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Your Voice In The Community

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30 SEN FOR DELIVERY TO YOUR DOORSTEP -  
ASK YOUR NEWSVENDOR

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## Tertiary Education in Perak

by A. Jeyaraj



Kolej Perubatan Di-Raja Perak



Institute Technology Perak

**T**he Perak State government has been saying for the past ten years or so that it wants to make Perak the “hub of education in the country”. This has never materialised and Perak is lagging behind most of the other states in terms of education. At a meet-the-people session at Quest International University Perak (QIUP), where VC Academic Professor Emeritus Dato’ Dr V.G. Kumar Das affirmed that it has reduced its tuition fees by almost 50 per cent for all its courses, the Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abd Kadir said the move was in line with the state government’s push to turn Perak into an education hub.

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# Perak Needs a Blueprint for Private Colleges

While this would provide students with quality tertiary education at affordable rates, Perak still has a long way to go to become an education hub if Wikipedia is anything to go by, it states that, "The city of Ipoh is famous for its cuisine." Ipoh Echo spoke to a number of educationists on why Perak was lagging behind and what must be done. Most of them were not aware of the state's initiative on education and collectively the views gathered were as follows:

The general consensus was that the state government needs a blueprint for private colleges. A feasibility study to determine whether or not there's a need for additional colleges in particular areas, the viability of the areas and to get recommendations from experts in the field. Then, attention must be placed on what unique courses can be offered in each college. Infrastructure must be in place and support services for the colleges must be available.

## No 'Run-Of-The-Mill' Colleges

As students' and parents' expectations are now high, often they prefer to study in reputable foreign colleges who set up campuses here. They are not prepared to study in any 'run-of-the-mill' college.

Good marketing is important, as are course offerings. Students want to get sound practical training and high quality lecturers must be employed. The state must also promote the colleges within the country, region and the world.

## Foreign Campuses Keen to Set Up

One educationist said that many foreign universities are interested in setting up their campuses here, but the red tape must be reduced and approval must be fast. He suggested that the government set up a Consortium of Perak Higher Education in which all existing and potential stakeholders can be members to work through issues. The government has been talking about allocating land to set up clusters of universities. As yet this has not materialised.

As most educationists Ipoh Echo spoke to were not aware of the policy of the state on education, it is imperative that the state be transparent and make its policy public as well as include educationists in the policy making process.

To complete this review on tertiary education, Ipoh Echo spoke to a number of colleges and following is a list of the colleges and their specialties.

## Taj International College

Provides degree courses in business management, Education, English, IT and also courses on Beauty and Wellness.

## Quest International University Perak (QIUP)

Quip is the first full-fledged university in Ipoh and is giving scholarships to top students and those who come from poor families. Students who excel in sports will also be given

scholarships. It has reduced the cost for courses and made tertiary education affordable in Perak to allow more people access to tertiary education, a very applaudable move and it is hoped that more tertiary institutions will follow suit. A medical faculty is in the pipeline and will be opened soon.

## University Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR)

UTAR was one of the first universities to be established around Ipoh to fulfil the aspirations of the people. It is a not for profit university with the primary goal of providing quality education affordable to all. Courses are available from foundation to PHD levels in various disciplines.

## Institute Technology Perak (ITP)

Provides undergraduate degree programmes for SPM/STPM students. It offers a diploma in advanced skills training. Since emphasis is on practical training, students have no problems in getting jobs on receipt of their diploma and are in high demand.

## Kolej Perubatan Di-Raja Perak

This College offers three types of MBBS programmes and has a degree programme for Nursing Science. It also offers diploma courses in pharmacy, radiography and physiotherapy.

## University Teknologi Petronas (UTP)

UTP is well established and offers degree, masters and PHD courses mainly in petroleum engineering, geoscience and technology. It works closely with industries to get placement for their students.

## Kolej Maxwell

Offers diploma courses in engineering, computer, electronics, and mechatronics. Since 60% of training is hands-on, students have no problem in getting jobs. It is known as a hub for technical training.

## Kompas International College

Offers accounting courses from certificate level to Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) level. About 25% of the students are foreigners. Students get job offers while they are in the final year.

## Wawasan Open University (WOU)

WOU provides opportunity for working adults to continue their studies. Diploma, degree and masters programmes are available. Students have to attend college once a month.

## Sunway College

Sunway College offers a number of diploma and professional programmes in accounting and business. Professional programmes include ACCA and Certified Accounting Technician. Diploma programmes are mainly in business and marketing.

## Masterskill

Masterskill is a Nursing and Allied Health college and offers diploma and degree programmes. It has an Employment Placement Unit to assist graduates to get employment.

## Study Excel

Students who do not know what course to take or where to study can contact Study Excel which provides consultancy services to students and parents for their tertiary education options.



## What to Do After SPM?

So, your SPM results are out. *What now? Continue studies or start to work?* Then, the next question is, if you plan to further your studies, *what to study? Which pre-university programme to choose? Which college or university to study at?* If you choose to work, what can you really do? These are the questions that usually go through a student's mind. So what are the real options that students have after SPM?

In reality, students must look at each Pre-U programme and choose the one which suits them personally in terms of their strengths, time as well as their study styles. Most important is actually subject choices because this will determine whether they will qualify for the right courses in university later. Different universities and different countries have different requirements. If they make the wrong choices, then they may find that they will have limited choices when it comes to choosing their study options.

Mr Simon Yeap, Ipoh Branch Manager of *StudyExcel Sdn Bhd*, who is an experienced and qualified education consultant, has this to say, "In India, to take up Medicine or Dentistry, a student must have done all the three science subjects to qualify, while in Australia, students would need Chemistry plus a second science subject only. Also, students have to take the ISAT (International Students Admission

Test) or UMAT (The Undergraduate Medicine and Health Sciences Admission Test) plus an interview. In UK, students have to take the UKCAT exam. Then the exams results will be reviewed for entry."

"Students must think about where they want to work in future and then look at what they wish to study in University and then work backwards from there to choose their Pre-University programme while taking into consideration their study habits. Some students prefer a more structured academic style while others may prefer more assignment and group work style."

Therefore, the education advisors in Studyexcel would be a great help to parents and students who need advice on further education and choosing the right career. Do feel free to take advantage of their services which are absolutely free of charge.

These services include Educational/Career Advice; application and accommodation; assistance with airport reception overseas, scholarships and visa application. On top of that, they have been officially appointed by the British Council as an IELTS test and registration centre. The Ipoh office is at 26-1 Jalan Chung Thye Phin, 30250 Ipoh, Perak, and the office phone number is **05-255 2811**.



IPOH **echo**

From the Editor's Desk

• by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

# Saga of the Broken Hospital Lifts

*And having seen how the lifts function, the whole episode seems trivial by any standards. It is really much ado about nothing. How this minor infraction has been politicised is beyond me.*



A peaceful demonstration by a boisterous placard-holding crowd numbering around 60 on the morning of Tuesday, March 20 drew the attention of passers-by and visitors to Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun, Ipoh. The reason for the impromptu gathering was the malfunctioning hospital lifts which left many visitors in a quandary over their perceived state of disrepair.

The eminence of the morning muster was assured with the presence of former State Legislative Assembly Speaker and Adun for Tronoh, V. Sivakumar. The Opposition politician alleged that four of the hospital's six lifts were inoperable for the last three years causing considerable hardship to patients and visitors alike. Sivakumar chided the hospital management for being insensitive to the needs of the public.

The intensity of the demonstration fizzled out soon enough. No untoward incidents happened and the authorities heaved a huge sigh of relief. There was no need for the riot police or the Light Strike Force or the formidable water cannons, as normal protocol would have it. Policing was kept to the minimum with a handful of policemen stationed around the hospital perimeter more for safety reasons than anything else. Their presence that fateful day was a reminder to the public that the situation was well under control.

