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ISSUE **138**

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Teluk Rubiah: Vale of Tears for the "Malaysia Project"

By Mariam Mokhtar

In January 2010, Vale SA, a Brazilian mining giant, formally announced the "Malaysia Project" for which a distribution centre and palletising plant would be constructed in Perak with an initial capital investment of US\$900 million (RM3 billion). Construction work on the controversial iron ore project at Teluk Rubiah in Manjung is underway. Large quantities of iron ore will be imported from Brazil, before it is converted into pellets and distributed to customers in South East Asia, China and the Asia Pacific region. A dedicated jetty will also be built to import raw materials and to export finished products. Perakeans, desperate for investment and development, gave their tacit consent. Others took no notice of the announcement which was carried in the mainstream papers. The majority were oblivious of this project whilst some have only just realised the magnitude of the proposal by the Brazilian company.

Continued on page 2



Vale's temporary site office



Artist impression



Kampung Pematang

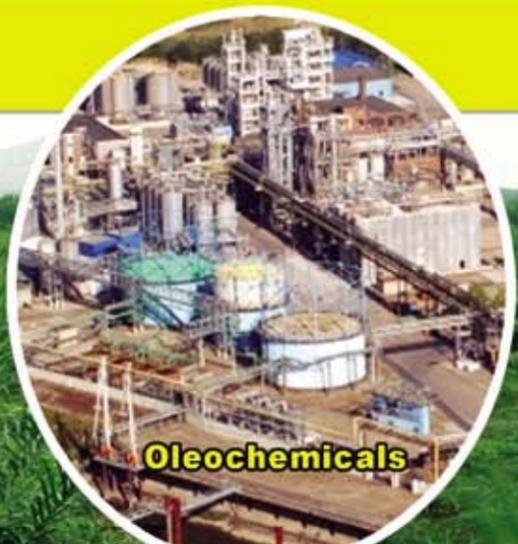


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Deep Seaport Terminal for Large Bulk Carriers

The “Malaysia Project” will involve a seaport terminal deep enough to accommodate ships of 400,000 dead weight tonnes (dwt). Initially, it will have the capacity for moving up to 30 million tonnes of iron ore. Future developments will include an option to expand facilities to handle a further 90 million tonnes. The plant is expected to commence operations in June 2014.

Work on the project started in the middle of 2011. According to Marcello Figueiredo, director of Vale’s Malaysian operations said that there would be “no environmental impact” during the current phase of the project as they were only building a distribution centre. The current phase needs a new jetty, extending 2km off shore with a 1.6km wharf, capable of handling large bulk carriers and barges, and would consist of a number of dedicated import and export wharfs.

State investment committee chairman, Dato’ Hamidah Osman, said that Vale was committed to the iron ore processing project and the state government has sent teams to study Vale’s facilities in Brazil. She said that Vale would invest between RM9 billion and RM14 billion.

Hamidah confirmed that the Vale plant in Lumut was located in a tourism zone and said, “... the Vale management is confident that it will be able to fulfil the detailed environmental impact assessment requirement for the project in Lumut.”

“Development Catalyst” – Zambrzy

At the ground-breaking ceremony, Menteri Besar Dato’ Seri DiRaja Dr Zambrzy Abdul Kadir allayed public fears and said that green technology was utilised in this “development catalyst”.

“The state has put forward a condition whereby Vale is to follow the environmental impact assessment procedures stringently...I would not tolerate anything that would lead to environmental problems.”

Vale executive director Jose Carlos Martins Antonio reassured Perakans that Vale would take all precautions to protect the environment. “It is our commitment to this country, authorities of this country and to the people of Perak. We are here to improve the people’s livelihood.”

Security Issues

Despite this, the *Coalition of Concerned Citizens of Perak* (CCCP) representing over 180 individuals – “*anak jati Perak*”, criticised Vale for building a jetty in Teluk Rubiah. They blamed the MB in “allowing Vale a free hand in owning the jetty”.

CCCP chairman Zainal Abidin Osman told *The Edge Financial Daily* of their concerns regarding security issues. They wanted the state government to refuse Vale rights to build and operate an enormous jetty in Teluk Rubiah.

In December 2011, Zainal said, “National assets should be under the administration of the government and cannot be sold to any party, especially foreign companies.”

“The government cannot and should not allow an asset of such magnitude and importance to be fully controlled by foreigners, especially on the Lumut coast,



Fishermen from Kg Pematang Manjung Selatan

where Malaysia’s naval base is situated.” “We tried to get an audience with Zambrzy, but we couldn’t, so we wrote in. We wrote in a few times, since February this year but he did not reply.”

Fears expressed by civic groups and local residents concern the destruction of the environment, the livelihood of locals, particularly fishermen, and beach-side tourism.

Countering these fears, Vale said: “We adhere to strict low-impact shipping practices. Vale’s ships will not pollute or cause other environmental damage.”

Environmental Issues

Nevertheless, the nearby Outward Bound School has alleged that part of the jungle is inaccessible to its teams. Other education and training institutions are also barred from entering the area.

Consumer and environmental groups have joined in the condemnations with claims that the ecosystem of the area, formerly gazetted as a forest reserve, would be destabilised.

The plant is located on a 450-acre site which was originally a Permanent Forest Reserve but the state government re-gazetted it to an ‘Industrial Zone’. Meor Razak Meor Abdul Rahman, Secretary of the Perak Environmental Association, said that the area is classified as an ‘Environmentally Sensitive Area Class 11’ and is only suitable for small eco-tourism projects but not for industrial use. He questioned why the plant had not been sited at the Manjung Industrial Park.

The Perak Department of Wildlife and National Parks said that the area is rich in flora and fauna and protected under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972. The site is surrounded by mature and regenerating natural primary forest whilst the bird life and mammals are protected by national and international laws. The area is also home to leopards, white-bellied eagles and the endangered palm plant, *Phoenix paladosa*.

Meor Razak criticised the state government, alleging that the state “went against all the laws of the land” during the process of converting the land from tourism to industrial use.

“Until today, the state government has not dared to answer us. Why did they do this re-zoning? If there’s no profit, then we don’t need to follow laws? We might as well be lawless.”

Effects on Ecosystem and Health

Penang (CAP) research officer S. Mageswari alleged that Vale had not fully addressed concerns about the ecosystem. “They claim there would be no problems but these ships that are coming in are huge vessels. Their movement would definitely affect the fisheries and coral reef.”

“We are not convinced and assured. What are they going to do about the dust pollution, the health hazards to nearby residents? The dust, which will have sulphur and nitrogen oxides in it, affects the respiratory system.”

She voiced concerns over dredging activities and asked how this would be enforced. She raised issues to do with water quality, marine life and the contamination of ground and underground water through leaching.

Teluk Rubiah, where the Vale plant is sited, was once a traditional Malay fishing village and Malay reserve land. Questions about the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report for the project have also been asked.

In a public hearing organised by the state government in November 2009, Abdul Rahman Said Alli, President, Perak Environment Association said that the authorities had conveniently turned a blind eye to the objections raised by the local community. He dismissed the claim that the factory would provide jobs for the local community and said that the highly mechanised nature of the industry would require only a few professionals.

He said that the main livelihood of the people living in the area is fishing and that their livelihood would be lost forever as the movement of big ships in the sea lanes would prove dangerous for their fishing vessels.

Pollution would affect the water quality of the seas, with disastrous consequences for the popular Teluk Batik beach and Pangkor, which are located about 500m and 5km respectively from the plant. The effect on hotels and associated businesses would negatively impact the tourist trade.

CCCP chairman, Zainal Abidin, warned of the security threat to the Naval Base which is located close to the plant and stressed that the jetty should remain a national asset.

Perak Fisheries Department when contacted, said that the impact to the fishermen at the project site will be temporary. Once all project start-up work is completed, the environment should return to normal. The Department also stated that Vale would be creating artificial reefs later to stimulate marine life in the area and also confirmed that the aquaculture farms along Sg Manjung will not be affected in any way by the Vale project.

