



P E R A K TOURISM NEWS



Volume 3

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TAIPING THE TOWN OF ETERNAL PEACE

Our love affair with Taiping does not seem to diminish in spite of the passage of time. Perak Tourism News will continue to highlight the attractions in the “town of many firsts” or more accurately, the “town of eternal peace” – an ironic reference to its difficult past when internecine clashes between rival Chinese clans over tin prompted the British to intervene in the affairs of Perak expanding ultimately throughout the entire Malay peninsula. What brings us back to Taiping again is Nature. Taiping Zoo celebrated its Golden Jubilee in September 2011. Malaysia’s premier zoo, established in 1961, has grown by leaps and bounds. From humble beginnings it has evolved into a major attraction with a “night safari” programme that still remains as the only one of its kind in Malaysia.

The Golden Jubilee celebration kicked off in earnest on September 1. The activities held during the celebration included a photographic competition, a sepak takraw tournament and a familiarisation tour for the media and those in the tourism business. The 3-month celebration will end on December 10 with a charity dinner in honour of the zoo’s adopted children.

foreword

By

Dato’ Hamidah Osman

State Executive Councillor for Tourism



Visit Perak Year 2012 is around the corner. The Perak State Government, through Tourism Perak Management Bhd, has arranged a number of activities and promotions to attract both local and foreign tourists to visit and spend their time and money in Perak. The amalgamation of efforts, energy and cooperation between the state and federal agencies, tourism industrial players, the hospitality industry, media and electronic agencies and Perakeans will help realise our mission of making Perak a tourist destination of choice. Various strategies and promotions are being planned and formulated by Tourism Perak based on the strength and uniqueness of the products and events. In the lead to the big day, we welcome suggestions and ideas to help enhance and improve VPY 2012 Perak. Yours to Discover



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TAIPING Zoo 1

Taiping Zoo is ideally located in a natural setting and within a pristine environment – the Taiping Lake Gardens. With the majestic Bukit Larut (Maxwell Hill) looming in the background it could not have been a more perfect scenario to begin with. It is just the place to marvel at the gifts of Nature – animals of the tropics in their natural-looking enclosures.

The facility
artificial
this



optimises the streams, pools and flora – and natural – to bring out the best in zoological garden custom-made for the paying public.

On display are over 1,300 animals ranging from 200 species of birds to reptiles and mammals. They are kept in enclosures spread out along two loops covering a distance of 2.5 km.

Taiping Zoo is open daily, including Sundays and public holidays.

Visiting hours are between 8.30 a.m. to 12 p.m. Entrance fees: Daytime: RM12 (Adults) and RM8 (Children 3-12 years). Night Safari: RM16 (Adults) and RM10 (Children 3-12 years).

For details call:
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and website:
www.zootaiping.gov.my



Bukit Gantang Agro-Homestay

Bukit Gantang Agro-Homestay provides accommodation and messing in a Malay village environment. It is being managed by an association helmed by ex-teacher, Hj Ghasali Hj Mohd Yunus. Twenty six houses are available for hire. Bookings can either be made directly or online through agents. Foreigners, especially Australians, Koreans and Japanese are the main customers forming almost 70 per cent of the occupancy rate.

A 3D/2N stay costs about RM280 per person. The package is inclusive of meals cooked by your friendly host or hostess and a guided tour of Taiping and its surroundings. Guests can savour all the local fruits available in the kampong when they are in season. The *mat salleh*, says Hj Ghasali, prefer mangosteens to durians. For booking and enquiry call Hj Ghazali at **+605-8551311** or his mobile: **+6012-4842742**. Email: ghasaliyunus@yahoo.com


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Taiping Lake Gardens 2

Taiping Lake Gardens, established in 1884, is the oldest and most beautiful botanical garden in the country. In the vicinity of the gardens are the town's zoo and the one-time 9-hole golf course of the Taiping New Club. The decommissioned golf course holds the distinction of being the first golf course in the country. The once busy fairways are now "freeways" for visitors who come to enjoy the peace and tranquility the facility offers. The one attraction that keeps visitors coming again and again is the drooping branches of century-old rain trees that line the road fringing the lakes. It is a sight to behold.

