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Your Community Newspaper

Serving the people of Ipoh, Chemor, Sg. Siput, Taiping, Kuala Kangsar, Gopeng, Kampar, Batu Gajah, Air Tawar, Sitiawan, Lumut and Teluk Intan.

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## Deep and decidedly dangerous . . .

### How would you like this unwanted fish pond installed near your home?

Remote Orang Asli villagers didn't like it either and demanded  
action be taken against a ruthless sub-contractor.

**Read our full report - page 2**

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# When the people of remote Pos Tenau village decided enough was enough

*They wanted a meeting to correct matters . . . and got one!*

By M. Gokoolaram Naidu



Eighteen months ago, the Orang Asli at remote Pos Tenau, 45 km east of Slim River, close to the Pahang border, were promised rubber trees, job opportunities, salaries for workers and, ultimately, an equal share in future latex-sale profits. It all seemed a pretty good deal.

What they certainly didn't bargain for was the highly dangerous, decidedly dirty fishpond – nothing short of a death-trap for local youngsters – that was suddenly dumped in their midst by a ruthless sub-contractor.

## NUMEROUS COMPLAINTS

Indeed, the fishpond has been just one of numerous complaints the villagers have amassed over the way they have been treated under the deal negotiated all those months ago between the Orang

of income.

In fact, the advice that they must seek other forms of livelihood had first been provided them some years earlier by the Pengarah of JHEOA Perak, En. Zamri, and officers from various other government departments who happened to call by the village on one occasion.

## THE PLAN

These ideas had taken time to materialise and it wasn't until several meetings later that the villagers and RISDA got to grips with a plan to introduce rubber planting in the immediate area.

As the Orang Asli understood it, they would provide the land. RISDA, in turn, would develop this into a rubber estate and provide job opportunities for villagers as the work went ahead.

But it hadn't worked out that way.



Parents are understandably worried for the safety of Pos Tenau village children.

cles. Arriving at their destination the visitors found 40 families comprising a total of some 450 adults and children, all belonging to the Semai ethnic group. It was noted the local Orang Asli all lived in reasonably decent houses constructed under Projek Pembangunan Rakyat Termiskin (PPRT).

## THEY CAME THICK AND FAST

Received by Pos Tenau's Tak Batin, Encik Sentor and 20 fellow villagers, the visitors moved to one of the homes to listen to the complaints. These came thick and fast.

As far as promised jobs were concerned, original assurances were that the only outsiders to be employed at Pos Tenau under these arrangements would be back-hoe and bull-dozer drivers. On the matter of salaries, these were to be paid twice a month.

It hadn't worked out that way, either. The sub-

contractor frequently settled wages in the form of food rations. What was more, the villagers were inevitably forced to purchase rations from the same sub-contractor at very high prices.

Previously, goat rearing had been a means of income for Pos Tenau families. However, they have been forced to abandon this activity as the contractor had complained the goats would eat rubber saplings.

## ROADS PROMISED

Good roads were supposed to have been built in the village. None had been constructed to date.

Each family was promised 6 acres of land and a 50% profit sharing scheme between RISDA and the village. Neither of these promises showed any signs of progress.

Making matters worse, the villagers have no formal titles to the houses in which they reside. They live in fear that one day



A village hillside cleared by the contractor and already under rubber cultivation

they will be evicted from their homes.

Topping it all, the contractor had gone ahead and dug out a huge fish pond for his personal use on elevated ground directly behind one of the village dwellings.

The Orang Asli were very concerned that the pond's bund might give way under heavy tropical downpours causing widespread damage and even

Health, Environment and Human Resources office. Copies of this correspondence were also dispatched to Perak's new Menteri Besar, JHOEA and ADUN Behrang.

Swift action on the part of the MB and Sivanesan saw the JHOEA call a meeting to discuss the outlined problems.

This took place on May 15 at Pos Tenau's small school canteen. The



Pos Tenau's Tok Batin (village head), Encik Sentor Kemen

Asli Affairs Department (JHEOA) and RISDA.

They had been assured then that the ancestral land they were making available for rubber planting, along with the cooperation they would enjoy with a planter contractor, would provide them with a far better livelihood than they had been enjoying in recent years.

## DEEP HINTERLAND FORAYS

Traditionally, the villagers had survived on jungle products – fruit and medicinal plants – they managed to gather on forays into the deep hinterland. They well recognised that these jungle items, once abundant, were fast depleting. If they were to survive they would need to find alternative sources

RISDA went ahead and sub-contracted the whole project to an independent operator.

From the viewpoint of the Orang Asli of Pos Tenau, the appointed contractor has been carrying out his duties in an "unfair and ruthless manner". By earlier this year the villagers had become so dismayed that they sought professional help.

On April 5, a group led by the chairperson of Perak's Bar Council Legal Aid Centre and Human Rights Sub-committee, Cik Dara Waheda bte Mohd Rufin, set out to hear the plight of the villagers at source. The writer of this report was a member of the group.

It required journeying down a treacherous muddy track, only accessible in four-wheel-drive vehi-



A key player for the villagers, Ipoh lawyer Augustine Anthony



Leader of the JHEOH delegation to the village talks, En Hj Akram Chragdin

deaths. The visiting representatives quickly reacted and carried out an inspection of the pool.

## SHOCKED BY FENCING

They were shocked to discover that the installer had failed even to erect required perimeter fencing that would prevent young children from approaching the water.

It was estimated the average depth of the pond was certainly over 6 feet. The only fencing feature consisted of a flimsy structure of tree branches exhibiting large gaping intervals through which children could easily slip.

Subsequently, letters outlining the Orang Asli complaints were sent to Y. B. Sivanesan Achalingam, who heads the State

occasion saw Mr Augustine Anthony, an Ipoh lawyer and head of the Orang Asli Affairs, Bar Council Human Rights Committee, subject JHEOA representatives to a particularly tough round of questioning.

## OUTRIGHT REJECTION

Mr Anthony rejected outright attempts by JHEOA delegation leader, En. Hj Akram Chragdin, to justify the existence of what the lawyer termed "that illegal pond"

By the end of the meeting Haji Akram had given his undertaking that the "illegal pond" would be ordered shut down immediately.

The Ipoh Echo intends following the Pos Tenau story as it's certainly not over yet . . . nowhere near.



From the Editor's Desk  
By Fathol Zaman Bukhari

# PERAK'S STAMPEDE OF COUNCILLOR HOPEFULS

*Herewith a brief, soul-searching questionnaire for eager applicants*

**There's been an overwhelming rush of applicants gunning for councillor positions in Perak.**

A total of 333 seats are up for grabs. A third - or 110 seats - are reserved for the public, as promised by the Pakatan Rakyat state government.

When the deadline for submission closed on Thursday, May 22, 2008, Ipoh City Council had received nearly 180 applications. Over 2,500 were submitted to the State Secretariat for appointments to the 15 local councils in the state.

Screening the applicants will be an arduous task given the huge number involved. State Education, Local Government and Public Transport Committee Chairman, Nga Kor Ming, is optimistic that the problem will be resolved in due time. "Logistics for the inter-

views are being prepared. We have the resources," he assured.

## 8 SEATS ONLY

The 180 applications from non-governmental organisations, interest groups and individuals received by Ipoh City Council are for the mere 8 seats made available to them. So each stands a 1:22.5 chance of being appointed. Not too tempting a figure, admittedly.

I met up with one enthusiastic applicant, a general practitioner, who was not very certain of being picked. He wanted me to lobby for him. His reason for applying was his desire to serve the people.

"But you have a thriving medical business. How're you going to fulfill your obligations?" I asked.

"That's not a prob-

lem," he replied. "I'll convert my clinic into a service centre so people can see me with their problems while I attend to my patients, all at the same time."

A simple enough answer. I believe others harbour equally noble reasons besides wanting to serve the people. But at what price? Those who sit on the Ipoh City Council are paid a monthly allowance of RM1,000. They get an additional RM50 to attend meetings.

## NOT OVERPAID

Most will be attending at least two meetings a month - sub-committee and full-board meetings. So, a serving councillor on the Ipoh City Council will get an average of about RM1,100 a month. Members of smaller local councils are paid between RM500 to RM700.

Councillors are clearly not overpaid.

The days of BN monopoly on local council appointments are over. Councillors then eyed bigger things - lucrative contracts, hawker licences, prestige and other perks that came with the office. That is why some remained on the council payrolls for more than the required one term. A term on the council lasts for a year - December to December. New councillors are sworn in every year - a total of 24 in the Ipoh City Council.

For the 2008 season, new councillors will serve for at least six months ending December. Inaction on the part of the state government has taken over three months of the local government's time.

Up to the time of reporting, none of the council line-ups had yet to be finalised.

I have a few basic questions for aspiring councillors.

Are you able to undertake a full term in a hot seat?

