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## A Tropical Retreat Fit for a Prince

Breaking of dawn (by Yoon Lai Wan)



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Fungus (by Yoon Lai Wan)

**Queen Elizabeth's second son slipped quietly into Belum, in northern Perak, and was determined to have a "holiday of a lifetime" before returning to England for his nephew's big day. Britain's Prince Andrew, who has represented British business interests since 2001, decided to take a break before the wedding of Prince William to Kate Middleton on April 29, in London.**

Continued on page 2

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## “Whatever happens, you must preserve your treasures – Belum and Temenggor.” ~Prince Andrew



Andrew told the Ipoh Echo of his difficulty going on “normal” holidays, away from the publicity glare and intense media interest: “I really envy the people who can just take a plane or drive somewhere, without having hordes of security personnel or the media pack and curious onlookers following.”

It is a sign of Andrew’s determination to enjoy Malaysian hospitality and to experience a stay in one of the world’s oldest rainforests that he was prepared to forego protocol and the usual luxuries extended to the fourth in the line of succession to the British throne.

### Prince Chooses Belum Eco Resort

The Ipoh Echo, the only paper given access to the Prince, accompanied him throughout his Belum escape. With a busy schedule back in UK, Andrew had chosen to spend his time on the 3-day, 2-night package at the Belum Eco Resort on Temenggor Discovery Island. During the 7-km boat ride from the Banding Island Jetty, Andrew, who is a keen bird-watcher and wildlife enthusiast, marvelled at the several species of tropical birds.

The island’s accommodation, which consists of small, twin-bedded bamboo chalets with attap roofs and an open-air balconies, was fit for a king. Within hours of arriving, Andrew was thoroughly refreshed after his first experience in a shower which was completely open to the elements.

“This must be one of the best showers I have had in my life – icy cold water, being so close to nature and a stunning view over the waters, towards the emerald green of the jungle in the distance,” beamed the prince.

Andrew, who had seen active military service in his younger days, negotiated the rough terrain between the chalets and the main resort building with ease. His interest in the multi-media presentations about the lake and its wildlife, completely absorbed him.

### Ten Hornbill Species

On the second morning, Andrew was up for an early morning boat trip, courtesy of the proprietors of the resort, to view the hornbills. Perak is known to have all ten of Malaysia’s hornbill species unlike Sarawak, which only has eight species.

Andrew’s patience was rewarded when several hundred hornbills flew overhead. It was a breathtaking sight, and the prince was able to record this on camera to take home to England. Much of his day, was later spent on swimming, fishing and canoeing on the lake.

The second morning saw another early start, complete with a very steep trek to Pulau Tujuh and its seven waterfalls. There had been a heavy downpour the previous night and some of the trekkers had to don several layers of clothes or wear long-sleeved shirts, as they shivered in the dipped temperatures of dawn. Heavy mist still shrouded the tops of the trees, on the peaks in the jungle.

“But for the leeches, and the tropical foliage, you would think this was England,” joked Andrew who was surprised that early mornings in the tropics could be relatively freezing.

As the party trudged along the jungle path, Andrew was fascinated with a clump of bamboo, because dinner, the previous night, had consisted of rice and jungle fowl cooked in bamboo over a charcoal fire. Steven showed the prince how thick bamboo sections were cut from the older bamboo clumps.

### Delighted with Menu

“That is what I like about the resort. The food tends towards a spicy fusion of local fruit, vegetables and jungle produce,” said Andrew who was delighted with the bespoke menu provided by the resort owners.

Later that night, the royal guest spent a night in a hide overlooking a salt-lick, one of the 60 scattered in Belum, to see if he could spot any wildlife. As luck would have it, Andrew managed to spot the Sambar deer and a tapir. When daylight came, Andrew recognised a variety of animal tracks like the kijang, elephants, wild boar and seladang, criss-crossing the salt-lick.

### Regrets

Perhaps, the only regret that Prince Andrew had was the amount of litter at the Pulau Banding jetty, the ugly government construction in the centre of the Orang Asli village and the fact that there were no Rafflesias in bloom. His horror to see indiscriminate logging and destruction of the rainforest was also another of his



disappointments.

Just before Andrew left the country, he was interviewed at the home of the English couple Mr and Mrs Pillarofo, who have been living in Ipoh since the Emergency.

Although the whirlwind tour had whetted the Prince’s appetite for more adventure holidays, he doubted that he would be able to make another incognito visit like this one. “Never say never,” said the prince. “My daughters (Princesses Beatrice and Eugenie) might want an adventure holiday and I might be lucky enough to accompany them.

### Holiday of a Lifetime

“Belum is certainly the holiday of a lifetime and an escape in the truest sense; the virgin rainforest, the wildlife, the birds, the flora and stunning views from Talikali viewpoint. And who could forget the ancient limestone hills and the fiery sunsets over Temenggor Lake? “Whatever happens, you must preserve your treasures – Belum and Temenggor.”

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IPOH **echo**

From the Editor's Desk

by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

# Fair Park 'TRAGEDY'

*Why a project, so big and so conspicuous, was allowed to continue, unhindered, right under MBI's nose? Is there something sinister, a hint of vested interest or worse, complicity?*

By now many may have forgotten the tragedy that befell three young friends who were out on an evening ride one fateful October night more than a year ago. The youthful trio had stopped their car at the Jalan Kamaruddin Isa traffic junction in Fair Park. While waiting for the traffic lights to change, the decrepit and partially demolished wall of a row of pre-war buildings came crashing down on their white Perodua Viva. The freak incident took the lives of Mohd Zairi bin Mohd Sabri, 25, and Mohd Firdaus bin Mohd Norzila, 23. Abdil Qudus bin Ismail, 21, who was in the driver's seat, escaped with minor injuries.

The deceased sustained injuries to their heads and limbs. Both of Firdaus's legs were crushed. They died on arrival at the nearby General Hospital. The unfortunate incident, which took place at 9.30 p.m. on Friday, October 29, 2009, continues to haunt their grieving parents to this day.

Firdaus's father, Mohd Norzila bin Abdul Rahman, 47, is grief stricken while his wife, Fawziah bt Salleh, 49, has yet to come to terms with the loss of her eldest son. Norzila, a lorry driver, seeks justice but all his attempts have been in vain. He feels frustrated by the lackadaisical attitude of the authorities, including political leaders to whom he had remonstrated.

"Justice delayed is justice denied" a legal maxim attributed to British premier, William Gladstone, best describes the situation. The proverb, "Out of sight, out of mind" amplifies this paradox even further. Justice, in this case, is purposely delayed in the hope that those involved would forgive and forget.

The single row of pre-war shop houses was a visible landmark in the 60s right to the 80s when developments in the Fair Park area were scarce. The building was home to a news vendor, a barber and a Chinese restaurant belonging to the *kopitiam* genre. The huge angsa tree adjacent to the building still stands tall by the side of the traffic junction. In its lifetime this imposing raintree has witnessed several accidents and incidents, and the collapsing wall was one in its long list of sightings.