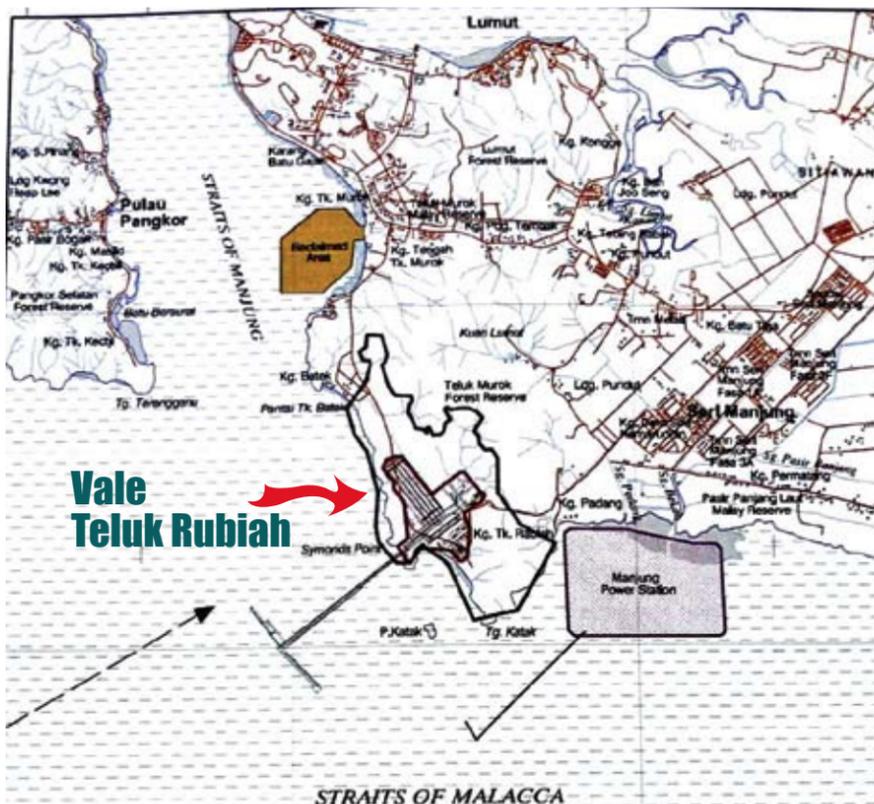
Vale No Response

A questionnaire requesting information about the project was sent to the Vale publicity officer in mid December last year. A reminder was sent in early January 2012. To date, Vale has failed to respond and William Sarayedin, the Communication Manager for Vale has not been available for comment.

One resident of Lumut said, “I can understand the need for job creation and regeneration of the area but I disagree with how the needs and concerns of the locals are brushed aside.”

The son of a fisherman when contacted said, “Is it morally right to sacrifice the environment and the original designated land use in the name of industrialisation?”

(With research contributed by James Gough and A. Jeyaraj)



Site map of Teluk Rubiah



Valemax vessels

IPOH **echo**

From the Editor's Desk

• by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

A Parent's Choice

The formation of Ipoh PAGE is largely an individual initiative made with the best of intention – to provide the number required to enforce a policy change...

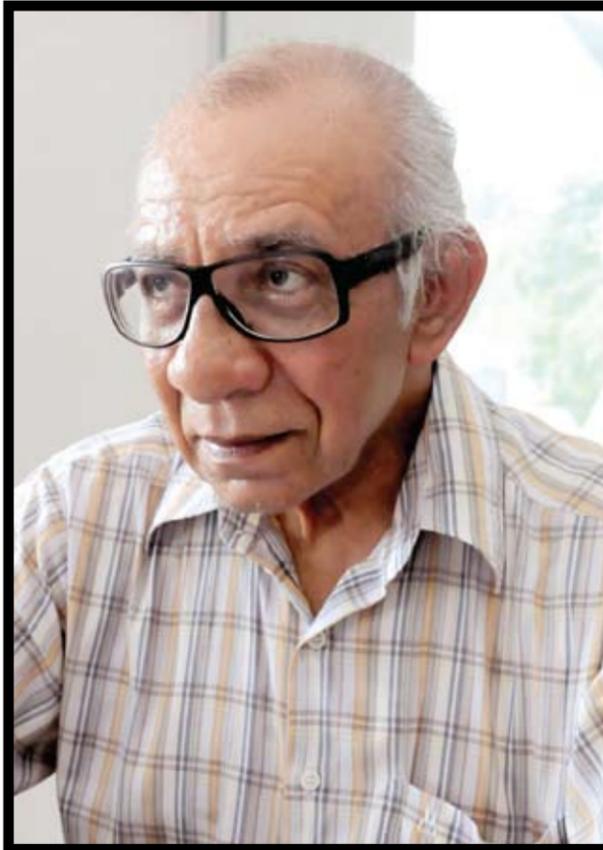
The decline in English language proficiency among Malaysians is becoming more apparent each passing day. Although attempts at addressing the problem have been taken, they are at best, short-lived and devoid of substance. The teaching of Science and Mathematics in English introduced by Tun Mahathir when he was Prime Minister in the mid-1990s was never fully realised as school heads resisted the ruling for reasons best known to them.

The only reason I can think of is the dearth of teachers who could speak and comprehend English well enough to teach in the language. Even at this material moment, sourcing for staff who can write legible English is problematic. So, we at Ipoh Echo have to make do with whatever is available. Thus time and energy is wasted in trying to decipher written submissions and reports. This is not an isolated case; the problem is endemic and is a major headache for those in the media industry.

My concern, however, is not with what is affecting us in Ipoh Echo but how parents are being short-changed due to no fault of them. The Education Act 1996 is explicit about the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English. The preamble says, "...the general principle that pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents." Parents, therefore, reserve the right to pick the language they prefer their kids to be taught, insofar as Science and Mathematics are concerned.

The only reason why the Education Ministry did an about turn was due to pressure exerted by the anti-English Language group, GMP (*Gerakan Mansuhkan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik dalam Bahasa Inggeris*). This non-governmental organisation consists of nationalists who are for the preservation of Bahasa Malaysia as the official language of the country.

It was during this period of uncertainty that PAGE (Parent Action Group for Education) came into being. The national body, PAGE Malaysia was formally endorsed by the Registrar of Societies in 2010 after a two-year hiatus. The Penang Chapter was formed in 2011. The group's



persistence in highlighting this anomaly prompted Education Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin to soften his stance and to provide parents with an option in the choice of language.

Our administrative system, however, does not function in the manner we expect. Decisions passed

in Putrajaya do not necessarily filter down the chain of command to the underlings in the states, districts and schools. It is the "Little Napoleons" who have the last say. They are the department chiefs, the district heads and the school principals. We come across these little pests when dealing with government agencies. And getting them to come to terms with reality is an exercise in futility. That is how swollen headed some have become.

Not wishing to be left behind, the Ipoh Chapter of PAGE was formed recently. It was largely an individual initiative made with the best of intentions – to provide the number required to enforce a policy change. Just like the Bersih (Campaign for Electoral Reforms) rallies, this NGO can make a difference. Pressure can be exerted not by physical means only; the Internet is one useful medium. The Penang Chapter has started a campaign via Facebook and is gaining momentum with over 250,000 members registered thus far.

Dato' Dr Anwar Hassan, a former student of Anderson School, Ipoh, is the man behind the Ipoh Chapter. On Saturday, February 11, through word of mouth and flyers, he cajoled parents to attend the local chapter's inaugural meeting at the Old Andersonians' cafeteria. Although the number of attendees was small it did not deter this former vet from making his demands known.

According to Anwar, Perakeans are generally unaware of the provisions in Education Act 1996. Among the issues the meeting raised is the listing of schools within the state offering the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English. The other is making available English texts for Science and Mathematics in all national-type schools that teach the two subjects in English, and finally, designating a cluster of schools of this genre in each district in Perak. Despite insurmountable challenges ahead, this affable and soft spoken septuagenarian is determined to set the records straight. Parents, Anwar needs your help.

Reviving Silveritage Galleria Complex



Silveritage Galleria Complex strategically situated along Jalan Raja Dr Nazrin Shah (Gopeng Road) will be revived per its original proposed plan, that of a State Handicraft and Tourism Centre.

The centre's infrastructure already includes restaurants, food stalls, mini-kiosks, 2 halls and other public facilities. However, the complex was subsequently rebranded as Medan Gopeng Bus Terminal when the express bus operators were relocated there in late 2004.

The re-development of the complex was announced by State Exco for Tourism Dato' Hamidah Osman during a visit to the complex recently. The revived complex will be a one-stop centre and will house the offices of tour and travel agents who will be allowed to bring in their tour buses.

According to Hamidah, the goal of the one-stop centre is to have all the state's products such as limau Tambun (pomeloes), kacang putih and even Pangkor Island ikan bilis and dried fish available here together with labu sayong pottery. "With the existing infrastructure even cultural events can be held here," added Hamidah.

The complex is anticipated to be ready after the middle of this year. This schedule is aligned with the schedule date when Meru Raya bus station is expected to be completed before the express bus operators from Medan Gopeng will be able to move over.

Hamidah also stated that a committee consisting of MBI, SEDC and the various tourism bodies and NGOs had been formed to oversee the transition.

