1995. Internship at University Hospital followed by three years as medical officer in Sarawak General Hospital led to a further 3 years as Trainee Registrar at KL Hospital in the Department of Oncology and Radiotherapy. This period spurred his interest in Oncology and he pursued this sub-specialty where for three and a half years he spent working at the largest oncology centre in Hong Kong treating an average of 4,000 new cancer cases per year.

Here he honed his skills in all aspects of cancer management for different types of cancers using the latest tools in radiotherapy and new novel chemotherapy agents as well as innovative treatments using immunotherapy and biotherapy under the guidance of the best of FRCC Clinical Oncology Fellows. As a result, he was also made a Fellow, FRCC (UK) in 2004.

Returning to Malaysia in 2004 saw him working as a Clinical Oncologist based in Kuala Lumpur Hospital where he not only took care of case referrals but also gave Oncology training to medical officers under his care. Added to this heavy workload of managing 10-15 cases a week, he managed peripheral Oncology clinics in Ipoh, Melaka, Johor Bahru, Kota Kinabalu and Kuantan.

Deciding to move into the private sector, Dr Lum joined the Ipoh Specialist Hospital as their Resident



Oncologist where he has been practising since 2006. "I was attracted to the facilities here in this hospital. We have the privilege of having the newest radiotherapy machine of all the KPJ hospitals in Malaysia which can match those in the Nilai and Subang Jaya Medical centres, both respected centres for their oncology departments," he said. "This Varian machine has the ability to rotate 360 degrees, thus allowing for a more targeted reach of hard to locate tumours," he added.

Prevalent Cancers

On the subject of the most prevalent cancers in Ipoh, Dr Lum revealed that as

the general population here comprises a larger majority of retirees, the most common cancers affecting men in order of prevalence are firstly nasopharyngeal carcinoma, followed by colorectal and in third place, lung cancer. For women, breast cancer is the number one affliction, followed by colon, lung and cervix in fourth place.

"As an oncologist, my biggest challenge is convincing patients, especially the elderly, that either chemo or radiotherapy would ease their comfort levels in their on-going battle against their disease. Many of them prefer to seek alternative methods and can fall prey to charlatans promising a cure," he continued. "I never tell patients that they will be cured. We discuss options,



outcomes and probability ratios for remission. I strive to ease their pain, and reduce their suffering. So even if tumours don't completely disappear, by shrinking them, we help to reduce their discomfort, making the journey more comfortable."

Statistics Encouraging

Statistics for the treatment of various cancers are encouraging. Five years ago, Stage 4 cancers, without treatment, carried with them a 3-6 month survival rate. Today, with either chemotherapy or radiotherapy, that survival rate is well beyond 6 months and much more optimistic for cancers detected at early stages. Furthermore, the draconian side effects of treatment has been reduced dramatically as a result of newer chemotherapy drugs and protocol and the more targeted radiotherapy machines which are able to zero in on the lesions and tumours.

"Whether this is winning the war on cancer is debateable, but my task is to help prolong life often allowing the patient to get his or her house in order without the pain of the disease crippling them. I am 'pro-life' and I believe that if you can have one day extra, that is worth clinging to," he emphatically stated.

Dr Lum has set up the same patient protocol in Ipoh which he learnt from Hong Kong, the basic tenets being minimal waiting time, good communication with patients and good rapport. This allows for individualised treatment and accommodation of patient's needs.

To the question of how he updates himself on the latest treatment protocols he said, "I believe in continuous medical education, and having just returned from Stockholm from the European Oncology Congress, I'm full of new ideas that I wish to explore with my patients."

"The message I wish to give to potential patients is this: For men, if you have enlarged lymph nodes, nose bleeding, persistent nose block, bleeding in your stools, and for women the first sign of something amiss, do not wait to go to your doctor. The prognosis for cancer caught in its early stages is very positive."

For more information, contact:
Dr Lum Wan Wei,
KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital, Suite 2-19
Tel: 05-2415106/7 or 05-2408777.

News Roundup

ISPCA Food Fair



The Ipoh Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals or more popularly known by its acronym, ISPCA, held its annual food fair at the

St John Ambulance Hall in Ipoh recently. There were about 30 sponsored food stalls selling a wide variety of local delicacies and tidbits. In conjunction with the fair, the United Youth Movement of Malaysia (Pertubuhan Gerakan Belia Bersatu Malaysia) organised a pet beauty contest, which was well received by pet owners.

Proceeds from the food fair and pet beauty contest went towards the ISPCA fund to upkeep the no-kill animal shelter. Animal lovers who would like to adopt a pet can do so by visiting the shelter at Lot 38642, 4½ milestone, Jalan Gopeng, 31300 Ipoh, Perak. For details on adoption and other related matters, readers can contact Doreen Laidlaw at **016-560 8905**.

