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an auspicious date
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empowerment
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AT LAST!

JELAPANG'S TERRIBLE TOLL GATE IS NO MORE

MOTORISTS TRAVELLING BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH ARE FINALLY USING NEW FACILITIES



But the saga is not quite over

Read James Gough's story - page 3

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IPOH'S BUDGET REVIEW REVEALS SUBSTANTIAL FUNDS OWED BY PUBLIC

Half yearly figures pinpoint four areas with highest defaulter numbers

Mayor Rashidi Hashim has tabled Ipoh City Council's mid-term review of Budget 2008.

This took place at the monthly full-board meeting on August 29 and the specific period covered by this review runs from January to July this year.

Some of the more pertinent points gleaned from this latest report are as follows:

a. As of July 31, a total sum of RM60.5 million of the RM120.7 million budgeted for 2008 has been expended.

b. The overall sum owing to City Council as at end July 2008 stands at RM70.6 million.

c. Of the amount receivable, RM53.1 million is owed by property owners in unpaid assessment bills for 2008. The figure represents 75.2 per cent of the sum owing to the council. The four areas with the highest number of defaulters are Bercham (8,645 and RM3.1 million), Pengkalan (4,818 and RM2.86 million), Menglembu (4,666 and RM3.04 million) and Ipoh city centre (4,408 and

RM4.25 million).

d. As of August 25 a total of 74,305 house owners have yet to settle their assessment bills. Collectively, this amounts to a hefty sum of RM24 million owing to the council.

e. The council is taking every effort to recover the amount owing by house owners. As at end July warrants to seal the properties of 15,413 house owners had been served. This represented an increase of 10,396 warrants over the corresponding period in

2007. The amount sought is RM12.7 million.

COUNCILLOR URGES DEVELOPERS

During question time, the Councillor for Buntong and Silibin, M. Kulasegeran proposed that the council make it mandatory for developers of new housing estates in Ipoh to incorporate the installation of solar panels to houses they built.

"Solar energy is a cheap alternative source," said Kula. "With the es-



Ipoh's Mayor Rashidi Hashim



It's a good idea - solar panels as part of basic designs for modern homes.



MP Kulasegeran

calating cost of electricity, using solar power to power houses is most appropriate."

He emphasised that

the onus was now on housing developers to take the lead and include technological advances within the overall concept of basic housing designs.

House owners can save as much as 30 per cent in electricity bills

monthly by relying on energy resources provided by the sun.

"What is more, there's plenty of sunlight in the tropics and that comes free," added the councillor who is also the MP for Ipoh Barat.

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Mohd Zainuddin

LAUNCHING OF TOURISM PERAK

By Ipoh Echo staff reporter

Perak's tourism industry has taken a tumble largely due to indifference and foot-dragging by past authorities. The problem is further compounded by the change-over of government from Barisan Nasional to Pakatan Rakyat follow-

ing the March 8 General Election.

A unique situation persists in all five Opposition-held states.

Federal funding for tourism is now channeled through the Majlis Tindakan Pelancongan Negeri (State Tourist

Action Committee) rather than direct to the state, as it was done previously. In short, the Tourism Ministry deals with action committees thus bypassing the states.

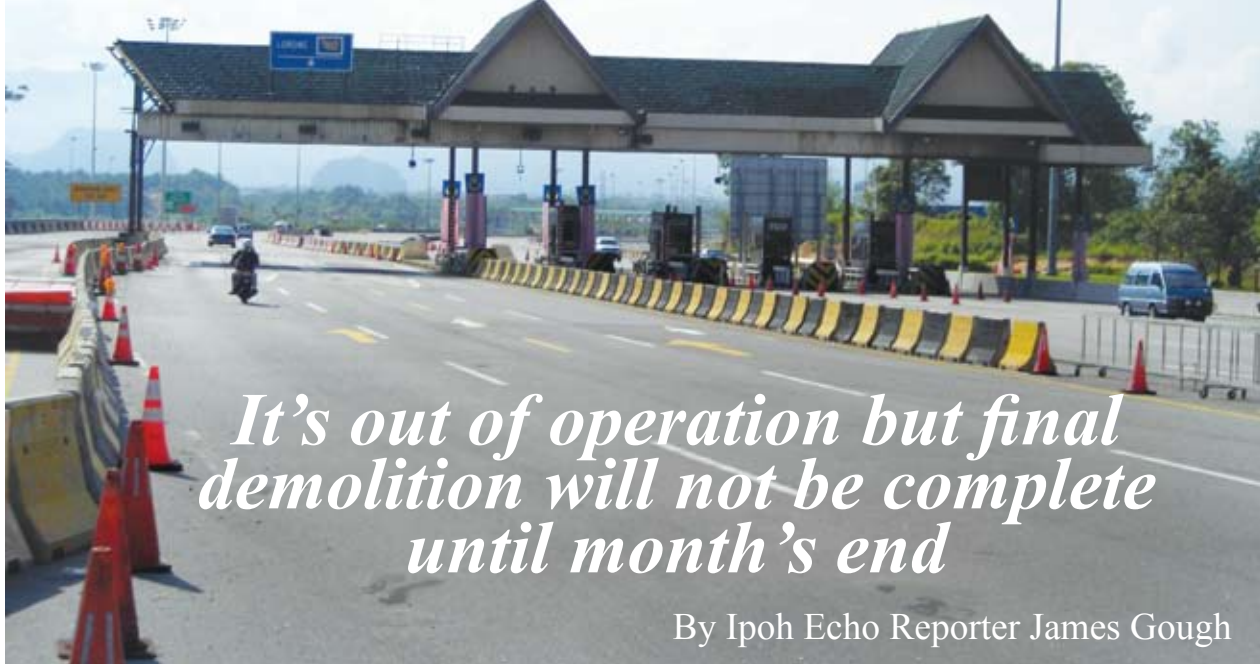
If this new arrangement is maintained there is clearly little chance that

we will ever be able to reinvigorate our tourism industry. Rather than let complacency set in, the PK-led state government has taken steps to establish a new entity to manage tourism matters in Perak.

Tourism Perak was launched on August 21 by

the Executive Councillor for Religious and Women's Affairs, Mohd Zainuddin, at the Banquet Hall of the State Secretary Building Ipoh. The General Manager of Tourism Perak, Amy Noraini Samat, later introduced her staff to Zainuddin.

GONE FOR GOOD . . . THE TOLL GATE WITH A FRIGHTFUL PAST



It's out of operation but final demolition will not be complete until month's end

By Ipoh Echo Reporter James Gough

Jelapang's killer toll gate on the North-South Expressway has finally – and not before time – been relegated to the annals of history.

The old multi-passage gate, cause of 12 deaths, 74 injuries and 143 accidents before work on its removal began late last year, is due for final demolition by September 27.

An official opening of the new facilities that took place some weeks back has proved somewhat premature. It was only on August 30 that traffic passing north and south along the expressway was being fully handled by the replacement booths.

In fact, the whole relocation of the highly controversial toll gate position has been plagued with delays over a period of more than six years.

Proposals to have its dangerous location close to the mountain base moved back to a safer orientation were first put forward in early 2002. But blatant inefficiency

by the various authorities responsible – Federal and state politicians as well as highway operators – resulted in complete inactivity.

However, when eight people died and another 10 were hospitalised in a massive accident at the gate early on the morning of December 11, 2007, the decision was finally taken to correct what in effect had all along been a huge design blunder.

800 METRES BACK

Quickly the experts drew up plans to move the operational gate position back 800 metres in a general southerly direction away from the mountain base.

Actual work on the relocation began approximately a year ago.

As huge earth moving equipment began gouging out alternate highway links and other machinery lay down heavy duty road services, officials of the highway operators,

Plus Expressway Berhad, issued, confident and optimistic appraisals of an early finishing date.