Bukit Larut . . . 3



Bukit Larut, formerly known as Maxwell Hill, is the oldest hill station in the country. It was established in 1884 by William Edward Maxwell, Assistant British Resident of Perak to cater to the needs of the colonial officials. At 1,250 m (4,101 ft) above sea level, Bukit Larut's daily temperature ranges from 10°C to 25°C. Besides being the oldest hill station, it is also the wettest spot in Malaysia.

Gazetted as a permanent forest reserve in 1910, Bukit Larut remains the most pristine hill resort in the country. Accommodation consists mainly of bungalows and rest houses, some of which are over a century old.

The summit is accessible by 4-WD Land Rovers managed by Taiping Municipal Council. Two-way tickets priced at RM6 each are sold at the base of the hill. Operating time is between 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. daily. For details and bookings call Bukit Larut Recreational Office at **+605-8077241/243**.

A package tour of Taiping would suit the intrepid traveller who hopes to get the most out of his or her ringgit. One should treat it as an adventure of sorts that requires some planning, some flexibility, a little foresight and, foremost, a keen nose for the unexpected.

It can be physically taxing as the guided tour will take you to places that will challenge you. If this is not your cup of tea, a more leisurely-paced trip is recommended.

But this is not what Perak Tourism News advises as the experience will lack the fun. This is what we suggest. First find out what the experience entails, prepare adequately for the venture and enjoy the experience.



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KOTA NGAH IBRAHIM HISTORICAL COMPLEX

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The Kota Ngah Ibrahim Historical Complex, whose imposing look is conspicuous from the Simpang-Matang-Sg Sepetang road, sits on a two-acre site. Once the residence of Ngah Ibrahim, it was built in 1870. Ngah Ibrahim was the son of Long Jaafar, the Malay chieftain who first opened up the Larut-Matang tin mines in the 1840s. Over the years the building has served several purposes, as a court for the prosecution of Dato' Maharaja Lela and Dato' Sagor for the murder of JWW Birch, as a residence for Captain Speedy, the Assistant Resident of Perak, as a teachers' training college and even as headquarters for the Imperial Japanese Army. Today, the Kota Ngah Ibrahim Historical Complex houses artifacts showcasing the history behind the Larut-Matang tin mines. It is open daily between 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Opening time on Fridays is between 9.00 a.m. to 12.15 p.m. and 2.45 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. Admission is free. For details call: **+605-8477970/+605-8472497**.

Matang Mangrove Forest

Kuala Sepetang, formerly Port Weld, has some unique attractions. Topping the list is the Matang Mangrove Forest which, like the Kota Ngah Ibrahim Historical Complex, is very visible from the road leading into Kuala Sepetang. Covering an area of over 40,000 hectares it has been recognised as the most well-managed mangrove forest in the world.

The Matang Mangrove Forest is an important site for coastal migratory water birds as well as a portion of migrant forest birds. According to the Malaysian Nature Society, as many as 43,000 to 85,000 birds may be using the forest during migration. The 255-hectare Pulau Kelumpang and 130-hectare Pulau Terong support a viable breeding population of the Milky Stork, which is endangered, and approximately 50% of the Lesser Adjutant in Malaysia. Wooden boardwalks provide visitors a closer look at the mangrove trees and the denizens that thrive in the muddy floor.

