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Photos by James Gough, Amy, Aduka and Rosli Mansor



More pics at ipohecho.com.my

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Feb 3 - Sultan's coronation parade



Feb 6 - Nizar outside the State Secretariat



Feb 6 - Nizar's desk emptied



Feb 5 - Ipohites gathered at Nizar's residence to hear him out



Feb 6 - Protesters outside Ubaidiah Mosque K Kangsar



Feb 6 - Boy passed out after being gassed



Feb 6 - Protesters pleading with Raja DiHilir

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Feb 7 - Chinese New Year open house organised by Parti Gerakan



Feb 8 - Nizar addressing Hindu devotees during Thaipusam



Feb 7 - Dr Zambray arriving at SMK Yuk Choy hall



Feb 8 - Nizar on his walkabout during Thaipusam



Feb 7 - Lighting candles to mark the "demise of democracy"



Feb 10 - Ladies in black mourning the "demise of democracy"



Feb 8 - Ipohites gathered on the lawn of MB's residence listening to speeches by Pakatan Rakyat's stalwarts



Feb 9 - Umno Youth organised a rally at Sultan Abdul Jalil padang to show support for the Sultan and the new BN-led state government

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Nizar: "I shall return"



Zambry: "I will remain"

And what does the future hold for us???

**EDITORIAL****LET'S MOVE ON**

"Histories are full of examples of the fidelity of dogs than of friends". This famous quote by British poet Alexander Pope (1688 - 1744) best describes the tragedy befalling Nizar and his men of steel. The impropriety, not so much the absence, of the infamous trio is the raison d'être for the downfall of the Nizar Administration.

Loyalty binds people to a cause. It is one of the many factors that unites people and keeps them true to the spirit of their organisations. In a fighting unit, loyalty, esprit de corps and comradeship keep soldiers on their toes. The parade square is the place where soldiers listen and respond to orders. Drill sergeants bark orders down the line. The shrill voice of the sergeant keeps the squad moving in unison. When he says left turn the squad turns left and when he says halt, the men halt.

In battle the same applies. The platoon commander is the prime motivator. The outcome of a firefight involving two opposing sides depends on how well the commander commandeers his men. Officers are allowed, by convention, to shoot any of their men who abscond in battle. Cowardice is a heinous crime punishable by death.

General George S. Patton said, "There is a great deal of talk about loyalty from the bottom to the top. Loyalty from the top down is even more necessary and less prevalent."

Leaders demand loyalty from their subordinates but seldom do they give the same to their underlings. This could be one reason why the trio became turncoats. Jamaluddin's and Osman's corruption cases are up for mention. The burden of guilt weighs heavily on them. Feeling abandoned and isolated, they leapfrogged. Hee's tiff with her party hierarchy is legendary. She felt cheated when bypassed by more junior members. This prompted her to revolt.

The die is cast. There is no turning back. Get the right candidate for the right post. Avoid postmen, meter readers, clerks and those of loose moral bearings. There are enough professionals to choose from. You have lost the battle but not the war. So move on.

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LAUGHTER YOGA

Laughter is the shortest distance between two people. ~Victor Borge

Move over apples, it's not your one-a-day that keeps the doctor away but laughter. So says Jeya Jeyaratnam, a laughter coach who has recently returned to Ipoh after many years in the UK.

It appears that laughter is the best medicine, as scientists have discovered. Research has shown that side-splitting belly laughs can boost the immune system and pump the blood full of endorphins – nature's own opiates and natural pain-killers – and suppresses levels of epinephrine, the stress hormone. A dose of laughter can also lower blood pressure, encourage better sleep and even tone up stomach muscles.

Faking it

"The body doesn't know whether you're genuinely finding something funny or not," says Jeya. "The important thing is that you're working your muscles, taking in more oxygen and creating a feel-good high. Even if you have to force it, the motto

here is 'Fake it until you make it'."

Very little faking is required, as I discovered when I attended one of Jeya's laughter sessions recently. Just watching all your fellow participants performing some of the exercises as directed is enough to send you into howls and shrieks of laughter.

Drop Inhibitions

You do have to leave your inhibitions at the door though and be prepared to look a bit silly. I had reservations about making a fool of myself when I accepted the invitation to join Kinta Properties staff at the one-hour laughter session. But as I watched Jeya take charge, dressed in her army fatigues, sports shoes and looking like a drill sergeant, complete with regulation whistle, I put my inner cynic aside and joined in.

And so it is that within a few minutes I found myself walking around the room, clapping my hands with fellow participants and chanting "ho ho ho" and "hee hee hee" in various levels of fake glee. Apparently, this exercise is designed to stimulate



Rotary Club laughter workshop

the same abdominal and facial muscles as a gentle yoga session would. For the next hour, she had us blabbering gibberish, dancing the twist, mowing an imaginary lawn and acting as various animals. Soon we were all laughing like the proverbial hyena. Apparently research has shown that children laugh up to 400 times a day but over the same period, we, stressed out, gloomy adults, raise a chuckle barely 14 times – proof that as we

age we become more dour and careworn. And we become more susceptible to sickness and the more debilitating diseases.

Laughter Cures

Over 25 years ago, Dr Norman Cousins in his book *Anatomy of an Illness* described how watching Marx Brother movies helped him recover from a life-threatening tissue disease. Cousins made it a point to enjoy a hearty belly laugh several



Jeya (centre) chortling

times a day. A few minutes of laughter gave him an hour or more of pain-free sleep.

In an ABC television interview, Professor Lee Berk, who has studied laughter and medicine for the past 18 years, explained that laughter increased the Natural Killer Cell activity, the cells that destroy viruses and tumors. Laughter increased a disease-fighting protein, B-cells, the source of a disease-destroying antibody, and T-cells which help cellular immune response.

Hearty laughter also exercises the lungs and circulatory system and increases the amount of oxygen in the blood.

Mumbai Origin

The concept of Laughter Yoga began in Mumbai, India when Dr. Madan Kataria, a family physician, saw the benefits of laughter on his patients' physical and mental health and set up the first laughter club in 1995 with his yoga instructor wife. The idea has now spread into a global phenomenon with over 5,000 laughter clubs around the world.

Laughter Therapy for Business

Recently international businesses have introduced laughter therapy workshops as a way of boosting staff morale and increasing productivity.

Employees at Volvo in Sweden, Emirates Airlines in Dubai and the Western Australian Government have all reported good results from laughter therapy classes. Hewlett Packard in Denmark even noted a 40% increase in sales following a year-long laughter program.

Jeya, who is also a certified health and fitness instructor, has found that laughter therapy has many helpful applications. She has used her feel-good techniques to help Scottish sufferers from the Bipolar Organisation Glasgow, improve their self-esteem and lift feelings of depression.

Locally in Malaysia, Jeya has worked with the Nursing College in Penang, Yayasan Sultan Idris Shah, Daybreak, Kami Wellness Centre, Sarawak Oil and Kinta Properties Holdings.

Ipoh is fortunate to have Jeya return to our midst where she can benefit many with her laughter therapies.