Nine months ago, Plus Expressways' COO, Nik Airina Nik Jaffar, told the press that the Jelapang toll gate job was then 60 per cent completed. Her company, she said, would meet its July, 2008, deadline. A few weeks later another official from the same company issued a revised date for completion. He predicted the job would now be done by mid-August.

According to Plus' current Project Manager, Encik Zakaria Ahmad Zabidi, the revised schedule calls for full completion by the end of this month. He added that he hoped all work might even be ready in time for the busy Hari Raya Aidil Fitri holiday season.

Few motorists familiar with the Jelapang toll gate saga will be holding their breaths.

The process of opening the new facilities went with a number of

most unfortunate hitches. Foremost of these resulted from sub-standard signage that should have directed Jelapang-bound traffic travelling north from Ipoh onto a side access road leading to the old turn-off.

Hundreds of motorists, negotiating this section found they missed the side road access. Unable to turn back, they were then forced to proceed through the new toll arrangements and continue to the first available turn-around point on the highway.

50 KM DETOUR

This happened to be located at Kuala Kangsar. It entailed a detour of more than 50 kilometres which, depending on the traffic, caused delays of an hour or more before they finally arrived at their intended Jelapang destinations.

In addition, soon after traffic was directed down the alternative Bandar Meru Raya access road leading to the southbound expressway, the road sur-

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EDITORIAL

A POPULIST BUDGET?

Some called it a populist budget. Others termed it a people's budget. Whatever the merits of such definitions, it's undeniably a huge budget; indeed, the largest ever.

The question remains: will Budget 2009 at RM207.9 billion, tabled in Parliament by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Badawi on August 29 effectively address the country's economic woes?

Since the June 5 fuel price hike in Malaysia, inflation has hit the roof. Adding to the overall impact was the revision in electricity tariff effective July 1. This propelled the consumer price index (CPI) for the month of July to 8.5 per cent, the highest since 1981.

Economists recommended lowering fuel prices to help soften inflationary pressures. Taking this cue, the Prime Minister announced a minuscule reduction of petrol and diesel prices on August 22.

The measure had little or no impact on the prices of goods and services.

What is particularly worrying about Budget 2009 is the associated fiscal deficit which will be at 4.8 per cent of GDP for 2008, up from 3.2 per cent in 2007. This is the 12th deficit budget in a row.

Although the PM expresses optimism that the deficit will be down to 3.6 per cent in 2009/2010, he did not say how he intends to reduce it.

And considering that 2010 is slated as the year for the transfer of power between Abdullah and Najib, this could well be a red herring.

The ones who stand to gain most in Budget 2009 are the 1.5 million civil servants who will be given one-month's bonus. They'll enjoy larger tax rebates and be

eligible for pensions at a base rate of RM750 after 25 years of loyal service. A 20 per cent rise in operating expenditure goes into servicing the burgeoning bureaucracy. Makes one wonder whether such generosity will translate into a better delivery system from the public sector.

Measures to boost the confidence of the private sector and to make it more competitive are conspicuously absent from Budget 2009, a major omission as it is the private sector that can truly boost the economy.

Plugging leakages is of primary concern as the sum involved is massive.

A saving of, say 10 per cent of the RM207.9 billion, will help reduce the fiscal deficit. Losses caused by corruption, wasteful public expenditures and poor procurement systems will, sadly, never be accounted for. The annual Auditor General's Report reveals numerous malpractices and excesses but punitive actions are seldom carried through.

Measures of this nature require true political will.

Projects awarded through direct negotiations rather than open tender will impact negatively on expenditure, as evident from current practices.

Cronies of the establishment, rather than genuine businessmen, stand to gain from these handouts.

It will be business as usual for those in the good books of the government.

The other question is how will the RM207.9 billion be acquired? We will never know.

Looks like Petronas revenue will again be the major source. Is this proper?

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Ramesh Kumar**

THINKING ALOUD

By G. Sivapragasam

INDUSTRY EXPERT COUNTERS TIN MINING SCEPTICS

In Ipoh Echo's last issue tin industry authority, Dato Chin Lean Choong, assured our regular Thinking Aloud columnist, G. Sivapragasam, that all risk factors considered, a revival of Perak's tin mining industry was still very much worth an effort. For this second and final interview segment, Siva holds no punches with his opening question

Siva: What answer do you have to the accusation that tin mining damages the environment?

Dato Chin: The perception that tin mining is hazardous to health and environment is erroneous. In Malaysia the overwhelming mining activity has been alluvial tin mining, by open cast/hydraulic/gravel pump mining and dredging. There has hardly been any complaint of toxic waste discharged from mining activities. Neither has there been any explosion in tin mining. The rare incidents of landslides were mainly caused by mining abandoned, dredged out areas (which are inherently unstable especially during the monsoon rains).

Long before the establishment of the DOE, the environment impact of mining and its general safety has always been strictly and vigorously inspected and enforced by the Department of Mines.

Mining is no more hazardous to health and environment than other industries such as palm oil mills, rubber processing, canning, metal fabrication and chemical manufacturing.

Siva: What about the landscape scarring that has often been highlighted as a reason to disallowing mining activities?

Dato Chin: It needs only be said that such scars are not permanent and the land could be easily rehabilitated by an appropriate policy on re-alienation of ex-mining land incorporating cost-effective rehabilitation measures.

There are many examples of successful rehabilitation of ex-mining lands. In Perak the visible ones will be Clearwater Sanctuary Golf Club, Meru Valley Golf & Country Club, numerous housing estates around Kinta Valley, aquaculture and orchard farming in Padang Batang, oil palm plantations and industrial estates in Gopeng and the UTAR (Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman) university campus in Kampar.

In any event any inflections are relatively benign and can be easily controlled, minimized and rectified with modern mining technology.

Siva: Could you comment on the assertion that tin mining is a sunset industry?

Dato Chin: Coal mining, which was decried a sunset industry each time a new energy resource was discovered is still very much alive. Tin is no different from coal. It is a commodity that has outlasted several substitutes and will continue to do so.

Besides, tin mining generates metallic by-products of tin such as ilmenite, zircon, rare-earth, rutile and struverite and a very significant amount of gravel and sand for the construction and building industry.

It was the mining industry, particularly the gravel-pump and open cast mining that generated the abundant supply of processed sand and gravel for the construction of mega infrastructure projects and countless housing estates, in the 1980s and 1990s.

Siva: Could you briefly explain the proposal the

need to be expedited.

The current policy that requires alienated lands to be converted into mining leases before any mining activity can be carried out resulting in the land owner losing title to the land when the mining lease expires needs to be changed.

Our suggestion is that the Government issues a mining licence over such alienated lands enabling the land owner to retain title to his land when the mining licence ends as is the practice in Johore. This would encourage miners to acquire alienated lands at high cost for mining, confident that they would retain the title to the lands after mining. Mining for gravel and sand needs to be allowed for export to other states and foreign countries. This would be a revenue generator for the State.

Siva: Before we conclude this interview would you like to add anything?

Dato Chin: To sustain mining in the State, a well defined policy with clear guidelines needs to be formulated and enacted. The policy should aim at optimum exploration and exploitation of Perak's mineral resources.

The policy must direct that minerals be extracted before put to any other land use. Globally, mineral

resources are being depleted with their exploitation often being subjected to political risk. Mineral resource development will ensure self sufficiency in minerals. Areas with mineral potential identified by Department of Geoscience should be made available for further investigation and exploration. The evaluation of the commercial viability of any such investigation and exploration should be left to the Miners.

As exploration and extraction activities require high risk capital and metal prices are at the mercy of the vagaries of the market mining rights granted should have long tenure and renewals of such mining rights be assured.

Environmental impact assessment must be balanced with the economic benefits of extraction of scarce minerals which are depleting and non renewable. Rehabilitation of worked-out lands must be encouraged with appropriate incentives to induce miners to rehabilitate the land while mining operations are in progress.

Minerals are non-renewable resources. Perak is richly endowed with it. As extraction needs only indigenous resources, it would be a pity if this opportunity is wasted.



Dato Chin Lean Choong

Association has made to the State Government?