The row of decrepit shop houses was sold off in 2008. The new owners, sensing the economic potential of the area, pooled their resources to build a modern complex to cash in on the boom. A contractor was duly hired to demolish the building, post haste, to make



Before



The tragedy



High fencing. MBI board indicating work in progress hidden



Unlike across the road... clear, visible and ....



Contractors name not readable

way for the new structure. This was the prelude to the tragic incident which smothered the lives of two innocent youths and maimed another.

The Street, Drainage and Building Act 1974 is explicit about laws relating to the construction of buildings and their impact on streets and drains. The local council is the authority that issues work orders to those keen on developing their properties – big or small. Section 70 details the requirements that owners must abide by when erecting buildings. It seems strange that MBI, in the aftermath of the incident, chose to absolve itself of blame when confronted with the question of accountability. Here is the Council's response to our query:

- MBI did not receive any application either from the owner(s) or the contractor to demolish the building.
- The demolition works were done without the prior knowledge and approval of MBI.
- The state authorities have directed that an inquiry be convened to ascertain cause(s). The composition of the board of inquiry should include representatives from Public Work Department, Department of Security and Health, Construction and Industry Development Board and a serving member of city council.
- The board of inquiry has made its findings and has identified the wrong-doers. Legal actions will be instituted against them in due course.

The answers above do not seem to inspire confidence neither do they address the problem, holistically. The question that is on everyone's lips is why a project, so big and so conspicuous, was allowed to continue, unhindered, right under MBI's nose? Is there something sinister, a hint of vested interest, or worse, complicity? We can only speculate. Norzila's quest for justice may have hit a brick wall.

## CORRECTION

From the Editor's Desk IE 116 refers to Majlis Daerah Kampar and not Maju Perak. The error is regretted.

## Roger Roger! Just Received My iPhone 4

by Peter Lee

Qing Ming or All Souls' Day falls in early April every year. This is the time of the year when Chinese families pay their respects to the departed ancestors. I remember when I was young, such a yearly event was like a picnic for the whole family where every family member would gather to clean the ancestors' graves, repaint the faded letterings on the tombstone, burn joss-sticks and offer their favourite food such as fried chicken, roasted meat, red wine, etc. As this tradition continues year after year, it is interesting to note that the choices of paper offerings for the deceased have not only increased but have developed further to luxury items. Previously, simple daily necessities such as spirit money, clothing and shoes were burnt for the ancestors to use. But as society becomes more affluent, people can now dig deeper into their pockets with a sense of filial piety to buy and offer to their departed ancestors items such as replicas of Bungalows with maids and security, Mercedes-benz S-Class automobiles, designer bags to store money or gold, iPhone4s, iPads with 888GB, gold Rolex watches, false teeth, safe-deposit boxes, LCD television sets, treadmills and a list of many other items which we use in this world. Come to think of it, while we express our love for our ancestors with these gifts, have we asked ourselves how we are going to pass our worldly possessions or gifts to our family if we depart from this world? In other words, have we a plan to provide enough for our family who are with us now, after our death. The only way I could see our doing so is by writing it on a piece of paper which we refer to as a will.



Just as we burn spirit money for the spirit world, money in the living world is even more important for our surviving family to live on. Imagine after you have gone, your family walks into a bank and tries to withdraw money from your bank account but are requested to produce a Grant of Probate in which they cannot produce because you didn't have a will. The next thing your family will be told to apply for the Letter of Administration and while applying for it, all your bank accounts will be frozen. Ask yourself again what would happen if at that point of time your family was in urgent need of that money, especially if your spouse is not working and you have minor children? Even though procedures to withdraw your money can be expedited with a will, you need to have a backup plan like having an insurance coverage policy so that your coverage can provide immediate funding. It is even more ideal to set up a Trust for this if your children are still minors. Without a will, your family would also encounter problems in transferring out quickly other assets such as investments in unit trusts or mutual funds, shares in the share market, properties, shares in your business, cars, contents in the safe deposit box, etc. So quickly do your will, appoint your executors to deal with your estate, choose your guardians to care for your children in the event both you and your spouse pass away together and specify the way you want to distribute your estate because in the absence of this, you may say "Roger Roger! Just received my iPhone 4" from the afterlife and your family on this side of the world would probably say, "May Day, May Day! We need your money now".

Peter Lee is an Associate Estate Planning Practitioner (Wills & Trust) with Rockwills International Group. He is also an Islamic Estate Planner providing Wills & Trust services for Muslims. He is based in Ipoh and can be reached at: 012-5078825/05-2554853 or [excelsec@streamyx.com](mailto:excelsec@streamyx.com). Website: <http://www.wills-trust.com.my>.



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Thinking **ALLOWED** • by Mariam MokhtarIpoh and Pahang Are **Sitting On a Time Bomb**

Although a distance of over 300 miles separates Bukit Merah, a suburb of Ipoh and Gebeng, outside of Kuantan, these two industrial areas have one thing in common.

They will be connected by rare earth technology, which most people have never even heard of until the recent protests in Kuantan and the nuclear disaster which followed the tsunami in north-eastern Japan.

These obscure elements are the magic ingredients in almost everything that make our modern lives possible. Rare earth elements power our computer screens, iPhones, catalytic converters and low energy light bulbs.

## Memories of Bukit Merah

Gebeng will soon acquire a new RM700 million rare earth plant which will generate radioactive waste and which many people and environmentalists say, have revived memories of Bukit Merah – Ipoh's own environmental disaster.

In 1979 the federal government authorised the establishment of a rare earth plant in Perak. Asian Rare Earth Sdn Bhd (ARE), a joint-venture between Mitsubishi Chemical Industries Ltd, Beh Minerals, Lembaga Urusan dan Tabung Haji and several bumiputera entities began operating its plant off Jalan Lahat in Bukit Merah in 1982.

In 1984 residents of Papan signed a petition against ARE to the federal government. They took to the streets to protest and



● Entrance to former ARE, Bukit Merah

organised a hunger strike. Experts visited the Papan dumpsite and declared it unsafe with radiation up to 800 times the accepted level.

The man behind the protest was Hew Yoon Tat, a butcher at the Bukit Merah market. Hew heads the Perak Anti-Radioactive Committee. He was among those who were incarcerated under ISA in the infamous Op Lalang of 1987.

In 1992 the plant was ordered to shut down by a High Court order. Although an appeal to the Supreme Court was pending, ARE decided to cease operations in 1994.

Sadly, not many Malaysians are aware that Bukit Merah and its radioactive waste problem still exists. To Ipohites, the fiasco is like a recurring nightmare.

## Nuclear Waste in Perak

Last year, the government proposed the construction of two nuclear power plants in Malaysia. Former premier Dr. Mahathir Mohamad disagreed with the decision and reported that "a small amount" of nuclear waste was buried in Perak.

Mahathir said, "In Malaysia, we do have nuclear waste which perhaps the public is not aware of.