A response from the state government was expected but its swiftness was rather exceptional. At 3.00 p.m. on the same day, Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon, the Executive Councillor for Health, organised a media conference at the hospital premises. Mah refuted Sivakumar's claims saying that they were frivolous and inaccurate. "Only one of the six lifts is inoperable, the others are fine. I don't know how he arrived at that conclusion," he retorted. "The details regarding repair works on the lifts are on the billboard outside the hospital."



Hospital Raja Perempuan Bainun, formerly Ipoh General Hospital, has six lifts at its main annexure. Four of the lifts are for the public, one for the fire brigade and the remaining one for the hospital staff. Lifts 4, 5 and 6 are under repair. Repair works began in November 2011 and are expected to complete in October 2012. The estimated cost is RM1.3 million. The wall titles in Lift 1, 2 and 3 are presently being replaced but the lifts are serviceable and not otherwise. Works on Lifts 4, 5 and 6 are in two phases. Phase 1 is the replacement of Lifts 4 and 5 beginning on April 24. The two lifts will be commissioned on July 13. Phase 2 involves the replacement of Lift 6 on July 17. It will be opened to the public on October 5.

Mah took reporters on all the working lifts confirming his earlier claim that all five lifts were in working condition except one – Lift 5. As an added assurance, the service lift near the Pathology Department is being used to ferry food trolleys and linen thus freeing Lifts 1, 2 and 3 for the public's use.

And having seen how the lifts function, the whole episode seems trivial by any standards. It is really much ado about nothing. How this minor infraction has been politicised is beyond me.

However, Mah's suggestion that staff, visitors and patients use the stairways to get to their destinations seems a little jaded. "I prefer to use the stairs as it's much healthier," he remarked. I wonder whether his advice will go down well with the aged and the infirm. Mah at 47, and a cardiologist by profession, is in his prime. But can you say the same of the many who visit the hospital daily?

## Eye Health

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 4

Glaucoma as you know has been nicknamed the "silent thief of sight". This disease results in **permanent irreversible blindness** in the affected eye(s) that often goes unnoticed until the loss of vision is significant.

### What Is Unnoticed Loss Of Vision?

In some types of glaucoma such as Primary Open Angle Glaucoma and Normal Tension Glaucoma, the **visual loss occurs very slowly** without the patient ever noticing until the disease is in its advanced stage. You may wonder how a person can be losing vision without noticing it. Well, this is because the **visual loss is from the periphery**.

This peripheral visual loss is typically described as **tunnel vision**. Starting in the peripheral most part of the field of vision, the visual loss slowly starts encroaching into the central vision. This slowly progressing loss of vision is often unnoticed by the patient until a substantial amount of peripheral vision has been lost. Furthermore, glaucoma is "silent" **without any acute pain or symptoms**.

### Early Glaucoma



This picture simulates the early tunnel vision that a glaucoma patient may have and yet may not notice that there is peripheral loss of vision. A major part of the central vision is good and the patient is still able to see well. This peripheral loss of vision can only be detected by specialised testing called Perimetry or Visual Field Testing.

### Advanced Glaucoma



This picture shows advanced glaucoma. Most of the peripheral vision has been lost here. Only a small tunnel of vision is left. At this stage, the patient usually experiences **difficulty moving around in poorly lit places** or outdoors at night. Most people end up seeking treatment at this stage when such a significant vision loss has already occurred.

I have had patients walk into my Consultation complaining of poor vision in one eye. Following examination, the patient was found to have Primary Open Angle Glaucoma. The shocking part for such a patient is that whatever visual loss has occurred **cannot be reversed**. In other words, the vision that has been lost in the affected eye is **lost permanently**. It is for this reason that those **above 40 years of age should have their eyes checked routinely** as part of their general health screening.

Dr Gill will elaborate on the eye checks that are done for glaucoma in the next issue of the Ipoh Echo.

For more information, contact Gill Eye Specialist Centre at 05-5455582, email: [gilleyeccentre@dr.com](mailto:gilleyeccentre@dr.com) or visit [www.fatimah.com.my](http://www.fatimah.com.my).



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

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A-G-1, No. 1 Persiaran  
Greentown 2, Greentown  
Business Centre, 30450  
Ipoh Perak Darul Ridzuan.  
Tel: (605) 249 5936  
Fax: (605) 255 2181  
Email: [editorial@ipohecho.com.my](mailto:editorial@ipohecho.com.my)

## EDITORIAL

Fathol Zaman Bukhari  
G. Sivapragasam

## REPORTER

James Gough

## GRAPHIC DESIGN

Rosli Mansor Ahd Razali  
Ed Shahir Noordin

## MARKETING &amp; DISTRIBUTION MANAGER

Ramesh Kumar

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Kampong Jawa  
11900 Bayan Baru,  
Pulau Pinang  
Tel: (604) 644 7507

## USEFUL CONTACTS

## Ibu Pejabat Polis Daerah (IPD)

05 2451 072 (CCC)  
05 2451 222 (Operator)  
999 (emergency)

## Ipoh General Hospital

05-208 5000

## Ipoh Ambulance

05-522 2506  
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## Ipoh Fire Brigade

05-547 4444/994  
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## State Secretariat

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05-208 8000

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## AA Ipoh

019-574 3572  
017-350 8361

## Thinking ALLOWED • by Mariam Mokhtar

## The Lost Tribe of Gunung Korbu

A joint expedition by American and Malaysian universities has discovered a new indigenous people living in the mountain range of Gunung Korbu, according to a secret memo seen by The Ipoh Echo.

The e-mail which was sent to various anthropologists, asks distinguished academics to mark June 13 as 'Perak's Day of Revelation', which they were encouraged to attend.

The team of anthropologists from the University of Pallorofi in California working with archaeologists from Universiti Teknologi Petronas at Tronoh have made several trips to Gunung Korbu in the past four years.

According to the memo, Professor Flora Pilo, who is the resident anthropologist at The University of Pallorofi said, "For years, trekkers to Malaysia's second highest peak brought back stories of a herd of buffaloes roaming the mountain range. Although they did not spot anybody, they heard voices in a language they could not understand, herding these beasts."

Gunung Korbu (or *Kerbau*) is peninsular Malaysia's second highest peak at 7,162 ft. and was discovered in 1885 by the British colonial government surveyor William Cameron. It was during this mapping expedition that Cameron discovered Cameron Highlands, but his discovery was only recorded in 1925 by Sir George Maxwell.

Historical records at the National Archives in Kew, London said that Cameron had been knocked unconscious by a herd of buffaloes at Gunung Korbu in 1885. Porters carried his broken body down the treacherous slopes and the significance of this herd of buffaloes and the lost tribe, including the failure to register Cameron Highlands, was because of Cameron's injury.

Professor Flora Pilo described the effort taken by the universities: "We sent in four teams, to try and make contact and we are glad to say that last year, we managed to persuade two members of the Korbuan people, to return to Tronoh whilst we conducted tests on them.

"I think this is a great discovery for the people of Perak, and all of Malaysia. DNA testing has confirmed that these people are descended from the other species, we know as *Lenggong Man*."

"Although smaller in size, they have the same dental structure, coarse wiry hair, as well as other characteristics of *Lenggong Man*. We wondered why they strayed so far from Lenggong. Perhaps there were tribal wars.



It is possible the threat of famine may have caused them to migrate, in search of food."

One senior academic at The Universiti Teknologi Tronoh who did not wish her name to be published, said that a Press Conference had been arranged for June, and that copies of the test results, photographic evidence, x-rays, medical tests and other detailed analyses of the tribe's dwellings and habits, had been sent to be scrutinised by experts in leading universities around the world.

The language used by the Korbuan indigenous people, is known as the *Korbellow*; their written language uses simple inscriptions and they practise rituals which involve going into a sedentary trance whilst daubed in mud.