Dato Chin: Our proposal is that to revive the mining industry the following measures need to be taken. Renewals of all mining lands that were abandoned when the tin price was below RM20/- per kg which can now be re-evaluated on the basis of the current price of RM50/- per kg

THUMBS UP

MAK CIK POZIAH'S GIFT TO FELLOW PERAKIANS

Where chess players congregate for their dose of the gentleman's game

Among the many stalls selling pomelos at Pusat Limau Bali (Pomelo Centre) along Jln Gopeng is Gerai No. 1 owned by the unassuming Mak Cik Poziah. Poziah's stall is unique. It doubles up as the meeting place for a band of diehard chess players, some of whom are current and former state players.

The chess aficionados gather at the stall from about 5.30 pm onwards every day of the week. Yes, seven days a week. Poziah has built, with her own money, a shed with tables and chairs for them to play.

A club has been formed and a blogsite has

discipline, which serves well in an increasingly competitive world.

Both parents and children need to learn how to handle defeat and disappointment in order to progress.

GOOD TRAINING

In chess, defeat is a natural consequence of being unprepared, having poor ideas and poor execution. It has nothing to do with the opposite number. In short, chess is a gentleman's game which, if played in the true spirit of sportsmanship, fosters the development of mental and moral strength. Our leaders should use chess as a

useful tips. The little shed next to her stall is Mak Cik Poziah's gift to the game. Humble as it may seem, it is a beginning for the growth of chess in Perak.

Could Malaysia's first Grandmaster be a Perakian?

For those interested, the Perak International Chess Association (PICA) currently conducts tournaments from time to time. For details please call its Vice President Encik Yunus at 013 390 8129.

RAYMOND SIEW



The chess aficionados in action

been set up: <http://www.limaubalichess.blogspot.com/>.

Chess is considered an individual game by the Sports Ministry. This means that its development falls squarely on the shoulders of parents. As chess tournaments in Perak are few and far between, players who wish for national glory have to travel to places like Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. This can be expensive. Without exposure, our players cannot progress. Although training can be done via computers, players need face-to-face contacts and tournament experience.

Chess instills mental

means to foster better relationship among Perakians.



Mak Cik Poziah

At Gerai No 1, I found a place for my son to practise before a tournament. There, players coming from different races and backgrounds are only too willing to share their knowledge and provide

MERDEKA DAY BABIES

And Madam Wong gets two!

Two mothers gave birth to Merdeka babies at the Ipoh Specialist Hospital.

Mdm Agnes Sheelah gave birth to ISH's first Merdeka baby boy at 2.27am. Mdm Wong Seow Ching had a double joy - a pair of twin girls, born at 9.32 am and 9.35am.

ISH General Manager Ahmad presented hampers to the proud mothers.

Mdm Wong who has a boy, aged three, actually had planned to have her twin babies born on Merdeka Day to make their arrival more meaningful.

PK



Ahmad Nasirruddin Harun, ISH General Manager, Nurse Manager Ms Phoo Siew Kwok and Sister Yeoh Bee Foong presenting the hampers to Madam Wong.

OUR CONCERNS

SIDE BY SIDE, in sickness and in pain

A tin plate, dented pots and pans and a lone light bulb - these are this couple's wordly possessions

Othman Mat Harun, 78 and his wife, Sabariah Ahmad, 68 are a likeable couple. They are also difficult to dismiss. Othman is partially blind. Earlier stresses and the loss of the daughter who was looking after them have left Sabariah mentally disturbed.

Othman - he is fondly known as Pak Man Rabun - and Sabariah live in a derelict shack beside a tarred track overlooking a disused mining pool off the main road to Malim Nawar. *But they try.* There are rows of pineapple suckers planted on neat beds in front of the hovel. "I gathered the suckers from the neighbourhood and planted them there," Othman volunteers with a toothy grin. He also talks about the dependable old rice cooker a kindly neighbour has handed down.

A bona fide resident of Kampong Batu Satu, Malim Nawar, he had worked at the nearby tin



Othman soldiers on while she waits for her son

mines until activities there ceased in the 1980s, forcing him to take on odd jobs. They had three children.

LOSS

Their offspring had to seek better lives elsewhere. The only son moved to Malacca and became a factory security guard. Only the youngest daughter remained in close proximity but, to Sabariah's immense grief, this child was diabetic and died of complications

three years ago. The mother, already mentally troubled, is still beside herself with anguish.

Othman has his own problems. "My right eye is totally blind," he declares. He cups his right eye with his palm to emphasise the point he was adding: "I could see with my left eye but with a blurred vision."

He can still move about unaided and refuses to sound bitter. "This is my nasib," says Othman. "I didn't ask for it. The kampong folks are very helpful and they haven't


forsaken me yet."

The "living room" is mouldy and dimly-lit. A lone light bulb hanging from a cord tied loosely to a beam brightens the place, albeit poorly, at night. A neighbour pays for the electricity bill.

Sabariah is sad that her only son now lives in Malacca. He sends the RM100 monthly support they subsist on but would have nothing else to do with them. But she waits for him everyday. She blames the daughter-in-law for this estrangement. Othman tries to placate her. "Perhaps," he says, "he is too busy."


One listens to all this and starts reflecting. Children grow up and wish to move on. When they look back and see nothing but misery and poverty, they get immersed in shameful embarrassment. Like Othman's son, they decide to be "too busy".

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FROM MY ALBUM By Quicksilver
EDWARDIAN ERA STAMPS
Find one beauty and you're wealthy!

The reign of the grand uncle of Europe, Britain's King Edward VII, ended with his death on October 9, 1910. As an avid stamp collector, I have always been intrigued by the Edwardian era and the stamp designs associated with it.

As it happened, some months prior to Edward's passing, the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the world postal body, implemented a colour-coordinated programme for stamp production designed to enhance mail categorisation and recognition throughout the international sorting process.

INDICATIVE COLOURS

Under this new scheme, green coloured stamps would thereafter be used for the postage of international printed matter, red for postcards and blue for letter-rate stamps.

The postcard I am reproducing along with this column serves as an interesting example. You'll note that the card was printed in Singapore and posted through the Straits Settlements system to an address in Germany.

The UPU agreement stipulated that the red stamp should be the nearest equivalent of 10 cen-

times and not one penny as previously agreed. Unfortunately, the Colonial Office in London then went ahead and complicated matters by introducing an extended colour code arrangement for colonial territories. This differed from the UPU stipulations. Essentially, London's interjection brought colonial territory stamps into line with British postal colour codes.

ADDED VARIATIONS

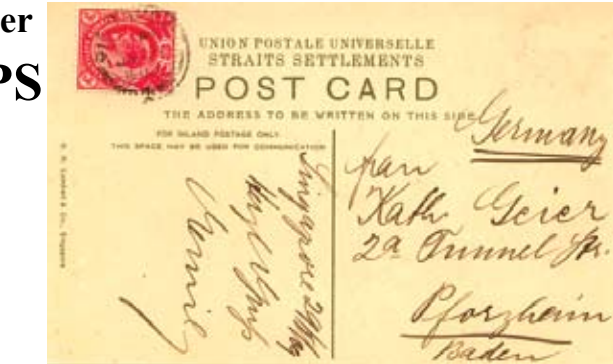
Confusing as it all sounds, these overall colour code directions proved generally successful and remained in existence until 1940. I should point out that there were various shades of the basic colours implemented as the years rolled on.

I have also illustrated (below) the last four values of stamps bearing King Edward's profile.

It was also during the final years of Edward's reign that another milestone in the design and colours of stamps of the Straits Settlements came into existence.

The Colonial Office announced in 1909 that a new \$500 dollar stamp was to be issued.

This particular large value stamp was released in May, 1910, just five months before Edward



passed away.

Not surprisingly it created all sorts of records and became the highest face valued stamp in the world. Measuring 3.3 cm by 3 cm it was undoubtedly a beauty!

