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'RESTRUCTURING PERAK'S LOCAL COUNCIL'
April 20, 2008, 9:30am, Syuen Hotel Admission free

Your Community Newspaper

Serving the people of Ipoh, Chemor, Sg.Siput, Taiping,
Kuala Kangsar, Gopeng, Kampar and Batu Gajah

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A YEAR AGO - WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THIS POSSIBLE?

(Come to think of it, who would have thought it possible a month ago?)

Stories on pages 2, 3 and 4



(From L to R) Perak's new Menteri Besar, Mohammad Nizar, Perak PKR state chairman, Zulkifli Ibrahim, State PAS commissioner, Ahmad Awang, DAP adviser, Lim Kit Siang, DAP Perak Chief, Ngeh Koo Ham.

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YOU VOTED FOR CHANGE

REMEMBER THESE WINNING PLEDGES *(You Never Know!)*



Ngeh Koo Ham



PKR



Zulkifli Ibrahim



PAS



Mohammad Nizar

On the Reform of Legislative Institutions

Restoration of local government elections; abolition of the appointment system of Senate; denial of the two-third majority of the ruling parties in the Parliament and State Assemblies.

On the Reform of the Electoral system

Restoration of the "one-person-one-vote" system of constituency delineation; expansion of voting rights to all citizens aged 18 years or above; restoration of the independence of the Election Commission; creation of an electoral culture that is clean, fair and free.

On Economic Development

Due emphasis is to be given to distributive justice; opposition to environment destruction; opposition to "Party Capitalism"; replacement of the ethnic quota system with a policy of "merits and needs".

On Labour

Implementation of minimum wage opposition to unlimited import of foreign labour; defence of workers' rights to free association; promotion of workers' solidarity

On Social Welfare

Implementation of health care and other social security policies; protection of the aged, the disabled and the poor against absolute poverty.

On Education

Implementation of a seamless system of education; full recognition of the right to mother tongue education; opposition to the 1996 National Education Act.

On Ethnic and Cultural rights

Cultural democracy; ethnic equality; national integration through equality, tolerance and understanding.

On Mass Media

Creation of a free, fair, accountable and responsible mass media; opposition to the monopoly of information and manipulation of news.

On Agriculture

Non-ethnic-based reform to land-reform; rental control; expansion of agricultural loan; reduction of agricultural taxes.

On Environment

Opposition to any economic policy that destroys the environment; the right of Orang Asli to develop and enjoy their natural resources; all major development of natural resources like the construction of mammoth dams must be subject to strict monitoring and assessment.

On Women

Participation of women in all levels of decision-making; opposition to all laws that discriminate against women.

A Constitutional state for All

Keadilan believes that the spirit of the Constitution and the rule of law must be honoured in deed, and not only in words. True adherence to the Constitution and principles of universal justice will ensure the rule of law and an independent judiciary as well as guarantee that the basic human rights and dignity of all are protected and upheld. A constitutional state affirms the need to reject all forms of racially divisive politics and pave the way for a society that holds unity, justice and mutual respect above all.

A Vibrant, Prosperous Economy for All

Keadilan's Malaysian Economic Agenda espouses our belief that if we are to compete globally and ensure a vibrant growth, discriminative policies that only enrich the elite must be replaced with a policy that ensures assistance to all poor Malaysians regardless of race. For Malaysia to stand amongst giants like South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore, we must play by the rules of the global game as well as eliminate corruption and wastage.

A Safer Malaysia for All

Endemic mismanagement of the police force for political ends, internal division and tolerance of a culture of corruption have all crippled the ability of the police to serve and protect ordinary Malaysians. Countless children and loved ones have now tragically fallen victim to this fundamental failure of the authorities to guarantee our security. Keadilan envisions a police force that is professional, neutral, better deployed, better trained and better equipped to realise their primary goal of patrolling our streets and keeping Malaysians safe from every harm.

An Affordable Malaysia for All

As Malaysia is a net exporter of oil, sudden and dramatic hikes in petrol prices only reflect subsidies of an insatiable appetite for corruption in the ruling party. Keadilan promises to lower the price of petrol in line with higher Petronas profits as well as manage the prices of basic goods to ensure a consistent, steady supply. Tolls and tariffs will also no longer be raised unreasonably only to satisfy conglomerates and corporate interests.

Better education for All

Malaysian university rankings are slipping below the 200 mark and children are leaving the national school system in droves, we must seriously re-evaluate government policies. Keadilan will allow institutions of learning the freedom to engage the best practices that raise the standard of education, pay educators the salary their profession deserves, and enable universal access to scholarships and higher quality education for all. Only then can we brighten the future of Malaysia and her children.

A Trustworthy, Just and Lean Government

*Strengthen the Watchdog agencies like the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA), Auditor General Department, Commission for Human Rights (Suhakam), the Election Commission (EC) and others, by placing them under the Parliament and equipping them with better mandate and resources.

Tender Board placed under the jurisdiction of the Parliament.

*A Prudent Financial and Transparent Management of the Economy

*Ensure that the price of petrol and diesel be reduced and maintained at a reasonable price as to suppress inflationary pressure on all goods and services.

*Reduce income and equity disparity between the haves and have little by focusing on acquiring education-cum-skills and actual income increment.

Defend the Safety of Lives and Dignity and Security on Property Through Waging War-On-Crime

*Turning the Royal Police Force to a professional body that are both citizen-friendly and crime-busting savvy through beefing up the force, better service scheme and upgrading professional training and retraining.

*Putting in place Best Practices in all ministries and government agencies and governmentlinked companies so as to enhance transparency, accountability and performance.

Empower Total Education as a Transformational Force

*Awarding scholarship to deserving students based on merits.

*Increase the seats availability at the public universities.

Ethical, Fair and Clean Mass Media Policy

*Reform National Mass Media Policy as to make accessible information to the rakyat that are both fair and balanced.

Environmental-Friendly Policy

*To construct a smart water drainage system which reduces the cost of agricultural products whilst at the same time optimise the use of water.

*To protect rain catchment areas, preserve jungles and wild life.

National Integration and Unity Policy

*To formulate a working integration policy strengthened and based on mutual-respect and non-prejudiced religious understanding between all the racial groupings and religious affiliations.

From the Editor's Desk

by Fathol Zaman Bukhari



LET THE SHOW BEGIN

*The new programme's director - Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin
- displays a determined mood*

A delicate nine-day impasse ended with the March 17 swearing-in of engineer and Perak PAS Secretary, Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin as the state's 10th Mentri Besar (MB).

Whether the manifestations of discord preceding the event were as dramatic as the nation's politically controlled press liked to portray them, remains to be seen. But there can be no denying that the *raison d'être* for the pause that didn't impress was brought about by uncertainties in the ultimate choice of candidate for the MB's post.

The Democratic Action Party (DAP) had the largest number of seats from among the tripartite Barisan Rakyat (BR) and by power of numbers alone the candidate should be theirs. However, the state constitution says otherwise. The person chosen for the job should be a Malay Muslim.

EXERCISING DISCRETION

Further complicating the picture was a separate, generally unappreciated, and yet to be invoked provision in the same constitution enabling the sultan to exercise discretion in picking someone other than a Malay Muslim should the need arise.