EL

Touching Base with the Handicapped

The Perak Tengah Community Rehabilitation Centre in Parit was a hive of activity recently when staff of Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan (YBU) and members of the Malaysian Association of Youth Clubs (MAYC) Parit Chapter dropped by unexpectedly. Their appearance was for a good reason – to conduct a joint gotong-royong for the well-being of the Centre.

The cleaning-up programme was led by the Adun for Belanja, Dato' Mohd Zain Abu Hasan. Present during the 2-hour cleaning operation were Khairul Shahril Mohamed, MAYC Parit Chairman and Parit Umno Youth chief, Abdul Rahman Syed, the Centre's head and YBU's Community Unit chief, Isfarina Mohd Bali.

The rehab centre caters to the physically handicapped within the District of Perak Tengah. "We can't abandon these unfortunate souls as they are part and parcel of society," said Dato' Mohd Zain when launching the programme. "The fact that well-wishers have donated in kind without a thought for personal gain



is indicative that society, on the whole, is supportive," he said. Mohd Zain appealed to corporations to continue helping the poor and the marginalised in line with the state government's objective to eradicate poverty.

Responding to Mohd Zain's call for help YBU made an on-the-spot donation of RM1,000 to the Centre. The money was for the purchase of basic necessities.

RM

Young Perak

Pre-schoolers 'Graduate'



Some 100 pre-schoolers received their graduation certificates from Encik Aznan Hj Alias, Deputy Director of Education Perak during a concert held in their honour. They were students of Tadika Kinderjoy, Ipoh who had put up a superb show of on-stage talent for the benefit of parents and guests, numbering over a thousand. The end-of-term show was held at the SMJK Perempuan Perak Ipoh hall recently. Aznan, in his opening remarks, stated that children who were exposed to high-quality preschool teaching tend to be more successful academically than those who were not. Mrs Looi, the principal, echoed similar sentiments and stressed on her kindergarten's commitments to provide a solid grounding for children while in their formative years. This is Kinderjoy's 15th consecutive graduation ceremony.

Ed

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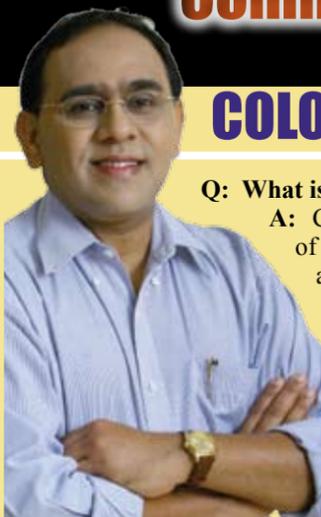
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Community Outreach Education on

COLORECTAL CANCER – A Preventable Condition Often Diagnosed Late

By Dr M.S. Thas, PMP FRCS(EDIN), AM(MAL)
Consultant General Surgeon & Colorectal Surgeon,
Pantai Hospital Ipoh.



Q: What is colorectal cancer?

A: Cancer in general is a group of cells growing together in an uncontrolled manner, invading and damaging healthy tissue. Over time these malignant or cancerous cells will spread to other areas in the body.

Colorectal cancer can occur anywhere in the large intestine and the rectum. It is the

commonest cancer in males and the third commonest cancer in females after breast cancer and cervix cancer. About 1 million cases are reported annually worldwide. Almost all colorectal cancers begin as polyps. These are benign or non-cancerous growths which if left untreated can evolve into a cancer.

Q: What are the risk factors for developing colorectal cancer?

A: No one knows for certain what causes colorectal cancer. However, we do know some of the risk factors that increase a person's risk of developing this condition. Amongst them are:

- Age above 40 years.
- Family history of colorectal cancer.
- Certain genetic conditions.
- Personal history of colorectal polyps.
- Certain chronic illnesses like Crohn's disease and Ulcerative colitis.
- Diet rich in red meat and animal fat, and low in vegetables, fruits and fibre.
- Obesity and lack of physical exercise.
- Alcohol and smoking.

Q: What are the symptoms of colorectal cancer?

A: Symptoms of colorectal cancers just like most cancers are often vague in the early stages. However, one should be wary of the following symptoms:

- Change in bowel habits such as increasing constipation, frequent stools, alternating constipation and diarrhoea and incomplete sense of emptying bowels.
- Passage of blood or blood streaked stools.
- Stools that are narrower in calibre than usual.
- Vague abdominal discomfort or a 'rumbling tummy'.
- Unexplained weight loss and loss of appetite.
- Unusual tiredness and lethargy.
- Swelling in the abdomen.