At the height of laughter, the universe is flung into a kaleidoscope of new possibilities.
~Jean Houston

For more information: email Jeyamalar Jeyaratnam: jey_jeyaratnam_3@hotmail.com

Tel: 012 538 6366

FOOD

ROTI CANAI

Why is it that the foods that are bad for you always tastes so good and the foods that are good for you taste like sawdust? Take for instance, your regular roti canai. It is made of white flour, water and lots of some kind of shortening – maybe ghee or maybe not. It has practically no (or very little) nutritional value whatsoever – but it tastes sooo good! There are very few places where you can have a meal for 80 sen? Roti canai is not usually a home-cooked food – it is always store bought accompanied



with dhal gravy and a fish or chicken curry. Some shops will also give you a spicy 'sambal' if you ask nicely. It is not advisable to attempt to make a 'roti' unless taught in the art of roti canai tossing – unless of course you want a head cover of oily dough!

Email your favourite recommendations to: ipohecho.vw@gmail.com

RESTAURANT	LOCATION	COMMENTS		PRICE (RM)	RATING
		+	-		
Restoran Nasi Kandar Pesanjung (24 hrs)	21 Psm Greentown 5 Greentown Business Centre	'roti' is bigger, flaky, 'sambal' is spicy	chicken curry average	1.00	3.5
Restoran Nasi Kandar Mahayudin (24 hrs)	149 IGB Industrial Centre, Off Jln Kuala Kangsar	texture good with nice flavour, good gravy	curry a bit watery, 'roti' soft	0.80	3.0
Greentown Salam Corner (24 hrs)	15 Psm Greentown 7 Greentown Business Centre	good fish curry	'roti' not flaky enough	0.80	2.5
Restoran Habib	54 Jln Lee Kwee Foh, Canning Garden	curry & 'roti' average		0.80	2.0
Restoran Aleef	58 Jln Lee Kwee Foh, Canning Garden		curry a bit sour, 'roti' could be softer	0.80	1.5

Our next food review will be
IPOH'S FAMOUS 'KUEH TEOW' (Kai Si Hor Fun)

ADVERTORIAL

Py Homes....THE BETTER HOMES

Property developer Py Homes has been in the property business for 15 years. It has a wide range of products from low cost homes to semi-detached units and bungalows. This is because "every level of product has a customer" so says its Managing Director Mr Chan Hoong Mun, an engineer by

profession and the key person in Py Homes.

The company was founded by Mr Chan Peng Yong, a rubber planter back in the sixties and has since diversified to oil palm cultivation and milling and property development.

In line with its motto "The Better Home", Py Homes believes that for the

price you pay you will get a better home thus making it a "value for money" investment. In its effort to brand itself it is determined to provide customers with quality homes at choice locations and good infrastructure.

Passion, innovation and fresh ideas are very important in this business. Their products being introduced

are based on the concept of lifestyle. Good concept does not necessarily mean expensive. Some customers prefer compartmentalization while others prefer open spaces and fewer walls. This aspect is also applied when designing the interiors. Giving the homeowner flexibility allows them to individualise their homes. Their Lintang

Makmur project at Sungai Siput applies an open concept.

In every stage of development they always try to give to the market what they want. Like trying to blend in with the environment. Their project at Suria 1 Avenue, Jalan Gopeng was given stronger colours while the Lintang Makmur project was treated with a timeless

design.

Py Homes believes that Perak especially Ipoh has a special advantage for the company. It understands the peculiar needs of the market. A developer's track record is very important to the consumers. The most important marketing strategy is still by word-of-mouth referrals they get from satisfied purchasers.

LETTER FROM ULU KINTA

writer's email: letterulukinta@yahoo.com

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

Merits and demerits of two airports of similar size, one in London and the other in Ipoh

One is a city in the Kinta Valley. Urban population, 630,000. Its airport is the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport which is surrounded by housing estates and is close to mountains. The other city is London, in the Thames valley of the United Kingdom. Population 8.3 million. Most Malaysians are only familiar with London Heathrow or London Gatwick. When AirAsia flies to the UK, it will land at London Stansted, to the north of the city. Very few of us will have even heard of London City Airport (LCY), the fifth largest international airport serving London, after Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted and Luton.

LCY is situated 10 km to the east of the city centre, or 4 km from the site of the 2012 Olympic Games and only 6 km from Canary Wharf, a business district of London where UK's three tallest buildings stand. Like Ipoh airport, LCY is a single-runway airport. The only difference is that LCY has Short Take Off and Landing (STOL) airplanes, which propelled its growth and success. Unlike LCY, Ipoh only operates during the day or when visibility is good. The runway length of LCY is 1,508 m, an elevation of 6 m and a grooved concrete surface. Correspondingly, the Ipoh airport has a runway length of 1,798 m, an elevation of 40 m, and an asphalt surface.

In its first year of operation in 1988, LCY handled 133,000 passengers with flights to Europe. By 1990, the number of passengers doubled. In 2006, LCY served 2.4 million passengers (79,000 aircraft movements). In contrast, Ipoh served 115,300 passengers in 2003 but subsequently went into gradual decline. In 2006 it served only 65,000 passengers (800 aircraft movements).

By 2002, LCY opened a jet centre for corporate aviation and by 2005, it had fast rail links to Canary Wharf and the City of London. Stringent rules are imposed on noise pollution from aircraft operations and because of the limitations of the runway and the steep glide slope, the types of aircraft are limited. For environmental reasons, helicopters are denied access.

Operations are restricted during the day and weekends to give residents relief from noise.

LCY is surrounded by



London City Airport

water of the Royal Albert and King George V docks to the north and south respectively. There are no covered maintenance facilities for aircraft and cargo facilities include a bonded warehouse and air-conditioned storage. Its passenger facilities include disabled access/facilities, a business centre, VIP lounge and Tourist Help Desk.

In the United Kingdom, there is a Government's Aviation White Paper which requires airports to make maximum use of existing runways. By stark contrast, all those previous assurances from both the Federal and state governments, about our Ipoh airport seem like another pie in the sky.

Again, the decision to make this airport achieve its full potential is up in the air. There has been argument, and counter argument, with various allegations and denials flung between Putrajaya and Ipoh. This does not augur well for the people of Ipoh/Perak. Our determination and dream, to fly high in terms of tourism, to make Ipoh an international hub for transport, air cargo, and the rest of it, are blown sky high.

Suggestions have included a runway extension which is impractical unless we 'flatten' the surrounding hilly areas or do a compulsory purchase of the housing land around the airport – both options being extremely prohibitive. Others have proposed relocating the airport elsewhere within Perak. And a few have lamented that as passenger numbers through Ipoh are not commercially viable, then the Ipoh airport project, ought to be scrapped altogether.

I am however amazed at the absence of disapproval and dissent from the communities living under the immediate flight path about increased noise, pollution and local road congestion. Similarly, there has been little or no objection from environmentalists about carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions as well as noise

pollution. Maybe they, like most Malaysians are apathetic to change; maybe they have left it to their elected representatives to decide; maybe the consensus is that the government will always get its way regardless of their opinions; or maybe they await jobs generated by the airport rejuvenation.

So, Ipoh airport has now seen another setback. Are the wider interests of Perak being considered? We need investment, business and trading opportunities. We welcome tourists and we are determined to improve our inadequate transport links.

In an ideal world, there would have been better options. And if we could have started again, then we would have built the airport away from hilly slopes and distant from residential areas. So we are where we are and all I can see is a waste of resources. Ipoh should not be content to accept that the airport operates mainly as a flying school.