Do you have the time and energy - since some are well past their prime - to respond to Ipohites' needs?

## MORE QUESTIONS

As for my doctor friend, does he have the wherewithal to perform effectively?

Is he prepared to *turmpadang* and gets his hands and feet dirty checking on clogged drains, uncut grass and uncollected garbage?

Is he prepared to lock horns with the "Little Napoleons" who have little or no respect for the mayor, let alone fledgling first-term councillors? And the most pertinent question of

all is this. Are you ready to sacrifice your time and energy for a paltry RM1,100 month?

If the answer is a resounding "yes" to all the questions then the doctor should be on the council. Chances are, given his waning interest, he might opt out half way through his term.

Dato' Mohammad Rafai's term as mayor ended on June 6, 2008. Ipoh is without a mayor. M. Kulasegaran, MP for Ipoh Barat, has expressed keenness in taking up the post. But can a serving MP be a mayor?

There is nothing in the Local Government Act that says he can't. Kula, however, cannot wear two hats at one time.

The debate whether a civil servant or a politician is more suited for mayoral duties has been going on with no solution in sight.

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at the UUM campus in Sintok, Kedah.

## MBA COURSES SOON

ATC coordinator, Kapten (B) Anwar Kamal informed the *Ipoh Echo* that the school has the facilities to conduct MBA courses and these would be launched September 2008.

"The majority of the students are from the clerical, technical and business sectors," said Anwar. "However, there is a sprinkling of professionals. Their presence is indicative of our courses' value and effectiveness."

The entry qualifications for the ATC diploma programme, according to



Prof. Madya Dr Hj Hamzah officiates at the ATC Ipoh branch opening.

Anwar, are a pass in Sijil Peperiksaan Malaysia and a minimum three years' working experience. Students must be at least 21 years.

## AFFORDABLE COURSES

The course fees are very affordable, ranging between RM6, 800 and RM7, 500. Students are provided reference materials and notes.

ATC Ipoh branch was formally opened to the public by the Director of Executive Development Centre, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Prof Madya Dr Hj Hamzah bin Dato' Abdul Rahman on Friday,

May 30, 2008. Also present at the ceremony was ATC's Executive Director, T. Sukan.

As part of its societal responsibility, ATC handed over cash donations to three charity organisations in Ipoh.

The organisations were Pusat Yayasan Anak-anak Yatim Nurul Iman Manjoi, Kidney Failure Agency Pasir Puteh and Persatuan Kebajikan Orang Cacat (OKU) Jalan Kampar.



A lecture in progress at the ATC facilities.

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## EDITORIAL

## LIVING WITH FUEL HIKES

After all the speculation, denials, contradictory statements, promises and undertakings the price of petrol has gone up by a whopping 40% and diesel by a staggering 63.3%

Undoubtedly this action will be followed by the predictable grumblings, criticisms and, perhaps, even demonstrations.

Reality is that prices of most commodities these days are dictated by world market forces. Attempts to assert control by nations in isolation inevitably prove futile.

The fact is Malaysia cannot keep on subsidising oil, a commodity that is consumed in such substantial amounts and which is subjected to such huge price increases. In an environment of this nature, price control through subsidies would only lead to abuse. No amount of policing or regulatory action would prevent it.

Sceptics would argue that the Government should apply the profits it derives from the sale of fuel extracted in this country to continue the subsidy policy. But what happens when the nation runs out of oil? Predictions are this could occur in a decade or so. By that time world fuel prices could well have risen to astronomical levels. Removing subsidies in a protected environment within such international conditions could well prove fatal, not only to our competitiveness, but to our very way of life.

At the social level, experiences in other countries have shown that subsidies inevitably favour one sector against another. Often it is the sector that is disadvantaged that subsidises the advantaged.

Electricity will also cost more, effective July 1, 2008. The increase will not affect household using 200 KWh a month. This covers 59 per cent of households in Peninsular Malaysia with a monthly bill of RM43.60. Those using in excess of 200 KWh per month will have to pay 20% extra.

Rebates for car and motorcycle owners can help offset the higher fuel costs. But the work involved in disbursing these rebates is colossal. The rich, as always, will have to pay more while the poor will be taken care of; or so we are told. This is the famous punch line all governments

use when justifying price increases.

Since over 30 % of economic activities are related to petroleum, a hike in its price will impact the *rakyat* in more ways than expected. The poor will be the hardest hit since their income remains stagnant while cost of living goes up. The end result is a corresponding increase in crime and unemployment rates. Inflation will go up further, distorting the projected GDP growth of 5-6 % annum. The *rakyat's* disposable income will plummet causing a lower demand for goods and services. Local businesses will be affected.

The estimated saving of RM50 billion from the reduction of fuel subsidies must immediately go to improving our abysmal public transport system. The motor car industry must be liberated so prices of cars can come down. Saving Proton must no longer be the government's battle cry.

A thorough review of public expenditure must be undertaken on a rational, objective and transparent basis, working on the principle that every ringgit of tax revenue must produce maximum benefit to the *rakyat*.

It's tough dealing with the expenditure side of government as it involves taking drastic measures to cut wasteful spending by the Government and its agencies. Yet this is what is required if we are to fix the problem. The Monsoon Cup, the Second Penang Bridge and some of the proposed economic corridors may have to go.

Efficiency (productivity) is key and that in part means cutting wastages, plugging leakages, ending corruption and downsizing massive bureaucracies.

The Anti-Corruption Agency has to go on overdrive. Such actions would require political will which may be tough for the Government to do in face of opposition from within the ruling party.

As individuals we have to adjust our lifestyle and tighten our belts even further. Fuel prices will be reviewed monthly. With crude oil price lurching towards USD 140 a barrel, it will be an upward trend all the way.

We have to accept the fact that the days of cheap fuel are over.

## OUR CONCERNS

## THE PUCUK PAKU WOMAN

*Resolute Kiah takes setbacks in her stride,  
one day at a time. She talks to ROSLI MANSOR*

Zakiah bte Shahbudin, 56, lives alone in a half-completed brick-cum-wooden shack, at Kampong Batu Satu on the trunk road to Malim Nawar. Zakiah or "Kiah", as she is popularly known, has been staying in the house for many years. It was home to her and a late uncle who took Kiah in when she was abandoned by her more affluent siblings.

The house, Kiah said, was never completed because crooked contractor had failed to meet the promises he sold to her uncle.

People who like complaining about not having 'the extras in life' should visit Kiah's "home". The one-room abode is all Kiah has for a sitting-room, bedroom and kitchen. The few utensils hanging above the stove have seen better days but she is adept at improvising. Kiah makes use of empty tin cans to store condiments and other dry goods.

The roof leaks and some of the termite-eaten planks are in danger of falling off. "On rainy days I have to cover myself to remain dry," she sighed.



Above and bottom right: Kiah sets out from her daily trip to the river bank where she gathers *pucuk paku* to sell.  
Top right: Kiah's half-completed shelter.



photographs by Rosli Mansor

There is no running water in the shanty so for lavatory needs Kiah uses the amenities at the nearby *surau* (prayer house). "It is difficult at night," she volunteered, "the *surau* is poorly-lit."

## INDEPENDENT

Kiah walks with a slight limp and her left hand is deformed. But her cheerful nature endears her to the villagers. In spite of setbacks, she is a brave woman who insists on being independent. She ekes out a living plucking

*pucuk paku* (fern shoots) along the river banks and selling these to traders at the Malim Nawar wet market. She makes about RM5 on a good day but nothing when it rains or when the river overflows. On these bad days, she has to turn to her neighbours for help.

"It's a tedious job but what choice do I have?" Kiah remarked as she wiped the mud off her bare feet. She has never owned footwear in her life. "I don't need shoes," she protested.

The rising cost of food has affected her in a

big way. Being illiterate, economics and statistics hold no meaning to her but she is aware that the price of rice has gone up dramatically. She talks to neighbours who keep her abreast of what's happening in the outside world.

Kiah sighed again and said, rather philosophically, "I have to eat less then."

Zakiah receives a monthly stipend from the Welfare Department. The amount, however, is barely sufficient for her daily needs and the monthly electricity bill which she

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**Ramesh Kumar**

pays diligently. "The *pucuk paku* helps supplement my income," she added.

She has taken all setbacks in her stride. "This is my fate," she declared. "I leave the rest to Allah."

In this land of plenty, there are still the destitute, the infirm and the deprived who require help, compassion and charity.

We may not necessarily see them as we go around, driving our cars or doing our shopping in supermarkets or eating in air-conditioned restaurants, but people like Kiah are out there.



## COMMENT

## LET'S STOP THE BLAMING GAME

And let's do away with erroneous generalisations that insult everyone's intelligence

In France, says a report, a woman is raped every two hours. During the time it takes me to prepare and eat a meal with my family, at least one woman is raped in a country that is supposed to be developed and civilised.