We had to bury the amang (tin tailings) in Perak, deep in the ground. But the place is still not safe. Almost one square mile of that area is dangerous."

The waste, incidentally, is not *amang* but contains thorium hydroxide. ARE extracted yttrium from monazite, one of the minerals found in amang for use in high technology products. The thorium hydroxide is produced in the production process. Both monazite and the waste contain thorium, which has a half-life of 13.9 billion years. It is going to be around for more than just a few generations of Ipohites. Worse still is that cancer-causing radon gas is released during decay.

## Higher Incidence Of Cancer

A private practitioner, Dr. T. Jayabalan, found that in 1984, 13 children from Bukit Merah had leukaemia and there was a high number of cancer cases among the 11,000 villagers.

In a survey carried out in Bukit Merah, he discovered that the number of miscarriages in the village was high, well above the national average. Tests on a sample of 60 children revealed high levels of lead in their bloodstream.

Jayabalan's medical findings were submitted in the villagers' 1985 suit in the Ipoh High Court. The findings were dismissed by the presiding judge.

The Papan-Pusing-Siputeh Anti-Radioactive Waste Dump committee chairman Low Tong Hooi said that Mahathir's statements were alarming: "Why is it only now that he has admitted the radioactive dump is dangerous? In 1984, he maintained that the poorly constructed trenches for the waste in Papan were safe".

Low claimed that Sahabat Alam Malaysia, Consumer Association of Penang and the Environmental Protection Society of Malaysia sought expert help from USA, UK, Canada and Japan to declare the factory and the dump unsafe.

## Too Little Too Late

However, the government ignored these recommendations and only started a decommissioning and decontamination exercise in 2003 and 2005. Finally, in January 2010 work began on the building of a proper underground storage facility.

So should we not be alarmed by our unresolved Bukit Merah problem, and the one Gebeng will soon see?

Back in 1984, Mahathir's radioactive waste came from a company approved by the government to process rare earth. He assured us that everything was all right. The Ipoh judge even dismissed any allegations of cancer-causing chemicals. Today, Mahathir sings a different tune. Something must have pricked his conscience.

## Questions, Questions

Should we believe the Australian company, Lynas Corporation when it tells us that Gebeng's radioactive waste is safe? Why have the Australian people rejected their own mining company's safety assurances, despite its billion-dollar money-making potential? Are we that gullible?

Are we simply greedy and is our government risking the rakyat's lives and a destruction of our environment?

Ipohites endured much suffering. Perhaps Gebeng can learn from the experiences of Ipoh's radioactive folly.

It is just like the Environmental Protection Society of Malaysia president Nithi Nesadurai said, "As we are observing now in Japan, the waste is a sitting time bomb."

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## Musings on Food

seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

Photos by Christian DiGiovanna

## SeeFoon continues her relentless pursuit of little known 'Tai Chau' restaurants

You can't miss it if you drive along Jalan Pasir Puteh coming from town and towards Station 18. A corner coffee shop directly opposite Shatin Court, with a huge veranda, Kafe Pasir Puteh also sports a giant television where the local denizens gather for their tea or beers and swap stories of the day.

The sole chef, Chan Tuck Chai, presides in the open-air kitchen, dispensing mouth-watering stir fries, steamed freshwater fish and deep-fried goodies to local food cognoscenti.



### Chinese Speaking Essential

So it must have taken the Chef and patrons by surprise when a troop of us marched in and sat down to order, a veritable United Nations of nationalities with only four out of the twelve, Malaysians. They had hardly ever seen so many foreigners, let alone one who looked like a foreigner but spoke fluent Cantonese (me). I must warn readers though if you do wish to go, to make sure you have a Chinese speaking friend with you, as ordering is all by recommendation only. And one last word of warning...do make sure you go with an empty bladder as you don't want to even approach the toilet!

Chef Ah Chai who has been cooking since the age of 12 has, by the now current age of 36, had many years of experience behind him to serve up some pretty masterful dishes; having learnt from Hong Kong chefs at different periods of his life.

### Best Fish Balls

The first dish we had was the homemade **Saito Fish Balls**, one of their signature dishes. These were some of the best fish balls I've tasted in Ipoh, springy, succulent with just the right degree of firmness, just blanched and served with an excellent *sambal belacan* sauce – 50 pieces for RM35.

Next on the menu was **Bitter Gourd** sautéed with roast pork, with a hint of garlic and black beans. This had good 'wok hei' or the flavour of the wok, as the Chinese like to judge their stir-fried dishes – RM20.

### Wild Caught River Fish

Following this was a steamed **Lampang Fish**, a wild

caught river fish that has to be eaten carefully as it has many bones. This was steamed with yellow bean paste and grated ginger. The fish that arrived was big enough for the twelve of us and the meat was tender and sweet. Their fresh fish changes daily and one has to ask for the recommendation of the day. Do ask for the price first as some fresh river fish can cost an arm and a leg. This one weighed in at 1.8 kg for RM86.

### Non Cloying

We then had the steamed **Kampung Chicken**, tender chunks of chicken served with ginger and scallions – RM20 for half a chicken; followed by a delicious **Petai** (stinky beans) and **Sayur Paku** (wild jungle fern) fried with fresh and dried prawns in a *sambal* sauce. This dish hit all the right notes for my taste buds: spicy, crunchy and no cloying taste of sweetness which is often found in sambal dishes from other restaurants. Similarly their *sambal belacan* sauce too is devoid of sugar which is just the way I prefer it – RM27.



### Rice and Noodles

Their **Tofu** fried with garlic and dried prawns came next, crispy chunks of melt-in-mouth tofu crisped on the outside and juicy custard soft inside with the garlic and dried prawns lending extra crispiness in the mouth – RM6/8/12. Next to come was a simple sautéed green vegetable to be followed by a **Fried Noodles** done 'Mee Goreng' style: yellow noodles with bean sprouts and chicken but with a curried flavour and slightly spicy – RM20. The **Fried Rice** that came after this was almost too much for most but as it was so delectable we all found ourselves tucking in. Fried with long beans and carrots, the long beans diced fine and still crunchy, the carrots lending their mild sweetness with each grain of rice separable and no enveloping oily film, the rice was a lovely culmination to a most enjoyable meal – RM10.

### Other Specialties

I talked to Chef Ah Chai afterwards and asked for other signature dishes which we didn't have an opportunity to try. He recommended the famous 'Tualang' prawns or

## HAWKER FOOD

### Glutinous Rice Dumplings (Zhong)

Traditionally, *Zhong* is eaten in celebration of the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month of the lunar calendar which falls sometime in May or June; this year it's on June 6. *Zhong's* unique shape and bamboo-leaf wrapping secured with a plant-based string, (made from fibrous banana tree trunk which is not so common these days), distinguishes it from other foods. Glutinous rice is cooked with a filling of fatty pork, Chinese mushrooms, salted egg-yolk, dried prawns, black-eyed peas or mung beans, cooked in a marinade of soya sauce (light and dark), five-spice powder and seasoning. As the glutinous rice slowly cooks (3-4 hours), it soaks up the flavours from the deliciously rich filling.