Fortunately, by the time the formal swearing-in ceremony took place at Istana Iskandariah, Kuala Kangsar, before the Regent of Perak, Raja Nazrin Shah, the controversy - publicly over-played or not - had

dissolved.

Multi-lingual Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin, 51, seems the right choice for the post. His credentials are indeed impressive. What is more, he exudes a charm that will endear him to both rakyat members and general Perakians alike. Not even his political opponents could deny this. His mannerisms, as seen during interactions at public seminars and forums, are impeccable. Furthermore, he has a knack of connecting with crowds and this clearly places him ahead of the pack.

The March 17 ceremony was exclusively for the Mentri Besar's post. The posts of the two dep-

uty MBs would be decided some days later. Even so, such a delay was unfortunate.

THE FORMULA

The 6-3-1 formula seems to strike a chord with the three political parties in the coalition. The formula is the allocation of the ten executive-member (exco) seats - six for DAP, three for Keadilan and one for PAS. Deputy MB 1 will come from the DAP while Deputy MB 2 will be from Keadilan.

Unfair allocation of the exco seats threatened to disrupt the loose alliance forged before the 12th General Election. According to a Keadilan

insider the problem was brought about by Perak PAS who made a secret pact with the DAP on the exco seat allocation question. As a trade-off for the MB's post, PAS agreed to allow the DAP to take eight seats while the remaining two would be shared by PAS and Keadilan. And this was made in spite of Keadilan having won seven seats to PAS's six in the legislative assembly.

INDICATOR OF COHESION

The degree to which this aberration lingers as an irritant or, alternatively, is effectively brushed aside in the broader interests of governance, will provide

a useful indicator of coalition cohesion going forward.

As Perak's electoral dust settles the immediate challenge facing the Perak DAP-Keadilan-PAS state government is to be a viable government for all Perakians - Malays, Chinese, Indians, Orang Asli and others.

MEETING EXPECTATIONS

It must be a government that can meet the expectations of the rakyat, a true government of the people, by the people for the people. The mistakes of the past administration are simply too glaring. Sifting through the files at

the State Secretariat may be a tedious task for the uninitiated. Some documents may have been systematically destroyed by now. But nothing is impossible.

What will the political ramifications be as a result of the revelations that inevitably must occur?

Only time will tell. Witch-hunting is definitely not an option. However, exposing the ills, the excesses and the abuses of the predecessors is certainly a must. Let it be a lesson to all.

CHANGING LAWS?

As laymen we must place our faith and trust in the ruling coalition. We should not be unduly distracted by words such as "Islamisation", "Talibanisation", "hudud" "telekong" etc.

Changing laws is not something as easy as changing undergarments. A ruling coalition with only a simple majority cannot undertake whims and fancies. Moreover, Islamic laws are constitutional.

Changing them requires sanction by parliament.

We need also to assuage fears brought about by the disgruntled few, those who had so much to lose and lost. It's time for a change of programme. So let the show begin.

The Ipoh Echo will be watching, listening and reporting, fairly and objectively, without fear or favour and with no political bias whatever. Exciting times lie ahead.



(L to R) Mentri Besar, Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin, DAP adviser, Lim Kit Siang and DAP Perak Chairman, Ngeh Koo Ham, at the post swearing-in press conference.

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Editorial

LOOKING TO A NEW ORDER

On April 1, 1946, the British established the Malay Union. This set off nationwide protests, inspired nationalism and ultimately culminated in independence. It must be remembered that this was immediately after a global conflict that exposed the vulnerability of colonial powers.

The Malay Union issue was but a catalyst and the ensuing events were part of a rolling wave of reassessment that questioned the relationship between the colonial powers and their subjects worldwide.

Similarly, half a century later, the Hindraf and other demonstrations are appealing to the conscience of society for change in the political philosophy of this nation. The recent national and state elections saw the ruling party lose its two-thirds majority in parliament and its controlling position in five states.

It should be recognised that this event was, in no small way, brought about by the global phenomenon of empowerment through advances in information technology.

A few days after the State Elections, 9 out of the 15 newly elected members of the Perlis State Assembly decided to form the local Government without the approval of their party's national leader. There can be no argument that the Raja of Perlis was constitutionally correct in recognising the claim of the majority members elected to the state's legislative assembly. But it is noteworthy that this was the first time such a prerogative had been exercised.

Political structures are showing signs of switching from being shaped 'top down' to 'bottom up'. Changes are coming fast and furious. So far reactions have been knee-jerk or driven by traditional thought. This may not be sufficient.

During the course of the last century several nations in the third world have been experimenting with various forms of political and economic structures. Communism, as a political system and socialism as a socio-economic tool, have failed in almost all the countries that adopted these approaches.

On the other hand, democracy as a political design and capitalism as an economic device continue to be less than perfect.

Perhaps it is time that nations, in a world that is rapidly becoming borderless and dominated by information, craft new forms of social, political and economic order more relevant and appropriate for this new age.

But as the nations of the world move closer to each other and individuals get exposed to and need to deal with an ever expanding global community, there has arisen a desperate desire to preserve individual identities.

The Deputy Prime Minister often speaks of 'Glocalisation' as a means of going forward. 'Think globally and act locally' he exhorts.

Still, the process of 'Glocalisation' requires a cultural mind shift - to adopt, embrace, deal with and react to new ideas. Such a process cannot be realised by limiting it to only the economic and social spheres. It needs to be extended to include the political quarter.

Only by individuals and communities actively participating in decisions affecting their lives can they pursue truly positive, creative, lateral, proactive and innovative avenues of analytical thought.

This demands transforming current political arrangements to ensure individuals and communities are involved in the decision-making process when it comes to matters directly affecting their lives.

In turn, it would require decentralisation of political authority.

Perhaps an audit needs to be conducted of all the various functions that are required for managing a successful, progressive nation. These could be divided into categories, then packaged and allocated to various levels of the transformed political structure for implementation.

Thinking Aloud

By Siva Pragasam

A PERAK GOVERNMENT FOR PERAKIANS

Turn in your party hats and put on your Perak hats

For as long as I can remember, Perak has been under the control of the Central Government.

Though our state has always had an independent political structure with a Chief Minister, local Ministers and a legislature, its affairs inevitably became dictated by the Central Government. The political party that administered the nation from Kuala Lumpur also controlled the state governmental apparatus. As members of the state government owed their appointment and tenure to the Prime Minister, their first obligation was to him, rather than to their electorates.

This situation has seldom worked in Perak's favour.

There can be no denying that the state was a premier one prior to Merdeka. Its wealth of natural resources, economic activities and human capital not only enriched Perakians but provided an important, initial thrust to the nation along the journey to its current status.

A STATE IN DECLINE

Sadly, during the last half century, Perak has been in decline. Today it is among the least progressive of all Malaysian states.

Why?

There have been limited resources directed this way from the National Government. Our territory is rarely included in major national projects. Indeed, what little development that occurs here these days is undertaken by parties located outside the state boundaries.

Perak has been - and still is - fading.

Tan Sri Abdullah Ahmad, former head of the New Straits Times organisation, traces the state's problems to a group of early leaders - most prominent among whom was Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang. He accuses the group members with having been ahead of their time.

The Tan Sri maintains that UMNO's rejection of Dato Panglima's "Malaysian Malaysia" vision, along with the man's

subsequent political defeat, severely affected Perak's influence in the national arena. Along with these events went the state's social and economic decline.