Closer to home, I read with disgust a report in the mainstream media which proclaimed that "women who are raped asked for it". The brouhaha about a school uniform being transparent is ludicrous and also insulting. So is National Islamic Students' Association Vice President, Munirah Bahari's announcement that, the white blouse is too transparent for girls and it becomes a source of attraction for men who are drawn to it,

People do not hold those who get robbed responsible for being robbed or those murdered responsible for being murdered. If they did, their sanity would surely be questioned. Yet, we don't seem to wonder about the minds of those who claim, rather loudly, that rape victims may have asked for it.

## INTERNALISING OPPRESSION

It hurts me deeply to see how women internalise their own oppression, that they appear to believe lies peddled to them over and over again – *if only she hadn't worn that... If only she hadn't been alone... If she hadn't stayed out so late... If she hadn't for-*



Should we start thinking of waterproofing these girls?

whether or not they like it.

What really broke my heart was the fact that the statement came from a woman.

## SHOCKING STATEMENTS

I can never forget the shock I had when I attended a meeting organised by the Perak State Women Family and Community Development sometime ago. The meeting was convened ostensibly to discuss grants for the various women's activities in the state. I was surprised when a man remarked that TV commercials on shampoos should be banned because "they showed women's hair". He went on to say that when a schoolgirl is caught in the rain, her blouse gets wet and it clings to her body. This is an invitation to rape, he declared. I interjected: did we have to think seriously about waterproofing schoolgirls then?

What was more shocking – and dispiriting – was the reaction of the women present. They merely nodded their heads as though in agreement with the guy's remarks.

*gotten her umbrella... If only she hadn't been so careless... and so on.*

Men are not mindless creatures but intelligent adults capable of delaying gratification, capable of resisting temptation and capable of respecting women. If I were a man I would feel offended if the behaviour of a few is to be generalised as the behaviour of all. To believe that men's violence against women is a natural act, that all men are abject creatures at the mercy of their hormones compelling them to uncontrollable acts of sexual atrocities at the sight of the female flesh, is a specious view of male sexuality. If male sexuality were so unmanageable then every male would be a potential rapist. Therefore, to excuse some men's violence by assuming that it is a biological need applicable to all men is being disrespectful of those who are not.

For a start, let's stop saying some women dress/act/speak/move in ways that invite rape. The view is an insult to our intelligence.

CECILIA CHAN

## THUMBS UP

## A CONTINUING SUCCESS STORY

More assistance for a vision that results in meaningful lives

**Daybreak, an organisation aimed at providing skills training and job opportunities to the disabled, continues to be recognised for its active and unstinting work. Early this year, the Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) singled it out for Corporate Sustainability initiative (see Ipoh Echo, March 16-31, 2008).**

More recently, the Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia, Ms Penny Williams, visited the Daybreak Pengkalen Pegoh premises. She was impressed with the help being extended to the 51 disabled trainees and the 36 pupils who attend the special school at the Centre. Likewise, the inmates were left inspired by her visit.

In her welcome address, the executive chairman, Datuk Sandra Lee, said Daybreak's association with Phoenix Society Inc The Australia – Malaysia Business Council and The Australia – Malaysia Institute (AMI) over these past years has greatly

helped the Centre achieve and maintain its vision of assisting the disabled gain self-esteem and lead meaningful lives.

She remarked, "I

would then arrange various exchange programmes for young leaders from Malaysia and vice-versa. She added funds would also be allocated for education and the arts.

Daybreak is the acronym for Disabled Adults and Youth Being Rewarded, Encouraged

and Accepted in Kinta. It started operating from a rented shop house in Ipoh Old Town in 1992. The centre moved to its own building in 2000.

The centre manufactures high quality socks, runs its own cleaning services to homes and offices around Ipoh. It also manages a nursery which has proved popular with contractors who need well-cultivated ornamental plants for the landscaping aspect of their development projects. The nursery is open to the public.

PETER KHIEW



A supervising trainer explains to the visiting diplomat (standing right, in printed top) how Daybreak's trainees turn out high quality socks

am sure the support and encouragement from these organisations and the government of Australia thus far, is just the beginning of a long and lasting partnership for the benefit of the disabled in Malaysia."

Lee also announced that the centre had launched the work experience programme for 36 pupils from six special schools within Ipoh.

The Australian diplomat declared that the Australian High Commission has set aside RM1.5million for projects to further promote a bilateral link between Australia

## GOING THE EXTRA MILE

ISH nurses raise funds for orphans

In a run-up to Nurses' Day 2008, the nursing staff of Ipoh Specialist Hospital (ISH) organised a jumble sale and food fair. Funds raised were donated to the Hannah Home, an orphanage in Canning Garden.

A team, led by Nurse Manager, Ms Phoo Siew Kwok, visited the orphanage on Sunday, April 27, 2008 to hand over the donation. They also gave stationery and vitamins.

In turn, the nurses were treated to a sumptuous dinner party hosted by ISH on Monday, May 10, 2008.

Dato Dr Janagaratnam, the Deputy Director, in his



Bringing cheer to wards at Hannah Home

welcome speech, thanked the nurses for the gesture that brought joy to the children at Hannah Home. Their selfless contribution, he said, had a positive impact on the hospital's image.

Meritorious awards

and commendation letters were then given to this year's top achievers. Among them was Ms Choo Yin.

Ms Choo had never gone on medical leave throughout her 10 year-service.

## RELAY FOR LIFE

31 and June 1.

The event was organised by the National Cancer Society of Malaysia (NCSM).

Ipoh City Lions Club's

The Lions Club of Ipoh City donated RM500 to sponsor 18 cancer survivors and supporters to attend the Relay for Life at Bukit Jalil in KL last May

project chairperson, Yong Sow Ngor and Sister Biro Kaur of the cancer support group were instrumental in getting the initiative through.

MY Lim

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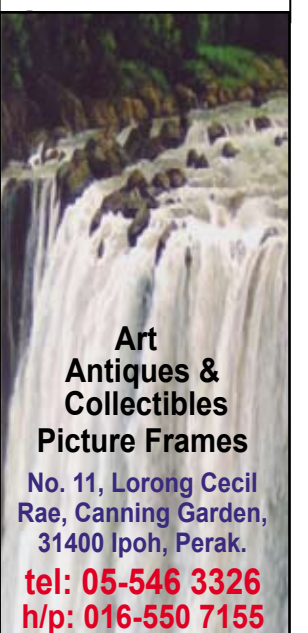
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# REMEMBERING THE MALAYAN EMERGENCY

June 16, 2008, marks the 60th anniversary of the start of an undeclared war in Malaya that would drag on for twelve long years. For Perakians this is a most significant date as hostilities were sparked by two separate communist guerrilla raids on rubber plantations outside Sungei Siput. Ipoh Echo's historian, **Ho Tak Ming**, looks back at another era that eventually culminated in the birth of our nation.

The 12-year Malayan Emergency (1948-1960) can trace many of its root causes to the Japanese Pacific War invasion of Malaya and Singapore which Tokyo launched on December 7, 1941. As the Imperial Army's 70-day onslaught progressed down the Malayan peninsula, British colonial authorities, faced with imminent defeat, formed a hasty alliance with the staunchly anti-colonialist Communist Party of Malaya (CPM).

Britain's top-secret Special Operations Executive (SOE), functioning in Singapore under the cover name, Oriental Mission, began training selected communist cadres for jungle warfare.

Initial courses were conducted at the SOE's Tanjong Balai base-camp near the mouth of Singapore's Jurong river. Other classes took place in Malaya at Ulu Tiram.

## PLANS OVERTAKEN

Although original intentions were to employ the newly trained communists in essentially defensive roles, it became obvious, given the speed of the Japanese Army's advance, that these plans would quickly be overtaken by events.

The emphasis then switched to preparing them for guerrilla warfare. Courses conducted were rudimentary, some of them lasting only a few days.

Graduating cadres were then moved into the countryside where they eventually formed a clandestine resistance movement known as the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA).

The MPAJA guer-



A key aspect of the Briggs Plan for Malaya was resettlement of those living in squatter areas into tightly monitored "new villages" like this one.

illas were joined in jungle camps by British army officers. Some had purposely stayed behind to assist the communist interdiction of Japanese supply lines.

## LEFT BEHIND

Others had been accidentally left behind in Britain's scrambled military exit from her two colonial territories. By early 1945, with the Pacific War's course turning against Japan, Britain's plans for re-occupying Malaya and Singapore gained momentum.

Invasion preparations for a return to Malaya by the British eventually saw the introduction of Force 136 jungle warfare specialists – by submarine and by air drops – to establish firm contacts with the MPAJA groups.