JAG

Eye Health



World Glaucoma Week
March 11 - 17, 2012

In conjunction with World Glaucoma Week 2012, Ipoh Echo talks to Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S.S. Gill about this "silent thief of sight" – PART 2

Glaucoma as we know is a group of eye diseases that results in permanent blindness in the affected eye(s) that is irreversible. Glaucoma is the second leading cause of blindness in the world. The disease often goes unnoticed until the loss of vision is significant, hence the nickname "silent thief of sight".

Who is at risk of glaucoma?

Everyone is at risk for glaucoma and should go for an eye check annually. However, certain groups are at higher risk of developing glaucoma. The following conditions and groups have a higher risk of glaucoma:

- Aging
- Family members of glaucoma patients
- Diabetes Mellitus
- Short sightedness (Myopia)
- Long sightedness (Hyperopia)
- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Past or Present use of steroids
- Migraine
- Eye injuries
- Certain ethnic groups – Asians & Africans

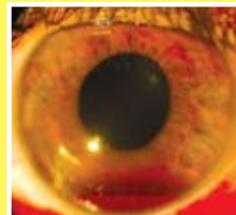
People Over 60

Glaucoma is much more common among older people. You are 6 times more likely to get glaucoma if you are over 60 years old and that is why it is important to have your eyes checked as you advance in years.

Family Members with Glaucoma

The most common type of glaucoma is primary open-angle glaucoma (POAG). This glaucoma is hereditary. The risk of glaucoma increases by 5 to 9 times if you have a family member who suffers from glaucoma. This hereditary link has been confirmed by two studies, i.e., the Baltimore Eye Study and the Rotterdam Eye Study.

Diabetes



Glaucoma-Rubeosis

Several large studies suggest that people with diabetes are more likely to develop glaucoma. If diabetes and glaucoma are treated early, vision can be saved. Otherwise, abnormal vessels in diabetes may form resulting in bleeding in the eye and rubeotic glaucoma (picture on left).

Dr Gill will elaborate more on glaucoma in the next issue of the Ipoh Echo.



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

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

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Thinking ALLOWED • by Mariam Mokhtar

Stand Out To Get That Job



In some professions, qualifications do not count for much; it is the personality behind the achievements that counts. A friend who has just spent a harrowing week interviewing new graduates confided in me the qualities of the graduates who had been selected for first interviews with his firm.

"The graduates think that showing me the piece of paper with their grades is good enough. It's not."

"Perhaps, in the past, grades or qualifications were sufficient. In those days, it also helped if you could speak well as it proved you had good communication skills.

"And it was a bonus if you had good looks."

He explained that nowadays, with so many graduates in the job market, potential employers are on the look-out for that 'something extra' to differentiate one person from the scores of others they screen at interviews.

"We want rounded personalities and it does not just apply to graduates. Many people forget that with the sheer numbers of people seeking employment, it is important that the person being interviewed stands out."

Describing some of the people whom he had interviewed, he singled out those who had confided something about themselves.

"Some people think that what they do in their spare time is not important. They are wrong. The person who tells me he does a bit of social work with elderly people shows that he cares for others. That he has a compassionate nature. The one who says that he recycles paper or glass or boxes, or helps clear up litter in some *gotong-royong* project shows that he cares for the environment. These snippets of information give the interviewer an insight into the character of the person asking for the job."

"I'm not saying that studies are not important. They are. But these extras are a useful indication of the type of person sitting before us." He went on to explain that volunteering or joining an NGO whilst at university were useful attributes to put on the curriculum vitae.

"Who knows? One day a week volunteering to help in a soup kitchen for the homeless, may mean all the difference between getting a job or not."

Alarmed at the lack of questions which interviewees had asked him, he then explained that he was receptive and more open to those people who were inquisitive.

"Some people say they have no questions to ask. That is worrying. Some say they have forgotten the questions they wanted to ask me. I tell them that this is not an examination and that they are allowed to bring in their pieces of paper with questions on them. If they did, it tells me that person has done some preparatory work," he said.

"Some people are shy. That is understandable. But they must feel free to talk about themselves. If they have had work experience when at university, they should try and relate it. What was it they learnt at their work experience, or internship? What did they like best? What did they dislike doing?"

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"If they did a short stint working in a supermarket, stacking shelves, it shows they can do routine, physical work. And if they handled customer queries, it showed they could deal with people."

"The people who come prepared, with notes about their previous work experience, or their questions, are the ones I warm to.

"Many forget that during work experience or internship, important stuff is being learnt. The basics of the job they are doing, like learning how to take telephone calls in a telesales job, or handling money as in a cashier's role is the first set of skills being acquired.

"The second skill gained is self-discipline. For example, it could just be the simple act of getting up to go to work."

He described one session a few years ago when he interviewed a girl who was well groomed, whose grades were alright but not too fantastic, who had some work experience tucked under her belt and who helped her mother collect old clothes for recycling.

"She asked me one question. 'What is the most worrying thing about your work?'"

At first I was taken aback. She had guts to ask me that question. I don't think I gave her a complete answer or one at all. But she is now my human resources manager."

Community

Caring For the Destitute



Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan's (YBU) empathy for the poor and the destitute is reinforced by the foundation's willingness to respond to the *rakyat's* needs spontaneously. On a recent tour of the Behrang constituency, Chief Minister Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir and CEO Dato' Zainal Abidin Omar were present to deliver some much needed foodstuff to two hard-pressed families in Kampong Kelewar, Behrang. The heads of the families are bedridden and are unable to fend for themselves. They have been living on hand-outs for a number of years now and are really desperate. The foodstuff given will last the two families for a short while.

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Musings on Food

seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

Photos by Nick Lee & Ed Shahir

SeeFoon's battle with buffets

I have always had a love/hate relationship with buffets. On the one hand the quality of food and cooking is often suspect and on the other, the variety of food is so diverse, that one inevitably will find a few items to suit one's palate. Buffets are where I bring my 'big' guys like my son and my nephew where they can tuck in to their hearts' content while I leisurely pick at their plates, tasting a morsel here and a bite there, having the opportunity to sample every thing else till I find the few that I really want to savour, before I make a move for my selection.

This was precisely the strategy I employed recently when I went to **Taro**, the newly-opened **Fusion Japanese restaurant** in Greentown. Located almost directly opposite Maria's and Chayo in Greentown Business centre in a standalone bungalow house, Taro shares premises with Kon Shong, a Karaoke lounge upstairs.

Strictly Buffet

Strictly Buffet only, the restaurant can seat more than a 150 people and is open for both lunch and dinner seven days a week. At RM59.90 for lunch and RM69.90 for dinner per person, the restaurant offers good value for money with over 100 items of food on offer. The extra RM10 for dinner covers the fresh made-to-order hand rolls with no limit on the number of orders!

Service is friendly and helpful, with plates being cleared from one's table as they're emptied and fresh cooked items delivered promptly as soon as they're ready.

As Managing Director Peter Ngui, who has worked in Japan for a number of years and whose brainchild it is, explained, **Taro** aims to please the large middle market with its pricing policy, variety and quality. Their special discounts for seniors aged over 60 and children under 130cm in height of a generous 50% while those below 90cm eat for free, make it economical enough for whole families to dine out and be given a Japanese food treat which under normal circumstances would cost an arm and a leg.

Staggering Variety

The choice and variety is staggering. The system consists of clips which are on your table. As you move around from station to station, there may be stations where the food is cooked a' la minute and you'd drop a clip with your table number into the bowl indicated for that particular item and



the food is delivered to your table when ready.

A drinks counter serves a choice of fresh made fruit juices sweetened with fructose but you can tell them to hold the sugar as I do when I order. And right beside that I spied a Haagen Daz freezer chest with a choice of five flavours, which is part of the buffet!

Cold and Hot Sections

In the **cold section** you'll find 4-5 types of **Sashimi**, all kinds of sushi, jelly fish, fresh oysters, seaweed, kimchi, tofu, different types of **soba** with help-yourself-sauces. For dinner, there is the additional choice of fresh made hand rolls with selections of 4-5 alternating between salmon, shrimp, tuna, California, Unagi (eel) and which may change from day to day. The **California hand roll** which I ordered arrived with the **Nori** (seaweed) still crisp and crunchy, a defining quality of a good hand roll.

In the **hot section**, the choice is even more boundless. Cheese topped baked oysters, grilled large prawns, salmon, Saba fish, fried **Shisamo** (the special fish which is full of roe), soft shell crab, Unagi or eel, Tempura prawns, fish, and vegetables and not to mention the **teppanyaki** table where the chef behind the counter is constantly busy frying up diners' choice of beef, chicken, lamb, seafood, and whatever is their hearts' desire from a generous selection. And I must mention the individual '**Nabe**' which are claypots of selected seafood, tofu and vegetables served in a choice of broth and cooked at the table.