IE traced Professor Flora Pilo to the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford University where she was attending a conference. She praised this paper for its investigative journalism and said, "Malaysians cannot keep secrets."

She has confirmed that the IE will be given first access to the couple of Korbuan who are still undergoing observation at Tronoh.

Meanwhile, a list of authorised travel agents will be given permission to market tours to visit the settlement of the Korbuan people, close to the Gunung Korbu peak.

Hotels in Ipoh will also prepare various promotions to cater to tourists to Gunung Korbu. Some suites will be called the Korbu Presidential Suite in honour of this long-lost tribe. Chefs will also cash in on the act and a lunch buffet, consisting of prime buffalo cuts will be on offer. Roast Korbu and Korbu pudding will be featured next June, when the Korbuan are finally unveiled to the world.

The memo will invite members of the Malaysian cabinet to be guests of honour at next month's Press Conference. That is why the Ipoh Echo can safely predict that GE-13 will not be held in early June.

## Community



## Aiding the Palestinians

Yayasan Bakti Gunong Keledang, in collaboration with Viva Palestina Malaysia (VPM), presented a talk and film show at the Perak Culture and Arts Auditorium in Jalan Caldwell, Ipoh recently. The objective was to collect funds to initiate Viva Palestina 6 (VP6), the sixth aid convoy to help the stateless Palestinians. Fund raising activities by VPM began in early March.

Some RM1.72 million had been collected prior to the weekend show. The money will be used to rebuild 11 schools in the Gaza strip and the purchase of educational materials. Two founding members of VPM, Azra Banu and Siti Azura, were in attendance. Azra briefed the audience regarding the proposed convoy and how it would operate in face of opposition from the Israeli authorities.

Dato' Megat Shahrani Megat Shahrudin, President of Kelab Bakti Gunong Keledang, in his opening remarks, thanked the audience for their generosity and hailed the two VPM volunteers, who will be with the convoy, as heroes for the cause of freedom.

The convoy will leave London for Gaza on April 22 and is expected to reach the troubled land on May 15. Those wishing for more details on VP6 can get them from VPM's website: [www.vivapalestina-my.org](http://www.vivapalestina-my.org) or email: [vpmalaysia@gmail.com](mailto:vpmalaysia@gmail.com).

RM

## 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.

## Congratulations to Dato' Seri and Datin N.S. Selvamany

On behalf of the old Andersonians and the community we wish to congratulate You and Datin on the publication of your book of biography and various awards But our well wishes and love is your real reward May you and your wife live happily and long Let the coming years pass like a divine song May your love for others continue to grow May the Lord give you more and more Master, you will be remembered forever We will forget you never

Telk Raj Sharma  
Teacher, Anderson School 1961 to 1978  
(For the full text of the tribute, go to [www.ipohecho.com.my](http://www.ipohecho.com.my/))





## Musings on Food

seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

Photos by Chris DiGiovanna

# SeeFoon gets hot and steamy in Gunung Rapat

I'm not usually a fan of steamboat unless they're specially ordered in advance from some of my favourite restaurants where I know the chefs and where they'll make the stock from scratch. Then I can rest assured that I won't leave with a bad case of MSG allergy to which I am very prone.

Most of the dedicated steamboat restaurants I'm afraid, fall into the 'make-stock-with-a-heaping-teaspoon-of-MSG' category and these I avoid like the plague. It was therefore with some trepidation that I accepted an invitation to try out the newly opened **Super Taste Steamboat Restaurant** in Gunung Rapat.

It is not the easiest to find but if you travel on Jalan Musa Mahadi which is the main road leading to Jalan Gopeng and past MayBank on the left, look out for the mini market Yoon Foong and turn left at that junction. Go 1.2 km on that road until you reach Persiaran Wira Jaya Timur 23. Turn in and go all the way to the end and there on five shop lots is Super Taste Steamboat Restaurant.

This is a family affair with brothers John and Johnny, Johnny's wife and a whole clan of other family members and their friends, proudly demonstrating their culinary skills as they pool resources to produce all the soups, sauces and other ready made ingredients that go into the steamboat.

This is what makes this steamboat special. All the stock is homemade with a choice of **spicy Tom Yam** or **clear stock** which is served in separate pots. So those who wish to have their food more spicy can cook their ingredients in the spicy soup while those preferring a milder taste can use the clear stock.

All the dips and sauces too are special, with a choice of four different concoctions to choose from. As each person has four dips in front of them, one is certainly spoilt



for choice. None of the factory made standard chilli sauce here. Each

sauce is unique and stands on its own merit, all concocted by family member

Angie Ng. There is the **red chilli sauce** made with fresh chillies, garlic and fresh herbs; the **satay sauce** made with fresh red chillies, galangal, lemongrass, toasted peanuts and other fresh herbs; the **green chilli sauce**, a combination of green chilli padi, garlic, lime and fresh herbs; and the **house oyster sauce** (her own creation) – green chilli padi, garlic, coriander and other fresh herbs.

The choice of ingredients for the steamboat is huge. There is the usual sampling of fish balls, fish cakes, fish wantons, sotong ball, etc., but worth ordering are their homemade items like the **dumpling**, the **pork tendon dumpling**, the **pork meat ball** and the **homemade fried bean curd dumpling** which are much tastier than the factory produced varieties to which our palates have grown jaded.

There is a profusion of vegetables to choose from, a sampling include **watercress**, **Chinese cabbage**, **Choy Sum**, **Pak Choy**, **Tong Ho** and **broccoli** or **Kailan** as well as **mushrooms** like **oyster** and **Enoki**.

Side dishes include **tofu**, **dried seaweed**, **egg**,



**vermicelli and deep fried noodles.** Meat dishes include **sliced beef**, **sliced pork belly**, **pork liver**, **pork intestines** and **chicken**.

But it is the seafood selection that captures one's attention and taste buds. Weekdays will see the usual offering of **sliced grouper**, **prawns**, **scallops**, **clams**, **mussels**, **squid**, **jelly fish** and **fish maw** but weekends is when the place becomes packed.

Weekends is when the live fish come in from Pantai Remis and further afield and families would gather here to eat the **live flower crabs**, whole **pomfret**, sometimes **mantis prawns** and whatever other live goodies are available. These are understandably sold at seasonal prices.

A **Super Taste Set** is available at RM15.00 per person for a minimum of two people as are wok fried 'la carte' dishes. I would recommend going on a weekend although one may have to queue for a table but the steamboat with the fresh caught seafood will definitely be worth the wait.



## HAWKER FOOD

### Wonton Mee (Revisited)



Here we go again...another hawker food well-worth a revisit! No half decent coffee shop or food court would operate without a *wonton mee* stall. A good *wonton mee* is al dente (has a bite to it) but, more often than not nowadays, the *mee* is the texture of instant noodles.

Some of the stalls are well-known and have been operating many years. Funny how people in Ipoh don't mind waiting for a bowl of good *wonton mee*. Here are a few to try:

#### Morning:

**Choy On Yoon Wonton Mee**, 26 Jalan Pike, Menglembu Noodles are thin, al dente, *wonton* flavourful, firm, has enough filling. They also have *char siew*, pork and prawn wonton – from RM2.50. Open: 7.00 a.m.-5.00 p.m.

**Kedai Kopi Kheng Hai**, 47 Jalan Yau Tet Sin (New Town) Noodles al dente. They have pork and prawn *wonton*, chicken feet mushroom, boar feet (Wed & Sun), *sui kow*, *char siew* – from RM2.60.

**Teck Hing**, Stall #45, Stadium Perak From RM3 – closed every Mon & Thurs

**Kafe Sentosa Ria**, Lebuhraya Ipoh, Ipoh Garden South Noodles have a nice flavour with tasty pork and whole prawn *wonton* – from RM3

#### Night:

**Stall at 736 Jalan Kg. Simee** (across from the Home for the Aged Simee), 5.30-10.00 p.m. Noodles very al dente with 6 tasty pork *wonton* – only RM2.80.

