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A Scenic Cocoon in the Heart of Ipoh

So why its obscurity?

Gunung Lang still lies in scenic majesty undiscovered and unexplored by Ipohites and tourists alike. Ask the average man-in-the-street about Gunung Lang and chances are one would be greeted with a blank stare and the retort, "Gunung What?"

So what is the reason for its obscurity and at whose feet should the blame for its lack of prominence be placed?

Gunung Lang is located just north of the city off Jalan Kuala Kangsar and easily accessible by road. It has a lake surrounded by greenery and limestone outcrops. It was first identified and adopted by the Rotary Club of Ipoh for development into a family recreational park; much publicity was given but with very little progress. It was unique then as it could only be approached through a cave, which has now been sealed off for safety reasons.

As the proposed project would be a major undertaking, it was later decided by the Ipoh City Council that it would take it over. It allocated a lot of funds towards its development, which was supposed to have been completed in 1995.

However, the question of who would develop it was hotly debated later. The uncertainties arose when the state government announced that it would consider a proposal by the State Agriculture Development Corporation to develop the site as an agro-tourism project.

It was not until 2000 that it became clear that the city council would develop the park according to the design of the National Landscape Department, which was engaged as consultant.

Back to Nature Concept

The department also made the large allocation for the redevelopment of the park on a "Back to Nature" concept for both adults and children. The aim was to preserve its natural beauty as much as possible. There are about 100 plant species at the site seldom seen elsewhere in the county.

Covering an area of 30.35 hectares out of which 14.16 hectares consists of the lake, the park is divided into two sections.

It was opened in October 2000 and was closed after a couple of years for renovation and reopened in 2004. There is a man-made cascading waterfall (operates a few hours daily) with a large sign that is lighted up at night and can be seen from the highway.

Across the lake, which is stocked with fish such as lampan, tilapia and kelia, lies an inner landscaped park that is accessible only by boat. The boat trip, which takes about five minutes from the jetty at the office building, costs RM3 for adults and RM1.50 for

children and senior citizens for a return trip. There are three boatmen and the boat departs whenever there are visitors.

Situated in the park are two watch towers, three kampong houses, a playground and mini zoo with deer, ostrich and rabbits. There are picnic grounds, a campsite, foot-paths, a boardwalk along the lake and plenty of Heliconia and Bougainvillea bushes.

The park is open from 8.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. daily except on Fridays when it is open till 4.00 p.m. There are few visitors during weekdays, however during weekends, the place is crowded with school children and companies hold their family days here.

A. Jeyaraj, who visited the park recently, noted that the place is relatively clean and a team of 22 workers carry out the day to day maintenance. It costs the city council RM200,000 annually to maintain it.

Lack of Visitors

In spite of being on the outskirts of the city and within easy reach by those with cars, the park has not been attracting visitors as many residents are not aware of its existence and even those who have heard of the name do not know where it is situated.

The inherent seclusion and tranquility of the place provides a perfect retreat for families to enjoy their weekends of relaxation. The surrounding limestone hills draped in lovely greenery is a living tapestry for the eyes.

Poor Signage

There is a lack of signage especially along the highway to divert some traffic to the park. Even at the entrance to the park there is no proper signage.

At the jetty there is a plaque giving general information. However, there is no site plan of the area and visitors going to the other side of the lake have to walk aimlessly not knowing what the attractions are.

Improvements Needed

The kampong houses need sprucing up. This is an eco-park and the plants and trees should be labeled and brief descriptions given. The focus should be more on landscape rather than as an animal park.

Maybe the deer and ostrich can be let loose or given to other petting zoos.

With few recreational activities there is little to do in the park other than strolling. The park needs hiking trails, hill climbing and exploration of the caves for the more adventurous.

The Perak House adjacent to the jetty needs to be maintained. A few household items should be placed inside the house.

Nor Sarul Rizal bin Kassim, assistant officer of the city council's landscape and recreation department located at the park, said that University Pendidikan Sultan Idris in Tanjung Malim has carried out a study on the park for the past two years and would submit its proposals for improvement soon.

Aggressive Marketing Necessary

Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir, has called on the city council to upgrade Gunung Lang into a recreational cum tourist spot for both local and foreign visitors. "I've asked MBI to find ways to improve the park so it will become a viable tourist attraction," he said.

There is no denying that it is a great location with a lovely environment of limestone hills and a cave, but the marketing for the facility is very poor. The city council should go on a more aggressive marketing drive to let members of the public know more about its scenic attractions.

Ipoh has its scenic attractions. It is time that a concerted effort is made to promote one of its hidden treasures.

For enquiries, call: **05-5062088**.



Perak House



Children's Playground



Aviaries

IPOH **echo**

From the Editor's Desk

● by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

IS BEING A GOOD HOST ENOUGH?

The singular aim of the tournament then (and now) was to provide the local team with the competitive exposure it desperately needed following its fall from grace...

The 20th edition of the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup Hockey Tournament has come and gone. In terms of results, there is nothing to shout about. It was another dismal showing for the Malaysian team, which was full of promises following the silver medal at the 2010 Asian Games. While the other six teams fought for a placing in the finals our players had to contend with the wooden spoon.

As expected, Australia lived up to its top billing, emerging champion for the sixth time pushing Pakistan into second place. Pakistan was champion three times since the tournament's inception in 1983.

Malaysia, in spite of being host and playing in front of a vociferous home crowd, has never once stood on the podium as champion. The best it has ever mustered was finishing runner-up in 1985, 2007 and 2009. It has been the same each successive year, a placing in the middle or right at the bottom of the table.

Among the few games which the country excels in is hockey. We have a proud hockey tradition dating back to the colonial era of the 1900s. Premier English schools like ACS Ipoh, Malay College Kuala Kangsar, Anderson School Ipoh and King Edward Taiping had produced outstanding hockey players who donned national colours at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics and at the Rome and Tokyo Olympics in 1960 and 1964, respectively.

Malaysia fared pretty well at successive Asian Games beginning with the third Games in Manila in 1958 when hockey was first introduced as a competitive sport. For the record, Malaysia or Malaya then, was ranked third in Asia, behind giants India and Pakistan - the teams to beat at almost every Olympics before 1980. It was only after the World Cup 1975 that Malaysia's fortunes took a dive. From being the fourth best in the world, behind Pakistan, India and West Germany, she suffered an abrupt slide in ranking.

The decline in Asian hockey began with the advent of artificial turf in the 1980s. The heavier-built and robust Europeans had a distinct advantage over the smaller-stature



Asians whose forte was in their nippy stick work. Hitting power increases on a flat and smooth surface of the artificial turf unlike the rough and irregular surface of the grass pitch. Long passes, hard-hitting and quick stopping of the ball became the norm.

The emphasis is on speed, stamina and absolute concentration. A momentary lapse in focus is fatal. Coaches would shout profanities at their charges to urge them on. The Malaysian players fell into this onerous trap, not once but almost all their four round-robin matches. Their only victory was against a lethargic South Korea team who has yet to find its footing.