VISION TO EMPOWER

Tan Sri's reading was that Perak UMNO should empower itself and become more assertive within the overall ruling party. This would have required Perak Malays to present a united force - a difficult task considering their heterogeneous composition.

In offering this solution and projecting it forward, Tan Sri Abdullah's argument rested on the premise that, somehow, UMNO would always remain Perak's dominant political force.

The invalidity of this assumption was established in a most dramatic fashion on March 13. Three parties, two of whom, ironically enough, advocate a Malaysian Malaysia concept, have taken control of the state.

ANSWERABLE AND ACCOUNTABLE

In assuring the Sultan of Perak that they were together in the task of forming a stable government, they accepted responsibility to be answerable and accountable directly to the Ruler and his subjects.

This is how it should be.

The Perak Government's first and one and only duty is to the people of Perak. The people of Perak have elected their Government and expect its members to do what is best for the local electorates.

They would not, for example, appreciate their Government subjecting themselves to the dictates of party leaders in Penang, Kelantan or Selangor.

SOLEMN DUTY

The elected representatives, sitting in the Perak State Assembly, owe a duty primarily to the King and the people of Perak. It is their solemn duty to do all they can and be totally devoted to the progress of

Perak and its people.

Their entire allegiance must be to the people of the state and when they make decisions on the affairs of Perak it must exclusively be in the interest of the territory they have promised to serve. Their respective parties may have nominated them, but it is the people who have empowered them.

Perak now has a rare opportunity to develop and sustain a Perak-centric culture that, no matter what government may follow, it will uncompromisingly think of Perak's interests first.

Though the representatives may serve their party, their primary objective must be the progress of the state and the well-being of its citizens.

They will, in fact, serve their party best if they focus on achieving this primary objective rather than promoting separate party agendas.

SWITCHING THEIR HATS

Those taking office should never forget that the three parties have joined forces to form a stable government.

When they sit in the assembly or on the executive committee, they need to remove their party hats and replace them with their Perak hats.

Perak must be perceived by the three parties that form government as a joint-venture project. The project is to turn Perak into a progressive state.

WORKING IN CONCERT

The success of this project will require them to work in concert, finding common grounds to realise this mission. If they prioritise their party's interest against that of the project there is little doubt the project will fail.

Perhaps the change augers a new beginning where each state government is independent and takes the responsibility for charting the state's future with the Central Government's role limited to macro issues and coordinating the efforts of the states to ensure optimum results.

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Your Concerns

WHERE CAN THE CHILDREN PLAY?

They cannot go where mosquitoes and leeches reign



The sad state of a playground, one of many cases

A playground for each housing area appears to be a government requirement. Parents and children, after all, need a place where they can relax and enjoy one another's company outdoors.

It is a good idea that has, in many cases, suffered in the implementation and maintenance levels.

Take the playground next to my house in Bandar Baru Tambun, for instance. Just look at the photos I have taken and decide for yourselves.

Where can the children enjoy themselves? The grass is overgrown; in many cases, the grass is taller than the toddlers!

Parents have told their children to give the playground a wide berth. It is plain common sense. No child should be allowed to cavort with mosquitoes, leeches and the occasional snake.

DENGUE THREAT

Warning the children has not been difficult. They themselves feel no desire to brave the tall grass just to reach play equipment that have been so badly maintained they can only be unsafe.

There is another worry our neighbourhood faces presently. Even if we and our children avoid this useless playground, it remains a threat to our health. Dengue cases are on the rise – places that breed mosquitoes must be looked into and cleaned thoroughly.

Perhaps the *Ipoh Echo* could help remind whoever is in-charge of such an eyesore about his or her duties to the tax paying public.

LFC
Bandar Baru Tambun
31400 Ipoh

Thumbs Up

AN AFFIRMING EXPERIENCE

A treasured helmet reinforces further Brother Vincent's faith in Perakians

Brother Vincent Corkery was born in Ireland and first came to Southeast Asia in 1952. He was principal and director of St Michael's Institution from 1972 to 1975. He returned to the post from 1986 to 1988. Retired, he currently resides at the La Salle Centre in Ipoh. He has always maintained his profound belief that Malaysians are arguably warm, friendly and honest. He shares a little story to back up his view. The helmet mentioned was brought back from England during one of his many trips there. "I treasure it a lot as it is not sold here," Brother Vincent explains. "I feel safer wearing it when cycling."

The former principal and director, St Michael's Institution, with his helmet.



Making my way as usual from SMI to OMPH in Ipoh Garden some mornings ago on my bicycle, I caught a sudden shower of rain.

I took shelter at a nearby bus stop to put on my plastic rain proof and was soon on my way again. On reaching the church, I realised I had left my precious cycle helmet on the bench at the bus stop. Not easy to get a replacement.

I resigned myself to the loss. However, on my return journey an hour later - the rain had stopped - I was quietly thrilled to see my helmet as I approached the bus stop. It was still there, waiting for me. A plus for the morning commuters of Ipoh.

Brother Vincent

Issues To Watch

REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS

Congratulations, New Leaders. Now, prove yourselves.



Here is a list of major problems and issues specific to Perak which you have to address. Yes, these problems have been accumulated over the years and cannot be resolved overnight. Nevertheless you have to make a start.

Regain the glory of Perak

What happened? Presently Perak is poor and under developed. Old timers talk of how proud

they were of the way the Seenivasagam brothers managed Ipoh municipality.

Would you start trying to regain some of that lost glory? Would you engage the people in an open dialogue and listen to what they have to say?

Redevelopment of Ex-Mining Land

Over the past four years, I have attended a number of seminars and discussions on the above. Nothing ever materialised.

Tertiary Education

Every year, thousands of school leavers from Perak

go to other states to pursue their studies.

Upon completion of their studies they opt to settle and work in those places. Stop the brain drain.

Job Opportunities

Ipoh is known as retirees' paradise. What would you do in terms of job creation for the young?

Flooding

Carry out a comprehensive study and ensure that the problem of flooding is effectively solved.

Public Transport

Public transport in Ipoh is in a shambles. The

system must be completely revamped. There has been talk about building a new bus terminal at Meru Raya but it has remained just that: talk.

Meeting the Public

The members of *Gabungan Air Perak*, an NGO, had wanted to meet the former MB. All efforts to get an appointment with him came to naught.

The new MB and his Exco Members must be more accessible. The team should also regularly visit all places in the state. The public should have an opportunity to air their hopes, suggestions and grievances.

A. Jeyaraj

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THE WAY IT WAS ...