It became used for fiscal purposes or on legal documents like land titles etc. Today, if you can lay your hands on one of these rarities, its current value in mint condition is well over RM700,000!

Alas I don't have an actual stamp in my album so the one I am reproducing here is a copy.

There is an interesting little story associated with the closing of the Edwardian era.

FINAL REMARK

The Prince of Wales (shortly to be King George V) told King Edward, his father, that his horse, Witch of the Air, had won a race that afternoon. The King replied, "I am very glad". They were his final

words. At half-past-eleven he lost consciousness for the last time and was put to bed. Shortly thereafter the old king died.

He left a huge legacy beside the stamps of his era including monuments that exist to this day in Malaysia - King Edward VII College Taiping, King Edward Place Penang - and King Edward Medical College in Singapore to name just a few.

Personally, I love this period; its fashions, the cuisine, the lifestyles and the many other facets that made the era so special; pompous, perhaps, but great just the same.

Until the next time, start searching and digging for the \$500 stamps that I've been telling you about. They are out there, on some land title or deed!

This is the one to look for - the \$500 beauty!



Edwardian era's last four stamps

Perak Pioneer, Established in 1894.
'The oldest and most widely circulated newspaper in the F.M.S.'
THE WAY IT WAS ..
100 YEARS AGO

A Shanghai correspondent of the 'Daily Mail' thus refers to the value attached to orange peel by the Chinese:-
'People at home do not pay much attention to orange peel except to avoid treading on it, but the Chinese carefully collect every piece they can lay their hands upon. They aver that it has great medicinal properties and is especially efficacious in afflictions of the throat. That this belief is held in the very highest quarter is shown by a recent paragraph in a local journal, which stated that the whole stock of a medicine shop had been ordered for the Emperor's use. In return the owner of the shop was given a complimentary tablet by the Government.'

* * * * *

Haji Mydin, shop keeper, and a former contractor of Batu Gajah, who was sentenced, on Friday last to six months' rigorous imprisonment on a charge of defrauding his partner, lodged an appeal yesterday against the judgment of the Magistrate, in the Court of the Judicial Commissioner at Ipoh.

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Ipoh Facts and Fancies

By Ho Tak Ming

YEARS OF RICKETY LEGS AND RICKETY RICKSHAWS

Early rickshaw pullers were "independent spirits" who sometimes had to be coaxed out of opium dens

One vehicle that survived competition from both the horse-powered ghari and the machine-powered motorcar was the humble rickshaw, or ricksha, or even jinrikisha - "man-powered carriage".

It was a light two-wheeled passenger vehicle drawn by a single human beast of burden. An ingenious Japanese invention of the late nineteenth century, the rickshaw certainly provided a cheap means of transport while incorporating a very basic form of manpower.

It made its appearance in earnest in Ipoh during the recession of the early 1890s when swarms of mining coolies were thrown out of jobs and came into town to ply these rickety vehicles for a living.

The reason why the rickshaw was so durable, in spite of technological advances like motor vehi-

cles, was that there was always a surplus of ex-mining coolies willing to pull fat, indolent passengers mile after mile just to earn two square meals a day.

OPIUM SMOKERS

Early rickshaw pullers were almost all opium-smokers who were the first to be let go by the mines during a recession. Not being used to discipline, they were undoubtedly free spirits.

In September, 1894, one of these indolent passengers, in all probability a Tuan Besar, complained in the newspaper:

'Some steps should be taken to bring the rickshaw pullers more under control: they should be registered and made to wear a badge. At present they are most independent and it is a matter of force to get them out of their opium dens when one wants a

drive from the village.'

The Government had imposed some form of control.

In 1892 it fixed the tariffs of jinrikisha fares, adding that no jinrikisha coolie was obliged to accept a fare in that scale for any distance beyond six miles from the principal police station of the township in which they were engaged.



RICH TOWKAY OWNERS

This was a measure introduced as a safety factor for both passenger and puller. The rickshaws belonged to rich towkays or

syndicates and were let out on a daily basis.

In July 1894, owners were allowed to register only new jinrikishas, ensuring that only road-worthy vehicles were let for hire.

However, the rickshaw coolies were unregistered. It was clearly difficult for the police to control them although the sepoys, from time to time did move on them pretty briskly.

The Perak Pioneer made a wry observation on March 30, 1895:

'The rickshas in Kinta really need overhauling. They are the most rickety vehicles that ever plied for hire, and in the majority of cases, the pullers are physically unfit for the occupation they undertake.'

'The majority of the ricksha pullers are a weedy and half-starved lot, and it is with difficulty that they can keep themselves on their rickety legs much

less pull a vehicle with a passenger in it. The pullers should be medically-examined before they are allowed to ply their vehicles.'

As competition for passengers intensified, the rickshaw-pullers became less picky about their fares, provoking some righteous citizens to complain to the press about the obnoxious things that the "gondolas of the East" were ferrying.

IMPROVING RICKSHAW ARRANGEMENTS

The authorities did try to make the Ipoh "rik" less a ramshackle instrument of torture, both for the passenger and the puller.

In 1904, the Sanitary Board began to register single passenger vehicles, intended for the weaker pullers. Later the rickshaws came with rubberised tyres to make them more com-

fortable.

While the advent of the motorcar and motorbus led to the demise of the gharries, the rickshaws managed to survive, in part because the pullers were willing to work odd hours, such as after midnight, and on out-of-the-way routes.

SURVIVAL ISSUE

It was a question of survival, if not of the fittest, at least of the neediest, but only just, as their hearts, already weakened by beri-beri and poor diet in most cases, could give out at any moment from the strain of pulling a vehicle with an elephantine load:

'To the ricketiness of the present rikishas are added pullers who are, more or less, suffering from beri-beri and who threaten at every step to drop down dead and deposit the fare in a gutter.'

Singapore on line

From Andrew Symon

TAKING SOUTHEAST ASIA'S RAILWAYS INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

Ipoh should be in a strategic position for this ambitious worthwhile vision

Inspired by writer Paul Theroux's 1977 account of his railway journeys in Malaysia and elsewhere in Asia – the Great Railway Bazaar – one of my first objectives as a backpacker from Australia in the mid-1980s was to take the train from Singapore to Thailand.

that governments must put more weight on railways: this may be critical to ensuring not simply efficient transport and trade links for industry, but avoiding choking road traffic congestion, rising fuel prices and polluting greenhouse gas carbon dioxide emissions.

Whereas four track road highways take up 10 hectares per kilometre and six lanes, 11 hectares per kilometre, high speed rail track covers seven hectares per kilometre.

The carbon dioxide emission for road vehicles is 111 grams of carbon dioxide per passenger per

development alongside the existing conventional line from Ho Chi Minh City to Hanoi. This is tagged at a cost of US \$33 billion but the government is pushing ahead and is working with the Japanese government and developers as to how this might proceed.

All this falls in the



The less photographed side of Ipoh's historic railway station – track side where human and goods movement becomes the heart of the operation.

And it was then that I discovered Ipoh. Catching a glimpse on the way up of the magnificent Ipoh railway station and hotel, with its mixture of British colonial neo-classical and Indian Mughal-inspired architecture, I decided we had to stop there on our way back from Bangkok.

Today, of course, the railway journey is still there to do and the Ipoh station hotel, now the Majestic, is still running fairly much as it was when I first stayed there.

CHALLENGES

Railways are far from being just a quaint legacy of the past and a mode of travel and transport outpaced by modern highways and jet planes.

In fact, they could prove to be an answer to the transport challenges of the 21st century – judging by the presentations and arguments made at a conference I attended in Singapore in late August – Asia Traffic 2008.

In Southeast Asia, where transport development seems more premised on reliance on new highway construction and ever expanding car and truck growth, the lessons from the conference are

In Western Europe, especially in France, not only is rail key for moving freight. In the passenger market, through high speed trains, rail is beating short air flights and road journeys hands down, according to train operator, the French transport, infrastructure and engineering group, SNCF.