The communist guerrillas were provided food and firearms parachuted into their jungle hideouts. Joint MPAJA/ Force 136 preparations for a British invasion were forestalled with the surrender of the

Japanese in August, 1945, following America's atomic bomb attacks on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The MPAJA came out victorious and in the brief period before the arrival of the British Military Administration, the guerillas were generally seen as the undisputed masters of the land.

## AN AGREEMENT THAT FAILED

Following the return of the British, an agreement was made with CPM whereby members of the MPAJA would be paid RM350 each, as a demobilisation allowance for surrendering their firearms. But in the event, the agreement failed to materialise.

Harsh post-war economic and social conditions caused a rise in anti-government activity. Problems relating to unemployment, low wages, scarcity of foodstuffs, rising crime rates and widespread corruption offered fertile ground for discontent and violence. Strikes,

often instigated by the CPM, became rampant and rapidly spun out of control.

On June 16, 1948, three European planters - Arthur Walker, John Allison and Ian Christian - were assassinated by armed insurgents at two rubber estates along the Lintang-Sungei Siput road.

A state of Emergency was immediately declared by the British colonial government. Initially it was confined to Perak and Johore. Within hours it was expanded to cover the whole country. Chin Peng, the communist leader, and his outlawed party members retreated into the jungles. The party subsequently proclaimed the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) to continue with their struggle to liberate Malaya from British control.

Although it was a civil war, the term "Emergency" was used to placate the British businessmen whose thriving rubber and tin mining industries would have been denied insur-

ance coverage had the action been officially recognised as a war situation.

## SLOW TO REACT

The British colonial authorities were slow to react in the early stages. They failed to appoint an effective overall director of operations to counter the insurgency until March 1950. The new anti-insurgency director at this point planned to address the underlying economic, social, and political problems facing the Chinese community while, at the same time, bringing government control to the fringe areas where the MCP received much of its support.

Before this plan was fully implemented the situation deteriorated further with the October 5, 1951, assassination along the Gap road to Fraser's Hill of British High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney. This attack galvanised British resolve to meet the threat posed by the insurgents. The colonial government, in turn, stepped up counter-insurgency measures. Prolonged operations were undertaken by security forces in an effort to destroy CPM bases and drive the guerillas deep into the jungle hinterland and as far away as possible from population food points.

## GUERRILLAS SWITCH TACTICS

The communist then began targeting tin mines and rubber estates, believing that such destruction would cripple the nation's economy and bring the government to its knees. Chinese squatters, living on Malaya's numerous jungle fringes, were sup-

porting the insurgents with vital food supplies.

Effective government counter-measures came with the introduction of the Briggs Plan in 1951 by Lt-Gen Sir Harold Briggs, the new Director of Operations. This involved the forced relocation of over 500,000 squatters, mainly Chinese, into guarded settlements called "new villages". This government-initiated food denial operation effectively severed the terrorists' lifeline forcing them deeper into the jungles.

## INDEPENDENCE PREPARATIONS

While actions to combat the communist terrorists were underway in the mid-1950s, Britain initiated steps to prepare the country for independence. This was eventually granted on August 31, 1957.

With independence came responsibility and it fell squarely on the local leaders from the three major racial communities domiciled in the country.

By 1960, the Emergency was practically over and only scattered remnants of the once formidable guerilla forces remained, mainly in secluded areas near the border with Thailand.

As the threat continued to dissipate and more "white areas" were proclaimed, the Government officially declared the Emergency over on July 31, 1960.

Security forces killed 6,710 guerrillas and captured 1,287. Another 2,702 surrendered during the conflict and about 500 at its conclusion. A total of 1,346 Malayan and 519 Commonwealth troops lost their lives. Civilian casualties were listed as 2,478 killed and 810 missing.



Britain's Lt. Gen. Sir Harold Briggs (centre in civilian hat), instigator of the Briggs Plan for fighting the communist insurgents



November, 1958: a unit from A Company, 1st Bat. Royal Australian Regiment (RAR) takes a break from patrolling against communist insurgents.



## FROM MY ALBUM

## WORLD POSTAL REVOLUTIONARIES

The two men whose foresight and planning created the very foundations of today's modern mail services

By Quicksilver



Henry Bishop of 'Bishop Mark' fame - one of London's earliest Postmasters General.

Let me give you an interesting insight into stamp collecting. What we now take for granted as far as stamps and their usage are concerned have their origins way back in the mists of time.

The early Egyptians, the Persian Empire under Cyrus the Great and the Chinese Chou Dynasty all had varying postal systems in place.

## NOT LIKE TODAY

But, of course, stamps in the form that we know them today, did not exist in those days.

Before the use of adhesive paper stamps, letters were hand-stamped or postmarked with ink. Postmarks in Britain were the invention of a man called Henry Bishop.

Mr. Bishop was Postmaster General at the London Chief office from

June 1660 to April 1663.

## THE 'BISHOP MARK'

He introduced his 'Bishop Mark' for letters in 1661 with the published announcement: 'A stamp is invented, that is putt upon every letter shewing the day of the moneth that every letter comes to this office, so that no letter Carryer may dare to detain a letter from post to post; which, before, was usual.'

The earliest London Bishop Marks comprised small stamped circles, bisected horizontally.

The month was depicted in the circle's upper half where serif lettering was used in a special abbreviated code.

The circle's lower half revealed the day of postage.

Bishop Marks remained in general usage



An example of an original Bishop Mark. I have enlarged it for better viewing.

until 1787-88.

## HE MADE STAMPS STICK

Sir Rowland Hill, a British teacher and social reform-



A Bishop Mark stamped on a very early item of English mail.

er, invented the adhesive postage stamp which came into existence on the 6th of May 1840.

His original idea featured an engraved portrait of Queen Victoria by William Mulready.

The Penny Blacks, as they were widely known, remained on all British stamps for the next 60 years.

Fast forward. The Straits Settlements, now under the Colonial Office and a separate Crown Colony, had to have a permanent issue.

Preparations for the printing of new stamps began in 1886 Prior to his departure to the Far East, Governor Designate, later Governor Colonel Sir Harry St George Ord, first Governor of the Straits Settlements (1867-73), asked that a new stamp design be issued for the

colony.

The 1st Permanent issue, 1867-68, came into existence on December 14, 1867, with the introduction of the 8 cents orange yellow.

This was followed with values of 12 cents blue on the December 15, 24 cents on December 16, 32 cents on December 17, 96 cents on December 18, 6 cents on January 13, 1868, 2 cents brown on June 11, and finally the 4 cents rose on the July 12, the same year.

Postage stamps imprinted with Straits Settlements and Queen Victoria as the Sovereign Head announced to the whole world the establishment of a new British Colony.



Three stamps from the Straits Settlements' 1st permanent issue - 1867-72

From Singapore, Governor Ord, on July 27, 1872, informed the Crown Agents in London that letters posted to Great Britain via Brindisi and Marseilles attracted a reduced rate of 30 cents from the usual 32 cents.

Governor Ord then instructed postage stamps worth 30 cents be printed



Sir Rowland Hill. When next you apply a stamp to a letter you should remember his name.

and supplied for use in the Straits Settlements.

The orders were received on September 2, 1872, and the 30 cent stamp was duly issued three months later.

No fuss; just action

This particular stamp



is claret in color and occupies a special position in my album. Here it is:



**Perak Pioneer**  
Established in  
1894  
'The oldest and  
most widely  
circulated  
newspaper in the  
F.M.S.'

## Editorial

Sir Frank Swettenham, our late Governor and High Commissioner, has rendered opportune and valuable service to the Straits and F.M.S. by his weighty article to the Times, a summary of which was wired by Reuters yesterday. Aptly enough, the article

has been designated, 'Our Morals and other People's Money.'

As the present Secretary of State for India remarked, in one of his trenchant speeches on the Opium Question, 'we have no right to be righteous at the cost of other people's revenue.' Everybody, having the slightest practical knowledge of the conditions prevailing in the Straits and the F.M.S. will not fail to heartily endorse the remarks of Sir Frank Swettenham, in regard to the impossibility of suppressing by law the consumption of opium, and the enormous losses of Revenue which the Government would incur in its vain endeavour to enforce an impossible measure.

We are glad to observe that Sir Frank Swettenham, who is far and away a

greater authority on Straits questions, than the fanatics and faddists at home, has strongly protested against the attitude which Colonel Seely had adopted in regard to the resolution passed by the House of Commons, so far as it affects the Federated Malay States. Perhaps the new Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, has not had, as yet, sufficient leisure to make himself accurately acquainted with the constitutional and legal status of the States forming the Federation.

