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PLIGHT OF THE STATELESS PERAKIANS



According to Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara (National Registration Department), JPN, out of an estimated 30,000 stateless people in Malaysia, 10% (or more than 3,000) are in Perak. Ipoh Echo takes a look at their plight in this issue.

Continued on page two

Name:
NOORA ADRIANA
Occupation:
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Hobbies:
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The quality I admire most:
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Why is it so difficult to register the 3,000 (or more) stateless people in Perak - is it because they are viewed as 'non-Malaysians' and thus do not deserve the same rights and privileges as other citizens?

A person is classified as stateless if he or she has no birth certificate. Most of the stateless people are those born in kampongs, estates, *orang asli* settlements and rural areas. These people are illiterate, very poor and ignorant of the basic requirements of the law.

The main reasons for not applying for a birth certificate vary from: husbands having left, marriages not registered, unmarried mothers, adopted children, one of the spouses being a foreigner, illegitimate children of married women, and children born at home. These people are ignorant of the basic law that regardless of their status, the birth of a child must be registered.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

The woes of the stateless are many. Without a birth certificate the child cannot go to school nor apply for an identity card. They cannot be legally employed and are not eligible for free treatment in government hospitals. They have difficulty in finding jobs and are exploited by their employers. They do not enjoy any basic rights. They suffer harassment by police and other law enforcement authorities. As a last resort they turn to crime for their livelihood.

In a move to alleviate the suffering of this minority group, JPN recently conducted a course for social workers who are assisting stateless people on the procedures and documentation needed to ease their status. JPN is also sending mobile teams to kampongs, estates, *orang asli* settlements as well as other places to register stateless people.

LACK OF PUBLICITY

Adequate publicity on these campaigns is often not generated and the JPN messages are not reaching the target group, resulting in low turn-outs and very poor response. The recent meeting in September in the Ipoh Town Hall is a case in point, attended by a mere handful of less than 50 people, with the majority preferring avoidance out of fear of facing fines or punishment.

I spoke to a number of social workers and all of them spoke of the difficulty in getting the details required for the documents and the hassles they have to undergo with JPN. Most of the kampongs and estates



Shahul Hamid, Chairman, MIC Tanjong Rambutan Branch, handing over a letter to Revathy from JPN, stating that her BC is ready for collection.

are no longer in existence and many cannot return to their birth place for information. Being uneducated, the applicants do not know in which hospital they were born or their date of birth. There are no records for those born at home or details of the midwife who attended the delivery.

DETERRENT COST FACTOR

The cost factor is a major deterrent in the stateless coming forward. They are manual workers and cannot afford to take leave or they would not be paid. Most of these stateless people have migrated and cannot afford to travel to the hospital where they were born to get details. They may have to make a number of trips. They are required to provide the photos of their parents and all siblings. The siblings may not be residing in the same town and they may not be in contact with them. In a number of cases the siblings are not willing to provide the photos.

I was present when Arul, one of the social workers was having a discussion with one such stateless person. The man had not registered his marriage and has five children of whom; three have birth certificates and two, not. He was told to produce photos of the whole family including full length photos of the two applying for birth certificates. This would have cost the man about RM100, a sum he couldn't afford and he never returned.

BUREAUCRATIC INDIFFERENCE

JPN's indifferent attitude towards resolution of the stateless issue is also to blame for the lack

of progress. Social workers complain that the staff of JPN are lackadaisical and uncooperative. Nor are they interested in solving problems, instead coming up with unrealistic demands. The hapless victims have to make a number of trips and each time the bureaucratic megalomaniacs request for additional information. Most of the applicants are not fluent in Malay and face insurmountable communication problems. In most cases the social worker is not allowed to be present when the applicants are interviewed and as these people are illiterate, they are afraid to speak. So the Catch 22 situation perpetuates itself: the stateless are afraid to come forward and when they do, they are browbeaten and left

speechless. Surely JPN must employ people of all races speaking the major languages in this country, to avoid this.

A perfect example of bureaucratic indifference and insensitivity is illustrated by the following story, where a family of seven had birth certificates for all except the last child. The wife explained that her husband was a driver and was away most of the time and that is the reason for the late application. The officer asked her why if her husband was away most of the time that she managed to have seven children, implying impropriety. The social worker, who was present, was appalled at the audacity and demanded that the officer apologise for the rude remark to which he com-



Stateless Perakians: Kaliammal, 28, and Marimma, 24, still waiting for their IC.

plied.

HOME MINISTRY IMPERATIVE

If the Home Ministry is truly committed to solving this problem, then they must simplify the requirements. It has been suggested that in a family with a number of children, if one of them has a birth certificate, then all the other children should be issued birth certificates. Other suggestions for the issuance of birth certificates include accepting

the Statutory Declaration of the applicant signed by the *Ketua Kampung*, MP or Assemblyman for the constituency, Local Councillors, JP's, Head of *Rukun Tetangga* or Residence Association.

It is imperative for the Home Ministry to stop dragging its feet. A person born in this country must not be denied his or her rights just because he or she is illiterate, poor, and ignorant, and did not register the birth of his or her child.

A. JEYARAJ

Stateless people can contact the following persons for assistance: Arul: 017-5656167; Saras: 016-5587144; Rani: 019-5638464; Selva Ganesan: 012-5207504; and Cecilia: 013-4384388.

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From the Editor's Desk

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FATHOL ZAMAN BUKHARI

RUMBLE IN DURIAN COUNTRY

Making the best of a drawn-out battle of wits between two arch rivals in the Perak political arena and the questionable moves that ensue...