As Milko Papazoff, the Kuala Lumpur-based SNCF International representative for Malaysia and Singapore, told the conference – the introduction of high speed services has turned passenger transport patterns upside down.

EVER GROWING

Before the introduction of high speed rail, only 22 per cent of passengers travelled from Paris to Marseille by rail. Now it is more than 65 per cent.

In the case of the Madrid to Seville line, it has grown from 19 per cent to about 60 per cent and for the Paris to Brussels trip from 24 per cent to more than 52 per cent.

Services go from city centre to city centre. No time is lost on long journeys and long queues at airports.

Environmentally, there are real pluses.

kilometre. For air travel it is 180 grams per passenger per kilometre. For high speed rail it is just 2.7 gram per passengers per kilometre.

And the fuel savings are just as impressive. Papazoff puts road transport at 3.3 litres of diesel fuel per 100 kilometres per passenger on average; air transport at 7.1 litres; and high speed rail at just 0.7 litres.

Overall, Papazoff says, the cost per passenger on the high speed rail is seven times cheaper than that for an Airbus A320.

For Southeast Asia, the obstacle for high speed rail development is, of course, the very large upfront investment costs, despite the long run savings and efficiencies.

How do you mobilise this? Through government? Or can the private sector do it? Or a mixture of the two?

PLANS

The idea of a high speed rail link between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur has gone up and down on the agenda because of this cost problem. Vietnam though is talking seriously about a 1,600 kilometre high speed rail

context of overall efforts to improve railway links in mainland Southeast Asia for passenger and freight traffic. And the major gap is Cambodia.

To bridge this, the Manila-based Asian Development Bank is helping to finance rehabilitation of the link connecting Thailand's rail system to Cambodia's, along with a general improvement of Cambodia's now decrepit domestic line.

Connection to the Vietnam is also planned. With the Chinese also improving links between Vietnam and southern Yunnan, it would then be possible to travel and freight goods by train all the way from Singapore through Malaysia and Thailand and across Cambodia and up the coast of Vietnam and on to Kunming in China.

Not that this means we will see high speed passenger rail blossom overnight. But what may emerge are some high speed sections along the potentially high demand parts of this mainland Southeast Asia grid – and, ultimately, one day, there may be a multi country high speed rail system.

And Ipoh would be nicely placed as a major junction for this service.





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Musings

by See Foon Chan-Koppen



See Foon

Baking Bread

There's a parallelism between making your bread and living your life

That's a strange title for my column; some of you readers out there may think - Don't tell me, she's now writing a food column?

No, dear valued reader, I am not about to hand you recipes but I do cook occasionally and, recently, I developed this penchant for making my own bread. It got me onto my habitual track of asking knotty questions about life.

So what has bread got to do with life other than as sustenance, you may ask? Plenty.

COUNTLESS ANALOGIES

As a thought occurs (baking bread and how it applies to life) my neuronal gossip fires off and comes back with a host of analogies and metaphors that would fill this entire paper. But as space is limited, here are a few offerings for consideration.

Baking bread is an alchemical process. Certain rules need to be followed. We put in precise measures of different ingredients, stir, let rise (if yeast is used), apply heat in controlled degrees and *abracadabra*, our bread is baked to perfection.

Similarly with life. Or so we'd like to think. The basic ingredients in the right proportions must be present to enjoy a successful and happy life - good education, good mate, good income, and, like

bread making, stir, (as in work hard), let rise (as in raise children), take the heat (as in stress) and you should be successful and happy.

But many things can go wrong between the time you begin the bread-making process and when the bread comes out of the oven - sometimes hard as a rock, sometimes still soft in the middle, sometimes burnt. As in life, how come I've done all the right things, followed the rules, and it still doesn't feel right?

So we go back to our recipe book and check the ingredients. Oh I forgot the yeast, or I put the oven temperature too low or I left it in too long. Sounds familiar?

TAKING STOCK

How often have we forgotten an essential ingredient in the haste of creating a successful life? As in a cup of work and a half cup of leisure? Half cup of time with the family? One cup love for others and one for self and a quarter cup of time for hobbies. And so on.

Have we left our friends in a cool oven for too long and our friendships have turned soggy? Have I been warm to my spouse and children? Or has the heat of fire from my temper left many relationships burnt to a crisp?

As in bread making, so with life. Some of us will give up baking bread altogether as in resign ourselves to a life of failure or victimisation. Or some will try again and again. And some others will go out and buy one of those idiot-proof bread-makers

that guarantee a perfect bread every time, like the way we fall for the "get-rich-quick" scams that guarantee a lifetime of abundance. These scams, like the bread-makers, don't work.

Trial and error is what works. Adjust the recipe without changing the proportions. If you're using a heavier flour as in rye or buckwheat (my favourite) add more yeast for rising, throw caution to the wind and try out different flavours, add nuts, cheese, bacon, mushrooms, whatever arises from your imagination.

Create special breads. Apply that to creating pursuits that ignite your passion.

And if the bread fails to rise, is soggy inside or hard as a rock, don't throw it away. Taste it, toast it, slice it and make crisps from it, crumb it and use it for frying.

So with life. We will encounter set-backs, experience pain, face failure, and run the gamut of human emotions but it is how we pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off and continue on the bumpy road that counts.

On this roller coaster ride, we're not going to make perfect bread every time but whenever we begin again, let's use every ounce of our creativity to bake the best bread we can.

And while we're at it, don't forget to add one tablespoon of patience, two cups of tolerance, one cup of compassion and a dash of humour.

And remember, as the amusing cliché goes:

"If life hands you a lemon, make lemonade!"

SIXTY SIX BEGINNINGS

Every couple starts a conjoined life with big hopes, bolstered by long-held beliefs.

Peter Khiew reports

The number 8 has always been considered lucky by the Chinese. In fact, it is considered the luckiest of all numbers. It is said to denote prosperity and wealth. Car number plates and addresses that come with the magic number 8 will always find more than happy takers among the Chinese.

So when 66 couples from Perak decided to register their marriages on August 8, 2008 (08.08.08), they simply believed that the date would not only bring them prosperity and wealth but auspiciousness as well. Remember - it was also the day when the much anticipated Beijing Olympics opened on 08.08.08 at 8:08:08 pm!

At the Ipoh Chin Woo Athletics Association hall, some 300 enthusiastic family members and friends turned up with bouquets of flowers and much cheer to congratulate the 66 couples who decided to get married on a special



Some of the 66 couples who chose August 8, 2008 as their wedding day



(From left) Cheng Wai Khuen, Chai Hui Ling, Ng Siau Ling and Chai Chun Siong



Jack Toh and Chan Siew Yeen, sweethearts for seven years

date that comes only once in a century.

Siblings Chai Hui Ling, 27 and her younger brother Chai Chun Siong, 26, decided to make the day an extraordinary and opulent affair in their fam-

ily when they married their spouses on the same day. Hui Ling married Cheng Wai Khuen, 28, a research officer at Universiti Sains Malaysia while Chun Siong, a mechanic, tied the knot with Ng Siau Ling, 24, an accountancy student currently studying in Kuala Lumpur.

The couples might be sharing the same wedding day but not their honeymoon destinations. Cheng, who currently pursues his doctorate, planned to take his wife to Australia. As for Chai, he opted for something Oriental - Korea.

Jack Toh Hon Ping, had double celebrations that evening. His birthday and wedding day fell on the same day. The 28-year-old officer in the shipping industry married his sweetheart of seven years Chan Siew Yeen, 29, a marketing of-

ficer. The association's deputy president and assistant registrar of marriage, Dato' Ooi Foh Sing said the mass wedding registration this time was the highest in 14 years.



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IPOH'S SPECIAL LINK TO AN INTERNATIONAL BEST-SELLER

Celebrating a 20th launch-date anniversary and still intriguing readers worldwide

Being Happy! – an extraordinary worldwide publishing phenomenon that Ipoh had a hand in launching back in 1988 – celebrates its 20th anniversary on international book markets this month.