100 YEARS AGO THIS FORTNIGHT

Tuesday,
7th April
1908

Editorial

The British Indians at Bangkok are reported to be greatly perturbed at the announcement that negotiations are pending between the English and Siamese Governments, for the cession by the former to the latter of the extra-territorial jurisdiction exercised of them. The Siam Observer, which was at considerable pains to ascertain the truth of the rumour, made what appeared to be an authoritative repudiation of this statement. It declared that no such negotiations were in progress either in London or Bangkok. Finally it sought to assuage the 'fears' of the British Indians that a treaty whereby British Indians were handed over to a jurisdiction, to which the European British subjects were no subject, would be unconstitutional and as such invalid. But the doubts which were thrown out by our Siamese contemporary as to the existence and progress of such negotiations, have been finally removed by the official admission by the Colonial Office, in answer to a question in the House of Commons, that such negotiations were actually in progress, and that no particulars of details

could be given until the receipt of a report thereon from the British Minister at Bangkok. The British Indians, on the receipt of this intelligence, lost no time in holding an indignation meeting to protest against the proposed treaty. On the first reading of the report of the proceedings of this meeting it might have been considered that the Indians were alarmed at the prospect of going under the foreign and alien jurisdiction of the Siamese tribunals. But such was far from being the case. The Indian speakers expressed their readiness to go under Siamese jurisdiction. But their most serious grievance was that the European British subjects are not to be handed over at the same time to Siamese jurisdiction. They have raised the cry of race distinction and resent it as a violation of the British constitution, and appeal to the terms of the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 which have no bearing whatever on the question of extra territorial jurisdiction which is regulated by treaty or capitulation, and not by statute law. The Bangkok orators are either oblivious or ignorant of the fact, that under provisions of the Indian Criminal Procedure Code European British subjects are absolutely exempt from the jurisdiction of every judge or magistrate in British territory or the Protected Native States,

unless the said judicial officer is himself a European specially empowered to hold such trials. When the statute law of India, from which they hail, has had such exceptional provisions for the last half a century, it would, we think, be futile on the part of the British Indians to raise a racial question which cannot be possibly settled in their favour.

* * * * *

Festivities at Kuala Kangsar

The auspicious double – nay triple event of the marriage of Rajah Abdul Rashid, a son of H.H. the Sultan and the installation of Dato Muda and the Raja Muda, has just been celebrated at the pretty little town of Kuala Kangsar. This place, which is usually deplorably quiet, has been stirred to unusual life. The streets have been thronged with Malay beauties in their picturesque garments, and almost dangerous with a multitude of motor-cars. Over a thousand school children were brought into the town, and at every available corner was stationed the bullock carts that had brought the little folks and their parents. The hospitality of the residents of Kuala Kangsar is well known, but such an

event stretches their generosity to an enormous degree and appeared to be quite cheerful under the burden of such an invasion of visitors.

* * * * *

Wednesday,
8th April,
1908

Festivities At Kuala Kangsar

At 8 pm on Monday last there was a Gala Dinner at the Istana Nagara. After dinner H.E. the High Commissioner remarked in the course of an address that it was just a year since he had the pleasure of making the now Rajah Muda, Rajah Bandara. Since he had received that honour

the Raja had travelled extensively throughout the country and studied and observed exhaustively the condition of his countrymen in order to ameliorate and endeavour to better their conditions. If he had any anxiety as to how to fulfil his onerous duties, he had no further to look for typical examples than the late holder of the position and to His Highness the Sultan, both of whom had accomplished the work with honour, tact and ability. During the last 30 years the country had made rapid, nay, even inconceivable progress, and it is probable that after the next 30 years a similar result may be expected. The rapidly changing economic condition of affairs required a man of ability, experience and authority to guide them and he thought the person best suited for the position was the new Raja Muda.

After his Highness, the

Sultan had replied, thanking the High Commissioner and the Resident General and the various ladies and gentlemen who had rejoiced with him on this occasion of conferring honour, festivity and rejoicing, the Raja Muda then replied. He said that he was fully aware of the arduous and difficult position he was called upon to fulfil, but he would endeavour, on all occasions, to perform his duties honestly and faithfully. In speaking of the probable development of the country he remarked that the present Government officers were not so accessible as in the old days of rapid development, prosperity and progress, nor did he think that they were as sympathetic and well acquainted with the Malay, as the early pioneers had been.

* * * * *

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BATU GAJAH BECKONS ... and Sally Tooke returns to her birthplace

Sally Tooke was born in Batu Gajah. Her father was working as a chemist at the Geological Survey Department which he had joined in the late 1930s. When the war erupted, Sally and her mother were evacuated to Australia. They would return to Malaya in 1947.

W. A. Tooke was a Reserve with the Royal Artillery and when the Japanese landed in Kota Baru on December 8, 1941, he was mobilised

and sent to join his artillery regiment in Singapore. Upon British capitulation, he became a prisoner of war (POW) and was among those sent to work on the infamous Burma Death Railway. He survived the ordeal and when the war ended, Tooke went back to his old job in Batu Gajah. There he would make life-long friends.

Senathi Rajah was a Malaysian geologist who started working as a laboratory assistant to Tooke sometime in

1955. Tooke encouraged Senathi to further his



Sally and Michael in front of the former Tooke home.

studies. Upon obtaining his degree, Senathi

rejoined the department as a geologist. At about the same time, Mohamad Amran was employed in the department as an office boy. Tooke prodded Amran to sit for the various departmental exams that got the youthful employee promoted. Amran retired as a Geological Assistant (Super Grade) in 1992, after serving almost forty years in the geological department.

In 1956, Tooke was tasked to set up the Ipoh Geological Laboratory

where the present Department of Mineral and Geosciences is located. He completed his mission in 1957 and returned to England. But he kept up a correspondence with Senathi and Amran who remember Tooke as an exemplary officer. They say he cared for the welfare of his subordinates, an exception in a long line of returning British colonials who were "aloof, arrogant and downright patronising

see opposite page

Ipoh: Facts and Fancies

by Ho Tak Ming

APOTHECARIES – COLONIAL DAYS' NOT QUITE FULLY-FLEDGED DOCTORS

An epithet was required to separate the surgeons trained in British universities and the products of colonial medical colleges

The earliest doctors to man the State Medical Service of the Native States were *apothecaries*, who were graduates of colonial medical colleges. They were placed in a different category from the physicians and surgeons, who were trained in British universities. The British did not accord the *apothecaries* the honorific title of 'doctor'. The Asian doctors also received half the salaries of their European counterparts.

Ipoh Hospital did not have its own District surgeon until 1894, having to share with the other district hospitals. The resident Apothecary, Dr. FW Nicholas, did a superb job single-handedly. In fact, from the hospital admissions, Ipoh Hospital was a more important than Batu Gajah Hospital. The European Hospital was at Batu Gajah and hence required a full-time Surgeon to be stationed there.

ABOLISHED

The title of 'apothecary' was abolished in the Colony in 1901, and the holders became known as 'assistant surgeons'. This was a sore point among the apothecaries, especially the graduates of the Madras Medical College. They thought it gave the impression that their diplomas were inferior to British ones. In truth, it was another illustration of the colour bar rearing its ugly head in Malaya at the beginning of the twentieth century.

In 1906, both the Colony and the FMS

drew up uniform Medical Registration Regulations, defining the qualifications of doctors.

WEEDING OUT

It was a move to weed out unqualified persons, such as retired hospital dressers who had opened dispensaries, especially in the smaller towns. A Medical Council with disciplinary powers was

Medical Officer. The first batch of exams was held in 1905. Certain senior doctors like Drs. Nicholas and Pereira of Perak were exempted from having to sit for the examination.

In 1907, the number of medical practitioners in Perak registered under the Medical Registration Ordinance 1906 was 22, comprising of 13 European doctors and 9 Asian doctors. The Asian doctors were: G

Wong I Ek (LMS Hongkong, passed examination in 1905).