In the **steam section**, **Chawan Mushi** (Japanese savoury

steamed egg custard) vie for attention with **Herbal Soup**, while elsewhere, ready prepared fried noodles, mixed vegetables and even snacks like peanuts, and other children's favourites await the eager diner.

Finally for dessert, if the **Haagen Daz** section does not call to you, go to the refrigerator where fruits, jellies, cakes, custard tarts and other sweets await.



Taro Japanese Fusion Buffet

131 Jalan Sultan Abdul Jalil, Greentown
30450 Ipoh.
Tel: **05-241 2551**
Operations Manager
Chloe Liew: **016-2031711**
Open 7 days a week
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Dinner: 6.00-10.30 p.m.
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HAWKER FOOD

Luk-luk



If you're a Malaysian, chances are you'll love *luk-luk*. *Luk-luk* comes from the Cantonese word '*luk*' which is to boil. So the concept for *luk-luk* is like steamboat, except that the ingredients are presented on skewers. The process is simple, just choose what you fancy, then dip your selected skewers into the hot boiling water until cooked.

These *luk-luk* stalls are usually set up on a vehicle such as a motorcycle or a van with up to 30 varieties of food ranging from meat to vegetables on skewers. The price is usually 70 cents per stick although there are some modern stalls located at pub areas offering not just the steamboat version, but also the barbeque version. These are usually priced above RM1.

The best thing about *luk-luk* is that you get to dip your cooked food in a variety of sauces. They are usually chilli, sweet sauce or satay sauce. Some stalls offer tom yam sauce and sesame chilli sauce in addition to the standard sauces in order to attract more patrons.

Places to try in Ipoh:

Night markets

A variety of *luk-luk* stalls ply the night market scene, each offering anywhere between 25 to 30 varieties of *luk-luk* priced at 70 cents each. Opens usually by 7pm till about 11pm.

Monday – Ipoh Jaya
Tuesday – Medan Ipoh (behind Tesco)
Wednesday – Stadium, Ipoh Garden, Rapat Setia
Thursday – Taman SPPK (Pasir Putih)
Friday – First Garden, Ampang
Saturday – Menglembu (near the flats)
Sunday – Taman Cempaka

Menglembu market

Stationed outside the market. Opens daily, beginning at around 3pm till evening. 70 cents per stick.

Buntong

Stationed under a shady tree near the market. Opens daily, beginning at 3pm till evening. 70 cents per stick.

Ipoh Garden South

Located opposite Kafe Sentosa, down the road from Pizza Hut. Opens daily, beginning at about 3.30pm till early morning. 70 cents per stick.

Pub areas

These vans offer both steamboat version, as well as the option to grill the ingredients. Prices above RM1 per stick. Located around Medan Ipoh, Persiaran Greenhill (outside St Patrick), Station 18 (behind Tesco Extra). Opens after 9pm till early morning.



RECIPE

By Margarita Lee



Deep-Fried Chicken Wings with Red Fermented Bean Curd

Ingredients (A):

1 dozen Chicken Wings
4 pieces Red Bean Curd
2 tbsp. Red Bean Curd Sauce (from the same bottle)
2 tsp. chopped spring onion
1 tbsp. Chinese Cooking Wine
1 tbsp. Oyster Sauce
1 tbsp. Soy Sauce
2 tsp. Sugar
Oil for deep-frying

Ingredients (B):

1 egg
5 tbsp. Tempura Flour

Method:

1. Marinate the chicken wings with ingredients (A) for minimum 5 hours, preferably overnight in the fridge.
2. Dip the chicken wings in beaten egg and coat every piece with a thin layer of Tempura flour.
3. Heat oil in a frying pan and fry chicken wings in batches until golden and crispy. Drain on a paper towel and serve immediately.

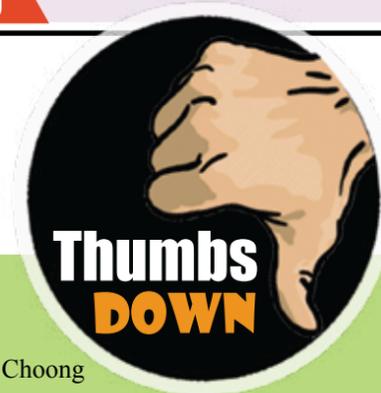


Ipoh's

Virtues in Danger

by Ian Anderson

Photos courtesy of Charlie Choong



As a small boy in UK I was brought up to try and live by the seven virtues, which my parents always assured me, the world cannot survive without. These are of course: faith, hope, charity, justice, loyalty, patience and fortitude. These seemed marvellous words to me and I could recite them whenever I needed to, but what exactly they meant I was not sure. And anyway the other famous seven, the seven deadly sins, sounded far more interesting to me.

However, about 50 years ago I arrived in Ipoh for the first time and it was no surprise to me that the British Colonial Government (as we love to call them) had made sure that our citizens would always have four (known as the cardinal virtues) of the seven to look up to every day – **justice, loyalty, patience and fortitude**. No doubt they hoped that, like this small boy was supposed to, the people of Ipoh would be outstandingly virtuous in everything they did and not fall into the ways of that other seven!

However, it is my duty to report that today, Ipoh's justice is slipping downwards and is likely to crash to the ground at any moment. Not only that but the city's fortitude is also showing major cracks and this does not bode well for the future. Surely **fortitude** cannot be allowed to follow **justice** down the slippery slope! Having made these observations I am happy to tell you that locally, loyalty and patience are both standing firm for the *rakyat*, but there is no forecast as to when that may change.

So what can be done about this appalling situation in our city? Maybe Datuk Bandar or Menteri Besar himself could step in and put things right but of course that would be a political solution and in this case would not fit the bill. What we need is for a skilled monumental mason to be contracted to view the problem at close quarters and advise how the deterioration in our virtues can be halted and then put right.

Now I fear that some of you will wonder why a mason is preferable to a politician and in this case it is quite clear for the four virtues are statues at the top of the **J.W.W. Birch Memorial Clock Tower** and if one or more comes crashing down it might just kill one of the council workers currently renovating the surrounding garden. Worse still, it might hit a tourist or even our beloved tourism Exco if she is destined to reopen the gardens and tower.

So what to do? Well it is quite clear that we do need our politicians after all – to promptly demonstrate their virtue by placing an immediate contract on that monumental mason as a matter of extreme urgency. It will be inexcusable if someone dies through administrative inaction. And all of Ipoh's virtues die with it.



Clock Tower where Ipoh's virtues stand guard

Community

Alif Needs Financial Aid



Muhammad Alif Syafiq Zamziba, 18, of Kg Tersusun Kledang Utama, Sg Siput, may have to forgo his chances of sitting for the coming SPM examination if his health continues to deteriorate. The teenager's right eyeball is almost out of its eye socket. The cause is traced to a cyst growing behind the eyeball. The swelling began almost 10 months ago. It is now the size of a tennis ball and covers almost the whole of Alif's face. Due to his condition, the boy has stopped attending classes since August last year. He missed the SPM Examination last year and may miss it again if his condition persists.

"I hope to be able to sit for my SPM Examination. How I wish I could be in the field playing football and *sepak takraw* with my friends," exclaimed a forlorn Alif. The eldest son of a farming couple, Zamziba Zabidi, 46, and Asarussita Moh Nor, 43, Alif is in the care of his doting parents.

"I've high hopes for my eldest son," said Zamziba. "But when told by the doctors that he has to undergo chemotherapy and a bone-marrow transplant, it becomes apparent that his condition is critical." Alif suffers from leukaemia and requires medication and extensive treatment. Due to the nature of his illness, the boy dreads leaving the confines of his home unless going for medical treatment in Ipoh.

Dato' Zainal Abidin Omar, CEO of Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan (YBU) dropped by Alif's house recently to provide some financial assistance. "Cancer treatment requires money and Alif is no exception. Hopefully, well-wishers would come forward to help the poor boy. Alif's future is in jeopardy."

The boy's parents are not giving up on him. Father Zamziba is resorting to traditional medicines as an alternative. "I am doing whatever possible to find a cure for my son's illness," he remarked.

Readers who wish to donate can do so by depositing your money (any amount) into Zamziba's CIMB Account: **0803-0112611-52-5**.

RM

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News Roundup

MB Rewards His Charges



Chief Minister Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zamry Abd Kadir took time off to spend some quality time with his 'adopted' children. It was done for a good reason. A number of them had acquired some very credible results in last year's Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR). Seventy four of his charges sat for the primary school evaluation examination and out of that number, ten obtained 7 As while the remaining got 6 As and below.