Two decades on, the internationally acclaimed work by Australian author Andrew Matthews has sold over two million copies in its British and American English editions alone. What is more, it today remains as popular with readers across the globe as it did when first launched. Fresh re-prints are currently en route to both the United Kingdom and the United States.

And how does Ipoh fit into the quite amazing *Being Happy!* success story?

After the September 1988 Singapore Book Fair where the volume made its first public appearance, Ipoh was chosen as the next launching pad to test



Andrew Matthews in action

public reaction to what was then considered a quite revolutionary publishing endeavour.

There was another important aspect for author Matthews to consider. His wife, the former Ms Julie Fernando, hails from Ipoh. What better place to put his theories on happiness to the test – his wife's hometown.

Presenting as a handbook to greater confidence and security, *Being Happy!* has become unquestionably the biggest selling book ever published

in Singapore. Its publishing company, the Singapore-based Media Masters, has an associate concern here in Ipoh – Media Masters Publishing Sdn Bhd.

Adding to the book's amazing popularity in the English language is the fact that it has been translated into some 33 'foreign' languages as well. And herein lies a quite unique achievement.

GENTLE PHILOSOPHY

For all these 20 years, the *Being Happy!* gentle philosophy has successfully transcended racial, religious and political biases wherever it has circulated.

It is in the Russian and Serbian languages. There are both Hebrew and Arabic translations selling briskly. For a long time separate editions have been enjoyed by readers on both sides of the Taiwan Straits – in complex and



simplified Chinese. *Being Happy!* also has huge followings in Vietnam, Poland and Hungary. More

recently, an Icelandic language edition has been launched in the far North Atlantic island nation's

capital, Reykjavik.

The September 2008, release is the publication's 64th reprint of the UK English edition. The US English edition, under the Price Stern Sloan imprint, was first launched at the 1990 American Book Fair in Las Vegas, Nevada. There the title became a runaway winner. Andrew Matthews, who was on hand for his book's US debut, then embarked on a three-month promotional tour across North America, speaking before groups as diverse as incarcerated criminals, school children and prominent businessmen.

Andrew Matthews travels widely on lecture circuits both in his homeland, Australia, and overseas. Away from speaking engagements, Andrew retreats to a well-appointed private studio in Cairns, Queensland, where he paints, specialising in portraiture. Of *Being Happy!*, he says, happily: "It's been a stunning ride!"

PHASES & FACES

MADE OF RECYCLED CARTONS

Ipoh pupils come up with interpretations of 'green glamour'



Showing off the results of their creativity

A child's imagination is limitless. Take the case of pupils from four primary schools in Ipoh. They took part in a 'green fashion show' held in conjunction with the campaign "Be Green, Be Responsible"-3R Campaign @ Jusco, Kinta City. It runs until December this year. It is a joint community programme between Brunswick (Environment Community Programme Division) and Jusco, Kinta City Shopping Centre.

The children not only designed and created attire using recycled beverage cartons, they even paraded their creative "green" designs on stage, to the cheers and applause of an appreciative audience.

SJKC Chung Shan clinched the top prize of RM500 Jusco Voucher

and a trophy while the first runner up was SJK (T) Kg Simee.

The third prize went to pupils of SK La Salle who received a RM200 Jusco Voucher and a trophy while SK Taman Bersatu took home the consolation prize of a RM100 Jusco Voucher.

Chief Operation Officer of Brunswick Industries Fenny Cheong said bins for recycling are placed at the entrance of Jusco, Kinta City shopping centre for the duration of the campaign.

She added that every first Saturday (10am – 12pm) of the month a collection counter will be set up for the convenience of local communities. Take note that a specially-designed blue coloured bin is for recycled beverage cartons.

PK

SIXTY REASONS TO BE HAPPY

Long-time Ipoh residents celebrate



The Gomeses

Camilo Gomes (83) and his wife Julia, 79, recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. They renewed their marriage vows and hosted a grand dinner. Six children, 15 grand children, many relatives and a guest list which included their newspaper delivery man shared the couple's joyful celebration.

It was an arranged marriage. Camilo was living in Malacca then and was part of the famous *Tres Amigos* band. Julia was

living in Goa, India. Upon completing her studies at the Convent there, she came to Malacca. They were married at St Peter's Church, Malacca.

The first few years were a period of adjustment. Julia preferred the cosy confines of her new home environment while Camilo carried on with his outgoing lifestyle. Fortunately, the birth of their first child Leonard stabilised the situation and an amicable understanding was reached. Camilo became a teacher.

As the Gomeses related how they came through the last 60 years together, one caught the joy in their voices.

Even times of difficulty were recalled fondly.

Both are staunch Catholics and for the two of them marriage is for keeps.

Camilo added, "I usually give in to her".

JAG



Eugene Pook

PSPA'S TALENTED WEAPON

The Perak Society of Performing Arts International Ensemble recently held their second season with "Music of the Night." The repertoire was selected by PSPA's music director Eugene Pook. The musicians, handpicked by Pook, were an interna-



Energetically singing their theme song

The Penang Diocese Youth network recently celebrated World Youth Day at the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, Ipoh. Approximately 1200 youths participated in this celebration and they came from all the 5 districts of the Penang Diocese - central, north and south Perak, Penang Island and the northern region which included Kedah, Perlis and Kelantan.

The objective of the celebration was to strengthen the relations among the youths of the various parishes. According to the local organising representative, Rodney Fernandez, the response was the best ever.

It was a one day celebration with a tight schedule. However the programme went with clockwork precision, from 830am till 7pm.

After lunch, each of the district staged a contribution. It was 2pm. The sun was blazing hot but the youths' performances were fully charged and their energy was automatically absorbed and shared by the audience.

The day ended with a mass led by Bishop Antony Selvanayagam.

JAG

YOUNG PERAK

Students from participating schools are invited to write about or photograph things/events outside their respective institutions of learning. E-mail articles to: editorial@ipohecho.com.my attn: Peter Khiew

INFECTIOUS FERVOUR Going all out on Flag Day

Twelve St John Ambulance students from SMK Perempuan Perak displayed a powerful demonstration of altruism when they were spotted at Taman D.R Seenivasagam looking motivated and cheery even after hours spent in the blazing sun.

It was "St John Ambulance Flag Day" and the girls had earlier been at Gunung Rapat and Taman Ipoh Jaya with their donation boxes. There they walked tirelessly in the scorching heat and were bent on having a successful day. Onlookers could not help but be infected by the group's enthusiasm.



Unfazed by the heat, the 12 girls return to the St John Ambulance HQ after a good day's work

Group leader Lau She Yee, 15, said her members are particularly motivated to garner support from the public as the collection will be channelled to help the underprivileged and the needy.

SUCCESSFUL FOOD FAIR EXERCISES TAJ STUDENTS

Accredited college encourages its students to be creative and enterprising through challenging projects

Hitting two birds with one stone - that was the aim of business administration management and information technology students of Taj College in Greentown when they pooled their resources to organise a Merdeka Food Fair in conjunction with the country's 51st year of independence.

dents had independently planned and organised and the fair.

The event attracted not only office and bank workers nearby but people from the surrounding residential areas who got curious and made a beeline to check out what the fair had to offer.

tation, freshness, pricing and ways to make the items saleable. The had plenty of decision making to do."

Business administration student S. Korshila, who tended a chicken porridge and cake stall, volunteered that while it was a challenge to run a stall for just a day, one got the satisfaction of seeing one's

Degree and Postgraduate levels.

The Kolej TAJ Diploma courses have been internally developed while the Degree and other programmes are conducted in association with prestigious private and local universities.

The college's high standards of academic



Added activities attract people to the fair

The month-long planning provided the participants with hands-on training in promoting, stimulating and enhancing creativity in their field of studies. It also opened up the opportunity for the students to mingle with the public and their fellow college mates in the spirit of Merdeka.