Though they might de facto be, to all intents and purposes, regarded as British Territory, yet their position de jure under International and Constitutional law, is that of States forming separate political entities. That this position has been distinctly recognised by the Imperial

Government, is clearly evident from the neutrality proclamations promulgated by the four Sultans of the Federated Malay States on the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904. These proclamations, be it remembered, were issued on the advice and suggestion of the respective Residents. When the position and status of the F.M.S. have been thus duly recognised, as that of Sovereign International States, it is indeed passing strange that a responsible Under Secretary of State should have so readily assented to any resolution in which, they have been dealt with as constituting a part and parcel of the Crown Colony Administrative system. Our apprehension that smuggling will speedily take the place of the legitimate traffic in Opium, if its use be prohibited by

law, is shared by Sir Frank Swettenham, who anticipates the speedy springing up of a lucrative illicit trade in the drug. The Times, in a leading article, endorses Sir Frank Swettenham's suggestion that in order to recoup in some measure the enormous losses the Straits Government would incur, the Imperial Authorities ought to relinquish the Military Defence contribution, as an earnest of their honest resolve to pay for the sincerity of their convictions. In the meanwhile the Home Government ought to make an earnest appeal to every Anti-Opiumist Peer, Prelate and laymen to support it in passing the Licensing Bill into law, simultaneously with the enforcement of restrictive measures in the Straits, affecting the consumption of opium.

## FOR SALE

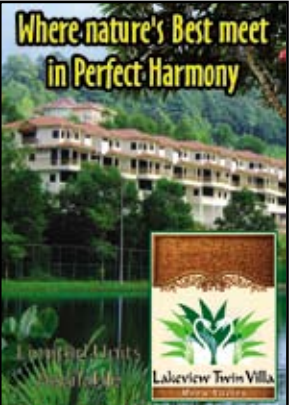


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## Musings by See Foon Chan-Koppen



See Foon

**I have recently had arthroscopic surgery on my knee in Kuala Lumpur, followed by a revolutionary treatment – the injection of one's own stem cells to stimulate growth of new cartilage.**

Chatting with the surgeon during the first injection, I asked whether the viability of my cells was affected by my age. He replied, "Well you're the oldest person we're treating with stem cells but the previous patient who is three years younger than you, did very well on them".

I remember my grandmother who was nowhere near as old as I am now, complaining about her creaking joints and knee pain. I used to think, "I'll never be like that".

After all I was an agile, active 20-something model in her prime who was going to stay young forever and never have any problems. Wrong on both counts.

Somebody once said, you either grow old or die young. Only two choices. Since I didn't die young,

the years have flown by and growing old never entered my mind. Until I moved to Ipoh.

### MOMENT OF TRUTH

One day, as I was sitting at a noodle stall, a much older woman came up to take my order. "Auntie, what you want?" I wondered whom she was

girl" to "Auntie". The rude awakening had arrived.

As part of the baby boomer generation, we spend a lot of time trying to fool ourselves into believing that ageing is optional. Media hype is hypnotising us into believing that ageing comes from the outside rather than from the inside out. We are bombarded with messages that tell us

fats we eat. And these can all be fixed.

There's a plethora of remedies in the market all claiming to put you back in the pink of health and youthfulness. You can buy creams that tighten and tone, wash down handfuls of vitamins that are supposed to be elixirs of youth, take a pill that will lower your cholesterol

up looking like Michael Jackson. Or to a lesser degree, you can walk around with a look of perpetual surprise or someone who's spent the last week in a freezer. Smile and your face might crack.

But what most of us seem to forget is that ageing starts the minute we're born. We're sent to school to learn our ABC's but we're not given lessons on ageing well. Depending on the luck of the draw. Some of us grew up in families who never made the connection between what we eat and how our bodies respond. We go through life in blissful ignorance – or is it denial? – of the fact that we too will become old.

### CAN IT BE TAUGHT?

I truly wish the art of ageing well could be taught starting in the first grade. Imagine if we could fall in love with fruit, vegetables and grains from the moment we're weaned from the bottle. What if every child realised that sitting behind a video game or watching television for hours could shorten his life. I wonder if the result would be fewer heart attacks, strokes and diabetes.

And it's not only in ageing well physically that we need lessons. How about mentally and spiritually? How about

developing skills that help with relaxing and staying calm through life's ups and downs? And wouldn't it be wonderful if we were all encouraged to laugh often and with gusto?

### TOO LATE FOR THE CHARM SCHOOL?

What if we could enter a charm school in mid-life that taught us to be patient, compassionate and kind? After all as our physical assets decline we need all the charm we can muster to get along with our fellow travellers on this journey called life. How many irascible and grumpy old men and women have we come across in our acquaintance-ship that we wished we could send to just such a school?

The greatest gift one gets from ageing is wisdom. So why not use it and get on the bandwagon to feel mentally and physically as good as you can?

Your family will appreciate it. And so will your friends and even the strangers who may cross your path now and then. And even if you're young, start sage-ing now for as one humorist put it:

Mid-life is when you want to grab every firm young lovely in a tube top and scream, 'LISTEN HONEY, EVEN THE ROMAN EMPIRE FELL AND THOSE WILL TOO.'



*Perhaps, youth is the right time to learn tolerance, openness and fun*

addressing and looked around. I was surrounded by men. My girlfriend and I burst into peals of laughter as I realised to my shock and horror that she was addressing me!! I had graduated from being "Miss" or as is the sweet habit in Ipoh of calling younger ladies "beautiful

that it is the sun causing the drying of and the excessive pigmentation on our skin; it is air pollution creating free radicals that account for all the wrinkles on our faces. Our creaking joints are due to a lack of glucosamine and our rising cholesterol counts are due to the amount of saturated

levels and you can always have plastic surgery.

The latter option is filled with possibilities that can eliminate the ravages of time. Wrinkles can be removed or softened, jowls can be sucked away and almost anything can be lifted and tucked. If you aren't careful, you can end



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### Feather Light Tiramisu



#### INGREDIENTS

Serves: 6

3 tablespoons very strong cold espresso coffee  
Few drops of vanilla essence  
100 g (3 ½ oz/ 1/3 cup) vanilla sugar  
2 egg whites  
225 g (8 oz) reduced-fat cream cheese  
115 ml (4 fl oz/ ½ cup) reduced-fat crème fraîche  
18 sponge fingers  
55 g (2 oz) bitter (dark) chocolate, grated

#### METHOD

In a bowl, mix together coffee and vanilla. In another bowl, beat sugar and cream cheese

together.

Whisk crème fraîche until just holding its shape and fold into the cream cheese mixture.

In a clean bowl, whisk the egg whites until forming soft peaks, then fold into the cream and cream mixture.

Break half the sponge fingers into pieces and place on the bottom of 6 glasses.

Drizzle with half the coffee mixture.

Spoon on half the cream mixture and sprinkle with half the grated chocolate.

Repeat with remaining ingredients, finishing with grated chocolate.

Chill until firm and serve within 1 day.

Nurina's note: To make vanilla sugar, simply store a vanilla pod in a jar of sugar and leave for at least 2-3 weeks for it to flavour the sugar.

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• By end 2009, Superstar will go into the franchise market.



## Know Your Assemblymen - part 4

# ATTENTION: Residents of Manjoi/Tambun and Menglembu/Batu Gajah

Our correspondent speaks to a BN stalwart and a DAP "newcomer"



**YB Dato Hj Nadzri  
B. Hj Ismail**

**Constituency:** Manjoi/Tambun

**Party:** Barisan Nasional

**Age:** 51: "The same age as Malaysia."

**Service centre:**

No 6A-1, Jalan LaBrooy. His centre is open from 9am till 5pm from Monday to Friday.

Service Centre Tel No: 05 506 1943

**H/p:** 012 508 7769

**Blogsite:** Available by August 2008.

**Education:**

Primary schooling at SK Padang Rengas; Secondary at SK Tun Perak Padang Rengas. He did his Business Studies at Polytechnic Ungku Omar and has a Degree in Economics from UKM Bangi which he obtained in 1982. In 1996, he has an MBA in Business Studies and is currently pursuing his Doctorate in Business Administration. Dato Nadzri is a firm believer in "Lifelong Learning."

**Marital Status:** He has been married for 29 years

and has seven children.

**Sports:** He likes bowling and jogs regularly.

**Hobbies:** He enjoys reading books on leadership and is currently reading Tony Buzan's "Headstrong."

**Life in politics:**

During his university days, he was active in student politics and was always an office member on various student committees.

Upon graduation, he joined the government service. At one time or another, he was Assistant District Officer, Assistant Director of Jabatan Bekalan Air and, in 1989, Assistant State Secretary. He was active in the Perak Youth Council and was its chairman for 10 years from 1990. During that 10-year period he was also a committee member of the Malaysian Youth Council. Dato Nadzri moved to the private sector in 1990. That was the year he signed up as member of UMNO. He joined UMNO to serve the rakyat.

Dato Nadzri has been the State Assemblyman for Manjoi for four terms beginning in 1995.

He has been pitted against Party Semangat 46 (1995), Party Keadilan (1999 & 2004) and PAS (2008).