The principal arguments are not convincing. We are not comforted by the fact that Ipoh has been chosen as a key destination for railway transportation. It is frustrating to see an airport, which has served us well since its early beginnings, being sidelined and underutilized. Moreover, why shouldn't we benefit from a well defined transport strategy of air, rail and road? We are painfully aware that the double tracking project will be ready soon and the roads are very congested. I don't see why we should lose out to airlines flying into rival airports on the mainland and Penang? At this rate, it will be many years before we finally reap more economic returns and when the recession ends, we may find that others are better placed competitively than us.

The only credible alternative, and a view that has been previously espoused by several people, is that we promote Ipoh airport as it is, that is without a runway extension, or airport relocation. The best



Sultan Azlan Shah Airport

option is to copy LCY and utilize STOL aircraft. LCY has progressed by leaps and bounds because of STOL airplanes.

Airlines that previously operated in Ipoh, like MAS and AirAsia, have maintained that the numbers of passengers going through Ipoh were insignificant and non-profitable. But what if we utilised smaller aircraft and combined this with a more workable flight schedule? Fokker Friendships or the Skyvans, Twin Otters, or the ATR-43 which is already part of the MasWings fleet, are already in use in Malaysia.

Businessmen used to fly up and down regularly, treating the airplanes like a taxi service. But not any more! Fresh orchids from Tambun, bound for Japan were once common air-cargo.

Should the government grant us the go ahead with the proposal to use STOL aircraft, then major upgrading and improvement work on the airport is essential. Among them are:

- * The main consideration has to be that of safety. There are severe restrictions on the runway length at Ipoh and this becomes critical in the event of an emergency or when landing has to be aborted and ample clearance is needed for an emergency take-off.

- * Navigational equipment will have to be overhauled to incorporate the latest instrument landing system (GPS technology) as the current one at Ipoh uses an obsolete tracking system.

- * Past repair work and repatching jobs have resulted in a very rough surface, which passengers into Ipoh in the past may recall and identify as noisy aircraft tyres when taxiing towards the terminal. Nevertheless, complete resurfacing of the runway surface will be necessary.

- * Half empty airplanes going to and from Ipoh will bleed an airline dry. Professionals and business-

men used to fly on the early morning flight to Kuala Lumpur and return in the evening. If this flight is reinstated, then KLIA should be ideal as it has fast links into the city centre.

- * As competition escalates between rival airlines and budget carriers, international destinations could make a comeback to Ipoh. Tourists and local travellers could fly direct to-and-from Ipoh saving time and money over unnecessary stopovers.

- * Airline companies cannot operate on a seasonal capacity only. We could maintain improved consistency in passenger numbers with aids such as internet booking, advanced bookings or imposing severe penalties for cancellations to act as deterrents. Improved streamlining of flight schedules have to be generated.

- * Necessary improvements will also have to be done on firefighting facilities, cargo handling, buildings, drainage, runway lighting, infrastructure and the like.

- * Annual maintenance on runways, navigational equipment and other facilities will be an integral, expensive and necessary expense.

Other Malaysian airports need not fear Ipoh stealing the thunder from them. We only want our fair share of development, maximum exposure with respect to international trade and tourism and the right to attract foreign investment.

To date, London City Airport (LCY) is the UK's leading business airport with twelve airlines serving over 30 destinations across the UK and Europe, and connections to the rest of the world through major European hubs. The similarities of London City Airport and Ipoh Airport are the single runway, runway length and weight restrictions, and limitations imposed on it by its surroundings. The use of STOL aircraft has brought vital business and growth to London.

We too could enjoy the benefits brought about by our airport which is conveniently located on the doorstep of our industrial heartlands.

It is the function of both the Federal and Perak governments to make big strategic decisions to inject life back into Ipoh airport and continued dithering of the sort we have seen is no longer an option.

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A RULER OF THE PEOPLE

Sultan Azlan Shah is all ears when it comes to dealing with the common people. Perakians know this well and they all look forward to meeting their beloved sultan when he comes a calling or when he drops by unannounced.

The 34th ruler of Perak has a soft spot for his royal subjects, regardless of their race, creed, age and political leaning. Ordinary folks, young and old, are accustomed to his demeanour and feel well at ease in his presence. When dealing with the state on matters relating to the rakyat's well-being, Sultan Azlan Shah will use his wisdom to express his judgment and thoughts.

His Royal Highness Sultan Azlan Shah was born in 1928. He was schooled in his hometown of Batu Gajah and, like all royalties of yore, joined the Malay College Kuala Kangsar before pursuing his law degree at Lincoln's Inn. He was admitted into the English Bar on November 23, 1954. Upon his return to Malaya he joined the Malayan Civil Service and was ap-

pointed as Assistant State Secretary of Perak. In 1955 he joined the legal service and that began his meteoric rise from a magistrate to being the Chief Justice of Malaya and eventually as Lord President in 1982. In 1965 he held the distinction as the youngest judge in the Commonwealth at the tender age of 37.

Sultan Azlan Shah's ascension to the Perak throne began when he was appointed Raja Kechil Bongsu in 1962. In July 1983 he was made Raja Muda and upon the death of Sultan Idris Shah on January 31, 1984, he was installed Sultan of Perak on February 3, 1984. His Royal Highness became the ninth Yang DiPertua Agong and held the position for five years from April 26, 1989 to April 25, 1994.

As the reigning ruler of a prosperous state, Sultan Azlan Shah makes the welfare of the rakyat a priority. He insists on being briefed by the powers-that-be on developments that are taking place in the state. Although not directly involved in the planning and

execution stages, nonetheless he made it his business to be informed. He dispenses advice as he deems fit based on his better judgment. This has worked fine with the administrators.

The changeover of government following the March 8 General Election saw Sultan Azlan Shah playing his pivotal role as ruler. He was never impulsive in selecting the rightful Mentri Besar but allowed sentiments and emotions to cool before making his choice known. Being the head of Islam in the state His Royal Highness is instrumental in maintaining a level head where sensitive issues are concerned. The recent edict by the National Fatwa Council on the banning of yoga by Muslims is a case in point. He had warded off negative comments by insisting that the matter needed his approval beforehand. The controversy surrounding the alleged christening of Malays by national mariner Dato' Azhar Mansor in November 2006 was also averted through his counsel. His insistence that mosques not be made a

place for political ceramah is being well received by all concerned.

Sultan Azlan Shah is a keen sportsman. His interest in sports knows no bounds. Hockey is his favourite, an interest he actively pursued during his school days. He was the past President of the Malaysian Hockey Federation.

At the special investiture ceremony to commemorate his coronation at Istana Iskandariah, Kuala Kangsar on February 3, a number of his hockey associates were awarded the Darjah Kebesaran Dato' Seri Azlanii (DSA) which carries the title "Dato Seri". This is testimony of his affinity for the game.

Sultan Azlan Shah tied the knot with Raja Perempuan Perak, Tuanku Bainun Mohammad Ali in 1955. They met when he was studying at Lincoln's Inn and she was attending a teaching course at the Malayan Teachers' Training College, Kirkby.

The royal couple is blessed with five children, two sons and three daughters.





Investiture ceremony for 25 recipients of a special award

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**His Royal Highness Paduka Seri Sultan
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D.K., D.K.M., D.M.N.