So what has this to do with the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup? The tournament began as a bi-annual friendly in 1983 pitting some of the best hockey nations in the world. After five appearances it turned annual in 1995.

The singular aim of the tournament then (and now) was to provide the local team with the competitive exposure it desperately needed following its fall from grace. While Australia, Germany, Spain, Holland and Russia improved by leaps and bounds, Malaysia remained stagnant. Her ranking in Asia plummeted when it played nursemaid to emerging hockey nations such as South Korea, Japan and China.

The one very glaring weakness of the Malaysian side at Azlan Shah Cup 2011 was its erratic performance. The players played in patches. They were not in the right frame of mind to do battle with seasoned teams despite having competed in the Malaysian Hockey League. The league, in all its simplicity, is "a tournament which has four good sides playing against social teams."

Malaysian Hockey Federation officials, from the President downwards, were too apologetic, accepting defeat as a matter of course. Coach Tai Beng Hai kept reminding us that Malaysia, ranked 15th in the world, had lost by a narrow margin to a seeded team. His other excuse, which I found repulsive, was his frequent reference to the Olympics Qualifier. Doesn't he know that only one team will make it to London from the three qualifiers?

Can Malaysia come on top in the qualifier after such a poor outing at Stadium Azlan Shah, Ipoh? I doubt it but there again, anything can happen. The burden of responsibility falls squarely on MHF and Beng Hai to prove otherwise.

Must we be remembered for being a good host while our team continues to languish in the pit? This is one sobering question which requires an equally sobering answer.

AMBOI! HOW COME YOUR ABANG LOOKS LIKE MY ABANG? ● by Peter Lee

When Khatijah goes to the market every morning to do her marketing, she often meets up with Fatimah who also happens to do her marketing at the same time. As time progressed, they befriended each other. One day, Fatimah invited Khatijah to her house for tea. When Khatijah visited Fatimah, both ladies shared their family stories with each other. Khatijah has a son who is in his mid 20s while Fatimah has a son and a daughter who are 10 and 15 years old, respectively. When Khatijah saw Fatimah's family photos she suddenly said *Amboi!* How come your *abang* (husband) looks like my *abang*? After both ladies cross checked with each other, they discovered that they are married to the same man. With this discovery, the women now demanded that their husband ensure in black and white that the house each is staying in and some bank accounts which are jointly owned with him must be transferred to them respectively if he passes away. This is one of the ways to make them feel secure.



With such a request, the husband can look into a legal document called "Declaration of Harta Sepencaria". *Harta Sepencarian* means property deemed jointly acquired during the subsistence of a valid marriage whereby both parties have contributed either directly or indirectly toward the acquisition of such property. In the *Declaration of Harta Sepencarian*, the husband must specify the houses and bank account which he jointly owned with his wives to be given to them respectively upon his demise or when divorce occurs. This way, it will protect the interest of the wives because this document is irrevocable unless the wives consent to releasing their interest back to their husband. In the absence of this agreement, the wives would then have to prove their contribution to their household when claiming their entitlement with the Syariah Courts and it is left to the judgement of the Syariah courts to determine their entitlement.

Once the Harta Sepencarian Agreement is settled, the husband must proceed to prepare his *wasiat* (Muslim will) to distribute the rest of his estate. Without a *wasiat*, the appointment of administrators which requires the consent of all the beneficiaries for the application for the Letter of Administration (LA) can be a problem if the wives fight over it. Even if the appointment of Administrators is successful, the estate must also have two sureties or guarantors. In addition, according to *faraid* distribution the wives will have to share their entitlement of 1/8 equally and the balance will be given to the sons and daughter in the ratio of 2:1. With a *wasiat*, he can first decide who is capable of being the Executors/Trustee. In his case, it is advisable to appoint a corporate Trustee like '*as-Salihin Trustee Bhd*' to be the main Trustee because it provides impartiality, professionalism and perpetual existence. '*as-Salihin Trustee Bhd*' is an associate company of Rockwills that provides Islamic Estate Planning for Muslims. With this appointment, the estate would not require any guarantors. The next step is to appoint Fatimah as the guardian of her minor children even though she is the mother of these children because if it's not stated then the paternal grandfather will be the next in line to become the guardian if he is still alive under Syariah law. When these appointments are in place, he can then decide on how to distribute his movable and immovable assets, bearing in mind that he has to set up a Testamentary Trust (Amanah Wasiat) for his minor children.

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

'City Survival Skills' Workshop

Sunday, June 19, 2011
8.45 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.

Heritage Hotel Ipoh
Ballroom Level 1

Entrance: RM5 per person.
Tea and light refreshments will be provided.

Objective of the workshop is to teach women basic self-defence techniques to overcome physical threats.
Open to all, especially women.

All proceeds from sale of tickets will be donated to Perak Women for Women.

Call the Secretary at 05-546 9715 or 012-5212480 for tickets.

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Thinking ALLOWED • by Mariam Mokhtar**Kampung DBI: High Expectations and Empty Promises**

On April 13, several residents of Kampung DBI Buntong held a protest in Ipoh. They were protesting because they had not received titles to their land despite promises, by successive Menteri Besars. Those arrested also included activists from Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) and the Human Rights Party (HRP).

According to Ipoh police chief Azisman Alias, the gathering was an “illegal assembly” under Section 27 of the Police Act. Amongst those arrested was HRP’s Perak chief A. Ramesh, who alleged that he had been manhandled and beaten by the cops and the Sungai Siput MP Dr D. Jeyakumar.

The residents’ disquiet has been festering for several decades.

R. Mohana Rani of PSM said that families in Kampung DBI had lived on what had been known as the Ipoh Municipal Council (IMC) land for the past 40 years, and that three generations of these residents had given their services to the council.

Representatives of the squatters had apparently sent countless memoranda and letters to the MB, but had received no acknowledgement. The squatters, who once worked for the Ipoh City Council say that they had built their houses near the government quarters in Kampung DBI and that three MBs had promised to solve their longstanding housing problems.

Rani claimed that for the past 14 years, Ramli Ngah Talib and Tajol Rosli had promised them alternative housing, in the form of either a parcel of land or a terraced house.

The squatters also claimed that in 2009, the MIC state chief gave a similar pledge, which remains unfulfilled.

The squatters claim that in 2009, MB Zambry Abdul Kadir promised to give land titles to Perak squatters provided they had occupied government land for over 10 years. Zambry’s decision meant that squatters would only need to pay the quit rent.

Six weeks after the protest, in April, outside the Perak legislative assembly, the squatters returned to the MB’s office where they tried to deliver a memorandum to detail the villagers’ plight.

This time they came with a 10-foot python which had been captured outside a squatter’s home, as evidence that snakes had been invading their compounds because of a nearby development.

The residents claimed that the snakes had given them sleepless nights, and they had feared for their safety. Some residents said that one person had died after being bitten by a snake.