"Every election was a tough fight," he says.

**The issues facing his constituency:**

He receives around 600 complaints every month. The issues at Manjoi are unlike those of other constituencies surrounding Ipoh. The SLR (*sampah, longkang and rumpit*) issues make up less than 30% of complaints. Squatters comprise around 3% of concerns.

He explains: "Since 1995, I have settled most of the squatter problem". The fact that he had previously been the Assistant District Officer helped settle the squatter issues promptly.

Most of the problems he receives are economic problems like children's education issues, educational loans, house loans and even family disputes where he takes on the role of "family counsellor".

**Dato Nadzri's proposal to stimulate activity in his constituency:**

It was Dato Nadzri who proposed to the previous government the re-location of the Land Office and the setting up of a shopping mall in Manjoi. The mall has not started but the Land Office has been re-located to Manjoi.

The goal was for the Mall and Land office to be a nucleus to draw activity to the area. The greater goal is a Malay city similar to what the predominantly Chinese have at Pasir Puteh.

I brought up the complaints received due to the shifting of the Land Office to Manjoi – the poor road signs, the difficulty to lo-

cate the office itself and the poor public transportation. He admitted that implementation has been slow. He mentioned a date for completion would be by the end of the year. However, he said further, it would be "hard to say with the new government".

I mentioned to him that *Ipoh Echo* had run a story about the proposed Mydin Supermarket and Gugusan Manjoi Project. It stated the overall project appeared to be in limbo.

I asked whether he could have an update on the fate of this project. Dato Nadzri responded that he would bring this matter up at the next sitting.

**His views on Ipoh City:**

**The current bus service needs to be integrated and upgraded.** The service is a social responsibility. If necessary, the government should take over this service but it must be integrated whereby the train and bus services would complement each other to provide an efficient service to the rakyat.

**Better paying jobs in Ipoh.** The only way to arrive at this is to bring in more investments. The government and the opposition "must work together" to achieve this goal. He feels that the current government should have more sittings to discuss and brainstorm this issue to achieve faster results.

**There should be more activities that would create a good nightlife in Ipoh.** Dato Nadzri agrees with this concern. He suggested that our unique cultural diversity is a very potential

selling point that should be promoted.

**Is it stressful now, working with the new government?**

Not stressful but exciting and challenging. Previously, he said, he just communicated with his colleagues and things moved smoothly. Now they have "to be explained and justified before any proposal can proceed".



**Lim Pek Har**

**Constituency:** Menglembu / Batu Gajah

**Party:** DAP

**Age:** 42

**Service centre:**

46 Jalan Trenchell, Menglembu.

Open from Monday to Friday (10am till 5pm)

Tel No: 05-281 0608

**H/p:** 012 5160 709

**Education:**

SK Wan Hwa in Menglembu up till SPM.

**Marital Status:** Married to Chen Peng Hwa, also from Menglembu. They have 3 children.

**Life in politics:**

When she left school, Lim worked as a clerk with a factory and as a tuition teacher in Menglembu. In 1999, the MP for Batu

Gajah, Fong Po Kuan, was looking for an assistant. Lim took up the post after the friend she had recommended for the job quit after four months on the job.

Lim's duties were mainly to service the constituents that came into the service centre and tend to their complaints. Subsequently, she helped them draft their letters in Bahasa Malaysia. Slowly, but surely, she settled in her job and grew to enjoy it. She adjusted to the demands of a busy schedule.

She helped people follow up the issues they raised with the respective government departments.

In time she began to enjoy the job of helping the constituents.

In 2004, she was asked to stand for election in Tronoh- also part of Batu Gajah - parliamentary seat. She lost that year to the member from the MCA by a margin of 1,700 votes.

She stood again in the last March 8th elections, this time for the Menglembu seat.

Lim won with a majority of 6,500 votes.

**The issues facing her constituency:**

The majority of the complaints that she receives are about rubbish, drains, uncut grass and faulty street lamps.

The others centre on land issues, traffic summonses and the like.

Since March, 2008, Lim has become a full time politician.

It may be hectic but, she claims having discovered that "helping people is very satisfying".



## A FAMILY AFFAIR THAT GROWS & GROWS

Mouthwatering dishes await at the end of a 40-km drive from Ipoh

These days, the mention of Tanjong Tualang does not immediately bring to mind images of an idyllic tin-mining town in a rustic setting. One thinks of mouth-watering Chinese dishes. The town is synonymous with seafood restaurants.

It is the place to go for prawns, crabs, *ikan hantu*, etc, prepared Hainanese style. Forty kilometres south of Ipoh, Tanjong Tualang is accessible by road. The newly surfaced road is wide and it takes you past large tracts of disused mining lands marked with abandoned ponds. In the mid-1920s, the areas

around Tanjong Tualang were considered the largest dredging fields in Kinta Valley.

In the old days, the swamp land at the outskirts of the town yielded an abundance of freshwater fish and *udang galah* (prawns). As tin mining progressed, the town's fishmongers had to go further south to purchase their supplies. It is a different story today. The prawns are now bred in ponds and are much smaller in size. Crabs and freshwater fish, however, are brought in from suppliers as far

away as Pantai Remis.

Sun Mee Fong Seafood

name is rather misleading as only freshwater fish and crustaceans are on the menu.

The Sun Mee was started by Wong Ah Lee and his wife Phang Kam Ling in 1971 – 37 years ago – at the very spot where the present restaurant now stands. It has remained a family concern. Apart from the Wongs, a son, a daughter and a daughter-in-law keep the enterprise going.

The prices are relatively cheap, compared to prices in Ipoh.

If you pine for the res-



From kopitiam to a thriving restaurant

Tanjong Tualang has ten seafood restaurants.

Of these outlets,

Restaurant (#21-23 Jalan Pasar) stands out. The seafood in the establishment's



taurant's spicy curry paste you can purchase it at the counter. The home-made paste, a good base for vegetable dishes, is another of Wong's specialty, costs RM10 a bottle. The restaurant is usually crowded at lunchtime on Sundays, as tour buses from as far as Singapore off-load their hungry passengers there. It is wise to avoid the weekend crowds.

**Operating hours are between 11 am to 8.30 pm daily. Call Sharon Wong at 05-2609321 for reservations.**



## YOUNG PERAK

Students from participating schools are invited to write about or photograph things/events outside their respective institutions of learning.

E-mail articles to:  
[editorial@ipohecho.com.my](mailto:editorial@ipohecho.com.my)  
attn: Peter Khiew

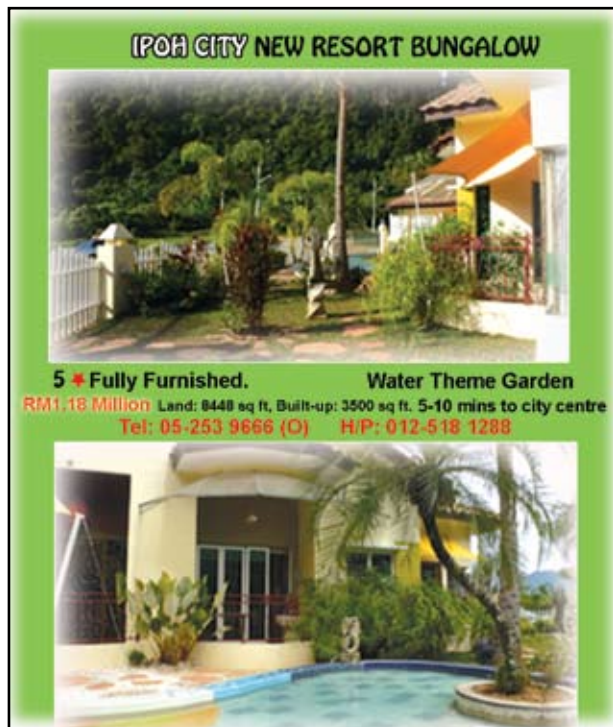


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## DIARY OF EVENTS

### CHARITY DINNER

in honour of 4 year old Adrian Anthony Viknewsaran, a leukemia patient, organised by Kelab Sukan Komuniti Ipoh Friday's Perak on Saturday, July 12, 2008 at Ipoh's Town Hall. MB Perak, Dato' Seri Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin, will be in attendance.

For reservations please call :

Steven: 012-551 3517

Nadarajah: 019-511 4202

Boss: 017-510 5154

### HEART DISEASES AND DIABETES EXHIBITION

An exhibition on heart diseases and diabetes will be held at the Tun Razak Library, Ipoh from 19 to 28 June 2008. A talk on the prevention of coronary artery diseases by Dr Inderjit Singh will be conducted insitu on Saturday, June 21, 2008 at 2 pm. Admission is free.

For details please call Cik Afiza of the Tun Razak Library at 05-255 8073.