These are some that are available all year round:

#### Kedai Mi Cong Yin

39 Lebuhraya Taman Ipoh Selatan, Ipoh Garden South. RM3.80 for a normal-size *zhong* but is tasty and the only one we tried that has mung beans.

#### Pusing

Stall diagonally across the street from Ming Feong Restaurant, 37 Main Road, Pusing (reviewed in IE 86). If you're up to making the journey, this *zhong* is worth having; not only is it a whopper for RM3.80, the filling is full and delicious too.

#### Ipoh Central Café

51-53, Jalan Raja Ekram (New Town). Best known since time immemorial – has all the essential stuff except the peas/beans – RM5.20.

#### Simee Market

Sold at the fruit stall on the left as you enter the market proper. RM3.80 for a good size *zhong* and the flavour is good.

#### Kedai Makanan Mee Sun (6.30 a.m.-2.00 p.m.)

2 Tingkat Taman Ipoh 6, Ipoh Garden South. Worth it for only RM3.00.

There are also mobile stalls in Old Town at Jalan Bandar Timah – **Kedai Kopi Sin Yoon Loong** (white coffee) and **Kedai Kopi Kong Heng**; and also in New Town at **Foh San Restaurant** on Jalan Leong Sin Nam.

**Udang Galah** which he serves two ways, head steamed and tails fried, RM80 per kg and do pre-order; the wild caught **Frog's Legs** which are available year round, RM40 per kg and pre-order.

On receiving the bill and leaving totally satiated from the table I made a private resolution to return and try other undiscovered specialties from Chef Ah Chai in the future. Our total bill for 12 came to RM218

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By Margarita Lee

## RECIPE

### Fusion Carbonara

#### Ingredients:

200g dried pasta (shortcut or long)  
2 tbsp olive oil  
6 rashers streaky bacon or beef bacon, cut into strips  
1 medium onion, cut into discs  
1 garlic clove, finely chopped

#### (A)

100 ml light cream  
2 tsp *wasabi* powder  
1 tbsp Japanese soya sauce  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1 tbsp Bonito Dashi powder

#### (B) Garnishing:

50g Cheddar cheese, finely grated  
½ tbsp shredded Nori Seaweed  
1 tsp toasted sesame seeds  
2 tbsp tuna flakes (*Katsuobushi*)

#### Method:

\* Boil water in a large pan; add in pasta, 1 tsp salt and one



tbsp oil. Stir well, then reduce the heat to medium and cook for about 8 to 10 minutes. Taste for degree of firmness. Drain in cold water, keep aside for later use.

- \* Heat the olive oil in frying pan until hot; add in bacon and fry over medium heat until fat from the bacon starts spitting.
- \* Add onions and continue to fry for 2-3 minutes or until soft, add in garlic and continue to fry, keep stirring, for further 2 minutes.
- \* Add cooked pasta; add ingredients (A), bring it to boil and stir well.
- \* Garnish with ingredients (B).
- \* Serve immediately.



# Academic Excellence

**JAG**



The winners were among 201 Orang Asli young-

Present at the ceremony were Yayasan Bina Upaya's officials, Yusuf Noordin and See Tean Seng.

RM

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## Wellness

● By See Foon Chan-Koppen

### Matters of the Heart Part 2

*Heart attacks are the number 1 cause of death in Malaysia. In IE115 March 1 issue we spoke to Consultant Cardiologist Dr. Chan Chong Guan at Pantai Hospital who shared with readers what is a heart attack, how to recognise one and the risk factors involved. We continue part two in this series on 'Matters of the Heart' – The Physical Kind.*

**IE: What treatments are available for heart attack?**

**Dr. Chan:** The standard treatment of heart attack involves:

1. ICU (Intensive Care Unit) Care – to prevent sudden death from arrhythmia (an abnormal rate of muscle contractions in the heart). At least 48 hours of continuous monitoring of heart beats with ECG will detect arrhythmia instantaneously so that it can be stopped immediately. When heart rate stops, care must be taken within 10 minutes. This has reduced in-hospital mortality rate by half. The most important of these is Electrical Cardioversion (Direct Current Shock).
2. Re-establishment of blood flow in the coronary artery which has been blocked by blood clot, by either:
  - Thrombolytic Therapy – to dissolve the blood clot with medication, or
  - PCI (Percutaneous Coronary Intervention) also known as Angioplasty which mechanically breaks the blood clot with a balloon, and usually finishes with implanting a stent (more on stents later) in the artery.

**IE: What are the longer term measures to preventing recurrence of heart attack?**

**Dr. Chan:**

1. Take medications to prevent clotting of blood such as Aspirin and Clopidogrel, as prescribed by your cardiologist.
2. Treating risk factors that lead to atherosclerosis, i.e. high cholesterol, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, obesity, smoking.
3. Treating and / or preventing heart failure – heart attack causes damage of heart muscle, leading to loss of function of the heart as a pump. When a significant amount of heart muscle is lost, heart failure ensues. Frequently, the signs and symptoms of heart failure only manifest many years later. There are many medications which your cardiologist may prescribe that have been proven to be able to prevent or to delay the progression of heart failure.



Coronary balloon and stent

**IE: Isn't it true that many patients stop taking their medication after leaving the hospital under the illusion that they're feeling fine?**

**Dr. Chan:** It is critical that patients take their prescribed medication faithfully, some perhaps for life. Do not alter your medication without consulting your doctor. Unfortunately a lot of patients do not take the full medication prescribed for them. This may be because in the short term, patients don't feel unwell so they skip their medication but in the long term this may lead to heart failure many years down the road.

Regular follow up with your doctor is very important because some medications will need dose adjustment from time to time. Heart patients need to know that every effort will be rewarded with reduced risk of further heart attacks or heart failure.

**IE: Tell us about Stents and the latest technology now available.**

**Dr. Chan:** Stents are small expandable tubes used to treat narrowed or weakened arteries in the body. During a stenting procedure, the stent expands when the balloon is inflated, locks into place, and forms a permanent scaffold to hold the coronary artery open even after the balloon is deflated and removed.

What is commonly used is a metal stent coated with medication that helps to minimise re-narrowing of the artery. Millions of stents have been implanted into patients with good results. A new Stent made of re-absorbable material will soon be available but we are waiting eagerly for the results of large scale clinical trials.

Another new approach is to use a balloon coated with medication to dilate the blockage, and the medication will stay on the blood vessel wall for awhile allowing the lesion to heal. The advantage to this technique is that no foreign body is left behind.

The medicated balloon method is ideal for short blockage. If there is no further blockage in six months the blood vessel will heal in the most natural way. The blood vessel may even grow bigger after some time. However not every single lesion is suitable for this type of treatment.

All this is done through a small puncture in the femoral artery in the groin or radial artery in the wrist.