Q: How can colorectal cancers be detected early?

A: Awareness is the key to early diagnosis. Various methods of diagnosing the disease include:

- Detailed history and examination by a doctor.
- Testing of stools for evidence of bleeding.
- Colonoscopy – in this examination a long, slender and flexible tube is used to inspect the entire large bowel. This procedure is quick, painless, accurate and safe. Polyps and early cancers can be removed during this examination and any doubtful lesion biopsied.

Q: What are the treatment options for colorectal cancers?

A: There are a few methods of treating this condition.

- Surgery is the gold standard in the management of colorectal cancer. The nature of the surgery is dependant on the location and stage of the disease. A portion of the large bowel is often removed by the surgeon and the bowel reconnected. At times a stoma (colostomy or ileostomy) is created.
- Radiotherapy: In this, high-energy radiation similar to x-rays is used to destroy cancer cells at the site of cancer. It is often used after a surgical resection. Modern day radiotherapy is effective and fairly safe.
- Chemotherapy: In this, cytotoxic drugs (drugs designed to destroy cancer cells) are used to destroy cancer cells in circulation throughout the body. Side effects occur because healthy cells are sacrificed along the way. It is often used as a supplementary therapy. However, at times chemotherapy alone is used depending on the situation.

Q: How can one reduce the risk of developing colorectal cancer?

A: Certain healthy life styles may help reduce the risk of developing this dreadful disease.

- Avoid food rich in red meat and fat, particularly saturated fat.
- Consume plenty of fresh fruits and vegetable and food rich in fibre.
- Food such as broccoli, cabbage and sprouts are encouraged.
- Exercise regularly.
- Do not smoke.
- Reduce consumption of alcohol.
- Consult a doctor early if you have any bowel symptoms.
- Get yourself screened regularly if you are in the high risk group.

Q: What is your message to the community?

A: Unlike many other cancers colorectal cancer is largely a preventable disease.

- Screening tests allow treatment of precancerous conditions such as polyps, thereby reducing the occurrence of cancer. Early detection is also the key to successful outcomes.
- Despite many awareness campaigns colorectal cancers are often detected in their advanced stages and due to this the death rate from colorectal cancer is almost 50% within the first five years of treatment.
- Another major pitfall, especially in this part of the world, is people often attribute all rectal bleeding to haemorrhoids (piles) without proper medical consultation or investigations. This should be avoided.
- Self diagnosis and therapy can be dangerous and at times disastrous.

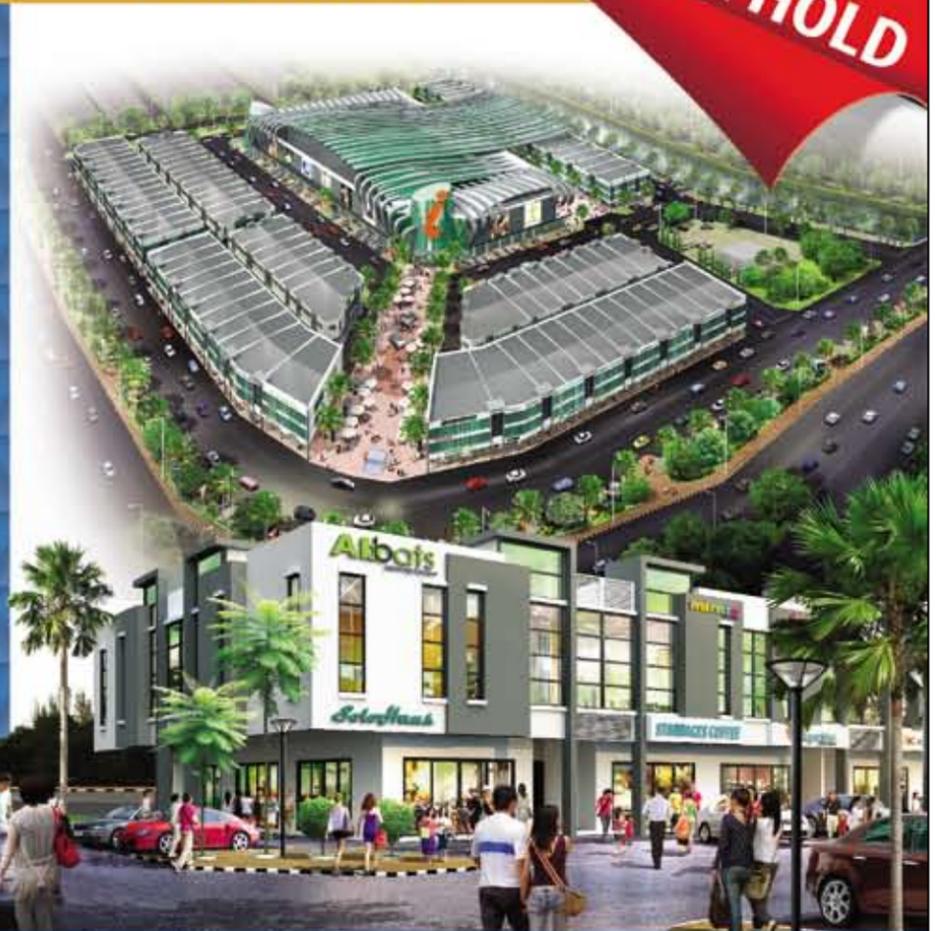
As a community outreach, our General Surgery & Colorectal Surgery Clinic will be having free consultation for colorectal & ano-rectal problems on December 10 and January 14, 2012, at 8.30 a.m.-1.00 p.m. Call: **05-5405668** for an appointment.