## DIFFERENT BUT ESSENTIALLY ALIKE

Teenagers everywhere go through a tricky patch when confronted by the confusing issues of love, relationships and intimacy

**'Do you have a boyfriend? Is he handsome? Have you kissed him yet?'**

I was beginning my term as a German exchange student in a Malaysian school. Full of excitement and curiosity, my new classmates surrounded me in the canteen and flung questions at me. At the time, I had a boyfriend in Germany and I told them about him. This ended their curiosity.

One Tuesday morning at school, we sat in groups to discuss the project we would present in class. Our English teacher had given us the liberty to choose a topic for the Oral test on condition it must be a 'teenager-topic'.

My three classmates and I started talking and considering this and that. I asked them 'Have you ever talked about sex education with your parents or in school?' One said her parents had spoken to her about sex. She added that she already knew everything about that stuff and just wanted them to leave her alone. The other girl said that her mum mentioned it briefly one day and she would not go and tell her mum about guys or ask anything else; it made her "ashamed and uncomfortable". But she admitted that she would really like to know everything and has found information online. My other friend was quiet for a long time, and then she said, "It's a taboo in my family, I can't talk about it except with you guys here and I don't really want to interfere in my parents' privacy. I know they will choose a husband for me

anyway. It is a tradition in my family, so I don't really need to think of dating anyone. The only place where I can talk to boys is when I go to my tuition classes." She told us of a friend who would sneak out to see her boyfriend. She would pretend to go

us and support us in coping with our teenage concerns. Also, it is important to show our parents that we need their guidance. If such a balance can't be achieved, then the school generally should take part in terms of sex education for students. School is the

guidance. They added that I should never be forced into decisions by anyone.

For all their openness, my parents do not support the idea of a 13-year old having early sex experiences. I have been told that at this age it could turn out to be a very disappointing experience with unpredictable risks.

### A SUCCESS

Back to our Oral test: In the end my school friends and I agreed that our teenage concerns are important issues and we should talk about them in school. We were unsure about how our audience would react and nervous our teacher might "freak out" at our topic - sex before marriage. Nevertheless, we prepared our presentation confidently. Everyone played a different role: A teenager, a parent, a teacher and a moderator.

The students were interested and asked many questions. Even our teacher was surprised how well we managed to talk about a 'taboo' issue. Maybe this was one step in a more open-minded direction?

Parents talking to us openly, being protectively aware of issues that concern (and confuse) us is important. Our parents are the biggest influence in our lives. We should stress the importance of sex education in school - this could help teenagers move in the right direction. Schools can moderate a sense and a culture of openness.

**Kristin Hartlich**  
Main Convent Ipoh



shopping or study with her girl friends.

### TRANSPARENT RELATIONSHIP

I couldn't really believe these facts. I felt slightly shocked. My parents and I have a very transparent relationship. I know if I need to talk, I can count on their advice. I will always remember my parents' words. 'Love is a gift that has been given to you and this special gift is not for anyone but for someone very special to you.' When my parents first started talking to me about love, guys and sex, I admit I felt a little bit embarrassed and uncomfortable as well. But this openness and trust was the only way to a transparent relationship.

In my opinion it should be the priority of parents to be open with

place where we spend the most time of the day. All in all I have figured out that my classmates and I are in the same situation presently - together we are being guided during our sex education lessons.

Sex education in school is about general knowledge, sex risks, pregnancy, contraception and relationships. Teenage years are not always easy and carefree. It can be a difficult phase of one's life. We are beginning to grow up, to become independent and make our own decisions. We are faced with so many uncertainties.

I appreciate that my parents they did not make falling in love and sex sound bad. But they stressed that I should take my time and use my good sense when confronted with new situations. Of course, they said, I could always turn to them for

## A "MUST-SEE"

Funds raised will go to documenting Perak heritage

**Sybil** is a two-act play about Sybil Kathigasu, a World War Two Malayan Heroine from Ipoh. She and her husband, Dr AC Kathigasu, operated a clinic at No 141 Brewster Road (now Jalan Idris Shah). In the first days of the war, the Kathigasus family evacuated to Papan, a town at the foothills of the Kledang Range. At 74 Main Road, Papan, Sybil maintained a clinic.

It was at this Papan clinic that she treated Malayan People Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) guerrillas. Apart from supplying the guerrillas with medicine, she also fed them the latest information about the war. Sybil kept

several short wave radio sets (decidedly treasonable during the occupation years) and listened to the BBC broadcasts. She called these secret sets, "Josephine".

The play is based on her autobiography *No Dram of Mercy*. The story focuses on Sybil's activities at Papan. Sybil and her husband were arrested and jailed by the Kempeitai, the dreaded Japanese Military Police on suspicion of aiding the MPAJA. They were tortured by Sergeant Yoshimura, the Kempeitai district head. The Kathigasus' tormentor was later hanged.

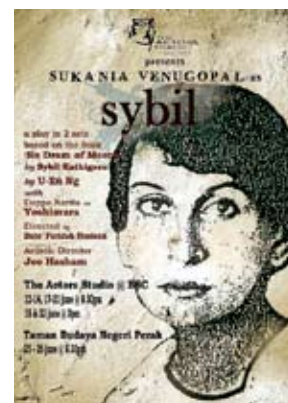
The play *Sybil* is a "must see" play for all residents of Ipoh. The press

conference for this play was called by the Perak Heritage Society chairman Law Siak Hong.

The society had actually forwarded *No Dram of Mercy* to Dato Faridah Merican of the Actors' Studio for consideration. Several months later, Dato Faridah invited Law to KL for a reading.

Dato Faridah and the play's actors, Sukania, Doppo, Darius and Ashraf later came to Ipoh and visited the Papan shop house at 74 Main Road. The house is unchanged from the way it was when Sybil lived there. The KL group also visited her grave at St Michael's Church.

JAG



*Sybil* will be staged at Taman Budaya Negeri Perak Ipoh from 25th - 27th at 8.30pm.

The play on the 27th will be a PHS Fund Raiser for their project 'Documenting Perak Heritage'. For further enquiries, please contact: 016 534 1018 (PHS); 05 547 8949 (Perak Academy) and 05 548 7814 (PSPA)



## ADVERTORIAL

# AATA - A SPECIAL AVENUE TO THE AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE INDUSTRY

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The Advance Aeronautics Training Academy (AATA), located at the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport in Ipoh, has become one of the major avenues for youths, particularly from the rural areas, to get into the aircraft maintenance industry in Malaysia.

Since its establishment in 2000, some 300 trainees have graduated from the academy, thanks to courses accredited by the Department of Skills Development of the Ministry of Human Resources and the Perak Education Department.

A number of the graduates have even proceeded to become aircraft maintenance engineers.

## LOANS AVAILABLE

Loans of RM10,000 each are available to those in need of financial assistance to take up the courses offered under the programme at the academy.

"This is an opportunity of which many parents and guardians are unaware," said AATA's principal and owner, Chief (Nig.) Dr. Tharuma Dorai

Ratnasingam.

Chief Dorai, who spent his childhood in a rural kampong in Negeri Sembilan, has been successful in the aviation industry of the country. In fact, he is one of the pioneers.

He is Chief Executive Officer of a number of firms, including Executive Jet Sdn. Bhd., Executive Jets Charter Sdn. Bhd., Chief Jet Sdn. Bhd., Air Ipoh Sdn. Bhd., and Aero Skill Technologies and Advance Aeronautics Training Centre.

## WIDE RANGE OF EXPERTISE

Activities of these operations range from aircraft insurance, sales, maintenance, spare parts, and training aircraft mechanics and maintenance engineers with flying experience and education.

Understandably, Chief Dorai is looked upon as an inspiring figure by the hundreds of young school leavers who have passed through his Academy. To them, he stands as proof that even those from poor rural areas can achieve

their dreams in the demanding and exciting aviation industry.

"The only tools one needs are hard work and a determination to persevere against all odds," Chief Dorai assures.

He ought to know. He worked as an apprentice at Malaysia Air Charter Company at the age of 17 for two years before making his own arrangements to study aircraft engineering at Air Services Training (AST) in Scotland.

## FURTHER STUDIES

He graduated as an aircraft maintenance engineer from AST in 1976 and went on to obtain an UK Aircraft Maintenance Engineer's Licence, including many foreign licences and a PhD in Aviation Industry Management.

After working in various countries, he returned to Malaysia in 1991 to set up his own aviation maintenance facilities.

The training centre at the airport was established later with just four initial trainees - a subsidiary of his Executive Jets' maintenance facility. "My aim is



Chief Dorai, the founder and Chief Executive Officer of AATA and related aeronautical firms

to create an avenue for the youths, like myself from the rural areas, to get into our country's aviation industry," said Chief Dorai. "I am proud that many of the Academy trainees have qualified as aircraft engineers and hold a BSc in aircraft engineering. They are employed by various airlines locally and abroad with good salaries and happiness."