**Cheong Kee**, 542 Jalan Sekolah, Buntong Noodles are al dente – has slivers of pork in the sauce with 4 pork *wonton* from RM3. Be prepared to wait at least half an hour (if you're lucky).

#### Stall #22 @ Stadium Perak

Noodles are al dente and flavourful, also has prawn *wonton* and *char siew* – prawn *wonton* are full and springy – from RM3.



#### Super Taste Steamboat

1A-9A, Persiaran Wira Jaya Timur 23A, Taman Panglima, 31350 Ipoh, Malaysia.  
Tel.: +60 135148884  
GPS Location: N 04.34.242 E 101.08.286  
Open Monday to Sunday: 5.30-10.30 p.m.

## RECIPE

By Margarita Lee



### Ayam Pongteh – Nyonya Chicken Stew with Soybean Paste

#### Ingredients:

- 2 kg chicken – chopped into pieces
- 3 tbsp. cooking oil
- 10 pips garlic – pound finely
- 20 shallots – pound finely
- 5 Chinese mushrooms – soaked
- 2 cups potatoes – wedges (boil till soft, keep for later use)
- 1 cup carrots – wedges (boil till soft, keep for later use)
- 2 tbsp. fermented soybean paste /Tau Cheong
- 2 tbsp. light soya sauce
- 1 tsp. dark soya sauce
- 1 tbsp. palm sugar/brown sugar
- 1 cup water
- Salt to taste
- Parsley for garnishing

#### Method:

1. Marinate chicken pieces with light and dark soya sauce.
2. Heat oil, sauté onion and garlic paste, add soya bean paste, fry till aromatic.
3. Add in marinated chicken and mushroom. Stir well; add in one cup of water.
4. Simmer chicken for about 10-15 minutes; add in potatoes and carrot wedges.
5. Add in sugar and salt to taste, and continue stewing for 5 minutes or until the chicken is tender.
6. Garnish with parsley.





## News Roundup

### Community Health Campaign at Kg. Timah



**P**erak Community Specialist Hospital (PCSH) organised a Free Health Screening at Kg. Timah's basketball court, Tanjung Tualang, recently. The free screening included blood pressure check, blood glucose test, consultation and counselling.

Guest of honour, Dato' Lee Chee Leong, Deputy Home Minister, launched the "*Kempen Kesihatan Komuniti*" (Community Health Campaign) which was organised by PCSH and coordinated by MCA Kg. Timah and MCA Kg. Timah Timur. Souvenirs, snacks, drinking water and free medicine were distributed to all Kg. Timah villagers. This exercise was part of PCSH's Corporate Social Responsibility programme.

Rajindar Singh (4<sup>th</sup> from left), CEO of PCSH, is seen in the photo presenting a souvenir to Dato' Lee Chee Leong (3<sup>rd</sup> from left).



### Perak Water Board Increased Profits

**A**fter meeting with the Perak Water Board (LAP), Perak Menteri Besar Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir told reporters, revenue from the sale of water had increased from RM270.67 million in 2010 to RM275.46, an increase of RM4.79 million. Through the increase in sales revenue, LAP had accumulated a pre-tax profit of RM104.32 million.

He added that a memorandum on the water restructuring plan in Perak would be tabled in cabinet for approval soon and the state government had already approved the proposed plan and had informed the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water on January 18. The agreement with Pengurusan Asset Air Berhad (PAAB) will be inked after the proposal is approved.

AJ

### PAGE Ipoh Potluck



**T**he Ipoh Chapter of PAGE (Parent Action Group for Education) organised a Parents for PPSMI (Teaching of Science and Mathematics in English) potluck lunch at the Town Padang as an awareness-creating activity for parents to support PPSMI. Dato' Dr Anwar Hassan, Co-ordinator PAGE (Ipoh Chapter), said that the support of the parents is needed for the future of our children's education. He called on parents to attend Parent-Teacher Association annual general meetings to press for the adoption of a PPSMI Option to be given to Standard 1 and 2 students and to set up PPSMI classes for students.

PAGE (Ipoh Chapter) urges the State Education Department to: declare names of Primary and Secondary National-type Schools in Perak offering PPSMI; make available English texts for Science and Mathematics in all National-type schools offering PPSMI; and designate a cluster of permanent PPSMI schools for boys and girls in each district of Perak.

AJ

### Gift from Red Crescent Society Gopeng/Kampar

**M**embers of the Red Crescent Society Gopeng/Kampar Branch recently presented 115 blankets to the State Red Crescent Society at its premises in Kg. Simee.

Dato' Mohd Rafiai bin Haji Moktar, Chairman of the Malaysian Red Crescent Society, Perak Branch, received the blankets from Mr Desunda Singh, Vice-President of Gopeng/Kampar Branch. Attending the presentation ceremony were officers of the Perak State Committee as well as officers of Gopeng/Kampar District.

Dato' Rafiai thanked Gopeng/Kampar District for the kind and generous donation which will most certainly be used in times of need. Mr Desunda Singh also thanked all donors for their generous donations in kind.



### Sungai Buntong Bridge Delayed Again

**R**esidents and commercial establishments in of Sungai Buntong along Lahat Road displayed their displeasure with Ipoh City Council recently for delaying the completion of the construction of a bridge over Sungai Buntong.

Lahat Road has, for many decades, been the main road joining Ipoh to the towns of Menglembu, Bukit Merah, Lahat and beyond, where many established industries and establishments are located. Work on the project to upgrade the bridge over Sungai Buntong started in October 2010 and was scheduled for completion a year later. The completion date was revised in 2011 with the rescheduled date indicated as June 2012.

At a gathering organised by State Assemblymen of Menglembu, Lim Pek Har; Tronoh, V. Sivakumar; and Pokok Assam, Yee Su Kai (whose family house is in the area) they highlighted that the delay was causing hardship to the nearby businesses whose regular customers had to make a big detour to get to their premises.

A check with the Engineering Department of Ipoh City Council revealed that the delay was caused by the resignation of the plumber of the sub-contractor appointed by MBI for the project.

The spokesman for the department explained that all remedial work such as relocating cables belonging to TNB and Telekom had been completed. The spokesman added that a new plumber had to be registered with the relevant government department before he could perform any work which contributed to the delay of over six months.

This issue has now been rectified and work to connect water supply and remove the old piping will be completed by the end of March after which the work to install the structure for the bridge will begin.

The spokesman also acknowledged the project would again "be delayed beyond June 2012 and indicated the date of completion by December this year".

JAG



### International Women's Day Celebrations



**W**omen's Affairs Committee Chairman, Dato' Hamidah Osman, announced eight programmes to celebrate International Women's Day which is observed globally on March 8. They are:

1. **Women and Education** – March 31 at UPSI Tanjung Malim by the State Education Department. Forum to discuss whether the country's current education system is capable of turning students into morally responsible citizens.
2. **Women and Breast Cancer** – April 6 to 8 at Arena Square, Batu Gajah organised by Lembaga Penduduk dan Pembangunan Keluarga Negara Malaysia (LPPKN) Perak. Forum to create awareness about the severity of breast cancer.
3. **Women and Law** – April 7 at Dewan Serbaguna, State Secretariat Building, Ipoh by Perak Bar Committee. Forum to discuss policies for single mothers and to get the government to implement them.
4. **Women and Entrepreneurship** – April 13 to 15 at Dataran Menara Condong, Teluk Intan by Dewanita DPMN Negeri Perak. Entrepreneurial opportunities for women.
5. **Women's Anti-Crime and City Survival Skills** – April 14 at Dewan Serbaguna, State Secretariat Building, Ipoh by Jabatan Pembangunan Wanita Perak and Perak Women for Women Society. Teach women ways to combat crime on the streets.
6. **Women and the Environment** – April 22, 2012 (beginning 8.00 a.m.) along Kinta River (near Kinta Riverfront Hotel) by Jabatan Alam Sekitar. Trees will be planted along the riverbanks as part of a green campaign.
7. **Women and Health** – April 28 (beginning 9.00 p.m.) in Pangkor by Malaysian Medical Association. A health screening programme for women.
8. **Mutiara Perak Awards (Women Gala Nite)** – April 29 (beginning 8.00 p.m.) at Kinta Riverfront Hotel Ballroom by Perak Society of Performing Arts. Awards for women who have contributed to society.