Perhaps the villagers are too naive in expecting politicians to fulfil their election pledges. Forty years ago, and possibly as recently as fourteen



years ago, the grandparent or parents of the current batch of squatters occupied land that was probably considered worthless.

Today, their homes are probably sitting on prime land and it is understandable that the authorities would be reluctant to give the squatters ownership of this land.

According to one squatter, the workers were housed in cramped quarters along Jalan Sungai Pari in Buntong. After these workers retired they were given permission from the IMC (what is now the Ipoh City Council (DBI)) to build their houses beside the labour lines.

In 1997, their homes were about to be demolished by the DBI. The demolition was stopped by lawyer, G. Balasundram, who obtained an injunction from the Ipoh High Court. Balasundram was murdered, last year.

It is a sad fact of life in Malaysia that, time after time, politicians make pre-election promises that they have no intention of keeping.

The squatters are probably of limited education and means. What are they to do? When their local state representative, or the MB, makes them a promise, they have no reason to disbelieve him.

Perhaps, the squatters are experiencing the symptoms of a much wider problem.

We are informed that successive MBs have told these squatters that their housing problems would be resolved. Perhaps, now is the time to fulfil that pledge and if the land in Kampung DBI cannot be given to the squatters for one reason or another, a plot in another location and monetary compensation for their houses, could be given instead.

After all, Perak senior executive counsellor Hamidah Othman has said that the state government wanted Perak to be rid of squatters by 2012.

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Pooven Enterprise (opp Super Kinta), 5 Jln Dato Onn Jaafar.
S.Y. Dry Cleaning & Laundry, 1 Jln Chung Thye Phin.
Desa Corner (opp Open University Malaysia) Jalan Lim Bo Seng, 30300 Ipoh. Tel: Zulhazmi 019-2724552.
Newsvendor (morning), Opposite Simee Market.
Perniagaan Sagayah, 22A, Persiaran Bercham Selatan 8, Taman Desa Kencana. Tel: Maniam (014-3035697).
Rasu Enterprise, 271 Jalan Gunung Rapat.
Perak Academy, 28 Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah.
Fitness Junction, 2 Jalan Kelab Golf.
P.N. Book Centre, 7 Jalan Dato Ahmad Yunus.
1-9 Persiaran SCI 2/2, Sunway City Ipoh, Tel. 05-5454398.
8 Persiaran Greentown Business Centre, Tel. 05-2088688.

*Simee:**Bercham:**Tmn Ipoh Jaya:**Tiger Lane:**Golf Club Road:**Sitiawan**Sunway College:**CIMB Securities:***JAWATAN KOSONG**

Pengedar risalah rumah ke rumah.

Gaji bermula dari RM 22 ke RM 30.

Dari pukul 9.30 pagi hingga 2.30 petang.

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

Piano Recital entitled “For the Children”. A charity event presenting Ipoh’s promising pianists in aid of Praise Homes, homes for destitute and underprivileged children. Friday, **June 17**, 7.45 p.m. at The Auditorium, Church Of Praise. For more information contact: **012-2830303** (Patricia) or **012-5195980** (Judy).

The Heidelberg Youth Choir from Germany will perform on Monday **June 20** at Syuen Hotel Ipoh. Contact: Festival Hotline – **016-5334757** or Witzi Leong at **012-5088818**.

Ex-Tarcisians Association (ETA) Ipoh is organising a cruise for its members. For details call: **05-5278563** (Veni), **017-4872795** (Mutharasi) or **05-5275336** (Ananth).



Musings on Food

seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

Photos by Ginla Foo

SeeFoon extends her explorations into Bercham

Mention Bercham to any Foodie from Ipoh and you'll end up with a list of recommended places to eat at that can fill a book. We all know about the claypot rice at K10; the crab rice and crab vermicelli at 'Botak' as we all refer to the boss of Mei Pak Tong or Rasa Lain; the economy rice with its endless choice of dishes at Ritz Bina; and the list goes on.

As my readers may have already noticed, I usually don't bother to review the well-known restaurants and eateries as they are already so popular and require no introduction. What I enjoy most is to discover the relatively obscure or little known places that only the local cognoscenti patronise and keep close to their hearts for fear that fame and popularity will go to the chef's head and up go the prices and down goes the quality. So far I have known this to happen but thankfully only to a few.

Escalating Price of Fish Head Curry

Lately I've heard friends complain about the escalating price of one of our pride and joy dishes: the fish head curry. Whether it be pungent Indian or Nonya Assam style, the large grouper or red snapper fish head is irresistible to most. Even the squeamish will not turn down the meaty collar morsel when extracted and presented to them on their own plate.

Escalating prices is a double edged sword: less people order the dish, more fish heads are frozen and more fish head curries end up on tables tasting like last month's bottom of the net than the day's fresh catch.

Hence I was pleasantly surprised when I was invited to San Chai in Bercham to taste their fish head curry to find that not only was it fresh-caught fresh, but the price was reasonable as well.

20-Year Bercham Veteran

Chef Woo Wing Kee who has been cooking in the Bercham area for more than 20 years, is the proprietor and chief cook in the kitchen while his wife and other family members man the service side in this spacious corner coffee shop. Where other fish head curries emanating from Chinese kitchens have hitherto had more of an Assam/Nonya taste, it was therefore unusual for this **Fish Head Curry** to have more of



an Indian spice taste and flavour and not what I had anticipated from a Chinese chef. Chef Woo's fish head curry was pungent without being overpowering and the fish head was just caught fresh with all the gelatinous bits simmered to perfection. Our fish head for 5 people – RM42.



Other Goodies

We had a small portion of their **Fried Roast Pork** which arrived on a bed of lettuce with a touch of sweetness which was not cloying, and a good starter while waiting for other dishes to arrive – RM10.

We also ordered their **Ham Dan Kai** or **Salted Egg Fried Chicken**. This is better than most other places that serve this as there was hardly any batter on the boneless chicken pieces, coated instead with salted egg yolk whose distinctive taste and mouth-feel explodes on the taste buds on the first bite – RM12/18/25 for S/M/L.

Accompanying our meal was a portion of their **Bean Sprouts fried with salted fish**. Our Ipoh bean sprouts which have earned for itself as being the best in the country, thick, plump and crunchy, paired with generous slivers of a fragrant salt fish (some establishments use poor quality salt fish which can ruin the dish) was fried to perfection.

The fish head curry which by this time had been ravenously demolished by the five of us, had proven to be more than satiating and only at my pleading for more variety to write my review, did we then decide to order two more dishes (just to taste!)

Titillating Tofu

These were the **Kon Jeen Har** (dried fried prawns), quick fried in their shells and juicy on first bite. Seasonal price; and the tofu topped with minced pork and chopped choy po or Chinese preserved radish. This was heavenly with the tofu left in its original state: white, creamy, smooth and the stir-fried minced mixture lending its crunch and 'umami' mouth feel to the bland tofu. Heavenly! I am confident that if vegetarians ask for this dish to be made without the minced meat, it'll be equally delicious.