**Sultan, Yang Di-Pertuan And Ruler Of The State And
Territory of Perak Darul Ridzuan And All Its Dependencies**

On the Occasion Of



JUBLI PERAK
Jubli 2009

**THE REIGN OF
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PADUKA SERI SULTAN
PERAK DARUL RIDZUAN
2009**

From



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**THE REIGN OF
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PADUKA SERI SULTAN
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On the Occasion Of



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Beban Tanah : Public Bank Sdn Bhd

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No Lesen Pemaju: 9824-4/05-20/11/554 (22.05.2008-21.05.2011)
No Permit Iklan: 9824-4/12/05/2009/06 (25.08.2008-24.08.2009)
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PARENTING

by WERN SZE GILL

ipohecho.parenting@gmail.com



The dream of most parents is to have a "well disciplined" child. In the Asian culture, it is common that when a child misbehaves, punishment is used as one of the tools to get the child to conform to what is deemed as acceptable behaviour.

"Discipline is definitely not all about punishing the child," says Hospital Fatimah community paediatrician Dr Shan Narayanan who is also the Perak Medical Association Chairman. "Effective discipline involves the modeling of character and teaching of acceptable behaviour."

"Discipline isn't what you do when children misbehave; it's what you

do so they won't," says Dr Shan. As someone puts it, "It's 90% Prevention and 10% Reaction".

The word discipline comes from the root word disciplinare, which is to teach or instruct. Hence 'discipline' refers to a system of nurturing that prepares children to achieve self-control, self-direction, and caring for others.

Know Your Child

"In this fast moving world, both parents work in order to keep the family going. As such, today's parents are stressed, tight for time, and during tense moments, tempers can flare making the situation worse. In many homes, the grandparents and maids are the main carers. The

child is subject to different rules and expectations."

"At the end of the day, parents must stay calm and in control of discipline in the home. Sometimes kids act out in order to gain the attention of their busy parents. Parents should take time to reinforce desirable behaviours with frequent praise and ignore trivial misdeeds," says Dr Shan.

Parents need to understand their children, their stage of development and their needs. Strategies that help promote good behaviour include providing regular positive attention and communication, listening carefully when children express their feelings, and allowing kids to make choices and help them evaluate the consequences

of their choice.

Useful Discipline Tips

Here are some ways to help reduce undesirable behaviour in children:

•Use Time Outs. Have the child be alone for a few minutes to help him calm down.

•Use Words. Speak calmly with your child and work out the problem together.

•Change the Activity. E.g., if your child starts scribbling on the wall, stop him and offer him papers to scribble on instead.

•Fix Up. When a child does something wrong, have him fix the problem.

•Ignore. Some misbehaviour is done to get attention. The best way to deal with this is to

ignore it.

•Be Firm and Stay in Control. Use a firm tone of voice when you tell the child what he needs to do. Work out problems patiently as they come up.

Punishment involving verbal reprimands is used commonly by parents. However, if used frequently and indiscriminately, they lose their effectiveness and become reinforcers of undesired behaviour because they provide attention to the child.

Corporal punishment is controversial especially in the Western culture as it can sometimes be interpreted as child abuse depending on the severity of the physical pain. Nevertheless, spanking remains one of the strategies



Dr Shan Narayanan

used commonly by many families here at some time.

"Finally, none of us are perfect parents," says Dr Shan. "In teaching discipline you have to make time for your child despite your busy schedule. In dealing with difficult behaviour you have to understand the situation and deal with it appropriately. We all make mistakes, but with experience we get better at parenting."

THINKING ALOUD

PERAK PROBLEM

G. SIVAPRAGASAM

February brought not only the year of the Ox but political confusion to Perak

When Pakatan Rakyat (PR) took Perak the vision was that we were at last evolving into a true democracy with a two-party system – a situation where the people would possess a real power to make a choice of governors.

In less than a year the PR government has collapsed and Barisan Nasional (BN) has taken control of the state. The situation has generated much emotion both amongst the detractors as well as supporters of the two sides.

There can be little argument that the manner in which Barisan Nasional (BN) took power in Perak leaves much to be desired. Increasing their numbers by taking into their faction, a couple of individuals who are facing corruption charges and a lady whose reason for changing camps is not so much principle as personal, will not improve the BN's reputation and indeed may have consequences. However, having said that, PR should be the last ones to complain. They have since the general elections, been threatening to do this very thing that they have become a victim of.

Hopping to another party after being elected under the banner of one party amounts to frustrating the object of the election process – the very foundation of democracy. Legislation needs to be introduced to prevent this from happening for it ne-

gates the exercise of people's rights. The fact is such legislation does not exist and is resisted by no less than the leader of PR himself. Objecting to such legislation on one hand but attempting to implement it on the other hand by getting undated resignation letters appears to be not quite just.

Whatever the legal or moral arguments may be, the irrefutable fact remains that the three members from PR had deserted them and have declared support for BN. Instead of blaming others for the result of this action PR need to look at themselves and examine why this has happened and take measures to prevent its recurrence. Selecting principled people as their election candidates may be a good start.

The people had granted PR the opportunity to govern the state and the least they could have done was to discharge this trust by ensuring that they sustain authority for their term. All they had to do was to keep their legislators loyal. Not being able to manage their own members may reflect on their readiness to manage the state. They should perhaps apologise to the people for not keeping their part of the bargain.

After the election, other than consolidating their foundation to sustain power, the one important thing that PR could have given the people of Perak is empowerment – to make

them conscious of their rights, to be critical and be more assertive. This they could have achieved by engaging the community as active participants in the decision-making process. It would have been a momentous achievement. Not only did they fail to do this but have evidently excluded from this process even those that shared power with them. It is amazing the change that comes over people once they get into positions of power.

Today PR needs to realise that all they have lost is the power to govern. They still command in the legislature a serious number of members enabling them to be a most effective opposition. After all it was not as if they were returned with an overwhelming majority at the last elections. The difference between PR and BN in reality was marginal and could very well have turned out the other way. Before the general elections their objective was to deny BN a two-third majority and it is no secret that the election result was a major surprise.

Despite their surprise and differing policies amongst them, it was quite remarkable how they managed to organise themselves to form the government. In spite of their loss of power recently their achievement has delivered to the people an alternative and this is what is significant and needs to be cultured. Future generations

will not remember nor care which political party was in power at what period. But what will be remembered will be the time when the political landscape changed.

It may be true that the current change could have been brought about by a no-confidence vote at a state legislature sitting but when will the session be called and at that sitting will the three 'independents' be allowed to vote and who will govern until the session takes place. Let's face it BN whether by fair or unfair means now has the numbers. It must not be forgotten that after the elections whilst BN did not attain clear majority they did have the most number of legislators in the assembly and PR at that time was nothing more than a loose association structured not so much as to take power but to get as many of them as possible elected. It is not a case of PR having a massive majority losing its power but more a case of power shift between two parties of almost equal strength. In the circumstances, dissolution with the probability of uncertainty and instability may not be the most prudent course.

All their current action – insisting that they are still the legitimate government and going on road shows does not help the democratic cause and may even prove counter-productive to their objective in the long term. They

need to be pragmatic and demonstrate responsibility.

What the people want more than anything else is peace and stability, an opportunity to lead a decent life and a future for their children – basic needs that are currently under threat by the current global economic downturn. Creating instability will only go to compound the situation. What they need to do immediately is to work with

the current government to ensure that the interest of the people take priority. The government too need to reach out and engage the opposition members in their efforts.