EL



## News Roundup

### Papan Landfill Ready to Receive Solid Waste



The Papan Landfill site on 20 March

The Papan Landfill to replace the Bercham Landfill location is ready to receive solid waste effective April 2. According to a spokesman for Ipoh City Council, the Bercham Landfill will receive its last dumpster on April 1 with all solid waste going to Papan effective April 2. Undoubtedly residents of Bercham will literally breathe a sigh of relief once the switch is effective.

The site of the Papan Landfill is located within the vicinity of the Asian Rare Earth Depository which stores the radioactive rare earth that was produced by Asian Rare Earth refinery which closed down in 1992. The Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB), in our earlier report (IE136 Feb 1), had imposed a 1.7 km buffer zone around the Depository and "no development was allowed to take place within it".

A check at the site has revealed that the Papan Landfill, where the solid waste is to be deposited, is just 1km from the Depository well within the 1.7km buffer zone. The Council spokesman confirmed the landfill cell is 1km away from the Depository but within the 1.7km buffer zone. The spokesman explained that AELB had allowed the landfill site be located 1km from the depository with the condition that the waste leachate be processed outside the 1.7km buffer zone.

The spokesman also stated that the new landfill cell as well as the leachate collection pond is temporary, with the permanent facilities scheduled to be ready in 8 months time.

Regarding the EIA report the spokesman stated that it was 90% completed.

JAG

### A Wedding to Cherish



Padang Rengas's Alia Hanah Abdul Rahman and beau, Dario Micael Da Silva Paxao, were married in traditional Malay fashion complete with *kompang*, *bunga manggar* and the *bersanding* ceremony. Micael, a Portuguese, met Alia while studying abroad. They decided to get hitched in Alia's parents' home at Padang Rengas. Father Abdul Rahman was a former student of Sekolah Tuanku Abdul Rahman (STAR), Ipoh. He now resides with his wife in London. Rahman's classmates came from afar to bless the newly-weds. It was also a moment to reminisce on the past. Dato' Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz, Member of Parliament for Padang Rengas and Minister in the PM Department were among the 1,000-odd invitees.

Nadim

### Bridal Fair

The richest and grandest bridal fair in Malaysia was held at the concourse of the Ipoh Parade shopping mall from Thursday, March 29 till Monday, April 1. This was made possible with the collaboration of Bridal World Group, Kinta Riverfront Hotel & Suites and Magnum 4D Bhd, the main sponsor.

During the fair, all Bridal World Group's wedding packages was sold at a discount of 50 percent. Forty-eight wedding gowns, mainly European and Korean styles, were showcased by six models. Additionally, visitors got to participate in Magnum 4D's multi-million ringgit draw.

To participate, one needed only to register with Magnum at the fair. Three sets of 4-digit numbers were picked by a guest-of-honour. Magnum would then place a bet with the numbers on a Magnum draw one week later, with the possible highest pay-out of a million ringgit. This prize money, less 10% for charity, would be shared equally among all registrants for each respective day.



If the number of entrants exceeded 400, Magnum would double its bet, for a pay-out of RM2 million. Participation in the draw is free-of-charge and was only open to non-Muslims, 18 years old and above.

Entertainment over the weekend was provided by Ipoh's wedding live band, Stanleystudio Music Department.

The organisers targeted 6,000 visitors and wedding-package signups of 200 couples at the fair.

EL

### PM Najib's Working Visit to Ipoh



Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak's one day working visit to Ipoh can be best described in one word 'swamped' by people that turned up at each location to greet him.

The school hall at SJK (C) Wan Hwa 2, Menglembu, was packed upon his arrival where he officially opened the school's new four-storey building and provided an allocation of RM300k simultaneously towards the construction of a car park.

At Kg. Kacang Putih, Buntong, he was greeted by 5,000 people who congregated under a ½-km long tent with shouts of "Satu Malaysia" as he made his way towards the dais. Najib, overwhelmed by the warm turnout, said he was "most encouraged by the show of support". Here too he announced a RM5 million allocation towards projects for the Indian community.

His last event, a dinner with the Association of Perak Chinese Religions in the state at the Yuk Choy High School, saw a turnout of 15,000 people. Undoubtedly a positive working visit which many Ipohites will remember for years to come.

JAG



### MBI Lucky Draw

The recently held luck draw at the Ipoh City Council building saw 230 winners taking home some very attractive prizes, compliments of the council. Those eligible for the draw paid their annual assessment bill in full by the end of February of this year. As required, the payments were made at counters within the council building, at the drive-through counter outside of the council building and at the old council office in Jalan Bandar.

The objective was noble – to encourage property owners to settle their assessment bill in full and on time. Souvenir mugs and ball pens were given out to 24,500 early birds. The number will be increased to 30,000 next year.

Village heads, councillors, council staff and members of the press were invited to pick 200 winners who will take home a tea set each. Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim drew 30 winners. These lucky 30 will collect prizes in the form of motorcycles, refrigerators and electrical appliances during a special ceremony to be held in April. The amount spent on prizes alone this year was RM30,000, an increase from RM25,000 last year.

EL

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## Young Perak

### MCKK Students Produce KK Heritage Trail Map



International Baccalaureate diploma programme students of *The Malay College Kuala Kangsar* first embarked on this project in October last year. This project was first mooted by Kinta Heritage Group, a non-profit organisation based in Ipoh. The collaboration of the Malay College Kuala Kangsar and Kinta Heritage has resulted in this well-researched and high quality tourism brochure for the royal town of Kuala Kangsar. The brochure, which is now in its final phase of production, is expected to be ready in April, bears testimony of the boys' love for Kuala Kangsar, the town of their alma mater. This is also their contribution towards Visit Perak Year 2012.



Information on 24 historical places and six precious local crafts have been included in this brochure. There is also information on the Royal Household of Perak. All this information was gathered from magazines, books, newspapers and the Internet. The students also conducted interviews with local residents of Kuala Kangsar to obtain further information.

When the places were successfully identified, the students, their teachers and consultants from Kinta Heritage tested the trail to ensure the suitability of it and to decide whether it was going to be a cycling or walking trail.

Historical places in Kuala Kangsar such as 'Istana Iskandariah' and 'Istana Kenangan' are already well-known to the public but in this map, the public will also be able to get information on other places such as 'Kedai Tinggi' and 'Sri Sayong Palace'. It is hoped that the Kuala Kangsar Heritage Trail Map will create awareness among the people, locals and tourists alike, that more effort should be put in the preservation and conservation of historical buildings and places in the town.

Kuala Kangsar is known for its traditional crafts. The crafts included in the brochure are *keris* making, *labu sayong*, *tekat* embroidery, batik painting, *mengkuang* weaving and silverware production. It is hoped that the inclusion of these crafts in the brochure will help preserve them for posterity. As Kuala Kangsar is a royal town, information on the history of the Perak Sultanate has also been included in the brochure. In fact, this section is considered an essential element in this brochure.