If the Assistant Medical Officers were unhappy working in the Government service, they could opt to be private medical practitioners. Private dispensaries were becoming popular in Ipoh around the turn of the century.

DR. WONG

The first Chinese doctor qualified to practise medicine in Ipoh, and also the first Asian private practitioner, was Dr. Wong I Ek. He was trained at the Hong Kong College of Medicine. After working at the Alice Memorial Hospital there, he joined the Perak Medical Department as an Apothecary.

In 1903, he opened the Ipoh Dispensary in Ipoh and later established two other branches in the town. He advertised in the newspaper:

*Dr. Wong I Ek
Lee Chai Dispensary, No. 51, Treacher Street, Ipoh.
Consulting hours; 8 am – 12 noon; 1 pm – 5 pm daily. Urgent cases will be treated at any hour.
Lee Chai Dispensary is left open till 9 pm every night. Thus, it is very convenient to patients who cannot otherwise procure medicines after the usual office hours.*

Dr. Wong jointly ran a hospital for Chinese prostitutes with the District Surgeon, Dr. Duncan Cooper. Dr Wong became a wealthy and an influential member of the community.



An apothecary's collection of healing potions

established. Assistant Surgeons and Apothecaries who had been working in the State hospitals for not less than six months, and who desired to be registered under the new Regulations enabling them to practise medicine, surgery and midwifery in both territories, had to sit for a special examination held in Singapore. After they had been registered, they would be called Assistant Medical Officers. The European Surgeons, who were granted exemption, were designated Medical Officers. The Head of the Perak Medical Department was to be styled the Senior

Abraham Assistant Surgeon (Madras Medical College); JEG Lesslar Assistant Surgeon (Madras Medical College); S Manickam Assistant Surgeon (Calcutta); K Matsutake Licence conferred by the Prefectural Government of Nagasaki (passed examination under the Medical Registration Ordinance, in 1907); FW Nicholas (Registered as Assistant Surgeon under Government Service); DB Pereira (Registered as Assistant Surgeon under Government Service; Quah Sin Keat (LSA London); Saw Ah Choy (Passed examination in 1907) and

Batu Gajah. . . continued from opposite page

especially when dealing with the locals". The two recall how Tooke "mixed freely with his subordinates regardless of their skin colour".

MAIN CONVENT GIRL

Sally was tutored at Main Convent Ipoh for a period of time. She stayed at the convent's hostel and spent weekends in Batu Gajah. She left to study in England in 1950. But over the years, she was kept interested and curious



Senathi (standing, left), Hj Razali and Amran (right) with Michael and Sally at Kelab Golf Kinta, Batu Gajah. by the letters her father, on his retirement, exchanged with the Perakians he had mentored. After her father's death in 1999, Sally continued to

correspond with Senathi.

Sally and her husband, Michael Biggs, were in Ipoh in early February. Biggs was a Captain with the Gurkha Regiment and was stationed at Rasah Camp, Seremban, in 1957.

Sally remarked on "Batu Gajah's transformation". So much has changed since she last set foot there – half a century ago!

But her birthplace beckons. She plans to visit again in 2009.

A. Jeyaraj

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Musings by See Foon Chan-Koppen



See Foon

The Glue That Binds

Food is one of the permanent interests people can enjoy together

I am currently on retreat in a remote area of southern France. As I sit huddled by the radiator in this small stone house which once was a water mill and goes by the romantic name of the Moulin de la Fourtounne, I am listening to the howling wind which is prevalent this time of year.

It is 10 in the morning and breakfast is over. The dishes have been cleared and I have just tidied the small kitchen.

At this time, in an ideal world, I should be sitting down to my reading and contemplation. But my mind is focusing on food instead - what shall I prepare for lunch? The fresh organic spinach that someone kindly brought or the white plump asparagus I bought in the Sunday market yesterday?

My mind is on a gastronomic merry-go-round as I devise creative ways to prepare and serve delicious vegetarian food using recipes from my mental repertoire of meat-based dishes.

I find myself pondering this question of food as it relates to people.

TWO GROUPS

I've discovered that people do fall into two categories: Those who *eat to live* and the ones who *live to eat*. Without apologies, I - and most Orientals - I know belong to the latter

group while Western *vegetarians*, by and large, fall into the former. This probably accounts for their food tending towards the wholesome and bland while the Oriental taste is not quite so healthy but rich in flavour.

At present, I am the only Oriental person here in this retreat centre and I have volunteered to prepare all the meals... not out of pure altruism, I confess, but more from "foodie-ism". Or is it gluttony?

Why do ALL my Oriental friends love food? I don't know of a single person whom I consider to be a friend, who isn't

binds my friendships!

This leads me to wonder if many of my readers out there share this delicious revelation?

I cook for my friends. I invite them to interesting new food finds that I discover. I share my foodie discoveries when I travel. I bring back calling cards from great restaurants.

I send food to friends whenever I'm cooking. I even pack a cold bag with homemade curry *rempah*, chilly sauce and homemade *sambal belacan* which I then put into my suitcase with my clothes when I travel long distance to Europe!



a foodie. Is it a platform on which we attract each other, something in common?

Most of my meetings with friends are always around food, be it breakfast, lunch or dinner. No sooner have we finished a meal than the next topic of what else to eat, and when, comes up. Even as we're eating, we're discussing the food we're eating or something else we had on some other occasion. Food is apparently the glue that

Every time I visit my dearest friend in the UK, my suitcase is laden with the aforementioned condiments.

Coming to this isolated retreat, there is bound to be tucked away in my bag, the ineluctable Baba's curry powder.

Now this does not happen with Westerners! They may bake an occasional cake or bring some homemade cookies. Unless it's a charity function where it's potluck, it is every fam-

ily for themselves. Unless they're Oriental and they happen to be living in the West! In that case, let the food festivities begin.

EXISTING DICHOTOMIES

This is not about creating chasms between East and West but the dichotomies exist and I know it well, having been married to Westerners (yes plural) with very different gustatory preferences.

Food does not only bind my friendships but I'm convinced that it influences my choice of where to live.

I can still remember like it was yesterday when my Ipoh crony brought me to "The House Of Mirrors" or Kong Heng where I had my first taste of Ipoh *hor fun*. It was love at first bite!

Many an evening have been happily spent sitting outdoors at "Bald Man" (translated literally from the Cantonese) with our potluck white wine and whisky, tucking into claypot crab rice, bouncy fish balls and his famous herbal chicken.

As dish after dish arrives, the whisky and white wine flowing, moods mellow and tongues loosen.

Bonding occurs whether it is sitting in an outdoor coffee shop in Bercham or a Michelin star restaurant in Paris.

Food Odyssey – part 2



WHERE A COFFEE BREAK IS A CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

Before you start protesting, I am aware that coffee is not considered food, but I just have to talk about this tasty beverage here. I am talking about Ipoh coffee. Why? Purely because it is world famous, it is from Ipoh and it tastes great!

One cannot write about food in Ipoh and neglect to mention the best accompaniment to your meal, a cup of **Ipoh White Coffee**.

Starbucks and Coffee Bean, these places do not do it for me. It isn't loud, there are no marble topped wooden tables and the waiters do not shout your order to the guy making your coffee. Also, there isn't Chinese toast with butter and *kaya* (egg jam).