Bukit Gantang's two rows of dilapidated shop houses lay astride the old Taiping-Ipoh trunk road. This small township of some 5,000 inhabitants lies smack in durian country. Incidentally, Perak Durian Fest 2009 was held in an open field early this year. Optimising the popularity of the fruit among locals and foreigners alike, Tourism Malaysia had embarked on a plan to place this sleepy hollow on the tourism map. The tourism department's home-stay programme has been willingly embraced by some enterprising villagers. Visitors now get to see the trees at close range and partake in the durian rush during the fruiting season. This novel idea has many foreigners flocking to Bukit Gantang to enjoy a new dimension in Malaysian hospitality albeit a thorny one.

Besides durian the other attraction that is making waves in Bukit Gantang presently is the upcoming parliamentary by-election. In the March 8, 2008 General Election, a three-corner fight between Dato' Azim Zabidi (Umno), Roslan Shaharum



Party flags and banners strung across road in Bt Gantang

per cent. Based on the 2008 figures, 63.5 per cent of the voters are Malays, 27.1 per cent Chinese, 9.1 per cent Indians and the remaining 0.2 per cent Others. The Malays are spread in the various kampongs and rural areas. The Chinese in the towns such as Kuala Sepetang, Changkat Jering, Simpang and Trong. The Indians are found in the rubber estates. The Malays are mostly cultivators tending to their fruit orchards, especially durians, rambutans and mangosteens. Some are in-shore fishermen in the coastal areas of Kuala Sepetang. The business

regard the coming event as "a vote of conscience" for Perakians. It will be an acid test to determine the popularity or notoriety of rivals BN and PK. Two other by-elections, namely Bukit Selambau in Kedah and Batang Ai in Sarawak are a contest for state seats. The Election Commission has fixed Tuesday, April 7, 2009, as election day for all three seats. Malaysians' propensity for sarcasm on political shenanigans is remarkable in its endeavour. They have succinctly termed the April 7 mini elections as *pilihanraya dua bukit satu batang* (two hills one pole election) after the names of the locations.

CANDIDATES

Barisan Nasional had on March 14 announced its candidacy. Ismail Suffian, 49, a local from Kampong Kubu, as BN's flag bearer. Ismail is the former Bt Gantang Umno division information chief. He is also the human resources and management services director of the National Solid Waste Management and Public Cleaning Corporation. Ismail is optimistic of his chances of winning based on his knowledge of the ground. Pakatan Rakyat's choice of ousted Mentri Besar, Nizar Jamaluddin, made on Monday, March 23, is obvious. Nizar's popularity is on an upward swing and so is the Islamic party's dominance in the area. This is evident from the party's flags and banners strung across roads and on buildings. According to the latest electoral roll, the number of registered voters in the Bt Gantang parliamentary constituency has

breached the 58,000 mark, an increase of almost 6 per cent over the 2008 figures.

Malays form the majority and as such the choice of a candidate rests on his or her ethnicity and origins. BN will bankroll on its return to its former bastion, Perak. Newly minted Mentri Besar, Dato' Dr Zambry Kadir, kick-started his campaign trail with a huge gathering at the Changkat Jering multi-purpose hall on Saturday, February 28. He called on BN supporters to deny PR's return to power. One political analyst had this to say, "BN would campaign on the basis that the Perak government is now firmly back in the hands of the Malays, making the not-so-subtle point that DAP was dominating the previous state government." BN would play the racial card to the hilt said another.

Pakatan Rakyat, on the other hand, has implored voters to consider the ills of BN's five decades at the helm and its liberal policies put in place by a pliant state government which was in power for almost 11 months. The catch phrase, Competency, Accountability and Transparency, will be its rallying cry.

QUESTIONABLE MOVES

A series of strange occurrences were underway even before nomination day on Sunday, March 29. Anwar Ibrahim was denied a permit to hold a rally at Simpang recently. Police cited traffic as the offending reason. They threatened to arrest those who dared show up. This, however, did not deter Anwar or his team. Anwar's infor-



Dato' Dr Zambry at the Changkat Jering multi-purpose hall.

mal ceramah at a kampong near Bukit Gantang on Thursday night, March 19, attracted an audience of nearly 15,000. On Monday, March 23, the Opposition newspapers, Harakah and Suara Keadilan, were suspended by the Home Ministry for three months ending in June. No reasons were given other than that "they had breached some of the Ministry's guidelines". DAP's Rocket has problems extending its annual publication permit which has expired. The Opposition's efforts to reach out to the Malay rural masses have been effectively "nullified" in the

word of one observer.

So what will the outcome of the Bukit Gantang by-election on Tuesday, April 7, 2009, be? There will be a winner and there will be a loser. So let the rumble in durian country begin.



Row of shop houses at Bt Gantang

(PAS) and M. Morgan (Independent) saw this former BN stronghold fall to PAS of Pakatan Rakyat. Roslan Shaharum won with a majority of 1,566 garnering 20,015 votes to Azim's 18,449. Morgan, who could only muster 872 votes, lost his deposit. In the 2004 election, Tian Lian Hoe of Gerakan secured the seat beating PAS stalwart, Dr Lo Lo Mohamed Ghazi, with a thumbs-up 6,702 majority.

A MALAY MAJORITY

The number of registered voters in 2004 was 53,880. In 2008 it was 55,562, an increase of 3.13

community is made up of the Chinese. They consist of petty traders, shopkeepers, mechanics, market gardeners and hawkers. The once thriving charcoal industry in Trong is still in operation although not as big as it was back in the 50s and 60s. The charcoal kilns are owned and managed by the Chinese.

The parliamentary by-election of Bukit Gantang (P59) was caused by the untimely death of Roslan Shaharum on February 9, 2009. His death at the onset of the Perak political quagmire resulting from the BN take-over of the Perak State Government on February 6, 2009, has led many to

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012-505 0547

05-5469715 (office)

THINKING ALOUD**MATHS AND SCIENCE – ENGLISH OR MALAY?****G. SIVAPRAGASAM**

When I began writing this article I was convinced that the policy of teaching these two subjects in English should continue. However, after listening to the debates, reading the various opinions expressed in the public media and conversing with educators and parents I am convinced that the policy needs to be reversed.