This project will be launched in April. It has been a great learning experience for the students to be involved in a project such as this.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT

### "Making Sense of Sensory Integration" Workshop

Organised by Autism Asperger's Help Association (AAHA)

April is International Autism Awareness Month and this workshop, in the month of April is also to raise awareness of the growing number of children diagnosed with ASD (autism spectrum disorder).

AAHA is inviting all parents, teachers and occupational therapists and anyone who is interested to come and join them. It will be on the 21st April, 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. at KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital. The speaker is Ms Teo Lee Fun, a specialist in this area. For more enquiries, call Ms Emily at **019-5582633** or Ms Michelle at **012-5121897**.

AAHA is an NGO located at 164, Jalan Perajurit, Ipoh Garden East. They organised a Walk for Autism in 2011 to raise funds to start an early intervention centre for children with autism and the centre started early this year. AAHA will also be organising a lot of seminars and workshops targeted at this community to help parents, teachers, and anyone interested to know more and how they can be of support and help to parents with children with autism.

### Tenby Schools Ipoh Annual Production 2012



Tenby Schools Ipoh's annual production on Saturday March 24, was a running success judging from public response. Two shows, one at 10.00 a.m. and the other at 8.00 p.m., were held at Dewan Leong Wan Chin, Sekolah Perempuan Perak, Ipoh.

Under the able guidance of Amy Crisp, 228 students, between the ages of 13 and 17, worked diligently for the past three months to put on a creative play called, "The Wiz". It is a modern-day adaptation of "The Wizard of Oz" with a Malaysian twist. Dorothy, played by Monissha Thiagu and Siti Ayesha, travelled to Malacca, Thailand, Singapore and Sydney on a quest to return home.

Each act was complimented with an entertaining dance by the different classes from the school. Singers Kevin Harris and Foo Hoong Ming entertained the crowd during intermission.

The Tenby A-Level Curricular class staged the Shakespearean play, "Hamlet", a culmination of its theatrical workshop which is an integral part of the curricular programme. Previous plays staged by the students were Macbeth, Julius Caesar and The Winter's Tale. Hamlet was scripted by Kshitij Verma and Nikika Parlanti who also directed the play.

All props, costumes and dance choreography were crafted by both students and teachers. Their commitment was second to none and this was the hallmark of Tenby Schools' success.

Tiffany

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

**"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**.

**MARA Education and Entrepreneur Carnival 2012, April 7 & 8**, 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. at Stadium Indera Mulia, Ipoh. For details call: Noor Farhana Abu Kassim, of All-About Communique Sdn Bhd, **017-588 2430** or email: <http://www.allaboutcommunique.com>.

**PAGE Ipoh Chapter Open Dialogue Session** entitled, "PPSMI – The Never Ending Quest" by Datin Azimah Rahim (Chairman of PAGE Malaysia), Wednesday **April 11**, 3.00-4.30 p.m. at Old Andersonian Club, 932 Jalan Hospital, Ipoh (inside Anderson School compound, enter from Taman D.R. roundabout). For parents who are concerned about their children's education. For further information or RSVP, contact or SMS: Anwar Hassan at **019-2774282** or Irene Yeoh at **012-5201993**.

**Malaysia IT Fair Ipoh Is Back @ Stadium Indera Mulia, April 13-15**. Lots of super value deals and fun activities all day long. For more information, visit: [www.MalaysiaITFair.com.my](http://www.MalaysiaITFair.com.my) or [www.facebook.com/MalaysiaITFair](http://www.facebook.com/MalaysiaITFair).

**Public Forum – 'Overactive Bladder'** by Dr Kalidasan Govindan, Saturday **April 14**, 3.00 p.m. at 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Dewan Anugerah, KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital. For registration and enquiries, contact: Pn Aziera or Miss Sarah at **05-2408777** ext. **8111**.

**Gathering for World Peace** organised by Persatuan Brahma Kumaris Ipoh, Sunday **April 15**, 6.15 p.m. at No.1 Persiaran Kin Mee, Taman Kin Mee, Fair Park. Open to the public of all faiths. Enquiries: Pam **012-5013049**.

**Blood Donation Campaign: The Gift of Life**, Sunday **April 22**, 9.00 a.m. - 12.00 p.m. at Church of St Michael, Ipoh, Peter Pang Hall. For more information, call Hospital Fatimah at **05-5455777** ext. **276**.

**Ante-Natal Class**, Saturday **April 28**, 2.00-6.00 p.m. at Conference Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Hospital Fatimah Ipoh. For more information, call: **05-5455777** ext. **276**.

**Centennial Fun-Fair and Michaelian Talenime 2012**. St Michael's Institution Ipoh, in conjunction with its Centennial Celebration, is organising the two events at its premises on Sunday, **April 29** from 8.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. Tickets can be purchased from the school office. For details please call Peter Khiew at **05-2540418** or visit [peterkhiew.blogspot.com](http://peterkhiew.blogspot.com).

**Kinta Craft Trail (Art & Craft Fair 2)**, May 12 & 13 at the Garden Villa, No. 5 Jalan Gopeng, Ipoh. You are invited to participate or meet at this upcoming Fair. Calling all crafters in Perak to contact: Dolly at **016-5516018** or email: [dollyquah@gmail.com](mailto:dollyquah@gmail.com).

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## Wellness

# Alimentary Checks Now Elementary

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

**D**r Saravana Kumar Karunanithi who is the new Resident Consultant Physician, Gastroenterologist & Hepatologist at Hospital Fatimah is all set to make people of Ipoh aware of liver diseases.

Dr Saravana, a local Ipoh Boy and ex Michaelian, obtained his medical degree from the University of Sheffield, UK, in 2000 and subsequently returned to Malaysia where he did his housemanship at Hospital Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Subsequent stints as medical officer in Hospital Sungai Siput and Ipoh General Hospital, gaining experience in managing acute and chronic medical conditions, saw him receiving his Membership of the Royal College of Physicians (MRCP) in 2006 after which he served as a specialist at Taiping Hospital for a year.

A move to Selayang Hospital which is a liver transplant centre in 2008, to do his sub-speciality in Hepatology (diseases of the liver) and Gastroenterology (diseases of the digestive tract), gave him first-hand experience in managing liver-related disorders including Hepatitis B and C.

Normal liver functions include breaking down harmful substances, removing waste products from the blood, storing nutrients and vitamins and moderating chemical levels in the body.

"There are several possible risk factors for developing liver disease, such as alcohol; **bacterial or viral hepatitis (especially Hepatitis B and C)**; drug-induced liver disease (e.g., Paracetamol overdose and some herbal remedies); congenital birth defects or abnormalities at birth; metabolic disorders or basic body processes with defects. Then, there is **non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD)** which can be caused by several issues such as obesity, diabetes, elevated cholesterol and elevated triglyceride levels," said Dr Saravana.

"Hepatitis is the most common form of liver disease. It occurs when the liver is inflamed and is linked to the spread of various viruses, but can also be developed because of poisons entering the body, an autoimmunity or hereditary condition," he added.

"The Chinese in particular are very susceptible to Hepatitis B and a lot of them are carriers without knowing it," he said. "As Hepatitis B and C are often asymptomatic, it is advisable for most people to have a routine screening through a simple blood test. This way, those who don't have hepatitis B can be vaccinated against it while those found to have **Hepatitis B/C** can be treated early on as untreated hepatitis can often lead to liver **cirrhosis and cancer**."

Cirrhosis of the liver, also known as chronic liver disease, is a very serious and deadly form of liver disease. "The symptoms that one could experience with liver disorders include jaundice or yellowing of the skin; loss of appetite, nausea, unusual weight loss; darkened urine; vomiting; diarrhoea, light-coloured stools; abdominal pain in upper right part of stomach; vague feelings of illness, fatigue; low-grade fever;



generalised itching; susceptibility to bleeding; enlarged and tender liver, enlarged spleen; edema or under-the-skin swelling," he elaborated.