A Graduation Day ceremony will be held at the Academy on June 19, 2008. About 60 Trainees will be receiving their certificates.

# CHALLENGING ON-CAMPUS SPARRING SESSIONS PAY OFF

Victory not "flash in the pan", says principal and chief coach

Ipoh International School students earned top honours in the Interschool English Language Debating Championship 2008 (Group B) organised by the Rotary Club of Ipoh. This is the second time IIS debaters emerged champion in the prestigious competition, which has been one of Ipoh's most celebrated forums for the city's youthful voices.

The final debate was held at the Chin Woo Hall last March. The IIS team was pitted against SMK Jalan Tasek, Ipoh. The motion: "The world was a safer place when our grandparents were kids."

IIS debating stalwarts Sophia Yasmin Yusoff (KBSM 5), Vyshnawi Raj (KBSM 4) and Yaghan Logendiran (KBSM 4) proposed and spoke eloquently for the motion.

Nichole Ashween Francis (Year 9) sat as reserve.

The champions' laurels are the fruit of a strong

our school," says Sophia Yasmin Yusoff. She was declared the Best Speaker in the Group B final.

the final debate. Many IIS students came to support their peers.

"Our victory was not a flash in the pan," remarked

Mr Louis Rozario Doss, KBSM Principal and chief coach of the IIS debating team.

"It reflects a school-wide culture of debating and public speaking in English.

"We have emerged as one of Malaysia's finest schools for the oratorical arts."

Young Perak salutes the champion debaters.

And kudos to the teacher-advisors who have inspired them to achieve excellence in English and public speaking. They are Mrs Leong Yin Fong, Mr Daniel Prakash, Mr Raj Gopal and Ms Jane Looi.

PETER KHIEW



The IIS Debating Team. Left to right: Vyshnawi Raj, Sophia Yasmin (captain), Nicole Francis and L. Yaghan.

and highly charged debating culture at the IIS.

Many classes participated in sparring debates before the school team took the floor in the Rotary Club competition.

"We had very challenging sparring sessions against other classes in

She added: "The sparring sessions were the best part of our debating experience because they challenged us to define ourselves, to think clearly and to polish our delivery."

More than 500 parents, teachers and students from various schools attended

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## Sport

## CLEARING THE AIR

by Steve Darby

Steve Darby agrees to answer some of the questions football fans have sent

I am always happy to answer questions, especially if the fans identify themselves. From experience, it's not worth answering questions from people who hide behind pseudonyms. Many Malaysian friends tell me that these can be mischievous people who just wish to cause trouble. Sadly, some of the press have written incorrect facts about various situations. Try not to believe "anonymous" sources. Real journalists verify stories. But I also strongly believe that a liaison with the Fans are an essential part of the growth of a club and its stance in the community.

I believe it's important that fans know the team is

of our players left for another club on a 50% pay rise. I have no problems with players accepting higher wages. This is their source of income in a short and highly fraught career. **Q: Why did we have a small squad?**

It was my decision to sign 18 senior players with 5 youth players in support. I felt fans would rather see players such as Nanthakumar, Khalid, or Hardi than watch a squad of 28 made up of average players.

What Perak fans must learn to accept is that we have a budget which is the same as Penang and less than Sarawak and more than 50% less than many other teams, including

our National Youth striker Fakri was taken off our team to play for the National Team on a full time basis.

Going to specifics, we lost both our strikers (Khalid and Carlos) at the same time for six games. Recently we had as many as five players down with a virus. In fact, we took only 13 players to Brunei as we had one suspended, one injured and three with viral infection. Normally, we could fill the bench with young players but we found out many of the young players did not have passports.

**Q: What about the criticisms you and the players get on the internet?**

or school teams who have no coaches. They would then be doing something positive with their time.

However, there are so many genuine fans out there; they are the silent majority.



**Q: Why don't you criticise your players in public?**

WE win together and WE lose together. Believe me, criticism goes on in the dressing room, but that's where it stays. Your job is to get the best out of your

budget, travelling costs, eliminating overnight stays, flying with smaller numbers of players by Air Asia and getting buses everywhere else.

**Q: Do you think Perak has been affected by match fixing?**

Yes! Our players have been approached and in turn they did the correct thing and informed the management who in turn confidentially informed FAM. But it immediately puts pressure on a player, and if they make a mistake cynics suggest it's on purpose. Every player makes mistakes, just look at Rise or Ronaldo in the recent ECL semi-finals.

Match fixing both saddens and disgusts

happen.

**Q: Where can Perak get better?**

I will continue to complain about the quality of our pitch (which deprives fans of good football) and the non-existent training facilities, especially for our young players. You only get better by quality practice. The facilities in Perak are a disgrace. Everybody wants professional results but nobody is prepared to give us professional preparation. Malaysia will continue to lag behind Japan and Korea until every club in the country has top class training facilities. If it's a crime to try to set high standards then I am a criminal.

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being run in a transparent and business like fashion.

**Q: Why did Keita Manjou not play for Perak this year?**

Initially, we felt we couldn't afford foreign players for this season. But after some excellent financial management by Dato Muhiyuddin, we managed to find the funds for two foreigners. We had offered Keita and Traore contracts on exactly the same money they had been on the previous season. Both rejected the contracts citing "personal reasons at home". We had to respect that and move on to source other foreigners. Keita recently transferred to Brunei for a salary way beyond our budget. Traore has asked to come back but wants a pay rise of 40%.

**Q: Did you approach any leading local players?**

Yes, we did. We approached five international players. Three told us they had been offered twice what we could afford. One

at least 4 in the Premier League. Two teams in the league have had more than 9 foreigners - do you realise how much that costs?

Let's get realistic about the football business. Until a major sponsor is found we will continue to try to do what Everton and West Ham do in the BPL. Perak qualified for the first time ever into the knockout stages of the AFC Cup. A great achievement when we concluded the group stage beating Singapore who had four foreigners playing. We are also the first foreign team to beat a Singapore team on their artificial surface.

Believe me, I would love to have two Malaysian international strikers on the bench in a game, but we cannot fund this depth of squad.

We were undone by the amazing schedule that was impinged upon us. We played 12 games in 34 days. This schedule was drawn up after the season started and after we found

Like most players, I no longer read the forum sections of internet sites. It's a pity as some of the sites like Yob4ever are top class and are obviously driven by genuine fans.

But why should I or the players read personal vindictive abuse written by invisible people? Constructive criticism is fine, is valid. The problem stems from some critics who have obviously never kicked a ball after leaving school.

I was told that one "expert" was saying how bad our back three were playing in one game - in fact in that game and for the previous three we had been playing 4-5-1! So much for the ability to read a game.

Alex Ferguson once commented on a similar situation in the UK when he said, why don't all the experts who criticise his coaching methods get off their backsides and put their knowledge to where it matters by helping kids

players and it's a complex task with so many variable personalities in a team. I find it pathetic when coaches say "they didn't listen to my instructions"... that means they weren't explained well enough.

**Q: Why don't Perak spend more money?**

If you are driving a motor bike, why don't you buy a Mercedes? **Because you haven't got the money.** It's so easy to say, get the money! I know the President, Dato Muhiyuddin, is working long hours to acquire the money needed to fund a club this size.

Most people (quite rightly) don't know the true economic situation of Perak FA. If they did they would be shocked. The recent publicity about the RM560,000 owed to the Stadium is only a fraction of the debts left by past administrations.

What I do know is that we have saved over a million ringgit this year by reducing the foreign player

me. Maybe we would have been champions last year if all the results had been honest? That's no disrespect to Kedah who are an excellent side but did bookies get to opposition teams to lose by big scores? To be fair this could be targeted at some of our opponents. My personal view is that no Perak player has sold a game. I back them 100%. As I told them we should welcome investigation because if you are innocent you have nothing to fear. If they are found clean then this should also be publicised to exonerate them in the public eye.

**Q: Are you happy with season?**

No! You are never happy when you lose a game. I hate losing; I don't sleep after we have lost! But again I reiterate every player gives 100%; they hate losing; it's their passion, their livelihood. They all want to win every game, but as in all leagues in the world this doesn't

Also, if we are to be honest, we need a larger "Front Office" including professional marketing and media officers who in turn generate funds. Our office staff are grossly over worked. It's the same story - under capitalised organisations straddled with large debts.

**Q: The Malaysia Cup?**

We have had nine players in full training for the Malaysia Cup. We have lost players to various national teams and to Sukma. I must add that I believe PFA did the correct thing in sending the President's Cup squad to Sukma as this is a developmental competition. The Coach Yee Fat has done a tremendous job with very young players.

As all fans know the Malaysia Cup is a "different ball game" and many teams change for it. Due to economics, we will be keeping the same squad but are going all out to better our final appearance last year.