In fact, those who scored 3 As were at the bottom of the pile.

To honour his charges' achievements, Zamry hosted a simple gathering at Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan's main hall in Greentown Square, Ipoh recently. The ten top scorers were presented with trophies, books and certificates, as a form of appreciation for their hard work.

Zamry encouraged the students to study hard and to excel in this year's public examinations. He then presented the school-going children with books, uniforms, shoes, socks and other necessities required for their education. The students' above-average performance has resulted in a number of them being offered places by prestigious public schools in and around Ipoh.

The Chief Minister thanked the parents who were present along with their children for nurturing their offspring. He felt that the adoption programme, which he had initiated, has achieved its goals. The children have benefited from the supervision and the encouragement that he has given. "I sincerely hope they'll be useful citizens in later part of their lives," Zamry remarked in conclusion.

RM

Young Perak Transforming Youths

A motivational camp aptly named, *My Life My Choice*, was held in early February at SMK Ave Maria Convent Ipoh. Forty five cheerleaders between the ages of 13 to 17 showed up for the two-day camp organised by *Miracles for Malaysia (M4M)*.

Miracles for Malaysia is an unofficial group formed by youths for youths. Its objective is to transform the youths of today into better Malaysians. The programmed activities were geared towards enhancing the cheerleaders' self-esteem and establishing a lasting relationship among the participants.

Motivational subjects such as Understanding Myself, Teamwork, Happiness Formula, Power of Beliefs, Self-Management and Contribution were taught. These subjects correspond to the cheerleaders' lifestyles and are of importance to them. Team-building games were held to



instil teamwork amongst the campers.

Ave Maria Convent cheerleaders, known as the Titans, hope to inspire others with their achievements. They want to contribute to society by using the potentials that they have in them.

M4M's secretary, Sharon Jessy said that their next step would be making M4M an official group for youths. She is prepared to organise similar camps if asked. Sharon can be contacted at **016-517 0950**.

Tiffany

Competition Act 2010

The Competition Act, which comes into force this year, will have an impact on the business landscape in the country. Lawyer Gavin Gore Andrews (pic) said the Competition Act 2010 was enacted to protect the interests of consumers by the promotion of competition and the prohibition of anti-competition practices while the Competition Commission Act 2010 provides for the establishment of the Competition Commission.



Gavin Gore gave a talk on the overview of anti competition law organised by Chan Associates to a group comprising of lawyers, accountants and businessman at Chan Associates' office in Ipoh recently.

"The Competition Commission Act 2010 was passed to provide for the creation of a Commission and its function is to control monopoly activities and to take action against companies involved in such activities," said Gavin. Offenders under the Act face a penalty not exceeding RM5million for corporate and RM1million and jail not more than 5 years for individual.

The Competition Commission has the power to investigate and enter and search premises, and to obtain documents and information including computerised data.

More talks on the said subjects will be held from time to time. For details on upcoming talks please contact Chan Associates at **05-254 5293**.

Ed

News Roundup

Memorandum to Cuepacs



A memorandum was handed over to the Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services (CUEPACS) after a lengthy discussion by the Amalgamated Union of Employees in Government Clerical and Allied Services (AUEGCAS). This was witnessed by Perak Chief Minister, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambray bin Abd Kadir.

The day-long discussion held at Bangunan SUK, Ipoh recently, was about the unfairness of the new remuneration scheme of administrative assistants, effective beginning of the year. In this new scheme, top echelon government officers will receive a bigger increment in their salaries, whilst lower-rung staff receive a much smaller increment.

The union hopes CUEPACS will study the memorandum thoroughly and hand over the finalised copy to the Public Services Department of Malaysia (JPA) as soon as possible as the plight of the administrative assistants requires immediate attention.

The Chief Minister agreed that the role of every civil servant is equally important and teamwork is the key to effective governance. He pledged a sum of RM26,100 required by AUEGCAS to repair and maintain its office building and an additional RM50,000 to ensure its smooth running.

EL

Lim Gardens and Vicinity Inundated

Heavy rainfall on the morning of Monday, February 20 caused severe flooding in parts of Ipoh. The worse affected areas were Lim Garden and settlements within its vicinity, especially Merdeka Garden, Hock Aun Garden, Manjoi, Kg. Tai Le and Buntong, which are located along Sungai Pari.

The main source of water for Sungai Pari originates from Punjak Jelapang. From this high point a number of streams empty their water into the river which flows past Ipoh.

Since the morning rain was unusually heavy, registering well over 115mm, water overflowed the river banks and into the housing estates. Rain during this time of the year seldom exceeds 80mm. This heavy downpour was very unusual, said the weatherman.

Two schools, SMK Seri Puteri and SMK Sg Pari Schools, were affected to the extent that both had to be closed for a couple of days. Chairs, tables and furniture had to be taken out in the open for drying.

To make matters worse, water pumps, installed at



Lim Garden, Merdeka Garden, Manjoi and Buntong to pump out excess water, were not functioning properly. The relevant departments were informed about the malfunctioning pumps but it had fallen on deaf ears.

A few hundred houses were affected by the flash flood, the worse ever in this new millennium. Many

MB Addresses Council Staff

Ipoh City Council staff took time off work to attend a talk by Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambray Abd Kadir at Stadium Indera Mulia recently. This was Zambray's second address to the staff.

The Chief Minister spoke about teamwork and how it impacts working culture. Every member of the Council, regardless of his or her position, is equally important. The ultimate objective is the accomplishment of a mission and, therefore, everyone has a role to play. Staff, said Zambray, must be shown appreciation so they will work harder and, in the process, help enhance the Council's image.

Zambray reminded everyone present that it was their responsibility to make Ipoh the cleanest city in the country once again. He then announced the good news. All Council staff would receive RM500 as bonus for 2011.

Ipoh City Council was awarded the ISO 9001/2008 certification in quality management by Certification International Malaysia. Country Director-cum-Managing Director, Ooi Soo Kang, handed over the certificate to Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim at the conclusion of the talk.

EL



personal belongings and furniture were damaged. Politicians from both sides of the political divide were present to provide a helping hand. Chief Minister, Dato' Seri DiRaja Zambray Abd Kadir and DAP National Vice Chairman, Kulasegaran went on their rounds to assist the flood victims. Temporary shelters were established. By evening most were back in their houses. Cleaning up the mess was the immediate priority of those affected.

Many who spoke to Ipoh Echo felt that the government has not done enough to overcome the problem of flash flooding. Sungai Pari needs to be deepened and since silting is a major factor, removing the silt and rubbish, they reasoned, should be done continuously and not on a need basis. "We've endured this far too long," said one aggrieved resident.

Ed

The Federal Connection

Perak Tourism recently held a dinner with the various directors of federal departments in conjunction with Visit Perak Year 2012. The dinner was officiated by State Exco for Tourism Dato' Hamidah Osman.

In her address to the guests Hamidah again reiterated that what has been done to promote VPY 2012 so far is not enough. "Tonight I want to 'lobby' you, the department directors of the Federal Government to also play your part to promote VPY2012 by holding your department activities, where possible, in Ipoh. Perak is rich with products. Your commitment is necessary to make VPY 2012 a success. Holding activities here will help promote the 'feel tourism, act tourism' environment."

The dinner was held at the newly-opened Riverfront

MATRADE's Programme 2012



The annual MATRADE's programme with entrepreneurs and exporters in Perak was held at Impiana Hotel. Dato' Mah Siew Keong, Chairman of MATRADE, in his welcome address, informed that this programme was to reach out to the business community outside Kuala Lumpur and update on new initiatives and programmes planned for this year. The Trade Clinic session is arranged to give an opportunity for the exporters to have one-on-one consultations with MATRADE and MITI agencies.

Dato' Hamidah Osman, Exco for Tourism and Industry who represented the Menteri Besar said that Perak is sandwiched between Klang Valley and Penang and facing stiff competition. Investors are questioning why they should come to Perak. The state government has prepared the Perak Industrial Development Action Plan (PIDAP) and projects are approved quickly. She added that businessmen in Perak are not familiar with the facilities available from MATRADE and requested Dato' Mah to set up an office in Ipoh for easy communication.

AJ

Husni Opens Entrepreneur Development Centre at RTC Gopeng



Dato' Seri Ahmad Husni bin Mohamad Hanadzlah, Second Finance Minister officially opened the Entrepreneur Development Centre at the Rural Transformation Centre (RTC), Gopeng. The Centre had approved loans to 45 entrepreneurs totalling RM372,000. Husni handed cheques to five of the recipients. He also opened branches of BSN and SME banks at RTC.