Taj College counsellor Sree Norainee said the stu-

TRAINING TO BE BOTH CREATIVE & ENTERPRISING

Sree Norainee said the students are encouraged to be creative and enterprising at all times. The Food Fair was one excellent platform for them.

"Even with simple dishes," the counsellor explained, "the students needed to think of presen-



Dealing with people effectively - no book can truly teach it

plans and efforts brought to fruition.

More importantly, the former student of SMK Convent Ipoh pursued, she learned a skill even books cannot truly teach - dealing with people effectively.

COURSES

Kolej TAJ offers a wide range of programmes at Certificate, Diploma,

provision are well acknowledged by employers of various industries. It is also recognised by LAN (Lembaga Akreditasi Negara). The programmes offered at Kolej TAJ are relevant to the working industry and the employability rate of its graduates is impressive. Kolej TAJ also offers various soft skills courses.

PETER KHIEW

A GOOD GROUNDING IN POSITIVE INTER-PERSONAL SKILLS AND SELF-RESPECT

Prefects get excellent leadership training and lessons on responsibility



At a leadership camp in Papan

Capable students should not be discouraged by their parents from becoming school prefects as the post serves as a platform for excellent leadership training. Most parents who disapprove of their children holding the posts are worried that their children may be target of reprisals from students who have been reprimanded.

But parents should throw in their full support if their children are selected as the selection process is based on stringent criteria.

Parents should be proud that their children are selected. They should give their children

their full support and encouragement.

Competitiveness in academic achievement and the current discipline scenario are some of the factors that make parents fearful of their children becoming prefects or class monitors.

Parents' fear that student leaders are harassed or threatened is unfounded as principals and teachers are always working behind the scenes to enable the prefects to carry out their duties.

FRONTLINERS

Prefects are frontliners, not law enforcer officers, to check on all aspects



All revved up for more responsibilities

of discipline and if the correct motivating force is applied, responsibilities can be carried out effectively.

"Most prefects are known to have positive inter-personal skills, self-respect, confidence and high self-esteem," said assistant director of Yayasan Kasih Sayang Malaysia (Selangor and Kuala Lumpur) Dr Kamarulzaman Ahmad when speaking to prefects of SMK St Michael who participated in a three-day leadership camp at Papan

Forest Reserve at Pusing, some 10 km from Ipoh.

During the camp, the prefects attended motivational talks, went jungle trekking and participated in group activities that fostered team spirit. They were taught ways of handling difficult situations when performing prefectorial duties in schools.

Among those who attended were school counsellors En Omar Ibrahim and Cik Nur Rubiyatul Adawiyah.

PK

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EMPOWERING THE MALAYS - A FORUM

The occasion was a good idea . . . BUT . . .



Dato Seri Dr Hj Mohd Hilmi Ismail, Chairman of the Organising Committee, welcoming the participants

Since the last General Elections in March, there has been growing concern within Malay communities nationwide that perhaps their once dominant influence as a race is becoming increasingly eroded.

In the wake of the reversals suffered by the ruling Barisan Nasional, especially UMNO, the immediate fear is that Malay rights and privileges are being infringed as the country's political frameworks adapt to changing circumstances and pressures.

Here in the state of Perak, once a BN stronghold but now under Pakatan Rakyat's rule, racial unease over the waning influence factor is widespread though undoubtedly being expressed in varying degrees of intensity.

Against this background a forum, appropriately titled "Pertemuan Melayu Perkasa", was held recently at the Dewan Besar Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP), in Tronoh. The primary objective of the one-day gathering was to discuss issues affecting the Malays, in particular Malays from Perak, and finding ways to empower them once more.

THREE DISCUSSION PAPERS

The forum was organised by Persatuan Darul Ridzuan Di Selangor dan Wilayah Persekutuan and a coterie of Malay-based non-governmental organisations from Perak. Three papers were discussed and were presented by academicians from local universities.

The first speaker, Associate Professor Dr Ahmad Jelani Helmi from Universiti Sains Malaysia, spoke on "Sejarah Pemerintahan Negeri Perak". He referred to the origins of the Malay power base in Perak - pre and post colonial periods.

Early Perak Malays, numbering some 2000 people lived along the banks of the Perak River from the mouth to its upper reaches. They were discovered by a Portuguese explorer soon after the fall of Malacca in 1511. The majority of these settlers were subsistence farmers living off the land in their kampongs. By the early 19th century the population had swelled to some 10,000 people.

Tin became a major source of revenue for the state. Although large tracts of mining lands were owned by Malay chieftains like Long Jaafar, the job of mining the tin ore was done by the Chinese.

"The Malays have no desire for this back-breaking job," said Jelani. Moreover, the number of Malays then was too small to support the industry, he reasoned. Thus the need to resort to Chinese workers from China. The constant bickering and fighting between the Chinese mining population and triad activities prompted Raja Abdullah, the titular head of the Perak sultanate, to seek British assistance and protection. The signing of the Pangkor Treaty between Raja Abdullah and Governor Andrew Clarke in 1874 signalled the beginning of British intervention in the Malay states. The number of Chinese miners had, by then, increased many folds.

NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

The second speaker, Professor Datuk Dr Ahmad Faiz Abdul Hamid, the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Universiti Utara Malaysia spoke on "Ketuanan Melayudan Dasar Ekonomi Baru". He traced the formulation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in the aftermath of the May 13, 1969 racial riots and how the policy of favoring "sons of the soil" was debased as time progressed. The erosion of the policy had stymied efforts at improving the Malays, in particular those from the rural areas.

"Economically the Malays are still backward, comparatively. However, there are those who claimed that the 30 per cent economic stake, as projected by our elders, has been achieved," he said in obvious reference to the controversial report compiled by Dr Lim Teck Ghee of the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute in 2006.

Dr Lim stated that bumiputra corporate equity ownership could be as high as 45 per cent and not 18.9 per cent as stated in government statistics.

QUESTIONING THE PUNDITS

Enormous strides made in the field of education as claimed by some pundits were wrong, said Dr Ahmad Faiz. "Those smart MARA schools like the one at Gopeng is a farce. The passing marks are impressive but only 30 per cent of the predominantly Malay students are in the top bracket," he said. "Compare this with the 80 per cent passes among the small non-Malay student intake in the college. There is something lacking in our drive," Faiz postulated.



Not quite a full house . . . intent listeners and untouched programmes

Associate Professor Saudah Hj Suleiman, the Dean of the Law Faculty of Universiti Teknologi MARA spoke on the National Land Code 1965. She went on to explain the details mentioned in the code and how they affected Perakians in general. There seemed to be much opposition to Pakatan Rakyat's issuance of land titles to new and planned villages.

Of concern was the state government declaration of the 999-year lease which, according to Prof Saudah, was non-existent in the National Land Code 1965. The fear, as expressed by Saudah, in the issuance of these title deeds, was the easing out of Malay rights on land which they once owned.

"One's greatness is judged by the number of landed properties one owns. And having a title deed is proof of one's ownership," said Saudah. "If you have none, then there is nothing much to talk about."

DISAPPOINTING TURN-OUT

Organisers of the forum had anticipated a turnout of some 3,000 disenchanted and "dispossessed" Malays but scaled it down later to 1,000 when response was lukewarm. The hall could easily accommodate the number but, unfortunately, only about 200 turned up.

The message, which the organisers wanted so badly to disseminate, did not go far. As it happened, the audience was made up mainly of senior citizens, most of whom were retirees and pensioners. It was definitely not the organisers' preferred target group. No attempts were made to attract attendance by university students.

Both the forum and the topics discussed would have struck chords with a twenty-something group rather than the patriarchs and matriarchs who were present that day.

According to reliable sources RM50,000 was spent organising the event. Much energy and money had gone to waste although it was for a noble cause. The one person who was smiling was the caterer who provided food and drinks for the 200-odd participants and, not forgetting the printer, who was responsible for the many glossy programmes which were left untouched on empty chairs.