Our total bill for 5 people came to RM120.

For those who need directions, you make a right turn at Glamour Square at the third traffic light after Tesco Extra and turn left immediately after into Persiaran Bercham Selatan 8, San Chai is on the right after a small playing field.

Restoran San Chai

2 Persiaran Bercham Selatan 8

Taman Kenchana

012 512 1000

Closed Mondays

Open: 11.00 a.m.-3.00 p.m. & 6.00-10.00 p.m.



RECIPE

By Margarita Lee

Nyonya Asam Stingray

Ingredients (A):

600g Stingray (or fish of your choice such as Snapper or White Pomfret), cleaned and cut into thick slices
10 small okras/ladies finger
2 tomatoes (cut into wedges)
2 tbsp of fish curry powder
1 bunga kantan/ginger flower (cut into halves)
3-4 stalks lemon grass/serai (bruised)
2-3 daun limau perut, Kaffir Lime leaves
200 ml coconut milk
400 ml water
3-4 tbsp of cooking oil
3-4 slices assam gelugor/tamarind peel
½ tbsp sugar
Salt to taste

Ingredients to be blended (B):

150g shallots
20 dried chillies (add more if you prefer spicy)
1 tablespoon of belacan (prawn paste)
Tamarind juice:
¼ cup of water
tamarind pulp (size of a small golf



ball)

Method:

1. Sauté the blended paste (B) in a wok, add in serai and fish curry powder until aromatic. Add water and tamarind juice and bring it to boil.
2. Add in tomatoes, bunga kantan, daun limau perut and assam gelugor. Simmer for 10 minutes before adding in coconut milk.
3. Add in okra, sugar and salt to taste.
4. Add in Stingray, bring it to boil. Simmer on low heat for 5 minutes or until the fish is cooked.
5. Serve hot with rice.

HAWKER FOOD

Dai Kao Meen (Peanut Turnover)



Dai Kao Meen a.k.a. 'big face' Dapom balik, or for those who insists on using English (no one does), it's peanut turnover. It has a thick batter made from flour, eggs, sugar, yeast and water. Roasted ground peanuts and sugar are sprinkled while the batter is cooking in a big black shallow iron pan. Margarine is sometimes added. When done it's folded into half. It's thicker than a crepe, but not as fluffy as a pancake. Best eaten piping hot!



Try:

Blossom Kafe

22 Tingkat Tasek Jaya 1, Taman Tasek Jaya, opens from 12 noon (016-5652886).

Lovely thick tender pieces with lots of ground peanuts. Can to be eaten there or take away. Call for bigger orders – 90 sen per piece.

Restoran Young Young

46 Lorong Taman 10, First Garden, operates from 7.00 a.m.

Equally thick and soft and not too sweet – 70 sen a piece.

Menglembu Market

Inside the market early till 10.30 a.m.

Same stall outside on the main road, just behind the coffee shop Lau Ti Fang (turn left at this coffee shop). Afternoon from 3.30 p.m. Foodies in Ipoh rate this the best.

Simee Market

On the left side of the centre aisle, selling fruits and eggs, from the main road. From 7.00 a.m. till about 11.30 a.m.

Tendency to be slightly on the dry side and cheaper than most at 50 sen per piece.

arts & culture

SHINY BLACK GOLD – GOOD ATTENDANCE



The recent staging of the musical “Shiny Black Gold”, an original in-house production by the Perak Society of Performing Arts (PSPA), has been described by many viewers as being “entertaining” and a “good effort”.

Written, directed and produced by PSPA’s President Datin Rosalina Ooi, it tells of the trials and tribulations of the Chinese Hakka community who came to Malaya in the last century in search of their

fortune in the form of tin or ‘shiny black gold’.

The story line is historically simple for those who grew up during the time when tin mining was all around the Kinta Valley but not so for the current generation as some of the younger actors “didn’t know what a dulang washing pan looked like” before the show.

The musical portrays the life of a migrant worker through a period before the Second World War till post war when migrant Lee

Cheong, played by Xavier Fong, makes his fortune and falls in love with pretty maiden Ying Mei played by Shu Wern Sze.

Scenes of gambling and opium smoking combined with up-tempo music and song kept the pace lively. Additionally the clever use of visuals – of photos around the Kinta Valley and movies related to the period – took the audience back in time.

According to Ooi the musical was “well attended by a good cross section of



LETTERS

We reprint some of our reader’s comments from our online paper. Go to <http://www.ipohecho.com.my/> to read more. The views expressed in these letters are not necessarily shared by the Editorial Board. We reserve the right to refuse or modify the letters we publish.

The Fireflies of Kg Dew

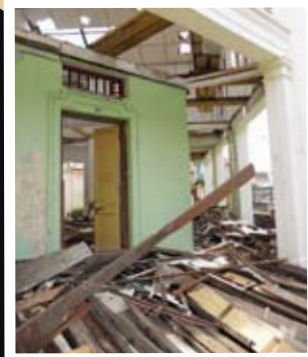
Thank you for a very good article and publicity about the Kg Dew firefly watching site.

Just a few facts that need to be clarified for the benefit of the readers:

1. “Tropical fireflies routinely synchronise...”
Well, the congregating fireflies in this region either synchronise their flashing or not depending on the species.
2. “The cause of this behaviour is linked to diet, social interaction and altitude...”
The congregation of this particular species of firefly, i.e., the Pteroptyx tener in this case (similar to the Sg Selangor firefly) is the mating behaviour of the male adult fireflies gathering together and synchronising their flashing to call for the adult female fireflies. It has nothing to do with their diet or altitude. Social interaction...mating that’s all.
3. “...some enterprising individuals in the village formed the Kelab Chaya Alam Perak...”
Kelip-Kelip Cahaya Alam Perak or KECAP was formed in February 2011 with the guidance of the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) in a firefly ‘ecotourism-involving-local-community-project’.
4. “Its objective is to promote the Kg Dew fireflies...”
Not only that... KECAP also promotes the conservation and awareness of the fireflies and its mangrove habitat.

Sonny Wong
Project Coordinator
Malaysian Nature Society

Obituary



Ipoh Echo has learnt with great sadness that these 5 pre-war shophouses Nos. 8/10/12/14/16 corner Jalan Sultan Abdul Jalil and Jalan Lau Ek Ching are currently being demolished. The MBI Building Department advised that the owner HAS been granted demolition consent.

We shall mourn their passing as will our children, their children and all of posterity in Ipoh.

the community”. At the matinee on the afternoon of the last day, over 150 senior citizens were captivated as they were able to relate to the show as “it was during their era”.

Similarly, the Gala Show held on the last night was well attended by State Executive Councillors. Perak MCA Youth Chief Dato’ Dr Mah Hong Soon described the production as “very good”.

HRH the Raja Muda of Perak Dr. Raja Nazrin Shah too was present and “had a chat with the cast” at the end of the show.

Shiny Black Gold is just one of the items as part of PSPA’s Perak Performing Arts Festival calendar. Their next item for the festival is the Perak Choral Festival 2011 on June 18-20.