For the future PR needs to reorganise themselves into a force. They need to bring into their fold not only people who are informed, knowledgeable and capable but who possess honour and integrity.

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YOUNG PERAK

by PETER KHIEW

Teachers and students from schools are invited to write about their respective institutions of learning.

E-mail articles to:
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TEA CEREMONY Foreign students adopted



Chan posing with the exchange students



Judith Sierp from Germany serving tea to her "father" Ho Yeong Song

It has been a tradition with SMJK Poi Lam to celebrate Chinese New Year with everyone, students, teachers, lab assistants, gardeners and office workers, irrespective of race.

Principal, Chan Weng Keong, said the approach has been adopted by the school as a form of education in Chinese customs and tradition for the stu-

dents.

"By organising this event, students, teachers and support staff of all races, who do not celebrate Chinese New Year, would be able to appreciate the significance of the lunar new year," he said.

Students came dressed in traditional costumes of all races.

Some brought bouquets and colourful um-

FREE MEDICAL SCREENING

A meaningful learning experience

It was a learning experience for 36 nursing students from Masterskill Ipoh Campus when they attended to some 3,000 people at its booth during Thaipusam celebration in Ipoh on February 8.

The trainee nurses conducted free medical check-ups for the throng of devotees visiting their booth.

Mr. Nitthiyanathan Lachumanan, marketing manager of Masterskill College of Nursing & Health – Ipoh Campus, said that the college had

also dispatched a similar team to Batu Caves.

"Providing medical assistance is one of the college's corporate social responsibilities. We have acquired two state-of-the-art ambulances for this purpose," he said. The college, said Nitthiyanathan, provided scholarship and donations worth over RM50 million.



rellas.

Members of the school's Wushu Club put up a robust lion dance and martial arts performance.

Former student Teoh Mei Sim show-cased her Chinese calligraphy talent. Teoh, whose ambition is to be an accountant, bagged an award at the Japan Open International Calligraphy Competition recently.

Five foreign exchange students under the AFS intercultural programme were "adopted" by host families.

They underwent the customary acceptance ritual of a tea ceremony between the students and their adoptive parents.

The students stayed with their Chinese parents for a week during Chinese New Year.



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Its facilities, other than the gym, include workout classes like aerobics (hi/lo impact), step, jazzercise, cyclorobics, butts & guts tone zone amongst others. Extras include rolfing (alignment massage), kids room, snack bar, facial and skincare treatment and showers and lockers. Its almost like a Fitness Hypermarket.

By signing up with the gym one can enjoy the variety of facilities available, as it allows you to participate in the various classes as you wish.

Fitness Junction is currently on a recruitment exercise offering a joining fee of RM60 only. In these times it is a good investment to enable mind and body to have fun and achieve fitness in a warm and friendly environment.

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Address: 2, Jalan Kelab Golf, 30350 Ipoh, Perak



OUR CONCERN

BAZAAR OR BIZARRE

What actually do they want? A bazaar in its original refinement or simply something bizarre?

It was fascinating to learn about the public hearing held recently to revive the Yau Tet Shin Bazaar. Some 400 people attended the meeting at Syuen Hotel Ipoh. There was apparently agreement on two matters – the bazaar be restored as Ipoh's icon and that it maintains its unique octagonal shape. No misunderstandings there!

You may wonder why I found this fascinating, but that is really simple for you cannot restore something that has been completely demolished, nor can you maintain a shape that is no longer there. Surely what they really mean is to rebuild the bazaar in the same shape and style as it was. That would meet the above agreement completely.

But even that was not so, because there was then talk of a contest for local and foreign architects to come up with a winning

design for the bazaar and of a multi-storey building with all manner of facilities including a giant greenhouse filled with flowers. Whatever happened to the idea of a restored Yau Tet Shin bazaar?

Now perhaps it is time to remind readers about the original and popular bazaar which bore the name of the famous miner and entrepreneur who developed Ipoh New Town in 1909. The bazaar was built to replace a sprawling and dilapidated market that was never very successful. In 1960, the Ipoh Town Council invited architects throughout Malaya and Singapore to submit designs for a proposed Yau Tet Shin Market and Shopping Centre (yes a contest!).

"The winning design, based on the requirement that 'each shop lot trader should have equal opportunity' and submitted by Architect Booty Edwards

& Partners, was constructed at a cost of \$500,000 and opened in 1962. It was a circular block described as having a projecting shell roof and balcony terminating in two gradual ramps. Located on Cowan Street it soon became a landmark known to the locals as *Pasar Bulat* (the circular market) or *pat-kok lau* (octagonal villa)" *.

Although famous throughout Perak and further afield for its range of suitcases and travelling bags, it also had three Chinese restaurants (the most famous named Chow Kee), record shops, an ice cream parlour and stalls selling Perak's famous pomeloes and groundnuts. The few tourists that we enjoyed in those days invariably found their way there.

Now may I suggest that those driving this project make up their minds exactly what they



Pasar Bulat circa 1979

want. Do they want a Yau Tet Shin look-a-like bazaar with a range of local products and food with 'equal opportunity' for all as the meeting seemed to agree, or do they want something akin to a multi-storey 'Life Centre' with a wide range of performing arts, a convention centre, an aquarium, a cooking school, and the giant greenhouse etc., as suggested.

The headline in The Star suggests they want their bazaar back again, but the meeting sugges-

tions seemed far more bizarre, sited as it would be 'midst the shophouses of Ipoh Town' and bearing no relationship to the firm agreement made at the meeting for a restored octagonal bazaar. I wait in anticipation for the outcome.

* Adapted from the book "Ipoh: the Town That Tin Built" published for the Ipoh Municipal Council in 1962.

WR

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IPOH IN BRIEF

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LEGITIMACY



Perak Indian Chamber of Commerce President, A.M.S. Yegambaram, announced that his faction is the legitimate organisation approved by the Registrar of Society. He produced documents to substantiate his claim. The splinter group, headed by B.K. Kumar, is not recognised by the Registrar and, therefore, does not represent the Indian business community, said Yegambaram. The Chamber will appeal to the state government to create a fund worth RM10 million to provide micro-credit facilities to those in the community wishing to venture into business.

USHERING NEW YEAR



It has become customary for Ipoh's leading photo studio, Chan Sam Lock Photo and Bridal Palace, to usher in the Chinese New Year with a feast and a lion dance. The Year of the Ox said Chan Boon Chin, the managing director, was no exception. He had invited over 500 guests, most of whom were his regular customers, to join in the merriment. "I believe in giving rather than just taking. Keeping my customers happy is important in this very competitive business," he said. The lion dance performance, held a couple of days after Chinese New Year, was all part of the ritual to bless the premises and to ensure continued prosperity.

A NOSTALGIC TRIP



Twelve former members of The Loyal Regiment, North Lancashire, whose battalion was stationed in Ipoh during the Malayan Emergency between 1952 to 1955, took a trip down memory lane recently. Their return was made possible through the efforts of writer and ex-member of the battalion, Freddy Hudson, and his acquaintances in Ipoh. The veterans, in their early seventies, are still alert and sprightly. Their wish to visit their old camp was fulfilled when they were taken to Kem Syed Putra (Tambun Camp) on a day trip. The visitors were greeted on arrival by Lt-Col Firdaus Kuah, the Commanding Officer 2nd Battalion Royal Ranger Regiment. Firdaus took them on a guided tour of the battalion's survival village. The village has much to offer - traps to snarl wild animals, edible plants and medicinal herbs. On the way out the old timers stopped by the Gurkha cemetery to pay their respects.