During the press conference Husni said that RTC would serve as an integrated service centre encompassing collection, processing and distribution of agricultural products, banking and insurance, business consulting services, skills training, health care and retail space. RTC Gopeng's outreach would extend to all those living within 100km from the centre.

AJ



Datu AC Mizal (r) with a fan

Hotel and guests were treated to cultural dances by Selendang Perak as well as being entertained by VPY 2012 Tourism Ambassador Datuk AC Mizal.

JAG

Wellness

Waterworks – The Biological Kind

By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

Dr Kalidasan Govindan maintains ‘waterworks’ of the biological kind. He is the new/old kid on the block who has just set up in private practice as Resident Consultant Urologist at KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital.

An old boy of the Anglo Chinese School here, Dr Kalidasan received his MBBS from Manipal, India in 1995, MS (Surgery) National University of Malaysia in 2003, Board of Urology Malaysia certification (exit exams) in 2007 and spent a year and a half obtaining a Fellowship in Urology (Australia) in 2008.

Coming here from Johor Bahru where he was Consultant Urologist Head of Department in Hospital Sultanah Aminah, Dr Kalidasan expressed delight at being back in his hometown and being close to his aged parents for whom he can now play an active role in their well being.

He is also excited about being able to introduce some new diagnostic technology to assist patients in getting the best treatment for their urological problems.

“I have always been under the possibly mistaken impression that Urology deals primarily with men, prostate and their waterworks and all that, so do you also see women?” I asked in all innocence when I sat down with this young (41 year-old) doctor with the charming smile.

“Yes prostate problems are very common especially amongst the older above-50 group but I treat women as well. In fact any issues with the kidney, bladder, urethra and ureter fall under my area of specialty. Aside from the prostate, women are afflicted by similar diseases of these organs, so there is no gender bias here.”

“The reason I see less women is because the awareness among them is very poor and they always seek treatment from primary health care physicians instead of coming straight to a urologist.” he added. “Take urinary infections for example,



Uro Flow equipment



Dr Kalidasan Govindan

which affect a lot of women: it is very important to ascertain the cause of it. It could be coming from any of the aforementioned organs and a urologist can determine the actual source of the infection quickly and prescribe the appropriate treatment. We have all the tools available right here in my clinic and I can intervene with alacrity.”

“So you also treat urinary incontinence in women?” I asked. “Both in men and women,” he replied. “Although most people who suffer from urgency incontinence blame it on aging, which is only one of the causative factors, urgency incontinence has an 80% success rate with medication and a few dietary changes such as cutting down on gassy drinks, caffeine, smoking and alcohol. Stress incontinence (loss of urine) which is induced by coughing or laughing can be treated with pelvic floor exercises or sling surgery. Sling surgery (TOT) has more than 90% success rate. So instead of suffering embarrassment or in silence, people with incontinence should go to a urologist”.

Another common problem afflicting more men than women is that of kidney stones. Dr Kalidasan was very optimistic about the new machine which is scheduled to arrive in KPJ ISH, the state of the art Extracorporeal Shock Wave Lithotripsy (ESWL) machine, a non-invasive tool that breaks up kidney stones painlessly.

One of Dr Kalidasan’s specialties is in the field of endourology, a minimally invasive surgical technique that avoids cutting open the organ in question using only scopes which require only small puncture wounds in the abdomen or back. These techniques are varied, using different tools and scopes for different problems with the advantage of minimal downtime for the patient. In fact some of these procedures do not even require hospitalisation.

Naturally for any specialist practicing today, the question

inevitably comes round to the big C., cancer of the prostate, bladder and kidneys being the most feared. “Cancer especially of the bladder and kidney, when caught in early stage, has a 90% chance of full recovery.”

“What about BPH or benign prostatic hyperplasia or enlargement of the prostate; isn’t that very common?” I asked. “Oh yes, in fact most men who reach the age of 50 should go for a urological check-up. It’s a simple one. In fact we’re going to start an educational programme here with talks and free check-ups soon to allay people’s fear of an urological examination, particularly amongst men. I was involved in the National Prostate Awareness Campaign whilst I was in Johor and have a very clear understanding of people’s fears. We give a blood test to measure their PSA levels, then they fill out a simple questionnaire followed by using a Uro Flow meter to measure the volume and rate of flow of urine. We then do a non-invasive ultrasound scan. This simple process will flush out most urological problems especially BPH whose symptoms are not very different from the more serious Prostate cancer. Most importantly, men with BPH need to be monitored by a Urologist for it not to advance to Prostate cancer.”

So what is your final word of advice to people on taking care of their ‘water works’? “This is my message to people out there. At the first sign of something amiss, not quite right, pain on urinating, accompanying lower back pain or increased frequency of urination and especially at the first sign of blood with or without pain, run, don’t walk, to the Urologist. The earlier caught the sooner cured”.



Ultrasound scanner

For more information, contact Dr Kalidasan Govindan’s clinic at: Clinic 9, KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital 05-2408777 ext. 8301.

Sport

Seladangs Struggle

The road to success for Perak is never going to be easy. Despite topping the league table after an impressive victory over Sarawak, the Seladangs’ luck ran out with successive defeats to T-Team in Kuala Terengganu and Lions XII at Stadium Perak.

What is the reason for the defeat then? It is not difficult to pinpoint the fault, actually. Poor performance is out of the question. The inability of Lazar Popovic to convert chances into goals is the one reason why Perak is so ineffective upfront.

The Serbian forward has not scored a single goal in seven outings and is under intense scrutiny from the fans. Ironically, there does not seem to be much effort coming from his side either. The issue with Popovic is not about support from his teammates but what lies deep within him.

Popovic was impressive during pre-season friendlies with confidence oozing from within him. His brilliance included a hat trick against USM FC in a friendly and helping to set up a few goals during the team’s pre-season tour of Indonesia.

So, the potential to shine is indeed there but Popovic has to fight a psychological battle with himself. His physical presence is already a big plus for Perak. Lions XII’s coach, V. Sundramoorthy, told Ipoh Echo after the home match last week that Popovic was a huge threat to his team.

His problem is identical to that of Chelsea’s



Fernando Torres. For strikers, it is all about confidence. The Serbian forward showed glimpses of his capabilities in Perak’s victory over ATM in the FA Cup. After coming on as a substitute for the injured Akhmal Rizal, Popovic forced ATM’s goalkeeper to work overtime with his many brilliant moves. He has the aptitude.

The Seladangs now have a good respite before their next fixture against PKNS in the Super League. I feel the break will provide Popovic time to rest and to recuperate and, maybe, to revitalise himself. His teammates have indicated their willingness to give him the space he badly needs.

Obviously, Popovic is not experiencing a fanciful start to life with the Perak team. This explains why the Seladangs’ fans are rather hostile towards him. It is about time that he gets his act together. And with the April transfer looming closer, there is every reason for Popovic to show his worth.

Keesh

Perak Grand Prix Chess Championship

For the third consecutive year, Perak International Chess Association together with Dato’ Arthur Tan Chess Centre, organised the Tan Sri Lee Loy Seng Perak Grand Prix Chess Championship.

It is a series of rapid chess competitions that are held in various districts in Perak over the next few months. Top ten players in the open category are awarded grand prix points. The player with the highest possible points and who has competed in at least three legs will win the championship.

The first leg, hosted by SMK Clifford, Kuala Kangsar recently, saw a record-breaking 306 players taking part in the Under-12, Under-16 and Open categories. Due to the huge turnout, the competition lasted longer than expected. However, it was a fruitful day for the winners who took home cash prizes, medals and certificates of participation.

The first prize winners were Ahmad Fitri Ahmad (U-12), Jason Teh Chee Ying (U-16) and Ahmad Fadzil Nayan (Open). Main sponsor, Kuala Lumpur Kepong’s representative, Anbananthan gave away the prizes.

EL



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LETTERS

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Why Appoint An Under-Achiever?

I find it strange why an under-achiever is reappointed to a position of prominence after having her service terminated. Professor Dr Rugayah Mohamed was formerly the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) of Universiti Teknologi Tun Hussein Onn. Her service was terminated by the university in early February of this year. Feeling aggrieved by the dismissal, Rugayah had sued the university citing former Vice Chancellor Dato' Professor Ismail Bakar and 13 other university staff as defendants. Her case will be up for mention on March 29.

The question that begs to be answered is why someone who has been dismissed is reappointed to a similar position as Vice Chancellor of Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia? There are definitely many more qualified academicians to fill the post.