JAG

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wellness

LOW BACK PAIN

By Dr. Manuel K. Punnia Raj

Low back pain is a common ailment affecting 80% of people at some point in their lives. The majority of lower back pain stems from benign musculoskeletal problems and is referred to as non specific low back pain.

Management

- * **Physical Therapy Rehabilitation.** Physical Therapy can include heat, cryotherapy, soft tissue manipulation, spinal mobilization, ultrasound and Interferential therapy. Active therapies like stretching, strengthening and aerobic exercises help in recovery. The right method of exercising instructed by a qualified physiotherapist can restore motion and strengthen your lower back, helping in relieving pain and preventing future episodes of low back pain.
- * **Acute Low Back Pain.** For acute cases that are not debilitating, low back pain may be best treated with conservative self-care, including: application of heat or cold and continued activity within the limits of the pain. Engaging in physical activity within the limits of pain aids recovery. Even with cases of severe pain, some activity is preferred to prolonged sitting or lying down, but be wary of movements that could further strain the back.
- * **Chronic Low Back Pain.** Low back pain is more likely to be persistent among people who previously required time off from work because of low back pain, those who expect passive treatments to help, those who believe that back pain is harmful or disabling or fear that any movement whatever will increase their pain. Surgery may be indicated when conservative treatment is not effective in reducing pain or when the patient develops progressive and functionally limiting neurologic symptoms such as leg weakness, bladder or bowel incontinence.

Low Back Pain Prevention

The prevention of back pain is itself, somewhat controversial. It has long been thought that exercise and an all-around healthy lifestyle would prevent back pain. Several studies have found that the wrong type of exercise such as high-impact activities may increase the chance of increasing back pain. Nonetheless, exercise is important for overall health and should not be avoided. Low-impact activities such as swimming, walking and bicycling can increase overall fitness without straining the low back.

- * **Specific Exercises:** Talk to your physiotherapist about how to perform these exercises.
 - Abdominal crunches, when performed properly, strengthen abdominal muscles and may decrease the tendency to suffer back pain.
 - Stretching exercises are helpful in alleviating tight back muscles.
 - The pelvic tilt also helps alleviate tight back muscles.
- * **Standing:** While standing, keep your head up and stomach pulled in. If you are required to stand for long periods of time, you should have a small stool on which to rest one foot at a time. Do not wear high heels.
- * **Sitting:** Chairs of appropriate height with good lumbar support are preferable. Automobile seats should also have adequate low-back support. If not, a small pillow or rolled towel behind the lumbar area will provide adequate support.
- * **Sleeping:** Individual needs vary. If the mattress is too soft many people will experience backache. A hard firm mattress is always good to sleep on; a thick mattress pad will help soften a mattress that is too hard.
- * **Lifting:** Don't lift objects that are too heavy for you. If you attempt to lift something, keep your back straight up, head up and lift with your knees. Keep the object close to you, don't stoop over to lift. Tighten your stomach muscles to keep your back in balance.

For more Information on Physical Health Contact your right health partner: PHYSIO BEYOND – The Physical Rehabilitation Specialist at **05-5478786**.



NUTRITION FOR YOUR EYES

In our series on Eye Health, Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr. S.S. Gill talks to us about how nutrition plays a part in eye health.



Dr. S.S. Gill
Resident
Consultant
Ophthalmologist,

The question many people ask Ophthalmologists is whether nutrition and vitamins play a part in maintaining healthy eyes. The answer in a nutshell is, "Yes, your eyes reflect what you eat!" Good nutrition is important for eye health and of course for general health too. Good nutrition helps to nourish our eyes, protect against eye infections and allows the eyes to function properly.

Diets Rich in Vitamins

A typical example of how nutrition plays a vital part in the health of our eyes is a childhood condition leading to blindness called xerophthalmia. This condition is due to a lack of vitamin A in the diet and is commonly seen in developing countries.

Certain foods are essential for good eye health. They maintain healthy cells in the eye which is so essential for proper function. Amongst the more important ones are the anti-oxidant vitamins A, C and E. These vitamins can be found in many different sources of fruit and vegetables such as oranges, grapefruit, tomatoes, carrots and green leafy vegetables.

Oxidative Stress

Our bodies constantly react with the oxygen in our environment. Due to this activity, humans produce tiny molecules called free radicals. These free radicals affect our cells, sometimes damaging them. This is called oxidative stress and it plays a role in how macular degeneration develops.

Carotenoids – Lutein & Zeaxanthin

Studies have shown that two types of carotenoids called Lutein and Zeaxanthin are essential for eye health. In the Age Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS) of 4,757 patients, it showed that those who had a higher intake of Lutein with Zeaxanthin in their diet had less incidence of Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD).

These carotenoids keep the eyes safe from oxidative stress especially from the exposure to blue light (high energy photons). Lutein has also been shown to improve retinal sensitivity. Lutein and zeaxanthin can be found naturally in vegetables, fruits, yellow peppers, mango, bilberries, spinach and broccoli.

A Balanced Diet

A good balanced diet that includes sufficient fresh fruits and vegetables is therefore essential. However, if you feel that your diet lacks adequate vitamins and minerals, you might want to consider taking a supplement for general and eye health when:

- * your diet does not include enough fresh fruit and vegetables.
- * it is hard to obtain or prepare fresh fruit and vegetables.
- * you have been told to take a vitamin supplement by your eye doctor.

Key Points to Remember

In summary, to maintain good eye health, you should:

- * Eat a good, balanced diet with lots of fresh fruit and vegetables.
- * Take multivitamin supplements with carotenoids if needed.
- * Stop smoking – cigarette smoke contains large amounts of free radicals.
- * Protect your eyes from sunlight. Use good quality sunglasses. Ones that filter off harmful ultraviolet rays and lenses that are polarised are best.
- * Get your eyes tested every 2 years if you are generally healthy but more often if you have medical problems like diabetes mellitus.

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

By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

An Oasis of Calm in the Heart of Ipoh

Ipohites can now escape to their own oasis of calm when the stress of coping with daily life becomes overwhelming. And they won't have to go far to do that.

At the newly-opened **Banyan** spa right opposite Jalan Kelab Golf, a majestic colonial style house has been transformed into a haven of tranquility where a plethora of rejuvenating and relaxing treatments await. Being an avid spa enthusiast, I naturally had to 'check it out', which I did on a recent weekday. My personal lament in going for facial or body work has always been that I end up with dishevelled hair and occasionally chipped nails. Finally, I have found a one-stop shop for all my beauty treatments and sail out for dinner straight after if the occasion warrants it.

The **Banyan** has maximised its colonial architecture with its high ceilings to create an aura of quiet elegance. Soft music and the gentle scent of essential oils enveloped me as I was greeted on arrival and served lemon grass/ginger tea. I was then offered the menu which is a prolific affair offering everything from face,



body to nail and hair treatments.