Certain tests may be needed to ensure an accurate diagnosis. These may include blood tests, Liver function tests, imaging tests such as X-rays, computed tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and Ultrasound.

According to Dr Saravana, anyone showing signs of jaundice (yellowing of the complexion) should see a hepatologist immediately. With his specialist training in hepatology, Dr Saravana is ideally positioned to help patients with any problems of the liver.

Another area of concern for Dr Saravana is in the digestive tract. With stomach and colon cancers being high on the list of cancers in Ipoh and Malaysia, he urges all people over 50 to have a gastroscopy and colonoscopy by the time they reach that watershed year. Given that stomach and colon cancers have a very high success rate of cure when caught early, he also stresses that other issues when detected early, such as polyps, inflammatory bowel disease, and even tuberculosis in the colon, which surprisingly is not uncommon, can be treated and the dangers minimised if not removed.

For someone who has done many **Oesophageal Duodenoscopy** and colonoscopies, Dr Saravana looks set to introduce some well needed diagnostic and treatment options for Ipohites and Perakeans.

**Dr Saravana's clinic is situated on the Ground Floor, Block D, Medical Suite  
No. 34 at Hospital Fatimah, Tel.: 05-545 5777 ext. 472/473.  
Monday-Friday: 8.30 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. Saturday: 8.30 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.**

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## Eye Chat – From A Retinal Surgeon's Perspective

### Stem Cells in Retinal Disease

Stem cell treatment has been a 'headline grabber' for many years now and in fact, since its discovery 13 years ago, we have all been aware of talk about treatment for cancer, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes and so on.

In ophthalmology (particularly in retinal circles), stem cell treatment is a very hot topic as there are many retinal diseases which could be potential targets for development of a viable stem cell treatment. Most recently, there has been a research paper published in the well-known medical journal The Lancet (<http://www.thelancet.com>) which described the use of human embryonic stem cells (hESCs) to help patients with age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and Stargardt's macular dystrophy (another degenerative disease of the macula which has no available treatment as yet).



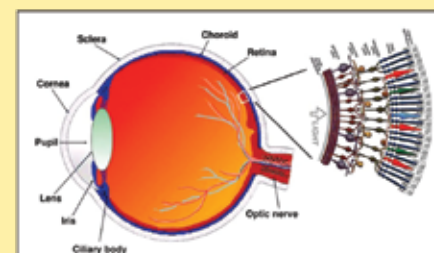
Dr Lee Mun Wai

### Introduction to Stem Cells

**What are they?** – Stem cells have the potential to develop into any type of cell in the body and can serve as an internal repair system to replenish other cells. Stem cells can, under specific conditions, develop into a cell type which is specific for a particular organ.

**The Retina?** – The retina is a tissue of many layers and it lines the inside of the eye. There are 10 layers in the retina but for simplicity, it can be divided into the neurosensory retina and the retinal pigment epithelium (RPE). The neurosensory retina is responsible for transmitting information to the brain for us to get the perception of vision and the RPE is a pigmented layer whose functions are mainly related to nutrition of the retina as well as transporting of 'waste material' out of the retina. In conditions such as AMD or Stargardt's disease, it is the RPE which is sick or dysfunctional.

Why should the RPE become sick? It could be genetic or environmental influence (e.g., sun or smoking). Unfortunately, the damaged RPE cells cannot regenerate and as more and more cells die, the disease gets worse and the vision deteriorates further. There has been intense interest in research to find ways to replace these RPE cells and using stem cells is one way to do it.



### What the future holds?

There is still much work to be done and many more questions to be answered. This most recent study has shown encouraging results in that there have been no complications observed in transplanting these stem cells into the retina of patients with AMD and Stargardt's disease. Aside from the technical challenges of the procedure, there was no abnormal growth of the stem cells or no "rejection" observed.

This study has been touted as a major breakthrough in the use of stem cells for the treatment of retinal diseases and if longer term and larger studies in future should show similarly encouraging results, we may be looking at another step towards the prevention of blindness!

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



## Business

### Ipoh Shoe City – in Two Years

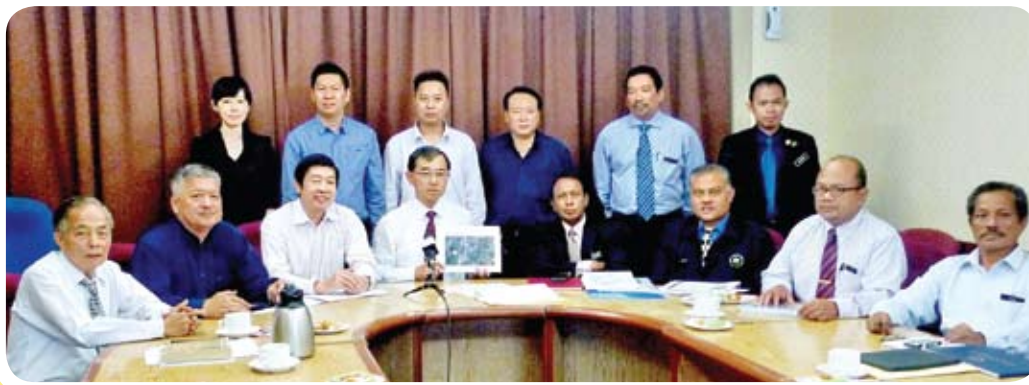
The ground-breaking event to start the establishment of Ipoh Shoe City will be held next month at its site at Pengkalan Industrial Area (Promistar).

This was announced recently by Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon, State Exco for local government, after a meeting with members of the *Perak Footwear Industry Association* (PFIA) and local officials.

The Ipoh Shoe City project was first mooted over a year ago to house various footwear manufacturers under one roof and will ultimately become a one-stop centre for foreign buyers to view their products, attract investors and overseas tourists.

PFIA, which is 99 years old this year, has over 500 members comprising of manufacturers, traders, designers and retailers. What started out as a cottage industry in the vicinity of Bukit Merah, now contributes 70% to the total footwear industry in the country valued at RM1 billion annually and produces under license internationally branded footwear names.

The setting up of the 'Ipoh Shoe City' project will facilitate unlicensed manufacturers, currently operating at Bukit Merah New Village, to comply with all requirements for licensing as a shoe manufacturer.



The 10.5Ha site at Pengkalan was offered to the Association by MBI last year. The site is a mining pond which will be filled. The whole project is anticipated to be completed in two years.

In the meantime, PFIA President Low Heng Keat thanked Dato' Mah and the local government officials for moving forward with the implementation of the Shoe City project.

JAG

### PESDC Achieves ISO Certification



The *Perak Entrepreneur and Skills Development Centre* (PESDC), located at Pengkalan 2 Industrial Estate, has achieved ISO 9001: 2008 Certification.

The Certificate was presented to PESDC Chairman Dato' Gan Tack Kong (pic, left) by SIRIM Perak Chief Khairul Aimy Kamaludin (pic, right) during the centre's career fair.

Gan, in his address, affirmed that 'achieving ISO certification was crucial for the centre explaining that the centre "must emulate leadership by example, practice good corporate governance and be managed in an efficient and transparent manner."

The career fair was officiated by Dato' Abu Bakar Syed Director of the State Economic Planning Unit who represented the State Secretary Dato' Abdul Puhat b Mat Nayan.

Also present at the event was Ali Badaruddin Abd Kadir, Chief Executive of Skills Development Fund Corporation, a division of the Ministry of Human Resources.

Eighteen established companies participated in the centre's Career Fair; the all Perak companies included Top Glove, Unisem, Proton and Silverstone.

PESDC, established in 1993, is private sector driven but supported by the State and Federal government. Since its inception it has trained 7,000 students and provided retraining for 5,000 employees. Currently its students are undergoing training programmes in automotive, plastics technology, printing, welding, refrigeration, mechatronics and CNC.