English is important but is policy the way?

There appears to be some confusion as to why English was adopted as a medium of instruction for Maths and Science some six years ago. Some believe that it was introduced to improve students' command of the English language while others are of the view that it was to provide them a good grounding in these two subjects for tertiary education needs.

Whatever the intent, the supporters of the present policy point out that English is extremely important in today's global world especially in the fields of Maths and Science.

The detractors of the policy concede that English is important in the world of today but deny that using English as a medium of instruction for the teaching of Maths and Science in schools is the right path.

They state that most

teachers are not conversant in English and are not able to teach these subjects well in English. Pupils especially from the rural areas have a poor command of English and are not able to understand what is being taught. They further claim that the problem is compounded by the lack of proper support infrastructure to aid the policy. And then there are the nationalists who feel that this policy compromises the position of the national language.

The advocates of the policy counter these arguments by asserting that the position of the Malay language is not undermined by the teaching of these two subjects in English. They feel that the way is not to change the policy but to improve the ability of the teachers to teach the subjects in English by training them and providing good infrastructure. They claim that children even in the rural areas have shown marked improvement in the use of the language and are improving.

Both goals hampered

There is no doubt that there are merits in the arguments of both parties but it is an undeniable fact that after five years of this policy the command of the English language has not significantly improved and more importantly it is proving to

be an impediment to the proper understanding of these two subjects. Doubts have also arisen about the reliability of the grading system, resulting in excellence being classed together with the mediocre.

The most vocal of the critics of the current policy are the nationalists who fear the loss of the pre-eminence of the Malay language. Their concern is understandable. Language is more than a tool for communication. It is, as someone described, the soul of the people. It designs thoughts and consequently directs behaviour. It is the foundation of a community's identity. However I do not think that the teaching of Maths and Science in English has any impact in this regard. The dominance of Malay as a medium of instruction in all the other subjects, ensures that the thought process will essentially be in Malay. Indeed, this I feel, is the main obstacle to the ability of students to understand Maths and Science taught in English.

You think in a language

Science and Maths, more than any other subject is a discipline that requires an understanding of concepts, thinking logically and solving problems. Effort of this nature is only effective in the language you normally think

in. Whilst learning Maths and Science in English undoubtedly serves as language learning, it may be at the expense of the subject itself. The difficulty that these mono-lingual kids encounter would not be unlike the trouble we would face if we had to learn Maths and Science in French or German.

I concede that English is exceptionally equipped to deliver knowledge in Maths and Science. The resources of the whole English speaking world are available to you. There is little argument that this type of knowledge is needed for students at tertiary level and a strong command of the language is crucial to access it. But the question is does everyone need this level of knowledge?

Matching skills to field of study

Firstly, how many of the students in a grade are in the Science stream and of this number how many desire to enter tertiary level education in disciplines that require Science and Maths? If I were to use my personal experience it would be about 10%. This 10% would undoubtedly need a good command of English in their chosen field. My question is why sacrifice 90% for the sake of the 10%. It may be better to identify the 10% early and provide them special courses in Science and Math terminology. When content is assimilated, terminology would not be a challenge. It would be like learning Latin to do law in the old days.

Secondly, we are talking about Science and

Maths knowledge up to Form Five level. It is quite astonishing that after 50 years, our institution responsible for developing the Malay language has not been able to get this done. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka really needs to step up their efforts to ensure that content and delivery is interesting, and challenging to students in the present age. Those who recently marched to deliver a memorandum to the Minister would serve their cause and the nation better by employing their energy in assisting the Dewan to achieve this quite modest objective.

Improve command of English

However, there is no question that English dominates the world and is essential not only in the field of Maths and Science but for every human endeavour. It is imperative that our youths are well equipped with this means to compete on the global platform. The learning of this language should not be a chore but made into an exciting and enjoyable experience. Literature need not be traditional. It could be Asian to enable better rapport.

We could also depart from the one-size-fits-all solution. Some schools could be identified for the use of English in a variety of subjects enabling those who think in English to realise their full potential.

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Hot and Cold

MUSINGS ON FOOD

by See Foon Chan-Koppen
ipohecho.sf@gmail.com



More pics at
ipohecho on line

In this continuing series of musings on food, SeeFoon discovers Concubine Lane and Koh Kee

When I first heard of Concubine Lane, my over-active imagination immediately conjured up scenes of afternoon or late night rendezvous where chauffeur-driven limousines deposit wealthy tycoons as they sneak furtively into the lane for their romantic assignations with their concubines. After their love trysts, they may or may not retire to Wong Koh Kee for a snack or even a full meal.

Romantic Illusions

My overblown romantic illusions were soon to be shattered when I went with my group of Foodie friends for a meal at Koh Kee recently.

This tiny lane off Leech Street or Jalan Bijeh Timah, is officially known as Lorong Panglima but to all Ipohites, it is fondly referred to as Concubine Lane and locals flock here to queue up in the heat for a table at lunchtime. On my recent visit, the restaurant was packed by 12.30 pm and at 1.45 pm when we left, a long line of people were still waiting for seats. Not that I have a picture of what she might look like, but nary a concubine in sight!

Where Are The Concubines?

I was then told by Chan Seow Lok whose father owned some of these houses that the name Concubine Lane came about, not from the salacious activities of its inhabitants, but from an aberration in the original architectural design of this row of shophouses. Lorong Panglima backs onto Jalan Panglima and the houses on the latter wider road are really the frontage for this row of houses in the small lane. While the houses on Lorong Panglima are standalone and not accessible from the houses in the front, each unit of two share the same title deed. Sort of like Siamese twins, stuck to each other. Whether or not concubines lived in the back while the tycoon and first wife occupied the front portion is left to conjecture. Or whether concubines lived here at all is debatable.