For my first visit and feeling somewhat under the weather having just recovered from a chest infection, I opted for the **Chromatherapy** combined with **Lymphatic drainage**. Offered under the name **Phytobiodermie**, it is a synthesis of light therapy and **Lymphatic drainage** used with energetic and natural essential oils all originating in Switzerland.

Chromatherapy, or light therapy, is a form of vibrational medicine that uses colour and full spectrum light on various parts of the body to balance the body's electromagnetic field (known as the "human energy field" or "aura"). Quantum physics states that matter is not solid, but is made up of light energy. From our skin to our organs, we are made of light. Light is the language by which our cells speak to each other. Because the body is matter and energy, the unique **Phytobiodermie** method is based on the energetic principles of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) - the "Five Element Theory" (Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water).

PHYTO 5, the products used in the treatment, are formulated with high-grade natural and energetic essential oils including minerals and vitamins, mixed in natural bases such as clay, algae and cereals. There is a full line of products for all skin conditions for face, scalp and body to rebalance and replenish our inner flow of "vital energy".

My face and body treatment was carried out with the aid of the **Biodraineur** which is designed to perform a highly effective **Lymphatic drainage**. **Lymphatic drainage**, helps the lymphatic system function more efficiently by facilitating toxin removal and improving



skin circulation. The result: healthier, glowing skin and a more beautiful complexion.

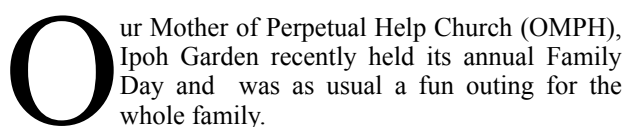
For my treatment it was coupled with a **Chromapuncteur** (light machine) to add the attributes of **chromatherapy** to those of the mechanical drainage in order to target all 5 fluids of TCM. The **Biodraineur** performs a high quality and fast drainage. The treatment is completely non-invasive and I was soon lulled into a soothing and relaxed sense of well being, occasionally even dropping off to sleep. Aesthetically, this produces a dramatically visible "lifting" effect and I have to admit that looking in the mirror after the treatment I was pleased to see a marked glow and was it my imagination(?) a mild lift to my facial lines.

Next issue: Read about **The Banyan Spa Journey**

Banyan

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OMPH Family Day



After morning Mass, the congregation spilled onto the grounds for family breakfast, and activities. There was something for everyone such as face painting, pony rides and even a dog show.

Parish Priest Father Phillip Lai could be seen doing the rounds of the various food stalls. Additionally a pair of policemen from Sungai Senam Police Station was available to register Rakan Cop members while a team from Fatimah Hospital was on hand to perform general check ups.

Undoubtedly, the variety of food was enjoyed by all and parishioners could be seen packing their lunch after enjoying the morning's activities.

A morning of quality time spent well with the family.

JAG

Blood Donation Drive

A blood donation drive held in conjunction with Ipoh City Council's 23rd Anniversary was held at the foyer of the council's main building on Sunday, May 15. Mayor Datuk Roshidi Hashim was present to officiate at the event and was one of more than 200 donors.

The beneficiaries of the donation are Raja Permaisuri Bainun Hospital, Ipoh and Pantai Hospital Ipoh. Stocks at both hospitals are running low.

City Council will make this blood donation drive an annual affair as it has come to consider it as part of the council's social responsibility. "Public response is encouraging," Roshidi told reporters.

Ed



More For Children in Playground



MBI has installed additional equipment in the children's playground in Merdeka Garden. Previously the field was rather empty but with the new equipment in the centre, it now looks colourful and inviting.

The new facilities should now bring children out from the confines of their homes, and provide an opportunity for the children and parents to make new friends. However, it may be advisable for the Residents Committee to take the initiative of educating the people not to damage public property and for adults to leave the play facilities to children only.

A. Jeyaraj

Red Crescent Day



A baby boy borne to an engineer father and a purchasing officer mother was the first arrival at Seri Manjung Hospital on May 8, which was Red Crescent Day.

In conjunction with the auspicious occasion, Manjung Red Crescent organised a number of programmes among which was the 'adoption' of Red Crescent babies. Members of the society started the day with a visit to the hospital bearing gifts and hampers for the newly-born. Nine babies were 'adopted'.

Organising secretary, Rohawati Abidin said that the various on-going programmes were aimed at instilling into members of the public the importance of first-aid and personal safety.

SN

SMC Launches *Kalvi Viratham* 2011

Sri Murugan Centre (SMC) launched its *Kalvi Viratham* 2011 (Education Vow 2011) by awarding certificates to top students in the UPSR, PMR, SPM and STPM examinations. The teachers were also honoured during the ceremony held at the Maha Mariamman Hall here.

Dato' Dr. M. Thambirajah, SMC Director told the students that there are only two ways to success; firstly, confidence that you can do it, and secondly, hard work. Education begins at home and parents must be supportive of their children and guide them.

More than a thousand students took the pledge that they would start preparing for the examinations from that night. To create inspiration, each student was given a SMC Kalvi Viratham 2011 badge which they have to wear.

A.J



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news roundup

Rotarians of Sitiawan



The Rotary Club of Sitiawan, considered one of the most service-oriented clubs of its kind in Perak, celebrated its 50th Anniversary recently. Over 500 members, spouses, guests and Rotarians from neighbouring towns and states, were present to celebrate the historic occasion.

Chartered Rotarian, Moses Tay, called Rotarians to uphold the club's motto. He implored on those present to perform their voluntary works without thoughts of rewards. They should strive to serve the community by providing assistance to the needy, especially physically-disabled children, whom society has neglected.

The 82-year-old Rotarian urged members who had left to rejoin the club, as their services were still needed. The evening ended with a cake-cutting ceremony which was jointly performed by Moses and the Sitiawan chapter's hierarchy.

SN

Y'S MEN'S Club Celebrates



Y'S MEN'S Club celebrated its 45th anniversary with a cake cutting ceremony during their annual dinner held at YMCA. The past presidents jointly cut the cake. The opportunity was used to collect donations from the guests for the victims of tsunami in Japan.

Dato' Seri N. S. Selvamony, who is an honorary member of the club and was the Guest of Honour, praised the members for their good work and requested more people to join them in doing social work.

Guests were entertained by dances performed by Black Baajh Bangra group.

AJ

KIOSK TO ENHANCE YBU'S EFFICIENCY

Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan (YBU) is taking measures to enhance its efficiency by making its services user-friendly and accessible to the masses. This was revealed by Syahrul Nizam Muhamad Roslan, YBU's Information Communication Technology Assistant Manager, to Ipoh Echo recently.

"The Foundation plans to introduce kiosks to facilitate online registration by applicants," he said.

The two major services on offer by YBU presently are micro-financing (micro-credit) and the Ladies' Uptown, a dedicated business programme for single mothers. It is also responsible for collecting and collating information on the state's hardcore poor for reference by the authorities. The foundation also selects volunteers to assist in implementing its many people-orientated programmes.