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My Say

By Jerry Francis



Is Ipoh Too Big To Be Managed Efficiently?



When I read about Kuching South City being awarded a United Nations-backed "Tourist City Award" recently, I turned green with envy. Why can't our city, which was once known as the cleanest in the country, attain such international or national recognition?

Kuching was the joint winner in the category – alongside Xining, in Qinghai, China – at the second World Cities Scientific Development Forum held in Chengdu, China. It is also the only Malaysian city accredited the United Nations' Healthy City status.

The global competition was organised by the United Nations, World Cities Scientific Development Alliance and the Sister Cities International. More than 200 city officials from 30 countries took part.

It has always been my fervent desire to see Ipoh continue to be maintained and developed as a clean and beautiful city. Ipoh is my "adopted" hometown since I moved here with my family in 1973.

As a journalist, I have seen it grow from a municipal council under the Seenivasagam brothers into a city council. It was then a people-oriented municipal council with two councillors on duty daily to deal with the problems of ratepayers. It also provided efficient health and recreational facilities.

However, after it was upgraded to city status 23 years ago, it began to decline and lost even its image as the cleanest city in the country. Recreational parks (there were then the Taman D.R. Seenivasagam, People's Park and Children's Park in the city centre) had also lost their attractions, while thousands of illegal rubbish dumps and clogged drains are all over the city.

This is the reason, not because of being anti-establishment as I have been accused by some, that I have been highlighting the failures of the city council in the last two decades.

Perhaps we should consider dividing Ipoh into north and south, as in the case of Kuching, so that the council

could provide efficient service and better amenities to the residents and restore its image and as well as giving Kuching South City a "run for the money".

Ipoh has grown too big since it was declared a city in May, 1988. It covers 642.57 sq. km. north of the Kinta District, extending from the edge of Bukit Kinta Forest Reserve in the East to the Kledang Saiong Forest Reserve in the West, and from Khantan in the North to Changkat in the South with a population of well above 711,000.

As a result, the Ipoh City Council has to provide services and amenities as well to various towns, such as Tanjung Rambutan, Chemor, Meru, Lahat, Menglembu, Bercham, Gunung Rapat, Manjoi, Pengkalan and a number of villages and new growth areas.

No wonder the Mayor, Dato' Roshidi Hashim, had conceded that the city's jurisdiction has grown in size to

such an extent that the city could not be expected to be as clean as during the era of the Seenivasagam brothers.

Recently, he also admitted that the drains in the city were poorly maintained as there were insufficient workers. He proposed to out-source the service.

However, since Ipoh attained city status, its manpower has also increased from just a few hundred to about 2,700 employees with much of its maintenance works being carried out by contractors. And yet the city council can still not cope with the workload. It appears the city council has been extended "a bridge too far" to have the capacity to provide efficient services and better amenities to its ratepayers.

Its area is now bigger than Kuala Lumpur, which covers 243 sq. km and has a population of 1.4 million. And even bigger than Kuching South City, Kuching North City and Kuching District put together, which have a combined area of 431.01 sq. km. and a population of 980,000.

With "Visit Perak Year" just around the corner, the city council needs to deal with all its problems fast. It has to carry out beautification projects, clean up the illegal rubbish dumps and clogged and stinking drains.

Otherwise, the city may even lose its top selling point, the delicious hawker food, as tourists will shy away from eating at many of the restaurants and food-courts, which may be considered by them as, dirty.

It is important that the influx of tourists expected during the "Visit Perak Year" have a good impression and a pleasant memory of the city after their visits if we are to consider our tourism efforts to be a success.

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