Grandma's Home Cooking

Nevertheless, Koh Kee has been here for three



Customers spilling out of the pavement at Koh Kee

generations and thriving. Koh Kee is known for its home cooking, such as Grandma might make. The fare is simple, hearty and reasonably priced.

The first dish to arrive piping hot was the trio of steamed eggs RM6/12. This classical home specialty evoked for me memories of my Grandma's kitchen where it served as the ubiquitous standby whenever fish or meat was scarce.

While the dish appears seemingly easy to prepare: lightly beaten fresh eggs, seasoned and steamed with salted and century eggs, yet, the perfect end result as that presented at Koh Kee is not so simple as any seasoned cook knows. The fresh egg was just the right creamy consistency with no steam bubbles creating pock-marks, the addition of the salted and century eggs in just the right proportion and the seasoning of soya sauce and oil just adequate.

This was followed

slices of yam or taro. Some establishments where I've eaten this dish may make it too dry but here the balance of meat and taro, to sauce, was just right.

Specialty of The House

A specialty of Koh Kee is their sautéed watercress with sliced roast pork (RM8/10/13) done with a hint of *belacan* (dried shrimp paste) and garlic. It was so good that we wolfed down the first plate and ordered a second.

Next came the *Hong Siew Yu Tao* or literally translated to mean Red Roasted Fish head (seasonal price). This is a method of preparation where in this instance, a Carp's head, is first deep fried and then lightly braised in a soya sauce mixture whose ingredients will vary from chef to chef. Not being a fan of carp which I find has a muddy taste, I found the sauce to be delectable while the fish meat left me unenthused.

Two last dishes com-



Steamed Egg Trio & 'PeiPa' Chicken

by their *PeiPa* chicken, (RM14 for half) so named for the way the bird is cut open and spread out to resemble the Chinese lute, marinated, then air dried, seasoned with their secret sauce and then deep fried. The usual *PeiPa* recipe usually applies to duck but in Koh Kee, the chicken was equally tasty and succulent, served with a dipping Hoisin Sauce.

The next dish was the *Woo Tau Kow Yoke* or pork brisket stewed with yam, tasty slices of fatty pork brisket layered between

pleted our food binge. The beef fried with bitter melon (RM8/10/14) and the bean sprouts with salted fish (RM 6/7/8) were both value for money and scrumptious.

For readers wishing to try out Koh Kee, I would recommend getting there early before the lunch crowd. Twelve noon is a good time. Or have brunch or a late lunch as Koh Kee is open from 11.00 am till 3.00 pm. It's well worth the trip downtown. And it won't make a hole in your pocket!

FOOD

BEEF SOUP NOODLES



Interestingly enough, Wikipedia says beef noodle soup was created by the Hui people (a Chinese Muslim ethnic group) during the Tang Dynasty of China and eaten as a meal in itself. Beef soup here is almost always cooked with white radish, spices such as star anise, cinnamon, cloves, ginger, and includes meat and tripe. Beef and white radish seem to go hand-in-hand. Maybe it's because white radish adds its own distinctive taste to the soup and, together with the ginger, may help in lessening any overpowering beefy flavour or smell. Cooking it this way seems to be indigenous to Malaysia. The beef and tripe are cooked in beef broth (made from beef bones) till tender, and the flavours are released into the soup – but not so much as to render the meat tasteless. Sometimes the beef is so tender that the meat is almost falling off the chopsticks as you pick it up. The rich beef broth is absolutely mouth watering and good to the last drop. Beef balls and beef tendon balls are a nice accompaniment to the beef noodle soup, and there are also the other usual accompaniments. Good chilli sauce is crucial for dipping. Although other Asian countries may claim beef noodle soup as their very own, but those of us who live in Ipoh know very well where it's found its home!

NAME	WHERE	COMMENTS	PRICE (RM)	
RESTORAN SUN UP 6:00am-11.30am	5 Lorong Cecil Rae, Canning Garden, 31400 Ipoh	Beef brisket & tripe are tender, beef balls are springy – a richer beef broth with delectable taste of star anise; beef tendon balls are a bit chewy	Beef soup & mee: 4.50 Beef soup: 3.50 Beef balls: 0.50	
NAM FATT FISH BALL NOODLE HOUSE (air-cond) 7:45am-10:45am Tuesdays closed	86C, Jln Raja Permaisuri Bainun (Jln Kampar), 30250 Ipoh (opp. Ecosave)	Beef tendon balls are tender & have gingery taste – beef balls have beefy taste – soup was very tasty, may have too much MSG	Beef soup & mee: 6.00 Claypot beef soup: 5.50 Beef balls: 0.60	
KEDAI MAKANAN & MINIMUM DESA RISHAH 11:00am-4:00pm Mondays closed	No. 3 Taman Desa Rishah, Falim	Lighter but tasty beef broth strong in Chinese celery – beef brisket & tripe are slightly tough – tendon balls are the best & beef balls taste beefy – chilli dipping sauce has a nice gingery taste	Beef soup: 4.00 Beef balls: 0.50	
CHEONG KEE BEEF NOODLES 3:00pm-11:00pm Sundays closed	Stall No 47, Off Jln Sultan Idris Shah, facing the old Odeon cinema	Beef broth is lighter but tasty – beef brisket & tripe are tender – chilli sauce different from others but spicy	Beef soup: 3.50 Beef balls: 0.40 Beef soup & mee: 3.20 (S); 4.00 (M)	

Our next food review will be **NASI LEMAK (BASIC)**.
Email your favourite recommendations to: ipohecho.vw@gmail.com

Recipe

by CAROL CHENG

Squids or *sotong* can be quite pricey if eaten in the Indian rice stall – RM2-3 per squid, served in a dry curry. Cook your own dish when this sea creature is in season. Real bargains can be picked up now. This is when you see piles of this in the wet market. Prices range from RM4.50 to RM5 per 500g or 600g for the white and lightly spotted types, indicating that this is a local specie. For 500g, you will get about 5 or 6 medium-sized ones. Squids are normally blanched in hot water and rinsed in cold water before being cooked as a dish in the restaurant. At home this

KOONG POH SOTONG

is dispensed with, as we wish to retain all their nutritional value. Here is a very popular Cantonese dish known as *Koong Poh Yow Yue*. When ordered from a restaurant or small eatery you have to hunt for the precious sotong curls. They are mostly hidden among the slices of carrot or capsicum.