"Application forms can be downloaded from YBU's website. However, it'll be a hassle for those without computers and internet connection," he reasoned. "The availability of a kiosk, where such transactions can be made online, will help simplify matters."

Two kiosks will be deployed, tentatively in June. One will be placed at YBU's office in Greentown Nova and the other at the State Secretariat Building.

Online registration, according to Syahrul, is the



preferred method as it enables an applicant to check on the progress of his/her application, its status and also its currency. Programmes and activities of the foundation can also be sourced from the foundation's website.

Syahrul feels that the kiosk is a good interactive medium between YBU and the people. "If public response is good more kiosks will be installed at other

RM

Alfred's Wesak Day

On Wesak day, while Buddhist devotees throng temples at dawn to meditate and provide offerings of charity to the needy and celebrate the birth, enlightenment and achievement of Nirvana by Lord Buddha, Alfred Perera and his band of volunteers are preparing lunch to feed over a thousand mouths as his way of "giving something back to the community".

Alfred is a Buddhist devotee who operates the Singhalese Bar at Old Town and this year is his 27th year providing free Wesak Day vegetarian lunch to all, irrespective of race or religion.

Lunch, consisting of rice and vegetables with *thairu*, *payasam* and a cup of ice cream, is regularly served at 1.00 p.m. after Alfred has said his prayers.

For Alfred, feeding a community is more "meaningful on a holy day" such as this.

JAG



NASAM Charity Food and Fun Fair



The Ipoh branch of National Stroke Association of Malaysia (NASAM) organised a Charity Food and Fun Fair at their premises in Pasir Pinji recently to raise sufficient funds for its operation for the coming year.

Its chairman Dr. Berry Tan Kheng Cheok, explained that NASAM is a non-profit organisation providing holistic rehabilitation services to stroke patients to aid them in their recovery. The centre not only provides physiotherapy, but also counselling to ensure that patients are helped mentally to deal with life as a stroke survivor. Additionally the centre also creates awareness of stroke to the public and how to reduce the risks.

Currently the centre has 33 stroke patients in various stages of rehabilitation attending therapy five days a week in two daily sessions. Resident therapists and volunteers provide the requisite therapy. It only charges a nominal fee and the bulk of funding is through donations. Private colleges send their students to the centre for practical training.

Those willing to donate can call the centre at 05-3211089.

AJ

SUPERBIKES EXTRAVAGANZA



It was a sight to behold. Almost four hundred gleaming superbikes, ranging in capacity from 750cc to 1200cc, filled the open field in front of City Council. Astride

these mean machines were their owners who came from all corners of the country, including Singapore and Thailand. They were there for a good reason, to raise funds by partaking in a convoy ride around Ipoh.

The event was organised by the Ipoh Superbike Club on Saturday, May 21 and was flagged off by Mayor Datuk Roshidi Hashim.

Sekolah Kanak-kanak Cacat Kg Tawas received RM8,000 while three orphanages were given RM2,000 each. The money was donated in Situ by the bikers during the ride around the city.

Singaporean Jerry Soh, 52, was joyous when approached. "I am impressed with the developments taking place in Ipoh. The old colonial buildings are still standing. They're so majestic," he remarked.

Lee Kok Hoong, 49, a businessman from Kuala Lumpur was rather coy. "This is, undoubtedly, an expensive hobby. But when I am in the company of friends, I feel free. We're one huge family," he said in obvious reference to the composition of the bikers.

The mayor intends on making the Ipoh Superbike Convoy an annual affair.

RM

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young perak HIGH ACHIEVERS



Some 140 Indian students from National-type and Tamil schools in Manjung District were duly recognised for their academic achievements. They scored 5As and above in the 2010 UPSR, PMR and SPM examinations.

The students received awards in the form of prizes and medals at a ceremony organised by Kg Acheh MIC Branch, Manjung in Sitiawan recently. The ceremony was officiated by the branch chairman, N. Nachemuthu.

"We organise this ceremony on an annual basis," said Nachemuthu to Ipoh Echo. "It's a form of encouragement for Indian students to excel in their studies."

Present at the function were parents, dignitaries, MIC leaders and party members.

RM

Running For Charity



Nearly 800 people were in Ipoh Padang recently to partake in the 2nd Ekiden Charity Run. Jointly organised by Ipoh City Council and the Ipoh Rotary Club, it was held in conjunction with Ipoh City Day.

The 4x4km race attracted Rotarians from Australia as well as three Japanese students who are studying at local universities. Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim and Japanese Honorary Consul General to Malaysia, Tomoko Takahashi were present. The aim of the run was to raise funds for the Rotarians' charity programmes.

Jaimunah and her aerobic team put up a vigorous physical display before Roshidi flagged off the runners.

Brooks Running Club Ipoh comprising Viswaram, Thineswaran, Kugan and Risitharan clinched first spot while two of their teams were among the top five. Panthus Club's John Herbert and Kelab Roadrunners Ipoh's Cheah Chang Fah teams claimed second and third placing, respectively.

Six-year-old R. Thiviyashini and a team of 9-year-old boys from Salvation Army were among the youngest competitors. Prizes were also given to the best dressed teams.

The mayor was pleased with the response. The council will make it an annual event.

LYW

Community

Gotong-Royong With Mayor



Mayor Dato' Rushidi Hashim participated in a gotong royong programme held at Taman Ampang, Ipoh recently. Over a hundred participants, comprising residents of Taman Ampang and staff of city council were involved in the clean-up operation around the housing estate.

The mayor was visibly pleased with the turnout. "The residents' response is most encouraging," he said.

Similar programmes will be held in other parts of the city in line with the council's mission of keeping Ipoh clean, green and developed.

Ed

Action Unwarranted Says Mayor

The action of a group of people, claiming to be residents of Kampong DBI, who brought a live 10-foot python to the State Secretariat Building on Thursday, May 19 was unwarranted, said Mayor Roshidi Hashim in a media statement released on Friday, May 20. The incident had gained much publicity in the local dailies.

"Foremost, there is no such Kampong DBI in existence. These so-called residents are squatting on a piece of land belonging to city council at Jalan Spooner in Buntong," said Roshidi.

The claimants, according to the statement, have



been squatting illegally on the council's land since the 1970s and have refused to move out. MBI had offered in the 90s, low-cost houses worth RM12, 000 each in Taman Perpaduan, Tambun but the offer was rejected.

Their refusal to move out of the 38-acre site has derailed the council's plans to develop the land. Being rarely maintained, the area is overgrown with thick undergrowth and has become a breeding ground for snakes and other creepy crawlies.

The residents' objec-

tive in bringing the slithering reptile to the State Secretariat Building was to highlight the authorities' indifference towards their well-being to the Menteri Besar. Their request for land titles had been ignored by the state government. Conditions in their settlement have gone from bad to worse.

"Out of humanitarian consideration, city council will initiate action to clean up the area" said Roshidi. The mayor bemoaned the squatters' reaction to council workers who came to clean up the area

in the past. "They've misconstrued the workers' presence as an attempt to destroy their dwellings and to forcibly remove them." They erected barriers to stop council staff from entering.