ACROBATIC NIGHT



Ipoh City and Country Club ushered in Chinese New Year with a bang. The management brought in an acrobatic troupe from China specially for the occasion, which was held at the club's lobby on February 1. Members, staff and guests were enthralled by the Chinese acrobats and magicians. They also witnessed a lion dance performed by the Ma Ching Cultural Society of Ipoh. At the end of the show Club Chairman, Tan Sri Yom Ahmad, took to the stage and presented angpows to all the performers.

THE HoSt @ HORLEY STREET



Another hotel will be erected in Ipoh within the next 24 months. It will be named the HoST, as it is located at the junction of Horley Street and Jalan Veerasamy. It will be a joint-venture project between MBI and developer, Cita Hidup Sdn Bhd. When completed it will have a 3-storey shop lot and an 8-storey hotel. The hotel is located close to the Kinta Riverfront. Its presence will help enhance tourism activity at the heart of the city as well as improve property values. The announcement was made during a signing ceremony recently. Mayor Roshidi Hashim signed on behalf of MBI while Cita Hidup Sdn Bhd's Chairman, Dato' Dr Abdullah Fadzil Che Wan, inked the document on behalf of the developer.

GUESS THE NUMBER



Everyone held their breath when a total of 2,732 mandarin oranges were filled into the cargo bed of a Mitsubishi Triton Lite. Dealer and principal of Ipoh-based F.A. Automobiles, Freddy Goh Choon Liang, said that the cargo bed could take over 4,000 oranges when filled to the brim. He came up with the novel idea when discussing with colleagues on ways to attract buyers to acquire the pick-up model. A competition to guess the right number of oranges was held at the showroom recently. The winner who guessed the right number of fruits walked home with a 21-inch colour television. He estimated a total of 2,688 oranges, 44 short of the original number. The guessing game was judged by four independent judges including two from Ipoh Echo. Visitors were entertained to luncheon and yee sang before commencement of the competition.

A DESERVING BREAK



Consultants and staff of Hospital Pantai Putri Ipoh took time off to entertain some very special guests on February 2 in conjunction with Chinese New Year. Some 47 orphans from Precious Gift Home and Rumah Maahad Darul Salam were feted and entertained to a lion dance performance. The CEO of Pantai Putri Ipoh, Dr Dirshaad Ali, welcomed the guests and later presented them with angpows.

REPORT AGAINST NEW MB



A report was filed at the Perak branch of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission on February 12 by the state DAP leaders. The report cited the new Menteri Besar, Dato' Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir, for abusing his power by appointing three non-elected politicians and one state assemblyman to the posts of advisors with the status of executive councillors. There are no such provisions in the state constitution for such appointments, said the DAP leaders. The appointments which come with remunerations and related perks will cost the state treasury almost RM 1 million a year. "This is a waste of public money," said Nga Kor Meng, Perak DAP Secretary.

PEAK SEASON BLUES



One of the attractions that holiday makers looked forward to during the recent festive holidays was taking a train ride to Kuala Lumpur and back. Many did just that as some had never been on a train before. For Fong Poh Kuan (MP for Batu Gajah) and her husband, it was to try out the new service. However, her efforts proved futile as purchasing tickets was too time consuming. Only one ticket counter was opened. The reason given was staff shortage. This was confirmed by KTM Intercity Executive Officer, Sabri Muhammad. According to Sabri, new staff, currently undergoing training in Batu Gajah, would only be available on March 1. Another grouse was the ticketing online system. It was slow and also erratic. This problem would be addressed said Corporate Communications Officer, Shariza Embi. KTM had started a weekend service effective January 24. The KL-Ipoh shuttle service now operates 7 days a week.

LETTERS TO EDITOR



Send your letters to the Editor Ipoh Echo 1, Jalan Lasam, 30450 Ipoh or fax to **05-2552181** or email to ipohecho.fzb@gmail.com. Letters must have writer's full name, address and phone number. A pseudonym may be included.

ODE TO TAMBUN ROCK PAINTING

As I crested the little ridge my heart was pounding a crescendo in my chest, not because of the record time I bounded up the steps, but after years of asking and searching, I'm about to finally come face to face with hitherto Malaysia's most important and remarkably enigmatic rock painting. Awash with anticipation and adrenalin rush, I stood rooted in awe at the majestic tableaux of ancient paintings purported to be inked at least 2000 years before. As my eyes focused on each image, I realized that in many instances there are traces of faint shapes lying underneath. When I peered deeper into the superimposed shapes, familiar images of local fauna began to emerge like apparitions across the chasm of time and rejuvenate the spirit of the place. The manner and style

in which the images were executed, including the solid forms alongside the 'x-ray' skeletal versions, and the apparently different weathering and superimposition of images seem to suggest that this site was utilized over a prolonged span of time and perhaps even by different groups of people.

Ever since my first trip to the site, subsequent visits have been gripped with apprehension and tinged with anxiety that this priceless and important heritage could be facing imminent destruction in the name of progress, development or even more ironically, conservation efforts.

The main charter of museums and antiquities is undoubtedly the preservation and conservation of historical sites and artifacts for research, presentation and education to benefit community and society. The objective would be

to create heightened sense of awareness amidst a critical mass of concerned citizenry who would be ideally beholden to step forth as stakeholders of these national treasures. Museums with their controlled and secured environment are the ideal vehicles for the preservation of priceless artifacts, but the removal of these items from their original locations at once diminishes the holistic significance of the sites and adjacent localities within a historical enclave. Rock paintings and megaliths are also not conducive to relocating and thus present unique challenges to their preservation. Certainly this is the case with the Tambun rock cliff paintings. Thus it is imperative that the immediate surroundings are secured as buffers against encroaching activities that will cause irreversible and untold damages. Even remote activities like quarrying can

cause earth movements and the generation of noxious gases and substances that will jeopardize these priceless relics.

Although it is heartening to note that local authorities like MBI and JWN are taking steps to promote the Tambun rock cliff paintings, priority should be made to secure the site first before promoting it, which will inexorably accelerate the degradation of the site.

Most archaeological sites and its surroundings are fragile and cannot sustain busloads of visitors trampling about in an uncontrolled manner. Humidity and carbon dioxide from respiration will literally erode the paintings. It would also be a fatal mistake to improve accessibility to hitherto unassailable locations as it will place the artefacts at the peril of curious hands and intentional vandalism.

Conservation works like the construction of footpaths, signage and amenities often do more harm than good especially when these are done ad hoc. I may sound condescending but if the artifacts alone are not reason enough to trudge up the hill, visitors may turn their attention on the surrounding environs and devise their own entertainment which may culminate in vandalism.

Already graffiti has defaced swaths of the rock face, some menacingly close to the actual ancient paintings. Fragile residual artefacts yet un-assessed, lying about near the ledges, have been irretrievably turned into dust beneath hordes of trampling feet. Piles of sand, construction material, and the movement of heavy machinery will further aggravate damages to undiscovered treasures that could very well slumber inches below the present surface.