Ingredients:
3-4 squids, (600g in weight), cleaned, scored into diamond patterns, and cut into 2 cm diagonals.
1 big onion, wedged into 6
3-4 dried chillies, broken into 2, de-seeded, and rinsed
1 thumb-size fresh young ginger, sliced quite thinly

2 pips garlic, minced
A few drops Worcestershire sauce
A handful of toasted cashew nuts

Seasoning for squids; mix and set aside for at least 15 mins:
1 tsp salt
1 tbsp Chinese wine
½ tsp sesame oil

Method:
Heat the oil and put in garlic, ginger & dried chilli. Add the onion and stir-fry for 2 mins, then add the squid. Continue to stir-fry until squid begins to curl. Add in Worcestershire sauce and reduce pan juices further. Toss in cashews; mix well and serve.

LETTER FROM ULU KINTA

writer's email: letterulukinta@yahoo.com

VOTE FOR ONE GET ONE FREE



Date: April 1, 2009
Venue: An undisclosed location in Perak.

In an unprecedented move and rare display of unity, the two Mentri Besars of Perak, Dato' Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir and Dato' Seri Mohammed Nizar Jamaluddin, have decided to put aside their differences and work together to promote unity, peace and stability. Their hope? To restore public confidence. Their aim? To steer Perak towards economic recovery, drum up foreign investment, and stimulate growth.

The circus that started in February has cost the state millions in terms of lost revenue and achieved precious little. The victims? The people of Perak and democracy. Unfortunately, the government(s) that got us into this mess should be the last ones that we would ask to get out of it. The political impasse has benefited no one. They led us into this quagmire and so, they should be held accountable.

The stalemate was doomed from the start. The only thing the two factions could agree on was that each believed the other to be at fault. Some believe the Sultan to be ill-advised. Others believe that Barisan Nasional started the blame game by claiming that they had enough seats to oust the opposition. Pakatan

Rakyat blames the fact that they were unable to hold fresh elections. Everyone blames each other to be the villain of the piece. Even outsiders started meddling. And so it goes on. Oh, and don't forget, a "tree" has attained "cult" status.

A solution did not exist, until today. In a moving and highly commendable gesture, the two Mentri Besars embraced each other and jointly declared that they were standing in solidarity to prevent a fractured state. They had high hopes that the people of Perak would lend support to this highly controversial and unorthodox idea – a first for Perak, if not, Malaysia.

The details of a power-sharing structure were simple. "Two ministers for the price of one". "Vote for one, get one Free," they joked. They even expressed willingness to split the monthly wage and annual perks.

An uninterrupted process of governing would ensue. Dr Zambry, being a "morning" person, would preside over morning meetings. After lunch, Datuk Nizar would take charge. Both Mentri Besars would be "fresh" and "ready for action" for each session. Not so, their attending officials, possibly.

Dr Zambry would be grateful for the free after-

noons when he could devote time on his journals, including penning poetic compositions for his wife, Datin Saripah. Nizar, a dedicated father, said he would relish the extra time with his eight children. A later start would mean helping with the morning school rounds, something that was impossible to do before.

Having two Mentri Besars would enable one to cover for the other during annual leave, time off sick, bereavement or personal reasons. Another plus point for continuity.

Questions of loyalty by the civil servants should not arise. Allegiance is to the position of Mentri Besar and not whether the seat is occupied by BN or Pakatan Rakyat.

Zambry, from Pangkor, will undertake decisions for inland regions of Perak, to familiarise himself with the interior of the country. Similarly, Nizar, from Kampar, would administer over Perak's coastal regions. This he feels would enrich his understanding of problems like coastal erosion, the sitting of appropriate industries along the coast. He would also oversee the construction of the Lumut-Pangkor bridge.

The sprawling official residence will be shared. One family would reside in the west-wing, the other the east-wing. The combined children could even make up one football team.

The official Toyota Camry would be auctioned off to buy two cheaper cars of identical make. When the need for official use of the car arises, as in transporting the Mentri Besar to a function, the State Secretary's Toyota Camry would be requisitioned, for that specific purpose.

The tedium of official

functions, of trying to keep awake and look interested during hour long speeches and prolonged cultural dances, is well known. Finally, this onerous task can be shared and the boredom halved.

Today on April 1st, just before noon, the two Mentri Besars will present their proposals to the Sultan for HRH approval.

YMM

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PERSPECTIVE

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AN ACT OF TREESON

itineraries, or if hordes of hawkers set up makeshift stalls selling drink and food, or market traders flog gifts and snapshots beneath the tree, for a fee. I wonder too, when the enterprising individual will hack branches and bark off the tree and sell it on e-Bay as a souvenir from the 'Democracy Tree'.

To pretend that the presence of the tree makes not a jot of difference, must hurt the Barisan Nasional government. It is difficult to contain their collective emotions when crowds of people swarm round the tree, to take photographs and erect plaques. The symbolism derived is too powerful to ignore and has definitely shaken the party's confidence.

A LAUGHING STOCK?