**IE: What about rehabilitation after a heart attack?**

**Dr. Chan:** We have to consider rehabilitation from the psychological, mental and physical perspective. Some people may go through a period of anxiety or even depression, which may require counselling. A good rehabilitation programme will restore the patient's confidence, hence the quality of life.

Physically we prescribe complete rest in the first week after discharge from hospital followed by a gradual increase in activity beginning with gentle walking around the house progressing to a stroll outside by the third week. After about two months I would recommend resumption of usual activity and stepping up exercise to fast walking or light jogging. It all depends on how much damage and how well the underlying blockage is repaired. The secret is to gradually increase activity every few days. At any sign of chest pain or shortness of breath, slow down. Also I advise my patients to avoid walking in the hot sun which puts a greater strain on the heart and to get good rest and avoid exercise if they have the flu.

**Dr. Chan Chong Guan at Chan Cardiovascular Specialist Clinic, Pantai Hospital Ipoh. Tel.: 05-5405522.**



● Dr. Chan Chong Guan, Consultant Cardiologist, Pantai Hospital Ipoh

## Diabetic Foot Care

*We continue our series on orthopedic ailments begun in IE December 16 issue with our second interview with Dr. Suresh Sammanthamurthy Exec. Director (Operations) and Consultant Orthopedic Specialist at Kinta Medical Centre.*

**IE: Why is foot care important for Diabetics?**

**Dr. Suresh :** Diabetes mellitus (DM) being so rampant in Malaysia, can cause silent damage to many organs and especially foot problems which commonly develop in people with diabetes and can quickly become serious.

With damage to the nervous system, a person with diabetes may not be able to feel his or her feet properly. Normal sweat secretion and oil production that lubricates the skin of the foot is impaired. These factors together can lead to abnormal pressure on the skin, bones, and joints of the foot during walking and can lead to breakdown of the skin of the foot. Sores may develop.

**IE: So can foot sores be life threatening?**

**Dr. Suresh:** Damage to blood vessels and impairment of the immune system from diabetes make it difficult to heal these wounds. Bacterial infection of the skin, connective tissues, muscles, and bones can then occur. These infections can develop into gangrene. Because of the poor blood flow, antibiotics cannot get to the site of the infection easily. Often, the only treatment for this is amputation of the foot or leg. If the infection spreads to the bloodstream, this process can be life-threatening.

**IE: So what preventative measures can people with diabetes take?**

**Dr. Suresh:** People with diabetes must be fully aware of how to prevent foot problems before they occur, to recognize problems early, and to seek the right treatment when problems do occur. Although treatment for diabetic foot problems has improved, prevention – including good control of blood sugar level – remains the best way to prevent diabetic complications.

**IE: Is Home Care sufficient?**

**Dr. Suresh:** People with diabetes should learn how to examine their own feet daily and how to recognize the early signs and symptoms of diabetic foot problems. They should also learn what is reasonable to manage routinely at home, how to recognize when to go to an orthopaedic doctor, and how to recognize when a problem has Diabetic implications. All this information can be obtained from their physician.

**IE: Can you elaborate on what risk Factors increase the chances of a person with diabetes in developing foot problems and diabetic infections in legs and feet?**

**Dr. Suresh: Footwear:** Poorly fitting shoes are a common cause

of diabetic foot problems. If the patient has red spots, sore spots, blisters, corns, calluses, or consistent pain associated with wearing shoes, new properly fitted footwear must be obtained as soon as possible.

**Orthopaedic foot wear and orthotics:** If the patient has common foot abnormalities such as flat feet, bunions, or hammertoes, prescription shoes or shoe inserts may be necessary.

**Nerve damage:** People with long-standing or poorly controlled diabetes are at risk for having damage to the nerves in their feet. The medical term for this is peripheral neuropathy. Because of the nerve damage, the patient may be unable to feel their feet normally. Also, they may be unable to sense the position of their feet and toes while walking and balancing. With normal nerves, a person can usually sense if their shoes are rubbing on the feet or if one part of the foot is becoming strained while walking. A person with diabetes may not properly sense minor injuries (such as cuts, scrapes, blisters), signs of abnormal wear and tear (that turn into calluses and corns), and foot strain. Normally, people can feel if there is a stone in their shoe, then remove it immediately. A person who has diabetes may not be able to perceive a stone. Its constant rubbing can easily create a sore.

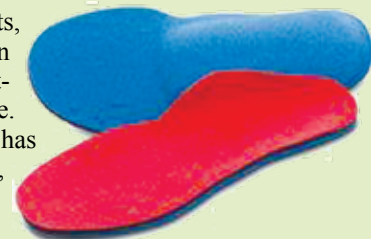
**Poor circulation:** Especially when poorly controlled, diabetes can lead to accelerated hardening of the arteries or atherosclerosis. When blood flow to injured tissues is poor, healing does not occur properly. Any trauma to the foot can increase the risk for a more serious problem to develop.

**Infections:** Athlete's foot, a fungal infection of the skin or toenails, can lead to more serious bacterial infections and should be treated promptly.

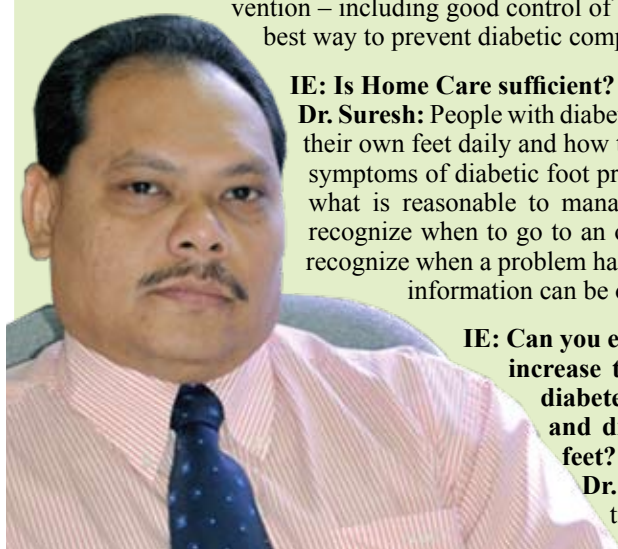
**Ingrown toenails:** This should be handled right away by a foot specialist. Toenail fungus should also be treated.

**Smoking:** Smoking any form of tobacco causes damage to the small blood vessels in the feet and legs. This damage can disrupt the healing process and is a major risk factor for infections and amputations. The importance of smoking cessation cannot be overemphasized.

**Dr. Suresh: Finally, I cannot emphasise enough how important it is to consult your orthopaedic doctor on any changes you may notice on your legs and feet. Do not wait till a sore develops.**



Orthotic insoles



For more information on diabetic foot care, call:

Dr Suresh Sammanthamurthy's clinic at Kinta Medical Centre: 05-2428315.

Email: sureshmurthy70@gmail.com Website: www.kmc.com.my.