AN EXPERIENCE

If you really want to 'experience' Ipoh, then have a cup of white coffee during tea time. You will not just get a cup of coffee, but also a cultural experience.

What about the coffee though? Ipoh white coffee beans, unlike other local (Malaysian) coffee beans are roasted with butter

but not sugar. This means that the roasted coffee beans are a lighter shade of black because there's no caramelized sugar, hence the name "white coffee". Lately, 3-in-1 satchets of white coffee are being sold in supermarkets and you can go to franchised outlets called "Ipoh Old Town" coffee shops.

THE ORIGINAL

But where do you go for the original? The best can be found in the few coffee shops located opposite the Kinta Heights flats in Ipoh old town along Jalan Bandar Timah such as Sin Yoon Loong restaurant (with a branch along Jalan Bendahara), Nam Heong restaurant (Distributor of the 3-in-1 Ipoh Old Town White Coffee), Xin Yuan Hoong and Xin Yuan Foong (All open mornings and afternoons only). These coffee shops are likely to be crowded during teatime, especially on weekends. Food-wise, you can get fried noodles, satay, congee and *kuih* sold in these coffee shops. But make sure you order some tasty toasted bread with butter and *kaya* to complement a truly good cup of white coffee.

LIM SI HOWE

BIRTHDAY BOY GETS HIS WISH

Michael Kitzig left Malaysia in 1972 but his love affair with the country has not waned. To this day, he nurses vivid memories of the first roast duck dinner he had in a restaurant at Canning Garden, Ipoh during one of his return visits.

Germany.

Michael, a psychiatrist, was a lecturer in a technical secondary school in Kuantan, Pahang from 1968 to 1972.

"The main reason for making the long journey is of course to enjoy this amazing meal," he volunteered.

"After this, we would be exploring the many interesting destinations in Malaysia," he added.

With Jutta, he was planning to visit Cameron Highlands, Seremban, Kuala Lumpur and Johor Bahru.

They were stopping by in Singapore before taking a flight home.

Last February, *Ipoh Echo* met up with Michael, who was celebrating his 60th birthday at his favourite Ipoh eatery, the Hong Kong Restaurant in Jalan Lee Kwee Foh in Canning Garden.

He was with his fiancée, Jutta Kcahsen. Both are from Osnabrueck, a city in Lower Saxony,



Michael and Jutta



Kafe Paprika's

French Onion Soup

The browning of the onions and a good beef stock are the important parts of this recipe. This soup is best made and served immediately. Any leftover stock can be frozen for several months. This recipe is unsuitable to freeze or microwave. Serves: 6

375g gravy beef, chopped
2 onions, chopped
2 bay leaves
½ cup parsley sprigs
2 teaspoons whole black peppercorns

2 litres (8 cups) water
30g butter
1-tablespoon oil
4 Large onions, thinly sliced, extra
¼ cup plain flour
1 small French bread stick
45g butter, extra
2 cloves garlic, crushed
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

To make the stock: Combine beef, the chopped onions, bay leaves, parsley, peppercorns and water in large saucepan, bring stock to the boil, reduce heat, cover, and simmer gently for 3 hours. Strain, cool, refrigerate over- night.

Scoop the fat from top of stock.

Heat butter and oil in large sauce- pan, add the sliced onions, cook over low heat until onions are golden brown and soft; this will take about 20 minutes, stir occasionally. Add flour, stir over heat for 1 minute. Add 5 cups of the stock, stir constantly over heat until mixture boils and thickens. Reduce heat, simmer cov-

ered 10 minutes.

Slice the bread. Melt extra butter, add garlic, and brush onto each side of the bread. Place onto an ungreased oven tray, bake in moderate oven until bread is dry and crisp. Sprinkle slices with Parmesan cheese, bake further 5 minutes. Place slices in serving dishes, top with hot soup; Serve immediately.

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Feng means wind and *shui* means water.

In Chinese culture, gentle wind and clear water have always been associated with harmony, good harvest and good health - thus *feng shui* came to be associated with good livelihood and fortune.

Chi is an invincible living energy through which the universe, earth, environment and our own lives flow and are formed and shaped.



A limited space can be transformed into a little oasis.

FENG SHUI IN YOUR GARDEN

The garden has been used for centuries as a place for relaxation and contemplation.

In today's hectic and stressful lifestyle, the garden has become a more important place to relax

your mind and soul, and to re-energise after a hard day's work.

A peaceful garden area, whether sizeable or consisting of only a few potted plants can be created to provide a sanctuary for relaxation of the mind and soul.

One can use the power

of *feng shui* to create a positive flow of energy around the garden.

This will create a harmonising and soothing atmosphere there. The results will benefit your family life.

Once you apply the *feng shui* formula in this section, you will see a vast improvement in the energy level of the rest of the surrounding environment.

You and your family will be enticed to spend more time together and share uniting sentiments.

Feng shui will have a tremendously positive impact on your life.

Try it!

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KOK MING'S DREAM

He wants to be a first-class chef and he is toiling confidently towards this goal

I completed my SPM in December, 2006. I had always dreamed of pursuing my tertiary education overseas. Friends had been e-mailing me exciting news from abroad and I wanted to see how well I could manage on my own. Fortunately, my family proved supportive of my plans.

My first priority was Australia. It was affordable and its geographical proximity to Malaysia appealed to me. I didn't want to be so far away from home. I also had a distant relative there and as he was already a permanent resident, I thought he could be a very good guide for me.

VIRTUALLY STRESS-FREE

When it was time for me to go, I approached WEL Education Enterprise for guidance. They provided me detailed information on costs, programme structures and course possibilities which enabled me to compare and weigh my op-



A farm-stay was part of a family holiday.



The proximity of Sydney allows for regular visits.

tions. After I had made up my mind, they liaised with the Australian institution I chose and sent an application on my behalf. They arranged for my student visa and all relevant matters, including accommodation. I just had to hand in the required documents such as result transcripts, etc. I was impressed by the professional way my case was handled. So much stress was avoided.

BROAD TRAINING

I started attending Holmes Institute in Sydney in April, 2007 for a two-year course which will earn me a 'Certificate III in Hospitality (Commercial Cookery)' and a Diploma of Hospitality Management'.

I have been in Australia now for nearly a year and I love it. It is a very beautiful country and the people are friendly. Holmes Institute is an excellent place for the course I have chosen. The teachers are kind and helpful apart from being well

qualified and experienced. The facilities and practice kitchens are well equipped. Apart from the theoretical sessions, we are made to work in the commercial kitchen to gain real life working experience. We are encouraged to work part-time in the commercial kitchen. As my lecturers keep saying, nobody will ever gain experience in the hospitality industry from sitting in a classroom all day.

Currently I'm working part-time in one of the

5-star hotels in Sydney as a kitchen hand.

In dealing with colleagues and customers, I'm also improving my communication skills. I have been so fortunate to have friends from all over the world. They've helped me broaden my mind. I am never bored.

Chefs are in demand in Australia right now. I feel my career started from the first day I arrived in Holmes. I feel challenged, excited and motivated.

Choong Kok Ming

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TIMELY RESPONSE

Small issues matter a lot to most people



Puan Rogayah bte Pilus, principal of SK Marian Convent receives the donation from Parti Gerakan representative Lee Kian Fei. Former Canning state assemblyman Vincent Hooi-Wy Hon looks on.