Already, the state government has declared that "sitting under the raintree is a disgrace to the House and is disrespectful to the Sultan". It conveniently ignores the protests of innocent bystanders merely seeking shade. Not content with the party line, individuals in the state government have proclaimed that the action is "like a slap to the assembly and the law" and that the Pakatan Rakyat assemblymen "should allow for fresh polls in their constituencies". I may be horribly mistaken, but wasn't something like this initially asked for but rejected at the start of this sorry mess that we are now mired in?

Others too have entered the fray. One person commented that "this incident showed that

Pakatan Rakyat was power-crazy". Another chided them for "acting like school children". Yet another chimed in that "Pakatan Rakyat had made the Perak Assembly a laughing stock of the world and an image that would be difficult to rebuild". Finally, not wishing to be excluded, one taunted Pakatan Rakyat for "putting on the show to cover up their weaknesses". A laughing stock? Definitely. A difficult image to rebuild? On the contrary, it marks a watershed in our history.

SYMBOLIC THREAT?

Obviously, the tree is a threat. But to whom? Pakatan Rakyat is not out of the woods yet. It is easy to be sidelined by the significance of this tree. The party has yet to be firm on its policies, its sense of direction and its ability to be cohesive and unite. And what of the tree itself? It may survive or it may end up as firewood.

Is this tree worrying because the sturdy and stout trunk conveys an unwelcome vision of strength, support and stability? Could it be the distinctive dome or umbrella shaped canopy, that provides protection to those who shelter under it? Is it the extensive root system which signifies solid foundations – an anchor to the earth representing one close partnership?

Maybe it is the special feature of the leaves which are light sensitive? They fold up when it is dark and cloudy, and allows rain to fall through the canopy to the ground below. It is this sensitivity to the needs of the tree as a whole, which ensures growth and survival. Moreover, grass grow-

ing under the tree is more lush and greener, than grass in the surrounding areas, which is exposed to the full glare of the sun.

The raintree can survive drought. It loses its leaves during dry periods and refoliates quickly when adequate moisture is available. It is highly receptive to changing weather patterns. The tree bears tiny pinkish powder-puff flower heads which are pollinated by insects and bees, flitting from one flower to another. Just like spreading unscripted ideas, perhaps? Finally, when the fertilised flowers mature into fruit pods and the seeds are spread by animals, far and wide, to grow and perpetuate, what we witness is a cycle. A continuum.

A mature raintree is virtually maintenance free. It does, however, possess a nuisance. Ripe pods falling on the ground, exude a sticky pulp of pods and seeds which adhere to shoes and car tyres. It is more an annoyance than a hazard. Much like the drama in real life.

Had it been another tree, the impact on the Perak psyche wouldn't have been as powerful. A royal palm tree? Lacks character. A coconut tree? Sways too much. A Flame of the Forest? Too fiery and uncompromising. A durian tree? It smacks of indulgence – moreover, the gravity-borne fruits can kill.

The raintree, drawing its strength from the soil, its energy from the sun, and growing tall, spreading wide and reaching up to the skies, portrays a powerful image.

DILEMMA

Then we come to the second half of the dilemma.

Any pretext to chop this tree down, to destroy and eliminate the living and potent symbol, is an admission that the hidden messages of the tree do matter and are offensive. Hurt the tree, but risk galvanizing your enemy.

It wouldn't be difficult to find any excuse to be rid of the tree. The disturbance it causes, the obstruction of the road, the illegal structure erected (plaque), the crowd control caused by the unhealthy interest generated, that the overhanging branches of the tree are a potential hazard or that its spreading roots are encroaching onto building foundations or are damaging road surfaces, sidewalks and pavements.

Unfortunately, most Ipohites are painfully aware that the three latter reasons have previously been used to remove mature trees in various parts of Ipoh. A feeling of unease persists. A notice, served on the tree, demanded that the owner remove his unauthorised plaque. Notwithstanding, the plaque was deliberately damaged and mayor, Roshidi Hashim, had it removed citing a city by-law as the excuse.

To date, the tree and its five saplings – Transparency, Trustworthiness, Integrity, Justice and Welfare – have been spared acts of vandalism. Who knows? Maybe the 'Tree of Democracy' might still be removed by the authorities as a 'protective measure' – that some person or persons unknown are out to cause it harm. Hence the tree will have to be chopped down. "To protect it", they will announce. "We were only acting in its best interests", they will affirm.

Who would have thought that a tree could have terrible implications for one group of people, and yet be an equally potent symbol for another? Throughout history, trees have played an important role in the lives of people and places. Siddhartha Gautama preached under the Bodhi tree. Johnny Appleseed became a legend in early America for championing conservation and apple trees. The future King Charles II avoided the marauding English army by hiding in an oak tree, The Royal Oak, in 1651.

Ipoh is named after the Ipoh tree, which exudes a poisonous sap. Perak's economy is built on a backbone of rubber, from a few seeds smuggled out of Brazil via London's Kew Gardens to Perak, by H.N. Ridley. One of these pioneer rubber trees still stands as a timely reminder of its significance in Kuala Kangsar.

Fast forward to the 21st century, and the most poignant tree thus far, is the one raintree that has famously been dubbed the 'Democracy Tree'.

THE RAINTREE

The facts are these: Scientific name, Samanea saman; Family, Fabaceae (legume family).

Common name, Raintree. A native of northern South America and naturalised in the Pacific Islands. It has a characteristic dome-shaped canopy and can reach a height of 50-80 feet. Its main uses are in agroforestry as an ornamental tree, crop shade, in silvopasture and livestock feed. The seed pods and leaves have medicinal purposes in some cultures.

But why has this tree caused much strife? Crucially, it has posed a serious dilemma for the authorities. Are they to stand impotent whilst Pakatan Rakyat members treat it with reverence? The tree has attracted curious and casual on-lookers as well as political devotees who enshrine it.