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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements must be sent by fax: **05-2552181**; or email: **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.

**Pantai Hospital Ipoh Public Forum, "Protect Your Kidneys, Save Your Heart"** in conjunction with World Kidney Day & Kidney Awareness, on Saturday, **April 2**, 1.30-4.30 p.m., at Dahlia Utama, 4th Floor, Pantai Hospital Ipoh. Admission is free. Contact: Ms Renuka or En Harith at: **05-5405712/5405715**.

**Ipoh Fine Arts Society presents "Shivam Sundaram Krishnam Madhuram", Kathak and Bharatnatyam Jugalbandhi** by Shri. Tushar Bhatt – India (Kathak) and Kumari Panbarasi – Ipoh (Bharatnatyam) on Thursday, **April 7**, 7.30 p.m. at Maha Mariamman Temple Hall, Jalan Sungai Pari, Ipoh. Free admission. Contact: **016-5904420**.

**A Day with the Registrar of Societies (ROS)**. This ROS-organised programme will be held at five district offices beginning April till December. First on the list is the Larut Matang and Selama District Office in Taiping on Saturday, **April 9** commencing at 9.00 a.m., at The New Club, Jalan Kelab Baru, Taiping, Perak. Those keen on knowing more about the registering of societies and other related matters are welcome to attend. For details please call Mrs. Theresa Rose Edward at **05-5288445/446**.

**Second Tan Sri Lee Loy Seng Perak Grand Chess Championship 2011**, Sunday, **10 April** at Taiping Chinese Recreation Club, 2 Jalan Stesen, Taiping. Contact: Yunus – **013-3908129** or Mrs Chow – **05-8076882** (CRC Taiping office hours). Closing date for registration: April 7. For details, entry form and update: <http://perakchess.blogspot.com/> (download form and follow instructions).

**Charity Performance by Ramli Ibrahim and Sutra Dance Theatre**. Banquet Hall State Secretariat Building Ipoh Friday, **April 15** at 7.30 p.m. Organised by Buntong Community-based Rehabilitation Association. For details call S. Saraspathy **05-2415779** or Subain **012-5056049**.

**"No Democracy Without Gender Equality: The Case for Women's Rights in Malaysia"** a dinner talk by Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir organised by Perak Academy, Friday, **April 15** commencing at 8.00 p.m., at Dome Restaurant, Meru Valley Golf & Country Club, Ipoh. For details and reservations, call: Wai Kheng at 05-5478949 or **016-5518172**. You can also fax your request to **05-5496675** or email it to: [contact@perakacademy.com](mailto:contact@perakacademy.com).

**Effective Communication Workshop by Kelab Anak Malaysia Batu Gajah** on Sunday, **April 17** at 8.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. at Ipoh City and Country Resort, Ipoh. This function will be officiated by Yang Berbahagia Dato' Chang Ko Youn, Special Adviser to Perak State Menteri Besar cum Patron Kelab Anak Malaysia Batu Gajah. Contact: Sit Wai Yin at **016-5311093**.

**Free Healing Camp by Centre for Prana Yoga and Self Transformation** on Sunday, **April 17** beginning 9.00 a.m., at Wisma Ehsan, 2-5, Jalan Sultan Yussuf, Ipoh. Admission: free. For details call Ms Valli Kamala Dhuria at **05-2554590**.

**SMI Centennial Celebration 1912-2012 and Michaelian Military Band Concert 2011** entitled "Beyond the Music" on Saturday, **April 23** at 7.30 p.m. at Dewan Leong Wan Chin, SMJK Raja Perempuan, Perak. The event is also a fund raiser to acquire new instruments for the expansion of the school band. For information, contact: Liew – **016-5414767**, Tiong – **012-6631548** or Rohaizat – **012-5222445**.

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## news roundup

# Perak Has First Career Centre

*Ten thousand jobs targeted for this year*

**T**housands of job-seekers in Perak can now register with Pusat Kerjaya Amanjaya or Amanjaya Career Centre in the city in their quests for suitable employment.

At the moment they can register at the booth of the career centre when it makes its visit to the various districts. Later when it is fully operational, it will be possible to make on-line registration.

At its first booth at City Council's lobby a day after the launch, 400 applicants submitted their registration forms. According to its Centre Manager, Zulkhairi Suber, the age categories were wide, "from fresh school and college leavers to retirees" Zulkhairi clarified that there was no age restriction for candidates adding that "hopefully their service would allow more Perakeans to come home to work".

The Perak Government launched the free one-stop centre, which is claimed as the first state-run employment centre, on March 21 as a big move to reduce unemployment and dependence on foreign workers.

It is a State initiative via state think-tank Institute Darul Ridzwan (IDR), to act as a liaison between the community and industry to match the skills of employees with the requirements of industry.

The centre will provide advice and help people find jobs that match their individual qualifications while at the same time helping the industry find workers to cater to their need.

It plans to achieve its goals by working together with industry players and the respective institutions of higher education to upgrade the skills of employees by a strategy of re-skilling potential employees.

Various organizations, industries and business establishments have been invited as participating partners to enable them to meet their manpower requirements.

Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Zambry Abdul Kadir who officiated the launch also witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with 10 participants of its initiative which included the FMM (200 member companies) Perak Youth Council (over 100,000 members) and Mydin Mohamed Holdings Berhad which will



● Zambry witnessing the signing of the MoU

require 2,000 workers when its Hypermarket opens in the future.

Deputy Minister of Human Resources Ministry Senator Dato' Maznah Mazlan, who was also present, complimented Zambry on his initiative as other than the Human Resource Ministry through Jobs Malaysia "Perak is the first state that has created a one-stop employment centre which provides skills upgrade service which would enhance the opportunities for workers". Maznah further stated that since January this year there were 30,000 job vacancies "of all categories" in Perak but only 500 were filled.

The Chairman and Director of Twin Creeks Sdn

Bhd, Dato' Hj Rais Hussein, a manufacturer of Solar Cell panels indicated that his factory "would require 300 skilled workers "which we will have to send to the United States for training" before the factory becomes operational in 2012.

Datuk Mokhzani Mahathir, the Group CEO for Kencana Petroleum, an oil and gas service provider based at Lumut, stated that "production this year was ramping up and would require 1,000 semi and highly skilled workers in the next 12 months to meet current demand. This is a reason for becoming a strategic partner with the centre".

The Centre set a target of matching 10,000 jobs for the year.

JAG

## Mums-to-Be Take Centre Stage



**I**poh's only maternity dress outlet, JustMum, in collaboration with CellSafe International, a leading stem cell bank, organised a maternity dress fashion show at Tower Regency, Ipoh recently. The organisers' objective was to showcase trendy eastern-and-western-styled maternity dresses for expectant mothers.

Women today no longer wear hand-me-down dresses like their parents of yore. They go for dresses which accentuate their looks notwithstanding their physical conditions. JustMum located at Greentown Business Centre, Ipoh caters to this demand. It also encourages mothers-to-be to breastfeed their babies with designer dresses that allow for easy breastfeeding while looking good and stylish.