For details call Matang District Forest Reserve at **+605-807 2762/5324**

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Charcoal Processing



Charcoal processing is a major industry in Kuala Sepetang due to the abundance of mangrove trees in the vicinity. There are about 60 kilns in the area and most have been in operation since the 1930s. The smell of burning wood hangs heavily in the air and this in itself is a unique feature of Kuala Sepetang. The Chuah Charcoal Processing Factory is opened to the public and guided tours can be arranged on request. For details call Mr. Chuah at **+6012-573 9563**

Prawn mee

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Prawn Mee is a specialty of Kuala Sepetang. There are several roadside stalls offering this appetising delicacy. However, only two deserve to be mentioned. One is **Warung Makteh Mee Banjar Udang**. It is located just before Chuah's charcoal factory about two kilometres from the Matang Mangrove Forest. The stall sells its own brand of prawn mee unlike its more celebrated rival, **Mak Jah Mee Udang**. The stall operates daily from 7.00 a.m. to 11.00 p.m. Its signature dish, *Mee Banjar Udang*, comes in varying sizes and servings. It ranges in price between RM6 to RM12 a bowl, depending on the size of the prawns.



Kg Dew



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Kg Dew, on the old Taiping-Bagan Serai trunk road, is home to another unique attraction in the Taiping itinerary. The firefly colony of Kg Dew is reputed to be far better than its much-touted namesake in Kuala Selangor. This is the view of many visitors thus far.

Getting to the intended spot is half the fun. The wobbly boat ride along Sungai Sepetang takes about 15 minutes from the wooden jetty. The fireflies are from the *Pteroptyx* species. The blinking is in fact a courtship ritual performed by female flies to attract male partners. The abundance of the "berembang" tree or *Sonneratia caseolaris* along the banks of Sungai Sepetang is the reason why the Kg Dew firefly thrives in numbers. The other reason is its unspoiled eco-system.

For details on Kg Dew and its attractions call Khairul Salleh Ahmad at **+6012-514 5023** or visit his blog at firefly.blogspot.com



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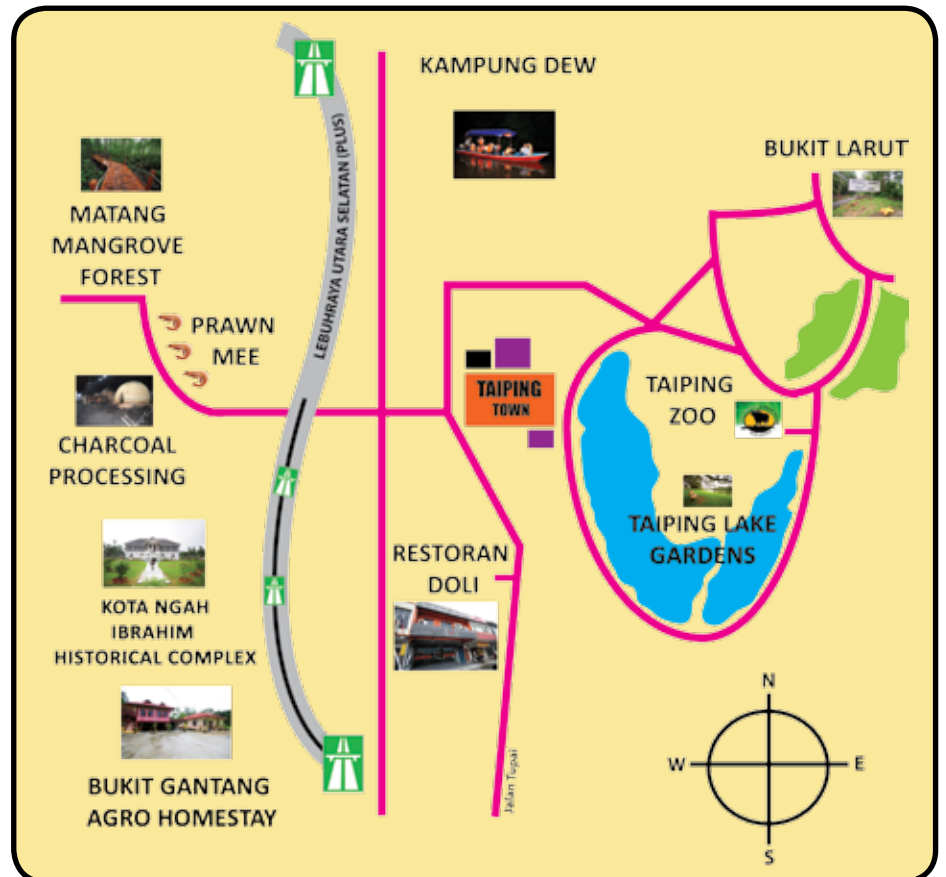
Restoran Doli 10