This tree has certainly livened up the city, chalking up spontaneous success, like no-other tourist attractions. I wouldn't be surprised if this tree will feature in future tourist



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balanced education opens the eyes and works the mind. Realising this, twenty five students of SMJK Ave Maria, Ipoh, have been undergoing training in the finer areas of performing

Teacher adviser Miss Mavin Ong said the students have been exposed to the craft of acting which includes designing and building sets, creating costumes and performing in front of their friends. Not only are they more confident now, their pronunciation and enunciation of words have improved significantly just after a few sessions. "They are also aware of their characters on stage, especially when the

students have to take on different roles." said Miss Ong.

Trainer and stage director Mr Timothy Chee, who ran the workshop, also taught the participants the finer techniques of stage make-up. He has been a play director for more than 30 plays. Besides being a self-taught artist, Mr Timothy Chee also helps to run workshops for the Perak Society of Performing Arts (PSPA).

TOP SCORERS



SMK Methodist (ACS) Ipoh emerged as the top school in Perak for the STPM 2008 examination. Jothiswaran Namasoo was listed as the third best student in the country. There are eight other students achieving straight A's in the school. ACS also received the STPM 2008 Excellence Award from the Perak education

department.

The other high scorers are: 4A's Anna Lauee Lim, Joanne Nga, Chan Sook Kuen, Chin Kam Rong and Yap We Shee, Loh Kah Yee, Loke Pui Lan and Loke Kar Mun.

Ipoh Echo congratulates the students and teachers for their untiring efforts in achieving such admirable results.

YOUNG PERAK

by PETER KHIEW

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

E-mail articles to:

ipohecho.pk@gmail.com

ULTIMATE FRISBEE



Infuse, the youth ministry of Full Gospel Assembly, Ipoh, can be seen every Saturday from 5 to 6.30 pm at Polo Grounds playing the not-so-widely known game of Ultimate Frisbee. The objective of this limited contact team sport is to score points by receiving a team mate's pass in the opponent's end zone. The objective of the Infusers (as the youths of Infuse call themselves), however, is to have some good, clean fun and of course, to have some much needed exercise after a long, stressful school week. Unlike other sports, Ultimate Frisbee

is refereed by the players themselves and one of the rules of this game is that players are to be responsible for foul and line calls, and to solve their own disputes. This has thus taught these young people the meaning of teamwork and good sportsmanship. Besides being a healthy way to spend Saturday evening, Ultimate Frisbee has also given the Infusers a chance to develop new and healthy friendships as all who are interested are welcome to join in the fun.

MINDY OON

Yoshinkan Aikido is offering self defence classes for children, adults and personal instruction for those interested. Aikido training develops the spirit and character of a person, develops patience, tolerance and humility and harmonizing with others. Aikido is a non aggressive art of self defence, which is ideal for physical, mental and spiritual development as a modern day 'yoga' and form of exercise.

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GOTONG ROYONG



Kelab Bakti Gunung Keledang organised a "gotong royong" to clean up the Gurab Muslim Cemetery at Jalan Kuala Kangsar recently. Some 50 people were involved in the clean-up – 25 club members and 25 council staff and relatives of those interred in the cemetery. According to the President of Kelab Bakti Keledang, Ir Khairul Anwar, the 9-acre site is almost filled to capacity. The club, said Khairul, had been duty bound to help the community by organising the *gotong royong* activity to clean up the cemetery. An additional 7 acres of land have been approved by the state for burial purposes. A system will be put in place to organise the cemetery's maintenance, especially at the new 7-acre site. Khairul hopes Muslim residents will cooperate to make the Gurab cemetery more pleasant now that it has been extended and the *gotong royong* activities to be held on a regular basis.

GEORGIAN DREAM OF GLORY

After 63 years of formation, members of the Old Georgians' Association are aiming to have their own premises. In realizing that dream, the building will be named "OGA Centre", and will serve as a powerful testimony to the dedication of the faithful old boys of St George's Institution (SGI), Taiping.

Vice-President Yeap Thean Hock said that if former Georgians and friends of SGI can pool their resources and make the OGA building a reality, it will be a grand gesture that can serve as a role model for the present students, in their endeavour to forge close links with the alma mater in the future.

"We have to use every possible avenue to forge ahead and we are confident of achieving this noble project," said



GEORGIANS - MAKE THIS A REALITY

Yeap, who is also the fund-raising chairman. He said the building fund now stands at RM74,100 and the association needs at least RM500,000 to kick start the project.

Notable Old Georgians include Datuk Ismail Khan Ibrahim Khan, the first Chief Justice of the High Courts in Borneo States, the Chief Judge for Negri Sembilan and Malacca and was also the first Malay to study law overseas and received the prestigious Queen's Scholarship; Dato' Ng Tieh Chuan, the CEO of the MPH Group of companies in Malaysia, formerly Managing Director of Pelanduk Publications Malaysia & Asean Academic Press Limited, London, and possesses more than 30 years of experience in the Malaysian book industry; Dr Toh Chin Chye who was the co-founder and the Chairman of the Singapore's People's Action Party (PAP) and served as the Member of Parliament for Rochore since 1959, Deputy Prime Minister when Singapore attained independence in 1965, Minister for Science and Technology and Minister for Health, Singapore. He was also the Chairman of Singapore Polytechnic and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Singapore.

Yeap said the 46th OGA annual dinner will be held on 4 April 2009 at 7 pm at Soon Lee Restaurant Taiping. For details, call Yeap at 019-5507538.

SUCCESSFUL TRAVEL FAIR



Travel sales promoters

Despite the financial downturn in the global economy, the Perak Chapter's Seventh MATTA (Malaysian Association Tour and Travel Agents) travel fair succeeded in securing RM3 million worth of travel bookings. "Considering the current economic slowdown, the sales figure is very satisfac-

tory when compared with last years recorded sale of RM3.5 million", said its organizing chairman Encik Aminurrashid.