Present at the "Gorgeous Mum and Family Day" show was supermodel and ambassador of CellSafe International, Amber Chia with her baby boy in tow. Amber gave valuable information about stem cell banking. Tips on postnatal diet were given by a nutritional expert. Lucky draws were held to keep the audience occupied while the kids were entertained by clowns and games.

LYW

## Eco Awareness Campaign



**M**embers of Leo Club, District 308B2, wearing costumes made of recycled and used material paraded throughout Ipoh Parade Mall to remind lunch time shoppers of the environmental 3Rs (reduce, reuse and recycle) on March 15.

It was part of the Leo Clubs from Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Perak, eco-awareness campaign "Making a Difference". During the eco-summit parade, the Leo members handed out paper food boxes and cloth shopping bags in exchange for plastic polystyrene ones.

According to District 308B2 Chairperson Alan Thoo, the club had also purchased 500 paper food boxes and 1,000 cloth shopping bags which carried a message "stop using non degradable plastic polystyrene bags and food boxes."

The team went to the food court to remind the lunch crowd to only use paper boxes.

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## Arts and Culture

# The 'Oscars' in Ipoh



● Carolyn Wong, Puan Sri Dato' Sandra Lee, Khoo Kuan Hwa, Tham Lai Meng and Datin Lynnette Tan

All the stars were out on March 19 as Soroptimist International Region of Malaysia (SIROM) held their Biennial conference at the Impiana Hotel in Ipoh. Ipohites and other Malaysian Glitteratti showed up in their finest as they strolled down the red carpet and had their photos taken by 'paparazzi' just like the real McCoy held recently in Los Angeles.

The fund-raising event, whose proceeds went to two charities in Ipoh, the **New Horizons Early Intervention Centre** in Canning Gardens and the **Pertubuhan Jagaan Kanak-kanak Cacat Setia** in Silibin, home to 46 mentally- and physically-challenged children, was the culmination of two days of networking and bonding activities amongst the members which included a treasure hunt along Ipoh's Heritage Trail.

Soroptimist International is the largest women's service organisation in the world for business and professional women who work to improve the lives of women and girls in local communities throughout the world. The Ipoh club, which was formed in 2009, was the 13<sup>th</sup> club to be chartered in Malaysia.

Puan Sri Siew Yong Gnanalingam, President-Elect Soroptimist International S.W. Pacific (SISWP), Datin Indira Naidu President SIROM, and Conference Chairperson Joanne Yeoh from Kuala Lumpur and members from sister clubs all over Malaysia were on hand for the speeches and toasts that were given by Joanne Fernandez, Past President of SISWP, Dato' Dr. Majumder and Puan Sri Dato' Sandra Lee.

Charter President Jayamalar Jeyaratnam and President Khoo Kuan Hwa and their committee saw their hard work acknowledged when the Ipoh club was recognised with the second prize in the 'Best Practice' award for their 'SIHA' (which stands for Soroptimist International Home Assistant) programme, a service project which trained single mothers for domestic cleaning work and organised them for ad hoc cleaning assignments secured by the club through flyers and word-of-mouth recommendations.

The evening's entertainment began with a martial arts display from Martial Arts and Fitness Academy. City Ballet put on a spectacular 'Walk Down Broadway' performance choreographed by Datin Rosalina Ooi and complemented by sterling vocals from Shu Wern Sze and Gavin Tang. This was followed by two exquisite numbers from soprano Mrs. Irene Lim in Chinese, most noteworthy of which was the Habanera from Carmen which was delivered with great flair and passion. Latin dancers from Yencsi Dance Studio closed the entertainment section on a snappy note.

The evening ended with a raffle draw with the grand prize being a night's stay with breakfast and spa treats at the Banjaran Hotsprings Retreat in Tambun.

SFCK



● Outgoing President SIROM Datin Indira Naidu handing over to incoming President and Conference Chairperson Joanne Yeoh

## young perak

# Motivating Students

Children today, unlike their parents in the past, can seek information from many sources. Information Technology has advanced by leaps and bounds and unless students are exposed to such a technology they will be left behind in the rat race.

Information Technology, however, has its downside. If children are being exposed to the wrong kind of information, they will invariably end up on the wrong end of the social spectrum. Keeping tabs on children is a daunting task considering what parents undergo to eke out a living in these trying times.

With this in mind, Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan (YBUDR) with the collaboration of the security and development committee of Kampong Raja, Parit, conducted a joint motivational course for 80 primary school students of Sekolah Kebangsaan Parit recently. The students will be sitting for their UPSR examination soon.

The one-day course was held at the village community hall. Fifty parents were in attendance to gauge its benefits. The students were taught time management and answering techniques on all five subjects slated for the examination. The parents, on the other hand, were told of their responsibilities and how to be effective role models.

Adun of Belanja, Dato' Hj Mohd Zaim Abu Hasan, officiated at the function. The foundation was represented by its senior officers, Yusof Nordin, Khairul Shahril and See Teng Seng.

RM



## Thumbs Up



# MBI Takes Action On Illegal Dumpsite

In response to the article, 'New Dumpsite below Kuala Kangsar Road Flyover' (IE 113, Feb 1-15), MBI has taken prompt action and put up a signboard "DILARANG MEMBUANG SAMPAH DENDA RM500. Dengan Perintah: Datuk Bandar Ipoh". A gravel path has been built under the flyover and the garbage is heaped on either side of this path. Note: MBI must remove the garbage and install a barrier at the entrance. The signboard is not a permanent solution and people would continue dumping rubbish in the area.

Meanwhile, according to a news item "Ipoh to be 'cleaner, greener and more developed'", (NST, Wednesday, March 9) it was reported that the Mayor warned litter bugs to stop dumping rubbish indiscriminately. Special officers have been placed in strategic locations to nab culprits and summons would be issued immediately. If these officers are doing their duty, then those creating illegal dumpsites can be caught in the act. The officers must be proactive.

A. Jeyaraj



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# Arts and Culture

## Seven-Month-Long Performing Arts Festival

The Perak Society of Performing Arts has really outdone itself this time by coming out with a 7-month-long Arts Festival which will feature a wide genre of performing arts to include Shakespeare plays, choral presentation, dance, music and even talks, exhibitions and workshops.

Titled the Perak Performing Arts Festival, it started this March with three programmes 'Exploring Shakespeare, Reaching Out Through Art, and Ipoh Oscar Night', the latter two being charity events.

The *pièce de résistance* though would be PSPA's very own original in-house musical production Shiny Black Gold. The script, written by PSPA President, Datin Rosalina Ooi-Thong and music by Christopher Tse is about the glorious tin mining days in Perak and the lives of Chinese migrants who worked in the mines then. Undoubtedly for PSPA, you really can't get more superlatively topical nor original than that.