One long-term measure considered to overcome the problem is the building of low-cost houses. These houses will be offered to the squatters on a rent or a rent-and-purchase basis. Those who could not afford to rent or buy the houses will be given alternative accommodation in council flats within the city.

"I hope they'll cooperate so the problem could be resolved amicably," Roshidi added.

The squatters had demonstrated in front of the State Secretary Building during the opening session of the state assembly on April 12. Police had arrested a number of activists including members of a political party.

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My Say

By Jerry Francis



On one side of the oblong cenotaph located opposite the Town Hall along Jalan Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab is a hastily cut black marble plaque with an inscription "IN MEMORY OF THE GALLANT MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES, POLICE AND CIVILIANS WHO SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES DEFENDING THE NATION DURING THE MALAYSIAN EMERGENCY 1948-1960, INDONESIAN CONFRONTATION 1962-1965 AND THE REINSURGENCY PERIOD 1972-1990."

The plaque is "squatting" on the memorial built for those from Perak who died during the First and Second World Wars. Three of the four original brass plates on the cenotaph which bore the names of the dead and military units have been vandalised and stolen. Thus, they were substituted with one dedicated to the dead during the wars, and another during the Malaysian Emergency and Indonesian Confrontation.



• The Cenotaph

Are the sacrifices of the members of the Commonwealth and Malaysian security forces,

REMEMBERING OUR FALLEN HEROES



• Army's monument in Banding

as well as civilian workers in Perak worth just a mention on a plaque? Thousands of them had given their lives to ensure peace and progress in the country since the Emergency was declared following the killings of three European planters in Sungei Siput in June, 1948.

Certainly, the dedication and sacrifices of those men and women of all races and religions must always be looked upon with pride as we strive to mould a united Malaysian nation. Therefore, they deserve to be remembered in a manner more deserving than just a plaque on a cenotaph that was not even built for our fallen heroes of the Emergency and Indonesian Confrontation.

I have always advocated the erection of a monument specially dedicated to the members of the security forces and civilians in the four decades of combating communist insurgency in the country. Perak took the brunt of the threat and was deprived of the much needed development until the peace accord was signed in December, 1989.

Their sacrifices, which eventually brought peace and security to the country, must be immortalized to remind us how close we were to losing our freedom. In so doing, we will also show to future generations how the various races had united to face a serious threat to the

sovereignty and integrity of the country and instill a sense of pride and patriotism among all Malaysians, especially now when the loyalty of the non-Malays are being often questioned by some people with a political agenda.

In my book, "Turbulent Years in Perak - A Memoir", I had also called for the monument to be set up, preferably along the East-West Highway in Upper Perak, which had withstood the terrorists' attempts to sabotage it. It should be located prominently on Banding Island, which is linked by two of the longest bridges along the highway, so that travellers and tourists will remember how the highway and the Temenggor Dam were constructed in the face of the threat from the communist insurgents.

A gesture such as this would be a small tribute to those who had responded beyond the call of duty and would serve as a reminder to us of their deeds and sacrifices. It would also make travelling along the East-West Highway more interesting, apart from being a tourist attraction.

The Malaysian Army had taken the cue and erected a small monument at the entrance to their camp at Banding in March, 2009. It was a decommissioned V-150 "Commando" armoured vehicle surrounded with plaques containing some heroic episodes of their fighting men. At least, the Army has recognised the deeds of its men. Others, like those in the plantation industry and Malaysian and Commonwealth veterans, are also continuing to observe a remembrance day at the "God's Little Acre" in Batu Gajah in June, every year.

What has the state government and the people of Perak done in appreciation of the role played by members of the security forces and civilian workers? It has been over two decades since the battle against the communist insurgents was victoriously concluded, yet there is no outstanding monument anywhere in Perak dedicated to those men and women except for what appears to be a half-hearted plaque at the cenotaph.

Even the few small monuments along the East-West Highway, which mark the scenes where serious incidents had taken place, have been neglected. I fear that soon, all their dedication and sacrifices will be forgotten and mentioned only in some books found on library shelves.

sport

NATIONAL TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONSHIP ENDS

Perak ended the the 53rd Malaysian School Sports Council (MSSM) Track and Field Championships on May 24 in third place with a medal tally of 9 gold, 10 silver and 16 bronze for a total of 35 medals.

The winner was Sarawak with 21 gold, 7 silver and 15 bronze. The runnerup was Sabah with 9 gold, 12 silver and 11 bronze.

The championship which took place at Stadium Perak from May 20-24 saw over 2,000 participants from 15 states which included the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Labuan.

A total of 90 events were contested which had been divided accordingly by male and female categories for ages under 18, 15 and 12 years.

Perak which had targeted for 26 gold only managed 9 gold medals. However, Perak State Education Director Dato' Mohd Rauhi bin Mohd Isa "was satisfied" with the score explaining that "we always aim high but our total medal tally of 35 meant that we won at 35 of the 90 events. This is only the beginning."

Perak's darling of the event undoubtedly was athlete Nor Hazwani binti Abdul Harris who was voted the best female athlete award for the Championship. She bagged 2 gold medals, the 200 metre event and the 80 metre hurdles where she set a new record time of 12.87 seconds.

Nor Hazwani, 11, studies at SK Tg Piandang Kerian. This is her second time participating in the championship, the first was at MSSM Johor 2010. Her ambition is to join the Police force.

The best male athlete went to Kedah's Ku Amir Syazwan bin Ku Sharif for his record-breaking run in the 400-metre sprint.

The championship was officially closed by Deputy Education Minister Datuk IR Wee Ka Siong who likened the championship to being a "factory" for producing athletes and noted that 7 new records had been achieved during the 5-day event.

The venue for the next MSSM Championship will be held in Perlis next year.

JAG



• Nor Hazwani and her awards

Veterans Hockey Tournament

The Ipoh City Hockey Association (ICHA) held their annual veterans hockey tournament on the sidelines of the 20th Sultan Azlan Shah Tournament in May. Their 9-a-Side hockey event was held on the morning of the last day of the Sultan Azlan Shah tournament and played on pitch 2 of the stadium. Four teams, Kelab Sukan 30-50 Ipoh, Royal Selangor Club, Prince of Wales Xokei Club and Soleros KL, participated in the event.

According to ICHA President V. Mohan, the event was held each year for the veterans to come together to have a game and a get-together. There are no prizes for the winners. The veterans have been doing this in Ipoh for over 15 years.

Noted among the veterans was Datuk Poon Fook Loke and A. Francis, both part of the national team that participated at the Hockey World Cup 1975 at Kuala Lumpur where Malaysia went down 3-2 to West Germany in the 3rd and 4th placing play off. It was the best position Malaysia had ever reached.

Some foreign veterans that participated were Avtar Singh for England and Tim "Budgie" Myers from Australia, both media correspondents covering the Sultan Azlan Shah Tournament.

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