If you yearn for a decent eating spot after a tedious day in the field, the place to go is Restoran Doli. Doli operated from a stall in Taiping hawkers' row in the 1970s. From a humble beginning it has now transformed into a mini chain with a branch in upscale Taman Tun Ismail, Kuala Lumpur. It is one of the many Malay success stories somewhat similar to Mee Rebus Ramli of Ipoh.

The Taiping outlet is located at No. 5, Regat Tupai on the road to the infamous Kg Tupai of yore. The town's fire brigade is the nearest feature of prominence should you fail to find the spot.

Restoran Doli's signature dish is *Fried Keow Teow*, Malay-style. Doli's *Fried Keow Teow* comes in two denominations – normal (RM4.50) and special (RM9). Doli opens its doors from 12.00 p.m. to 12.00 a.m. daily except on Fridays.

For details call +605-841 0525 or Fadil at +6017-505 5877.



Mid Autumn In Ipoh



The Mid Autumn Festival held this year was an excellent day-long event complete with culture, colour and gaiety. The fact that it was held where the Yau Tet Shin Bazaar once stood made it all the more meaningful. Yau Tet Shin, incidentally, was the Hakka Chinese tin miner who built the first shop houses in New Town.

Unlike last year when the event was held at night and along the heritage trail, this year it was a day-long affair. It started in the morning with a torch relay between heritage sites in Old Town. The reason for the relay, according to Organising Chairman, Ho You Meng, was to signify the "continuity of culture and heritage".

Activities shifted to the erstwhile Yau Tet Shin Bazaar later in the morning where martial arts demonstrations, cultural dances and a colouring competition took centre stage.

A Chinese yo-yo performance by students from Shen Jai School enthralled the crowd, which included State Exco Councillor for Tourism, Dato' Hamidah Osman and Perak Tourism Management Bhd CEO, Ahmad Fathil Abd Ghani. The celebration at night took on a carnival-like atmosphere.



LAUNCHED : LOGO FOR VPY 2012

The Logo for Visit Perak Year 2012 was launched by Perak Menteri Besar Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir during the Gegaria Carnival at Dataran MBI during the weekend on September 24.

In his message to the audience Zambry reminded them that "all Perakeans are the ambassadors of the state. Everyone must participate. Be courteous and smile for visitors so they can take home happy memories and make Visit Perak Year a success".

Also present at the launch was State Exco for Tourism Dato' Hamidah Osman and Perak Tourism CEO Ahmad Fathil together with tour agents and media personnel from KL and Singapore.



JAG

All roads leading to the celebration site were sealed. Food stalls serving local delicacies, ranging from *laksa* to *loke-loke* to *fried wonton* to soya bean drinks, were available along the roadsides. Colourful lanterns together with traditional costumes donned by students from Poi Lam School added colour to the event.

The arrival of Menteri Besar Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir and his wife, Datin Seri DiRaja Saripah was heralded with the pounding of drums and the prancing of both lion and dragon dancers.

Although it was, in essence, a Chinese Mooncake cum Mid Autumn Festival, the mix of cultural performances made it a uniquely Malaysian version of the Mid Autumn Festival.

The culmination of the festivities was the lantern walk through Jalan Mustapha Al-Bakri to Jalan Raja Musa Aziz before turning into Jalan Yau Tet Shin and back to the event site.

The crowd, estimated at around 3,000, felt that some publicity leading to the event was in order to create the interest in the *rakyat*.

The hullabaloo, apparently, had stirred enough interest prompting the MB to announce that it would be an annual calendar event beginning next year.

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