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## News Roundup

## Honing Skills in Bead-Making

**Y**ayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan (YBU) is relentless in its pursuit for excellence through its many outreach programmes. The foundation has just ventured into the teaching of handicraft as a means to help the underprivileged and the marginalised to be self-sufficient. It has acquired the expertise of Halina Buang of 1Skill Consultant from Rapat Setia to teach single mothers, the mentally and physically handicapped and selected individuals from within the Orang Asli community in the state, the fine art of bead-making.

The two-day programme was held at the foundation's multi-purpose hall in Greentown Business Centre recently. The launching ceremony was graced and officiated by Datin Seri DiRaja Sharipah Zulkifli, wife of Chief Minister, Dato Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir. Sharipah is also the President of Baiduri, the Association for Wives of State Representatives.

"This well-conceived programme is set to make an impact as it's a skill-based initiative done with the best of intent," she said in her opening remarks. "The skill acquired by participants will help them generate money, which in turn will make them self-sufficient."

Hairul Anwar Mohamad Noor, YBU's Corporate Services Manager, echoed the sentiments of Sharipah by reiterating the benefits that could be derived from the programme. "Bead-making is an infant industry but the potentials are huge. Beads can be sold as souvenirs and as religious items. The benefits, therefore, should not be overlooked," he told Ipoh Echo. "YBU has identified the likely target groups to be taught the skill in bead-making," he added. It would definitely go beyond the present



group of individuals who were picked based on their dispositions.

In realising the objective of turning the skill into a money-spinner, the foundation has taken steps to market the finished products through its network consisting of corporations, state religious departments, tourism agencies and traders. They will also be sold during government-sponsored seminars and road shows locally and abroad.

RM

## Zambry Lauds Education Department's Effort


**C**hief Minister of Perak, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir praised Perak Education Department's effort in organising a mind-mapping workshop exclusively for students from the Kinta Valley. Over a thousand school-going children attended the 3-day workshop named "EZLEARN2U" held at the Ipoh Town Hall from March 22 to 24.

The programme, according to the organisers, was in tandem with the advancement made in the field of education. "I hope the introduction of this mind-mapping strategy will help improve students' understanding of Science and Mathematics," said Zambry in his opening remarks. "These well-rounded students will be an asset to the nation in the era of globalisation," he added.

In an earlier speech, Deputy Director of Education, Hj Mohd Idris Ramli remarked that the programme would be extended to cover other subjects such as Islamic Studies, Moral Education, Bahasa Malaysia and English.

RM





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## Sport

## Red Warriors Humble Seladangs

Three months into the season, Perak has little to show in terms of prowess. Against a technically superior Kelantan side, the Seladangs were literally gasping for the proverbial air. Predictably, the Perak team succumbed to a disappointing 2-0 defeat on its own pitch here in Ipoh on Saturday, March 17. The score left them lingering helplessly in sixth spot.

Having lifted the Malaysian Super League title last year, the Red Warriors have remained true to form in 2012, in spite of several off-field controversies. Peter Butler left the team in February but the Red Warriors retained their solidity to sit comfortably at the top of the table. Bojan Hodak is being drafted as a replacement. Maintaining the same regime, Bojan has managed to keep the team intact thus far.

With such impressive performance, it would have been foolhardy to predict a loss. The manner in which Kelantan exposed Perak's flaws was magnificent, to say the least. Ten minutes into the first half, the Red Warriors were already one up courtesy of a Nasril Nourdin

fumble which saw Daudsu Jamaluddin netting the ball in spectacular fashion.

Norizan Bakar's men barely made an impact from that moment on. Failee Ghazale, who made a surprise return to the Perak foil after a lengthy spell on the side-lines, failed to impress upfront. Even the charismatic Akhmal Rizal struggled to pull the strings on the offensive.

After a significant period of total domination for the away side, Bojan Hodak's men eventually doubled their lead in the 24th minute. Zairul Fitri curled in a mesmerising free-kick, which eased past Nasril Nourdin into the Perak goal, as Kelantan threatened to run riot.

Nevertheless, the Seladangs fought hard and began to find their feet, as the game progressed. The second half was a much better period for the home side. Lazar Popovic carved out a few key opportunities with his languid touch but the rest failed to complement his efforts. Things became far too delicate for Perak as the minutes ticked away. The Kelantan team showed great resilience to keep its lead. Michal Kubala could have scored in the



90th minute but his shot rattled the bar, instead. Fans could only look in disbelief.

After a string of defeats the pressure is beginning to mount on the Seladangs. Popovic's struggles, meanwhile, are not showing any signs of improving. It is time for a reality check for our home team.

And with the April transfer looming in the horizon, Perak needs to reshuffle ITS squad. Keita Mandjou is high on the shopping list.

Keesh

## PICA/YMCA Chess Tournament

The 15th PICA/YMCA International Chess Tournament was held at the YMCA Ipoh, recently. It saw the participation of 97 players, including national players, a turnout that was better than expected.

Time-control was 20 minutes, to ensure that the tournament could be completed within a day. There were a total of seven rounds.

There were five categories: Under-12, Under-15, Under-18, Veteran and Open. Trophies were presented to all winners, while the top ten players in the Open category walked away with cash prizes, additionally.

The winner of the Open category was Sumant Subramanian, 19, from Cameron Highlands. His father and two younger siblings, Shreyes and Sarika, were also among the top ten finishers in the tournament.

According to Perak International Chess Association



(PICA) President, Ir. Chan Swee Loon, chess tournaments are held regularly throughout the year to promote and to instil interest in children and to create opportunities for them to play at competition level. He hoped that through these efforts, new talents would be uncovered.

EL

## Ipoh International Run 2012



The 17th edition of the Ipoh International Run (IIR 2012) will be held on Sunday, July 1, in conjunction with Ipoh City Day and Visit Perak Year 2012. There are twelve categories in all based on age groups and gender. A new category, called "Fun Run", will make its debut this year.

Entry fee ranges from RM5 to RM20 (USD1.50 to USD8 for foreign participants). Cash prizes worth RM96,750 will be given away, in addition to 1,600 medals. The organisers expect over 13,000 participants from Malaysia and neighbouring countries. Last year some 14,000 runners, from as far as the United States of America and Kenya, took part.

The top three schools with the highest number of participants will receive RM1,000, RM750 and RM500, respectively.

Chief Minister Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir will flag off the first group of runners at 6.45 a.m. at Stadium Indera Mulia, Ipoh.

Registration is open from April 1 to June 25. Entry forms are available at IIR Secretariat at Wisma Bougainvillea, Jalan Foo Choo Choon. Registration can be done online at [www.mbi.gov.my](http://www.mbi.gov.my) or [www.ipohrun.com](http://www.ipohrun.com).

EL

## The Premier Pitch comes to Ipoh

The Premier Pitch, a Singapore-based sports establishment that created football facilities in Singapore, has opened a branch in Ipoh.

The establishment was created by ex footballer, Paul Masefield, to enable football enthusiasts to have a game all day long and in any weather. Football fans will know Paul Masefield as the regular commentator on Astro's ESPN Sports.

The Ipoh centre is located at Menglembu and covers two warehouses, Block B & C, Hala Perusahaan Menglembu 12, off Lahat Road behind the Proton showroom.



Paul Masefield

According to its General Manager, Mr Andy Johnston, the Centre has two types of pitches, two artificial turf courts, one FIFA spec training pitch and one full size FIFA spec Futsal court.

Johnston added that "Ipoh is the first The Premier Pitch outlet to be opened in Malaysia. The full FIFA-size court will enable



Full FIFA sized futsal court

6-a-side games to be played with the possibility for teams to prepare themselves for the Futsal League."

The Premier Pitch opens its doors this month (April). For enquiries and booking, contact: Peter at 012-6986487 or Miguel at 012-6784794.

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