The festival is the first of its kind in Perak and is supported by the State Government. Dato' Hamidah Osman who launched the festival presented the Society with a grant of RM120,000 for organizing the festival saying it was an attraction which would promote tourism.

Additionally, Ipoh's own international actress Dato' Michelle Yeoh has supported by graciously agreeing to be the Performing Arts Icon while MCA President Datuk Seri Chua Soi Lek pledged a grant of RM30,000 for the festival a week earlier.

The event for the last day of the festival is Perak Top



Marching Bands to be held at Ipoh Padang on September 16 in conjunction with Malaysia Day celebrations.

This Arts Festival has been long overdue. However, it's better late than never. So bring on the show!

James Gough

## Drama Workshop



Several schools in Ipoh have the privilege of having teachers from Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (KLPac) and The Actor's Studio conduct drama workshops in their schools. The team, consisting of Christopher Ling, Mark Beau de Silva, Lex, Kimmy Kiew, Kelvin Wong and Qahar Aqilah, comes on a fortnightly basis.

The aim of the workshops is to enhance and help hone the students' drama and theatre skills. This in turn helps them holistically in their learning process. To inject fun into learning, games are utilised. The students are trained not only in drama but dancing and singing techniques, as well.

SMK Methodist, SMK Methodist (P), SMK St Michael, SMJK Sam Tet, SMJK Perempuan Perak and even Daybreak have benefitted from the team's efforts. "It helps me to be more confident on stage," said Shaun Pandian, 15, of SMK Methodist.

The workshops are intended to go on for a year, but KLPac and The Actor's Studio hope it will be an ongoing affair.

When Mark Beau de Silva sees young people getting involved and interested in performing arts, he feels that there is a need for continuity. "Just as we've learned from others, we hope to pass it on to the younger generation."

LYW

## Art Full of Joy



Theresa Lim (3<sup>rd</sup> from left), Datin Grace Lee and Datin Rosalina Ooi (right)

The Perak Society of Performing Arts kicked off its inaugural Perak Performing Arts Festival with a charity dinner talk and art exhibition held at Citrus Wine and Dine, Ipoh Garden East on March 11.

The dinner talk and art exhibition themed "Reaching Out Through Art" was presented by Perak's first woman architect Theresa Lim Mun Sim. Incidentally the name Mun Sim means "fullness of joy and gratitude".

The art exhibition featured Chinese paintings of hens, fishes and sparrows in a Rambutan tree depicting a happy time Lim had growing up at her house on Jalan Selamat which is located off Jalan Sultan Abdul Jalil behind Ipoh Parade.

Lim very generously donated 59 paintings and 600 books, 300 each of two books entitled "Once Upon a Bell Tree" and "A Little Grain of Rice". The proceeds from the sale will go for the benefit of ASAP, the Autism Support Association for Parents.

In order to further appreciate Lim's painting one should actually read her books.

Lim, 79, in her book "Once Upon a Bell Tree" describes her home at Jalan Selamat as "very big" with a "wood of a thousand rubber trees" which included a "Home of the Catfish" and a "Stream of Joy" which had guppies, fighting fish and even shrimps which were eaten



raw and tasted "really good". She also had a "Wishing Well" where fireflies congregated "on any bright night in the year".

Ineluctably, her happy memories have been translated into art and unknowingly through her book she has provided Ipohites a graphic insight of a time when the current Greentown property sprawl was actually a vast natural habitat.

JAG

For information about the festival please go to their blog: <http://pspablog.blogspot.com>, email: [pspa2011fest@gmail.com](mailto:pspa2011fest@gmail.com) or contact PSPA/ Sara: 05-548 7814 or Witzi Leong: 012-5088818.

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## My Say

• By **Jerry Francis**



# Not Logical To Have Two ICT Centres in Ipoh

**T**he proposal by Perak's chairman for local government Dato' Dr. Mah Hang Soon that the top floor of the central market building be turned into an information and communications technology (ICT) centre, like "Low Yat Plaza" in Kuala Lumpur, moved me to take a critical look at its viability.

Do we need another ICT one-stop centre in the city? Can both sustain, or will one of them eventually be phased out? Not that the top floor of the 29 year old central market building, which until eight years ago was occupied by Super Kinta Shopping Complex, is unsuitable for it. The question is why have another?

Has Dr. Mah forgotten or is he not aware that the city has already an established ITC centre at the Yik Foong Complex located at the intersection of Jalan Laxamana and Jalan Sultan Idris Shah, and just across the road from the central market.

The four-storey Yik Foong Complex opened its doors in 1983 and in 1996 when its main anchor tenant, a supermarket, ceased operation, the complex began to gradually build its reputation as an ICT centre. Currently 30 per cent of its tenants are marketing hand phones, computers, computer hardware, software and accessories.

Its reputation as an ICT centre is already well-known in the city. Just ask any resident in the city about where to hunt for computers and accessories; he will undoubtedly point towards the Yik Foong Complex.

The success of the complex has encouraged the management to plan for modernizing and restructuring its image as one associated with being an ICT centre. It is ideally located and convenient to service the surrounding schools and offices nearby.

Therefore, is it logical to have two such centres in close proximity of each other in the city? The city council should instead help to promote the existing ICT centre, rather than creating another centre to compete with it. Look at Kuala Lumpur as an example. The Imbi Complex was 'the' ICT one-stop centre before Low Yat Plaza was built just behind it. What has become of Imbi Complex now?

I hope Dr. Mah did not make the suggestion just to get ICT dealers and traders to move into the central market complex in order for the city council to rent out the space, without taking into consideration the implications of such a move. Please come up with some good and viable suggestions to inspire economic activities, not to dampen existing

ones.

What the Perak Malay Chamber of Commerce president, Datuk Muhammad Muhiyuddin Abdullah, has suggested is more logical. "We want priority (use of the space at the central market) to be given to products manufactured in Perak as another effort to promote them to shoppers and visitors," he said. "We are also looking at products coming from small and medium industries and providing an avenue for the traders to sell their products." However, the central market complex needs extensive renovations to provide an ideal environment before it can be considered suitable for trading, as the presence of the wet-market has not been conducive.

Such suggestions for widespread economic activities are exactly what the city centre needs. This is what I have been advocating for the revival of the city centre, which has seen business premises closing down due to lack of business opportunities.

The city council must come up with viable ideas and provide incentives for economic activities, so that the city centre can once again be vibrant.

## Sport

# Aerobathon 2011



**M**BI-sponsored Aerobathon 2011 saw keen competition coming from health buffs eager on stretching their physical limits and winning cash prizes at the same time. The event, held at Stadium Indera Mulia, Ipoh recently, drew about 200 participants of all ages and sex. They were divided into four categories based on their age. The oldest was a 59-year-old man while the youngest was a girl in her late teens. The participants were required to bend, jump, gyrate and stretch to the accompaniment of music from a player. They were being guided by a team of professional aerobic instructors who led them through the rigorous physical routine lasting a full two hours. The winners were those who lasted the ordeal and remained standing at the end.

Ed



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