The Minister of Higher Education has promised the *rakyat* that the appointment of Vice Chancellors and Deputy Vice Chancellors of institutions of higher learning is via a rigorous process to ensure only the most qualified are picked. He owes us all an explanation.

Dr Raja Ahmad Al-Hiss
Ipoh

"Papan Landfill Urgent as Bercham Fills up"

Thanks for the report, James.

It is sad that such delayed action will be taken to stop the stench now fouling the air and affecting the residents in Bercham. There may be less people living near the new dump, but the place is imminently unsuitable for this land-use as a rubbish dump and leachate.

There is no Environmental Impact Study to validate this land-use; the proposed land-use is illegal. The Federal Government rejected it way back in June last year. The problem of rubbish disposal in Ipoh has been brewing for years. That's an issue of town planning.

There are some thirty farmers in the area who will lose their crops and animals, some already have since the letter was issued to evict the land. Some of them have been farming for over thirty years, since the last tin mine closed, making idle land productive. Their protests in Papan and Lahat have not been reported in the English-medium newspapers.

And what will happen to the forest reserve and within it, the youth camp facilities for some two hundred youths, and the cool Sungai Papan where locals would swim and picnic and friends and families enjoy quality time? The rubbish dump will ruin this forever. The 'Papan Waterfall' was known more than 100 years ago. There are historic photographs of people enjoying the cool mountain stream and its cascades.

The chosen site is a beautiful historic valley, Kong Mui, Papan, whose water-bodied environment is enjoyed by bird watchers and people who walk for exercise in clean air. The channelled air flow in the valley means that foul air will affect the residents in Papan and Pusing. Kong Mui is one of the richest tin fields ever; now, stripped of its underground valuable deposits, it is banished to become a rubbish dump for not only Ipoh but adjacent districts. Be aware of rubbish trucks hawking the highway leading to the dump. Why should rubbish be transported to a centralised dump in Kong Mui? Papan is the best documented historic town (now downgraded to village) with a long history and a formidable heritage which both international and local tourists have found fascinating and charming.

This is error in planning. There is no need for a big vast centralised dump. Each sub-district must handle its own rubbish. This is the only way to encourage residents to mind their rubbish in an environmentally-conscious way. And as suggested by Steven Lee, a green method must be used. We must take note of LA21, in planning for a green future.

If only to relieve the people in Bercham, the designated phase one must proceed.

New solutions must be found quickly before an entire area gets dumped with everybody else's rubbish, while Papan residents' rubbish is not even regularly collected. Ultimately, Papan will be made unattractive and that will be the loss of Ipoh, Kinta, Perak and Malaysia. A better solution has to be found quickly. We urge MBI to reconsider while restricting the use at the dump. The people living in Papan and Pusing count.

Meanwhile, why don't you go enjoy the tranquil serenity of this beauty before it is lost to bad planning, and illegal at that?

Papan Jones

Arts & Culture Arts Chat



Arts Chat (*Sembang Seni*) is a series of discussions on arts, culture and language to be held at Institut Darul Ridzuan's PORT (People of Remarkable Talents) every second Thursday of the month.

Wellness

Eye Chat – From A Retinal Surgeon's Perspective

Glaucoma and Erectile Dysfunction

What has an eye disease like glaucoma have to do with a condition which is so physically remote from the eyes (you might ask)? A recent study was published (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22036631>) which described a possible link between glaucoma and erectile dysfunction (impotence) and has reported an almost **3 FOLD** increased risk of glaucoma in individuals suffering from erectile dysfunction (ED).



What is glaucoma?



As World Glaucoma week nears (March 11-17), there has been much information put out there about how glaucoma is the 2nd leading cause of blindness worldwide and how the symptoms do not present themselves until a very advanced stage. There are many different types of glaucoma and I shall not elaborate too much into the diagnosis and treatment of this disease but suffice to say that glaucoma is a group of diseases characterised by progressive damage to the optic nerve and associated with pressure inside the eye.

What is erectile dysfunction (ED)?

This is a particularly taboo subject (amongst the men at least) and not often discussed in the context of our society as well. It is defined as the inability to develop or maintain an erection for satisfactory sexual intercourse.

Causes of ED – Public education about this condition is very poor and there are many men who "suffer in silence" for fear of the stigma associated with this diagnosis. The main causes are divided into two main categories; psychological and physical. Little do people know that the physical causes account for over 50% of ED and these would include hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol and heart disease just to name a few. All these diseases have a common 'theme' in that they are vascular disorders (i.e., problems with blood vessels). In actual fact, treatment of these vascular problems would also treat ED in such individuals.



What is the link between glaucoma and ED?

This study looked at data from over 4,600 men with ED and found that there was an increased risk of these men having glaucoma compared with a "control" group of men without ED. There has been evidence to show that vascular problems (as mentioned above) can lead to ED as there is chronic damage to the blood vessels throughout the body. Similarly, problems with vascular tone and blood flow have been implicated in glaucoma and it would not be surprising if the two conditions had common causative mechanisms.

What are the implications?

The results of this study have to be taken into context of course – a lot more research has to be done to evaluate this association between glaucoma and ED. Is there a true link or is this a chance finding?

What it would mean for physicians is that there is another aspect to look out for when managing a patient with ED – getting their eyes checked as well! For the layman, being armed with good health information is always a good start towards leading a normal life in spite of these problems. Nevertheless, this paper has raised some eyebrows and we shall continue to look hard for more information about these two conditions.

More about Viagra and risk of blindness in coming issues.

For more information about this topic or other eye health subjects, please visit my blog at: www.lec.com.my/youcare-eyecare. Or call Lee Eye Centre : 05-254 0095.

Ipoh City Hall Never Fails To Amaze

Of late, there have been many grouses raised by residents of Ipoh of the lackadaisical attitude of Ipoh City Hall. Complaints are not resolved despite reminders and even to the extent of highlighting issues to the media. It appears that they have taken a stand not to respond to and adopt a laid-back attitude with the hope that the issues raised will settle down after some time. It is not in line with Visit Perak Year 2012 and like the Prime Minister has reiterated time and again – civil servants must buck up!

There was a *Know Your Councillor* campaign carried out by Penangites early this year for the public to be able to judge for themselves whether their councillors are up to mark. They are expected to serve the interests of ratepayers. Perhaps Ipohites should also follow the same. What has happened to the KPIs proudly and confidently announced earlier? If they are short of manpower, why not just organise a *gotong-royong* in the specified areas whereby the residents together with the councillors will work along side one another and prove to themselves that nothing is so impossible. It would also give us a chance to know our councillors and achieve a win-win situation, drastically the reverse of what's happening now.

On another note, the Datuk Bandar Ipoh and his team of engineers should take a drive along Jalan Silibin. You will experience road speed humps of different shapes, sizes and gradients. There does not seem to be a standard measure on this. Most recent vehicle models are scraping their bumpers and the gradients have also sunken during the road works. Does anyone in Ipoh City Hall ever care? Does the team of road engineers and town planners supervise and approve of such works being carried out? So many questions remain unanswered. It would be nice if we residents are given a chance to compliment Ipoh City Hall in performing their given tasks once in a while but regrettably I feel this will never happen. Ipoh City Hall never fails to amaze me.

Baljit Singh Gill
Ipoh

The first in the series kicked off on Thursday, February 16 with the topic, "Should Politics Interfere In Arts?" Panellists were Dr Awang Sariyan, Director-General Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Dato' Dr Anwar Ridhwan, a national laureate and Aziz Desa, a programme producer with TV9. The discussion was moderated by Malim Ghazali PK.

The moderator started the ball rolling by asking whether there was interference in arts. And if so, what were the consequences?

Aziz Desa alluded to the controversial book, *Interlok*, which had outraged the Indian community who consider the contents as an affront to their race and beliefs.

Dato' Dr Anwar was of the opinion that interference was sometimes necessary, particularly when used to change the mind-sets of the people. Awang said that there were both positive and negative effects whenever politics interfere in arts. Negative interference, he reasoned, was unavoidable.

All three panellists shared their experiences as to the advantages and disadvantages of political interference. They, however, concurred that a balance was needed in order to tread the fine line.

EL



iSpeak

A. Jeyaraj

Watching The Waters Roll in



My experience of flooding consisted of visiting housing estates that have been flooded and interviewing the people affected and proceeding to report on it. However, on this Black Monday morning when I woke up after 5.00 a.m. and looked out of my window, I found that the whole area was flooded. I quickly came down and noticed that my porch was under water and when I went to the kitchen the water was already entering it. I immediately woke my wife and alerted her.

I have been living for about 20 years in Lorong Pari, Lim Garden and this is the first time flooding has occurred. I used to tell visitors that this is high ground and if my place gets flooded then the whole of Lim Garden would be flooded. My place was finally flooded.