FZB

REMEMBRANCE DAY - A DOCUMENTARY

In conjunction with the 60th anniversary of the declaration of Emergency, a documentary titled "The Remembrance Day" was launched recently by the Perak Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri Mohamed Nizar Jamaluddin. The 40-minute

feature film was produced by Harchand Singh Bedi. Harchand had acquired the assistance of the British and Australian War Museums and local historians during his research.

The film recaps events leading to the declaration

of Emergency on June 18, 1948 and captures grieving moments of comrades and friends of fallen heroes who gather annually during Remembrance Day at Batu Rajah's God's Little Acre.

A part in the film is dedicated to the gallant

troops of the 11th Indian Division who fought the advancing Japanese Imperial Army at the Battle of Kampar in January 1942.

Please contact *IpoH Echo's* office for details on the documentary. **HM**



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UP COMING EVENT

“A dinner talk organised by Perak Academy will be held at Syuen Hotel on Friday, October 17, 2008 beginning at 8 pm. Guest speaker is Mr Yap Lim Sen who will deliberate on the subject, “The Malaysian Dilemma”. Mr Yap will share his experiences growing up in Malaya and then Malaysia through the years. Please call Mrs Lee at 05-6478949 for reservation.”

ETHICS & THE COACH, part 2

THE COACH AND PLAYERS' VALUES

An all-round training should yield good results, on and off the pitch

After the challenge posed by performance-enhancing drugs, Coaches are confronted by the second area of potential concern – match fixing.

Recent court cases have shown that England is not exempt from this problem. It is a reality in many other countries. Despite the tremendous efforts of football associations such as the Malaysian FA who have used life bans there lingers the suspicion.

DOGMATIC STAND

I once held the dogmatic view of, “just say No” when coaching in a country where games were being fixed. Until a very intelligent and sensible player said to me, what would you do if you were offered six months’ wages?

I still said, “say no!” But then the invisible middleman would come up with threats, such as “we know where your daughter goes to school”. It could come to a point when those threatened feel it’s not always a wise choice to turn to the police.

I have been asked, again, what do you do when your children are hungry and you have not been paid for three months? This is a sad reality in some countries. One of the benefits that a Professional



Inculcating the habit of fair play

Footballers’ Association is that this situation would not happen as often.

GREY AREAS

The grey areas also arrive when players “play safe”. They play to win the game from the start, and if they win they collect their win bonus. If, however, they are going to lose the game, they ensure they lose by a certain score to get a losing bonus (from the bookies).

I am certain, but could never prove it when teams I have coached have gone from 2-0 down with five minutes to go to 4-0 down with 2 dodgy goals. You can get good odds on a 4-goal spread.

The other grey areas arrive when you can bet on who takes the first throw-in or the first free kick. Insider trading is perhaps not just related to business. Solving this situation may lie easier with administrators who can ensure players are paid on time and that salaries are not heavily bonus-related. Also consistent and well publicised

life bans can act as deterrent. People are banned from betting if they are involved in a game, but policing this is impossible and only fools would get caught. Perhaps legislation on what you can legally bet on may take the grey areas into black and white.

BACK TO VALUES

The answers that might help? Stringent and consistent rules must be applied. However, the key area is the ethos and culture that the young player is brought up in. If the correct values are both overtly and covertly instilled into players, then, they may never enter into the areas that not only may lose them their careers and potential great lifestyle, but in the case of drugs . . . their lives.

Many coaches may believe that they don’t influence the values of their players. All the research shows that this is wrong.

Coaches have a great influence on adolescent players. The responsibilities are great, but the potential rewards in helping to create an all-round footballer on and off the pitch are enormous . . . and that is not a monetary reward. Respect can’t be bought.

STEVE DARBY

Sport

A FOOTBALL ACADEMY IN PERAK?

What it takes to spot and develop a Wayne Rooney

An ex-player I once coached, is now a young coach at an English Premier League (EPL) Academy. He has contacted me to inform me that the club is now taking the DNA of all their players to test their genetic potential.

ACTN- 3 Testing is a very expensive process but Real Madrid have it already in place. It’s seen as an investment. The development of a player at this level is very expensive and only a few will “make it” to the top, but if they get there and are sold (such as Wayne Rooney was from Everton to Manchester United), then the profits can pay for the Academy for a number of years.

I was Youth U18 coach at Sheffield Wednesday in the EPL in 2001. Believe me, it was hard work. We had to trawl the region (and the Football rules meant we could only take players within 90minutes travelling time of our ground) for potential talent. This 90- minute rule was further amended to 90minutes by car at the UK speed limit as Manchester United decided to transport talented players outside their catchment area by helicopter! This meant that all the coaches were working more than 60 hours a week.

The Academy is a well run mini-lifestyle school.

EARLY START

Players are taken in from the age of six. The club has a large number of scouts who spend their time watching children’s games and are paid expenses and a bonus system as the young player is signed and if he makes the first team. Many of them are volunteers who do the job for the love of the club and often only get match tickets as payment.

After a player is scouted, he is invited to train with his age group. One -off trials are considered a poor indicator of talent. The players are invited to train for six weeks three times a week to see if they have the ability and if they actually enjoy training. This principle applies to under 6, 8, 9, and 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 year age groups.

The players train three times a week and play games at the weekend. But the games are not in a league format and the players are rotated so that

every player is given a chance to play and is not a permanent substitute. At the younger age, the coaching is minimal and all the work is based on ball skill and not physical training which comes in about 14 years of age.

Part of the training in these age groups involves nutrition (for parents as well) lifestyle and the introduction of weight training. Also the player is encouraged to keep high standards with school work and there is liaison with schools by a trained teacher on the staff.



Wayne Rooney of Manchester United

The coaches of these age groups are chosen for their age specific ability. Often the younger ages have female coaches or young ex-players who have a role modelling effect on the players.

STRINGENT SELECTION

The selection of coaches is very stringent for Academy coaches. Not only do they have to be well qualified but, they must have a clean criminal record, a first aid award and have undertaken a child protection course.

At the age of 16 the big decision is made. The selection of players to enter the full time Academy. This age allows players to be drawn from anywhere in the world. So the sad reality is that someone who has been with a club from the age of 6 through to 16 may not be deemed good enough to be taken on as a young professional. The hardest part of my job was telling a young player he was not going to be offered a contract. Getting abused by a crowd is nothing after having had to tell a young man his dream is over.

The players enter this system with a fixed wage of £ 80 a week, and his can only be raised on an annual increment till they are 18 then it is a free market. Rooney made his debut for Everton first team at the age of 16 and was on

this wage. Once he graduated this rapidly rose to £3000 a week and on to the £100,000 a week these days.

INVESTMENT

But for every Wayne Rooney there are the other 95% who either drift out of the game or to lower levels or even worse are injured out of the game. Steve Heighway who was Academy Director at Liverpool said that Liverpool run their multi-million pound Academy for the sake of a few players. In their case the development of Owen Carragher and Gerard was a worthwhile investment.

Once the players enter the full time Academy they start to train on a daily basis and mix with the full time professionals. Occasionally, a young player is taken to the first team squad to train to see if he can adapt. Mainly to adapt to the pace and power.

However, he must also attend some form of education at least three times a week. To cater for these young professionals an Academy must have a minimum full-time staff of:

- Three coaches
- Qualified Physio-therapist
- Education and Welfare Officer
- Recruitment Officer

Also there will be part time allocation for Sports Psychologists and nutritionists.

That is the minimum. Manchester United, Liverpool, Chelsea and Arsenal have many more full time staff and their facilities are world class. They not only look after the players on the pitch but take the holistic view of educating the player as young man.

It’s a multi -million dollar investment process that needs both finance and the political will to believe in development as opposed to winning at all costs and the long term view that players develop at different rates. The concept is aimed at the elite and nobody gets into an Academy based on who they know or through any corrupt methods.

It is elitist but the clubs in the EPL also have a “football in the community” programme that caters for children of all abilities. But they are always looking for the next Wayne Rooney.