Damaged chairs, desks and spoilt items in the toilets in schools – these were some of the concerns parents highlighted at the Gerakan community service centre in Ipoh Garden recently.

Responding, the

former Canning state assemblyman Vincent Hooi Wy-Hon identified the affected schools and visited them.

Hooi presented RM20,000 each to SJK(C) Chung Tack, SK La Salle, SK Marian Convent and SK Ho Seng Ong Methodist.

He said the contribution should enable headmasters to acquire new desks and tables, or a few units of computers for students to use in their resource centres.

SK La Salle headmaster Lai Kum Ming said the donation came in handy as the school has plans to build a “reading hut”.

According to Lai, the “hut” would be situated in a “strategic” point in the school compound. He added that it would be a conducive reading spot as “pupils like to read and discuss things” outdoors.

Lai also said the school was also considering replacing desks and chairs.

SAFETY MEASURES, AT LAST

Three pedestrian bridges planned for schools

Students and teachers of three schools which are located along busy roads, can now look forward to crossing the Jalan Sultan Iskandar Shah, Jalan Sultan Idris Shah and Jalan Kuala Kangsar safely.

Three pedestrian bridges, costing RM2.1 million, will be constructed for SMK Sam Tet, SJK(C) Yuk Choy and SMK Yuk Choy. Some 7,154 students and teachers will benefit from these facilities.

In his address to teachers and students, then state education director Hussain Harun said the government was mindful of the daily risks faced by pedestrians in the named areas.

The bridges, he continued, should allay the constant fear of parents whose children have to cross the roads to get to their classrooms.

Concerns have been raised before about the likelihood of pedestrians being knocked down by speeding vehicles and inconsiderate drivers.

The ground-breaking ceremony was attended by Datuk Ho Cheng Wang in his then capacity as state exco Public Infrastructures and Utility chairman and state Road Safety Council chairman.



In a city where zebra crossings don't seem to matter, something has to be done to protect the lives of schoolchildren.



Yuk Choy students, in colourful costumes, prepare to welcome guests to the ground-breaking ceremony of the three bridges.

‘CELEBRATION COUNTDOWN’

Everyone is geared towards making 2009 a memorable year for Andersonians

Anderson School is nearing its centenary year and big plans are being laid to make it an extra special time for all – old boys, educators who had at one time or other been connected with the school, present day teachers and students.

It was a momentous occasion attended by prominent old boys like Datuk Seri Mohd Tajol Rosli Mohd Ghazali, popular cartoonist Datuk Mohammad Nor Khalid aka Lat and corporate figure Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Helmi Ismail, who is also



Former MB Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli exchange greetings with students

uphold the Anderson tradition. He spoke of the legacy passed on by predecessors who are now corporate giants, political figures and community leaders.

NEW NECKTIES

He also sponsored the newly-designed blue neckties for all Anderson school students. He called on them to wear the ties every Wednesday as a tribute to the school's great tradition.

The old boys are also

initiating the construction of a new building to replace the current Old Andersonians' Clubhouse – a spot famous among gourmets for its northern Indian cuisine

Costing at RM2.1 million, the new clubhouse is scheduled to be ready by December, 2009.

Anderson School Ipoh turns a hundred years old on Feb 8, 2009.



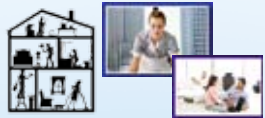
Creative old boy: Cartoonist Lat contributes his share to the day's programme.

To ensure the success of the centennial Bash, a ‘Countdown Celebration’ was held to usher in officially the grand preparations for the institution's Big Year.

the organising committee chairman.

Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli former Perak Menteri Besar, shared memories of his student days. He advised the students to

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BENEDIKT'S BATTLE

One man's spirited fight to save the Gopeng Pipeline



Only Benedikt Schwarzacher seemed to appreciate the historical value of the Gopeng pipeline.

Until very recently, you had to drive literally under a massive pipeline perched on a steel platform to get to orchid grower's Benedikt Schwarzacher's front door in Gopeng.

The 14km-long pipe was almost a hundred years old and its history was linked with the rich heritage of Perak. It was the bonus Benedikt took into consideration when he first came to view the area. The fact that part of

privilege was not to last. In November of 2007, Benedikt received a letter from two men. He recognised them as residents of the kampong. The men were informing him that the pipeline was to be cut up and sold as scrap metal. The notice ostensibly came from Gopeng Berhad.

Shocked, Benedikt voiced his concerns to the courier about the impropriety of cutting up something of historical

reported this to the police.

Gopeng Bhd subsequently sent Benedikt a letter claiming his fencing was "incorrect" and the pipeline was outside his boundary.

That was news to Benedikt who promptly appointed a surveyor who happened to be the same man used by Gopeng Bhd. The findings were in favour of Benedikt – everything was in order and "the land under the pipe belonged to Benedikt".

District and Land office indicating that the property was sitting on Government land, contractors moved in to dismantle the pipe. Benedikt's grant and the surveyor's report did not seem to matter.

The day it happened, Benedikt was not home but his wife and his visiting parents were. They pleaded with the contractors but their words fell on deaf ears.

Protesting, Benedikt's mother even sat on



On contractor's orders, workers dismantle the platform.

the Gopeng pipeline would run through his property proved very attractive. He thought: how many people would have the privilege of living literally next to history, day after day?

The pleasurable

significance and selling the spoils as scrap metal. The sentiments were not appreciated. Benedikt recalls the messenger having made a threatening remark which the orchid farmer took seriously. He



All that remains

By this time, Benedikt realised he also needed lawyers. They immediately dispatched a message to Gopeng Bhd.

The letter informed the company that the fencing was "correct" and that their client would be applying for a writ of injunction against trespassing.

However, by mid December 2007, the pipes outside of Benedikt's property had already been removed.

On January 31, 2008, with a letter from the

the pipe but that, too, proved futile. At 1:44pm, Benedikt's wife lodged a police report.

Two police personnel were promptly sent to the area to stop the work.

By evening, fifteen workers had been arrested but half of the pipe on Benedikt's land had been removed.

On February 5, Benedikt's lawyers applied for an injunction to prevent contractors from further entering his property.

TO BE, OR NOT TO BE?

... still the FMS QUESTION

It's been over a month since Ipoh's historic watering hole, the FMS Bar and Restaurant, closed its doors after 101 years of dutiful thirst quenching.

velopments. Trouble was, the news was not good; not hopeless, mind you, but definitely not good.

'I last spoke to the owner on March 3 but that discussion didn't get far.



Hopefully not the last farewell. Nephew with the loyal and popular FMS waitresses, Florence (left) and Iris.

The hope then was that loyal patrons could, in three to four months, resume relieving parched palates in those familiar surroundings. This now seems highly unlikely.

Renovation work planned by the owner for the distinctive corner building overlooking Ipoh's padang has yet to begin.

What is more, hoped-for negotiations for resumed operations between the building's owners and the internationally recognised former FMS proprietor Pan Chee Ein – the famous "Nephew" – have yet to get off the ground.

VISIT

The 74 year-old Nephew dropped by the Echo's offices at No 1 Jalan Lasam the other day to bring us up to date with de-

"I was in the FMS for a final clean-up before handing over the keys and he walked in.