It is the fervent hope of many that the local and federal authorities fan off the passion of local heritage societies and academia in executing conservation programmes that live up to the charter of protecting priceless artefacts for the benefit of societies, present and future. It is ironic that left on its own, the rock cliff paintings of Tambun and its environs have endured a couple of millennia, and most likely to last just as long into the future, but with misguided and haphazard conservation efforts, it is unlikely to last beyond the decade.

It is with a heavy heart and forlorn gaze as I took my leave of the site. I know not if the paintings will hold their own until my next sojourn, or perhaps they too will take after their artists and vanish into the mists of time and place.

Cheah Soon Tatt, Penang

MOTHER NATURE

I refer to your feature "In The Shade of the Old Tropical Trees" (Ipoh Echo Issue 64) and where the writer decries the indiscriminate felling of tropical trees. In the last paragraph, she expressed the wish that trees could talk. Well, if any one of the decade or century old trees that have been cut down could talk, I believe this is what it would say.

"I truly was an awesome piece of Nature's handiwork. You could not stop raving about the majesty and beauty of my countenance. You enjoyed countless hours of pleasure and happiness under the soothing breeze and cooling shade of my leaves.

And just as you could count on me never to disappoint you, I also thought I could count on you if anything were to happen to me.

When the first engineers came to survey the area and said they wanted to build a road and I was in the way, I thought you would come and tell them that there was no way you'd let them chop me down.

And when they cleared the grass and moved the bulldozers in to dig the fresh earth and pave it with stones, still I hoped you would tell your family, relatives, friends, and anyone you could get hold of. And if none of them were willing to lend a hand, still I was sure you would let no venue unexplored and

no stone unturned to save me.

And even when the chain saw blasted through the air and I knew my time was near, even then I thought you would put yourself between the steel of the saw and the warmth of my bark so that I could live. Even then I did not want to believe that you would not lift a finger to save me. You said you loved me, but you let me die."

There used to be a row of majestic trees which lined the road at the junction of the old Tambun Road, and Tiger Lane. Besides being beautiful, the trees provided protection and cooling shade to the Mahkota Wira Condominium. This par-

ticular property used to be an exclusive place of residence and its value was derived also from the magnificent trees which stood right in front of the apartments.

When the trees were cut to facilitate the construction of the flyover and to install the traffic lights, the Mahkota Wira apartments were suddenly exposed to the noise and danger of traffic on a main road. The market value of the apartments fell and residents reacted either by decreasing the rent or selling out and moving to a different area.

Although these residents might have been unhappy about the situation, I wonder if they actually took any steps



to see if there was a way the flyover could be built without felling the trees as a casualty of the development. Residents probably assumed that nothing could be done and that the trees could not be saved

anyway.

The point is – you can be sad and sorry, feel alarmed, shocked and outraged, but feelings never change anything. Action does.

Marisah Abdullah, Ipoh



ANDERSON SCHOOL IPOH

Thank you for featuring Anderson School in Ipoh Echo Issue 67. For the past months I have been in touch with former Andersonians while on my trip to Australia and New Zealand.

The recent being the Chinese New Year celebration at the Club, PJ having

yee sang and karaoke with Caroline Lee (Wong Mee Yong), Lee Ean Keong, Steven Yen Siew San, Kok Wai Sum, Ho Gan Sum, Guru Sagoo and spouses.

I have not met them for over 39 years and what a surprise when I found all are looking fit and ladies looking lovely without a spot of a wrinkle, or being toothless granny and grandpa.

Lee Ean Keong (a pilot) and Kok Wai Sum still maintained their athletic physiques.

Caroline Lee is having a hard time keeping "wags" at bay at each of his port of call.

We had a fine time tossing yee sang and wishing everyone good health and longevity. During the karaoke session, Kok Wai Sum was very bashful and

we had to entice and coerce him to sing "Mary Had a Little Lamb" and "Baa Baa Black Sheep".

We ended in the wee hours of the morning just like the good old days in "Staying Alive" and sang the Anderson School anthem, "To Strive, To Seek, To Find and Not To Yield".

S K Ong, Kuala Lumpur



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Hot and Cold

IPOH FACTS AND FANCIES

by HO TAK MING



KEEPING FAITH IN IPOH

We should credit these colonial officers for keeping faith in Ipoh. Without their foresight Ipoh would have languished far behind

The early British authorities did not know what to do with Ipoh. They could not countenance the aspirations of a town they regarded as an unruly mining camp, so unlike the official towns that they had created, such as Taiping, Batu Gajah or even Kuala Lumpur. The conventional wisdom then prevailing in official circles was that the tin in the Kinta Valley would be worked out in ten or, at the most, twenty years' time.

Ipoh had sprung up like a mushroom overnight, and like a mushroom, could wither away and die just as quickly as soon as the tin in its environs was worked out. The Government was thus reluctant to invest it with public buildings of architectural splendour.

The only such buildings built before the First World War were the Railway Station and the Town Hall-Post Office complex, and that, only as a compensation for rejecting the town's petition in 1909 to have the

district capital transferred from Batu Gajah, and to have Lumut developed as its seaport, with a railway connection.

Only a handful of the British had faith in Ipoh. The first of the faithful was William Cowan, the Protector of Chinese, Perak. He had been associated with the town since 1883, when the country was in its infancy and Kinta on the verge of bankruptcy. He had faith in the unruly Chinese mining coolies, who were rushing in to work the tin mines, and who could just as easily have turned the Kinta Valley into a place of anarchy, like Larut was only a decade earlier. By his fair treatment and concern for their welfare, he earned their trust. In gratitude, they called him *Tuan Kawan*. Because of the continual influx of Chinese mining coolies, by the early years of the twentieth century, the Chinese formed eighty percent of the population of Ipoh. At a farewell dinner given to William Cowan in 1904 on the eve of his depar-

ture from Ipoh to take up an important appointment as Imperial Chinese Immigration Agent in Hong Kong for the recruitment of labour to South Africa, he said, "If it were not for the Chinese, Ipoh would be non-existent and the FMS would have been a trackless waste."

When Rev W.E. Horley came to Ipoh in June, 1895 to start the Anglo-Chinese School, the District Magistrate, R.D. Hewett, told him that if he wanted to start an English school in Kinta, it should be at Batu Gajah, the district capital and up till then the principal and most important town in Kinta. The Government obviously had doubts about the future of Ipoh. However, Rev Horley had more faith in Ipoh than the Government. His faith was justified when Ipoh rose rapidly to become the second city of the Federated Malay States, and the Anglo-Chinese School one of the greatest schools in the country.

R.D. Hewett's scepticism of the viability of Ipoh was shared by every-

one in any position of authority, with the exception of Ernest Birch, the British Resident of Perak from 1904-11. He had the greatest faith in Ipoh. It was on his advice that Yau Tet Shin built New Town. To build a complete town in the face of the general view outside that Ipoh would fade out of existence as soon as the tin in the Kinta Valley was worked out, required courage.

The old towkay, however, was a man of both courage and foresight. When New Town was completed in 1908 in the midst of a great slump in the price of tin, the majority of the acres of new shophouses stood empty for months. It was an item of news to record that "another shophouse in the New Town has been occupied" even though the rent was only \$15 per month. As the price of tin recovered, New Town slowly filled up. If not for Yau Tet Shin's complete lack of English, *Sun Kai Cheong* ('New Town') might well have been known as Birchtown today.