I took my car out and drove through the flood waters to park on high ground. As I reached it, the car stalled and the engine died. There was the smell of burning rubber and when I opened the bonnet it was smoking. I closed the bonnet and rushed home. By now the water was entering the hall through the kitchen and porch. My wife and I quickly carried everything from the floor and placed them on chairs and tables. The water was about one inch deep and stabilised at that level. The kitchen cabinets and store rooms were under water. By now I received calls from friends that the whole area on either side of Sungai Pari was flooded.

I have three dogs to look after, one is a small house dog which was frightened and we kept her upstairs. Another dog was lying on the bench in the porch. My German Shepherd was very happy playing in the water.

I will give an example of how fast the water rose initially. A driver was driving through the road to pick up someone to take to the airport. He said when he passed my house the road was dry. He drove 300 metres or so to the end of the road and made a U-turn to return. That stretch of road is about two feet lower than the rest of the road. He said all of a sudden the water rushed in and the car began to float and he could not open the door and came out of the window. The car was submerged under water up to the level of the window. This happened in a few minutes.

By daybreak many MBI staff came and water flowing down Sungai Pari brought along tons of rubbish which was stuck on the upstream side of the bridge along Jalan Raja. Because of this, water overflowed and debris was scattered along Jalan Raja.



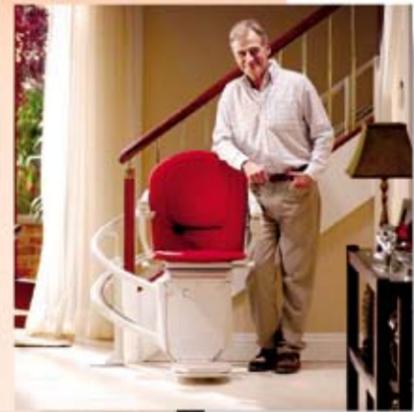
MBI workers started clearing the rubbish.

I heard announcements being made in Kg. Manjoi asking the flood victims to make a report at the Kampong Manjoi Police Station and submit to the Welfare Department Staff at the Community Centre. One of the men who came to see the flood situation said that the bridge was damaged. When I looked at the bridge from my house I noticed that no traffic was flowing and there were many people on the bridge. I walked to the bridge with my neighbour. There was a big crowd on the other side of the bridge. When I went there I saw the MB was about to leave. When I asked him why he only visited Kampong Manjoi and not Lim Garden which is also badly affected, he replied with "we look after all people and my man will come to your place. He had to go for a meeting". I then asked "is your meeting more important than the plight of the people?" He never replied.

Datuk Nadzri Ismail, assemblyman for Manjoi came and saw me in my house having been told by the MB that he must see me. Thanks MB. I asked of Nadzri, why Kg. Manjoi residents were asked to make police reports, but what about others affected by the flood? Why were they not informed of this? There was no answer.

In Kg. Manjoi information is conveyed through a speaker system which all the residents can hear. This facility is not available in other areas. In the old days a van from the Information Department used to drive around informing people of important events through a speaker in English, Malay Chinese and Tamil so that everyone understood. Since the flooding started just before 5.00 a.m. many people were sleeping and it rose

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so fast they could not salvage their belongings. If there was some public announcement the people could have been alerted.

Disaster Relief Task Force Needed

When I was looking at the work being done at the bridge, I noticed there were co-ordination problems. I suggest that a Disaster Relief Task Force be formed. MBI must initiate this and the team members must be from MBI, Fire Brigade, Police, Health Department and Welfare Department. The Force must be under a Captain who co-ordinates the activities and has the authority to make decisions. Each member must be given a specific duty. They would be under a group call and must go to the site when called upon. Relief work can be done efficiently.

Rain is said to be the cause of the flood, but people do not believe this. During the past forty years or so there has been heavier rainfall which can be verified by the Meteorological Department. In this instance, people feel that a lake or dam upstream might have breached the banks or a large volume of water has been released into the river. JPS must investigate the true cause and eliminate it once and for all. For the time being, residents are living in anxiety not knowing when the next flooding will occur.

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.

Free Workshop on "Know Breath, Know Life" by The Art Of Living Ipoh, **March 4**, 12.00 p.m. at 10A Lintasan Perajurit 11B, Taman Ipoh Timur, Ipoh. Contact: Ying **012-5669044**.

My Career Fair 2012 – Service Programme, Sunday **March 4**, 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. at Thamil Methodist Hall @ Dataran ACS (ACS School). Companies or government bodies offering placements especially for Form 3 & Form 5 school leavers, IPT final year students, unemployed fresh graduates and those already employed but looking for higher placements. For more information, contact: Thiru at **012-5020704**. (Go to Ipoh Echo online for more details.)

Public Forums: I. "Kidney: The Gift of Life – Transplant" (by Dr Go Kuan Weng), Saturday **March 10**, 3.00 p.m.; **II. "Prostate In Crisis"** (by Dr Kalidasan Govindan), Saturday **March 17**, 3.00 p.m. Venue: Dewan Anugerah, KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital (5th Floor). Free screenings at hospital lobby: (1) blood pressure, glucose, BMI and dipstick urine test, from **March 9-10, commencing 9.30 a.m.** for the first 200 participants daily; (2) Uroflow – detection of prostate disease for men above 45 years old on **March 17, 10.00 a.m to 1.00 p.m.** For registration or further information, contact: Pn Aziera or Ms Sarah at **05-2408777 ext. 8111**.

Happily Ever Laughter Nite (a fundraiser for Perak Women for Women Society in conjunction with International Women's Day), Saturday **April 7**, 7.00 p.m. at Level 6 Tropicana Ballroom, Ipoh. Contact: PWW **05-5469715/012-5212480**. (See page 6.)

Baden Powell Guild Ipoh is calling former boy scouts, girl guides, and those interested to promote fellowship according to the aims and objectives of the Guild. For more information, contact: **017-5788719** or email badenpowellguildipoh@yahoo.com.

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Book Review

The Last Post – Story of The Emergency (1948-1960) & Commemorative Events

This is a true story about the magnificent roles that everyone played, particularly those in the planting and mining sectors, the Malaysian Armed Forces, the Royal Malaysian Police and its ancillary units, members of government and non-governmental agencies and the ordinary civilians who lost their lives during the Emergency (1948 to 1960). It contains the Rolls of Honour of combatants – Commonwealth and Malaysians – who participated in the containment and the defeat of Communism. Graphic accounts of some of the tragic incidents are also included.

The book was written by R. Thambipillay, a combatant himself, after years of fruitful research, locally and overseas. The author explained the methods used in bringing the conflict to an end. He alluded to the roles of the Special Branch and the Psychological Warfare Section of the Government, which used intelligence, garnered by the Special Branch, to their advantage. The use of ar-

mour is also featured in the successful prosecution of the insurgency war. The book also attempts to describe how Communism developed world-wide and how it arrived at our shores.

This book, in essence, caters to the many visitors attending the various remembrance ceremonies in Ipoh.

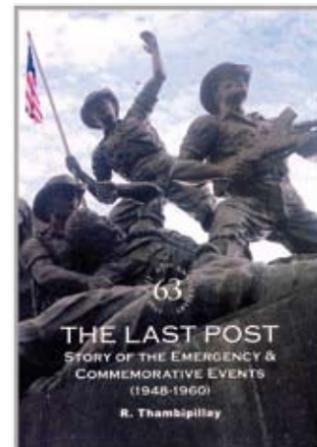
The Last Post – story of the Emergency 1948-1960 and Commemorative Events (ISBN 978-983-41340-1-3) is published as a keepsake. It is a limited edition of only 1,000 hard-bound copies consisting of 298 pages with about 370 photos, of which over 300 are photos of tombs of Commonwealth military personnel, Royal Malaysia Police, planters, miners, civilians buried in Batu Gajah's God's Little Acre and other cemeteries in Malaysia. After almost 64 years there are still loved ones, colleagues and friends keen to know the final resting place of their loved ones. The chapter under Memoriam contains more photos

of tombs.

The book provides detailed accounts (with photos) of commemorative events, such as the one initiated in 1980 in Batu Gajah popularly known as "God's Little Acre", the service for the fallen Gurkhas at Kem Syed Putra, Ipoh and a composite remembrance service revived in 2008 at the Cenotaph, opposite the Ipoh railway station ending with the popular "Troops Night" sponsored by the Chan brothers at the Royal Perak Golf Club.

The hard-bound book is priced at RM80 a piece. Those keen to purchase one can contact the author at 012-2352557 for details.

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