"We had a pleasant conversation but he was obviously too busy at the time to start talking about a renewed contract with me," related Nephew.

February 29 last was the FMS's closing date. The bar and restaurant were crammed with memory-chasing customers all day.

They were rollicking final hours, tinged with sadness.

Since then Nephew has been deluged with queries on when the premises will reopen and whether he will be on hand to do the honours from his familiar stool behind the bar.

He promises the Echo will be the first to know the news – good or bad.

On February 7, the contractor returned to remove the remaining pipes.

Benedikt immediately drove to the Police station to report the contractor was trespassing again.

There, he was shown a letter from the Deputy Public Prosecutor's office referring to an earlier police report made by his wife on January 31.

No criminal action was found. The record was stamped NFA (No further action). The police could

not assist.

On February 7, 2008, the pipe was totally removed from Benedikt's property. The concrete stumps where the pipe had once sat were all that remained.

Benedikt is now claiming from Gopeng Berhad the scrap metal value of the pipe (which he wants replaced).

He is also filing charges for criminal trespass and claims for damages on his property.

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Sport

FOOTBALL REALITIES

Or, why we cannot sign up a Fernando Torres

by Steve Darby

Sometimes, this job isn't too bad. I started this article sitting on a beach in Paradise Island in the Maldives. We had won, 3-1, so life was good. But it got a bit harder later with a 31-hour journey back to Ipoh.

We are currently on a programme of 12 games in 35 days, punishing physically and psychologically. In essence, we are a victim of success as we have qualified to represent Malaysia in the AFC Cup and we are still in the Malaysian FA Cup.

Add our coming second in the Malaysian Super League. So far, we have won 6 of the twelve games and a six game unbeaten run has included travelling thousands of kilometres.

A better consultation process between State and national body would certainly be a bonus!

MOANING FOR A CAUSE

Recently, I was told I moan a lot about the quality of training and playing facilities in Ipoh.

Well, if wanting high standards is a crime, then I am a criminal!

If wanting to win and do everything possible to prepare for a win is a crime, then, again I am a criminal.

I believe it is my responsibility to do everything that is possible

to win for Perak and to provide an exciting and

Carlos has scored 18 goals in 18 games and is the second

In even better perspective it means Torres earns in a week what a first year nurse in UK earns in 10 years or a graduate teacher in 8 years!

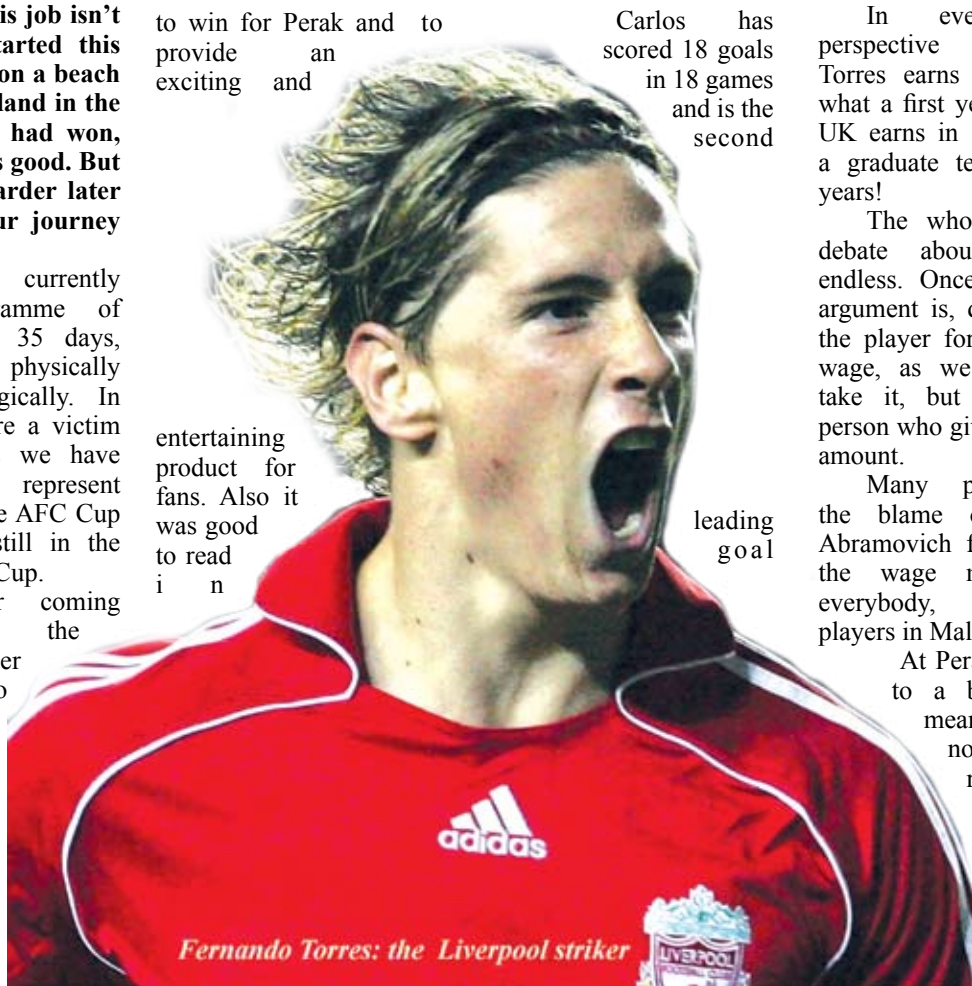
The whole morality debate about this is endless. Once again my argument is, don't blame the player for taking the wage, as we would all take it, but blame the person who gives him this amount.

Many people lay the blame on Roman Abramovich for inflating the wage market for everybody, including players in Malaysia.

At Perak we work to a budget that means we do not go into the red and we work as a business with our income equaling our

entertaining product for fans. Also it was good to read i n

leading goal



the Ipoh Echo the sad state of the Ipoh Padang renovation.

We were told in November that it would be free to use as a training venue again in December. I am writing this in late March and the Padang still looks like a bomb site.

This has had a knock on effect. Amateur games scheduled for the Padang had to be re-scheduled for other pitches which are now deteriorating at a greater rate.

Now, on the subject of fans who have made news in the football press recently. Perak had a lot of criticism about our striker Carlos Caceres.

scorer in the country. But that is a different issue. The reality is that the player has now adjusted to climate, food and playing style and is showing his true ability.

"GET A TORRES!"

One fan said to me: why don't we get someone like Fernando Torres of Liverpool?

Well, the simple answer is that Fernando Torres earns 140,000 UK pounds a week, (approx 980,000RM a week) which in reality means he earns more in a day than our star players earn in their whole annual contract.

expenditure. Sounds like common sense, but that is a phrase that is sometimes forgotten in football.

Fans have to realise the real world of football that we see on television is totally unsustainable and out of reach of any team in Malaysia.

So can we get twelve games out of twelve in this 35-day period? We are half way there. This a credit to the professionalism of the players. They have learned how to 'recover' and look after themselves off the pitch.

We only have a small squad so we need every player possible. Let's hope this continues.



Despite budget constraints and other niggly issues that affect training and schedules, Perak footballers have done well. Carlos Caceres has acclimatised and is scoring for the state. Above photos were taken during the match against Penang. Perak won, 3-1.