Ernest Birch greatly resented control from Kuala Lumpur. He likened Federation merely to a "business arrangement for the better administration of the four States (of Perak, Selangor, Pahang and Negeri Sembilan)". Federation was brought in initially (in 1896) to bring an end to the quarrels between the four British Residents who each and all desired to be little kings in their own States.

However, the choice of Kuala Lumpur as Federal capital was an unmitigated disaster for Perak. Ipoh was then the only town to pose a rivalry to KL (Taiping was already past its heyday, and no longer a threat). When he first visited Ipoh as British Resident, Ernest Birch made a prophecy to the townspeople that Ipoh would develop into one of the most important towns in the FMS – if not the most important town.

Ernest Birch did not anticipate the machinations of the High Gods in the Federal Capital (or the Federal Octopus, the way

it grabbed everything for itself). For years and years after Federation, KL was developed disproportionately to all the other towns in the FMS, Ipoh included. And that too, out of the Federal coffers to which Ipoh contributed the most! The High Gods promised to make Ipoh the Commercial Capital of the FMS, while KL remained the Official Capital. But nothing came out of that promise. All the things that Ipoh asked for – the transfer of the district capital from Batu Gajah, the development of a seaport at Lumut with railway connections to Ipoh, the transfer of the State capital from Taiping – things that would indeed make Ipoh the Commercial Capital of the country, were not given.

The ambitions of Ipoh before the First World War, when it was at the peak of its prosperity from tin, were thwarted by Kuala Lumpur. Because KL did not keep faith with Ipoh, the consequences for the tin mining capital of the country in the post-war years would be disastrous.

CHEERS TO THE AGED

A corporate giant's responsibility to the needy and the aged

Residents of the Simee Home For The Aged had reasons to smile for a special occasion. A lion dance performance, acrobatic and martial arts displays were arranged for the benefit of the inmates ranging in age between 65 to 99 years old.

After the 10-minute performance, they joined the organisers in the symbolic tossing of the *yee sang*, welcoming another auspicious lunar year before being treated to a sumptuous luncheon.

The treat was given by corporate giant, F&N Coca-Cola (M). On hand to entertain the inmates was, Dato' Kamal Harun, National Corporate Affairs Manager.

"These are some of the special moments in life that we should not take for granted as there are those who don't have the opportunity to celebrate such festivities with their loved ones," he said.



Dato' Kamal later gave ang pows to the residents and donated money to the home. Each year the leading soft drink manufacturer celebrates Chinese New Year at a designated institution for the aged in the country. This is its second visit to Ipoh. The first was to the Salvation Army Perak Home for the Aged in 2005.

PK



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COMMUNITY NEWS



AZALINA OTHMAN VISITED PANGKOR

Tourism Minister officiates Pangkor jetty terminal

Tourism Minister Dato'Sri Azlina Othman paid a working visit to Pangkor Island on February 9. The objective of her one-day visit was to observe the progress of tourism-related projects under the 9th Malaysian Plan. She took the opportunity to meet those involved in the tourism industry.

According to statistics compiled by Tourism Malaysia, the number of visitors to Perak in 2007 stood at 1.8 million. Out of this, 700,000 were foreigners. In 2008, between the months of January and September, the state received 1.9 million visitors of which 500,000 were foreigners. This represents a 7.4 percentage increase over the same period in 2007.

A sum of RM60.3 million was allocated to upgrade existing tourist



Azlina launching the Pangkor Island jetty terminal upgrading project

sites in Perak under the 9th Malaysian Plan. Pangkor received RM13.5 million of the total amount to improve tourist facilities on the island. Most of the money is reserved for up-

grading works on the island's jetty terminal. The final phase of the improvement works will be completed in March 2010.

Azlina was briefed on the island's tourism devel-

opment projects at Teluk Dalam Resort. She offici-



Azlina with Rohana Abdullah from Teluk Gedung

ated the upgrading works of the island's jetty termi-

nal before ending her short visit.

ROSLI MANSOR

THAIPUSAM 2009

Giving thanks and acts of penance to Lord Muruga

Thaipusam is celebrated in a big way in Perak, especially here in Ipoh. Devotees from all over the city and from the surrounding areas throng the Hindu temple at Gunung Cheruh to pay homage to Lord Muruga. They carry colorful kavadis, pal kodam (milk pots) and pull chariots as



Smashing coconuts in the path of the passing chariot

acts of penance to Lord Muruga.

The main chariot bearing the deity of Lord Muruga is drawn through the streets of the city late in the night. This has been the practice in Ipoh since time immemorial. Large crowds line the streets where the chariot passes. Jalan Sultan Idris Shah on the night of February 8 was transformed into a fairy land filled with lights and glitter. As the chariot passed, devotees smashed coconuts in its path as they gave thanks for answering their prayers.

For three years in succession, Chan Sam Loke Photo Studio, had been doing its part for the prosperity of the city. This year, said Chan Boon Chin, was no different. "Over RM3,000 was expended to purchase coconuts, oranges and peanuts for the occasion. We pray for stability since the state is in a political turmoil." Chin is optimistic that stability will prevail once normalcy returns.

HMA

HOME SWEET HOME

At long last a place to call home



Kak Kiah (R) posing with Puan Zabaidah (L) in front of her house

Kak Kiah or better known as the "Pucuk Paku Woman", who appeared in a feature piece in Ipoh Echo Issue 52, had her dreams of owning a house fulfilled. Ipoh Echo paid her a surprise visit recently. Beaming with joy, she gladly posed in front of her new house with her benefactor, Puan Zabaidah Jalil. Kak Kiah's cosy but modest little wooden abode, built on a piece of land

owned by her relatives, is close to the Kampar - Malim Nawar trunk road. It has a bedroom, kitchen and an attached toilet, facilities that were lacking in her old "lean-to". Puan Zabaidah was reluctant to reveal the actual cost of the house when asked. "It's my *sedekah* (gift) to a gutsy lady who has suffered enough," she said with much humility.

Kak Kiah looks less



stressful these days. She still picks *pucuk paku* to sell but only when it suits her. "I am more settled now," she remarked.

More pics at ipohecho.com **HMA**

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ANNOUNCEMENT

PERAK ISLAMIC INFORMATION CENTRE

The Perak Islamic Information Centre cordially invites those wishing to know more about the religion (non-Muslims included) to a group discussion with Islamic scholars. For appointments please call Dr Mohamed Amir bin Meera Hussain at 019-3815563 (mobile). E-mail: piic@streamyx.com

SEMINAR ON PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Learn to conduct seminars and meetings the right way. Toastmasters YMCA and Ipoh Toastmasters Club will organise a seminar on the subject matter on Saturday, February 28, 2009. Seminar will be conducted by Dunstan Chan. Venue and Time: Perak Medical College, Greentown, Ipoh between 9 am to 5 pm. Entrance: RM45 per person inclusive of lunch and tea breaks. Those interested please call Cheah Tong Kim at 017-487 3980 or Pak Peter at 019-574 3572.

HEALTH TALK AND HEALTH CAMPAIGN

Kinta Medical Centre, Ipoh will organise a health talk and health campaign on Friday, February 27, 2009. Venue and Time: Kinta Medical Centre, Jalan Chung Thye Phin, Ipoh between 8.30 am to 1 pm. Admission: Free. For details please call Kinta Medical Centre at 05-2425333.