The venue which was the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport instead of the usual Indera Mulia Stadium, presented a setback of sorts, as only 7 travel agents, anticipating a lower turnout of visitors, participated; instead of 12 previously.

The most popular destinations selected by travellers was China, followed by Europe.

State Tourism Chairman Hamidah Osman, in her opening address, stated that her department was currently "having serious discussions with the Ministry of Transport to identify a suitable location for a Low Cost Carrier Terminal. They were focusing on the upper Perak area".

The next MATTA fair will be held in September at Indera Mulia Stadium. The September fair will be bigger to cater to year end travellers.

COMMUNITY NEWS

EXCHANGING IDEAS AND INFORMATION



The Parasitology and Haematology Group meeting was held at the Veterinary Research Institute (VRI) in Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah, Ipoh, recently, involving five regional diagnostic laboratories of the Department of Veterinary Services Malaysia and other institutes such as the wildlife department, Taiping Zoo, NaFISH, MARDI, KUSTEM and UPM. The meeting, which is an annu-

al event organised by VRI, was held at the lecture hall of the Avian Poultry Disease Research and Training Centre building.

The meeting discussed the current issues of veterinary parasitology and haematology in animals, as well as research and diagnostic activities in the institutes. A lecture was given by Dr M. Krishnasamy, a taxonomist, on the mounting of parasite samples and identification techniques

for animal ecto-endo parasites. Dr Cheah Tong Soon from the Perak Medical College was invited to give a talk on zoonosis, the dangers of animal parasites, as well as current zoonotic diseases caused by parasites which prove fatal to humans.

Participants of the meeting were also exposed to new knowledge from referral cases and modification of diagnostic methods involved in parasitology and haematology for animals.

Overall, the meeting proved to be a good platform for researchers from different institutes to gather and exchange information regarding their diagnostic cases and current research activities. For further info: visit website at <http://www.jphvri.gov.my>

ANNOUNCEMENT

A charity dinner by Ipoh Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPCA) will be held at Hee Lai Ton Restaurant on April 12 at 7.30 pm. Call Dr P. Sunitha at 05-5467676 or Doreen Laidlaw at 016-5608905 for tickets.

Health Awareness campaigns organised by Perak Community Specialist Hospital

1) April 4: 8 am -12 pm. Prostate Awareness Campaign. Free blood test, ultrasound and consultation on prostate issues for first 50 participants.

2) April 11: 2 pm-4 pm. A Talk on Osteo Arthritis of the Knee by Dr Subra N. Free consultation for first 10 participants. For more information on both campaigns please contact Ms Juliet Choo at 018-5713955.

"Nation Before Self" a dinner talk organised by the Perak Academy and presented by retired CPO of Perak Dato' Seri Yuen Yet Ling to be held at Tower Regency Hotel on April 10 at 7.30 pm. Please contact Wai Kheng at 05-5478949 or email: contact@perakacademy.com for reservations. Dinner and talk priced at RM35 per person.



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PA AND MA : OUR HEROES

Sisters Ee Lyn, Ee Juen & Ee Wern share how their role-model parents, Ipoh-based doctor Su Too Kiat and teacher mom, Jee Fun, overcame challenges of humble beginnings and found love and strength through keeping strong family traditions.

In the beginning, it seemed an unlikely match. Dad and mum grew up in the same small town but ran parallel lives. Mum was raised in a family of 4 children, went to an English school and was a keen sports-woman. She was beautiful and was pursued by many eligible lads. Dad, on the other hand, was raised in a large family of 12 children, was a serious student and went to a Chinese school.

They would have walked the same streets in Sitiawan and would have frequented the same stores but yet, for many years, did not meet. One thing they did have in common was to pursue, with single-minded determination, their dream of higher education and the chance of a better future. Ironically they finally met, many years later, in the University of Malaya over a box of Kentucky Fried Chicken which probably cost all of Dad's pocket

money for the week. They were married in a simple ceremony and spent their first year living in a small rented room, sharing a mattress on the floor.

Raising 3 Girls

Our parents worked full time but we always felt their presence near to us. Dad would rush home for lunch just so he could spend some time with us before we hopped on the bus for school. He would always take every available opportunity to share something of his life or of a great person, with us. There was always a spring in our step after these special moments as we would be energised by his encouragement. His favourite words "You can do it!" still rings loud and clear in our ears until this very day.

Our parents believed in providing us with quality education so we would find freedom in life. There was never any pressure to perform, only the expecta-



Dr Su Too Kiat and wife, Jee Fun

tion that we did our best. Interestingly, the most important lessons we learnt were not gleaned from school, but from observing our parents.

When it was time for our tertiary studies, Dad researched extensively to ensure we got the best education available to us, and we certainly did get the best.

Mum was selfless and would labour, with love, in the kitchen after school,

providing food for family and friends who would find refuge in our home. She taught us to be good wives, good cooks and good workers. She never dwelled on her own problems and preferred to focus her thoughts and energy on helping the people around her.

Dinners were special as we would learn life's most valuable lessons by sharing the events of the day and then encourage each other. Sometimes it was as simple as sharing a

good long laugh together.

Our parents' love for us was not without discipline. There were many a "family crisis meetings" conducted to confront unacceptable behaviours. We never really resented them because discipline was always meted out in love. Tears were replaced with hugs and new found insights.

Marriages that last a lifetime are uncommon nowadays. We are lucky to have experienced first hand, what it takes to raise a strong and loving family, and the kind of love and respect every couple should have for each other. As women, we learned from our mother that strength comes in many forms and that there are times to be quiet and times to speak up. Our parents showed us the importance of honesty, strong work ethics and most importantly, to learn from mistakes made.

Our Harbour, Our Home
Even though we are now scattered across 3 con-

tinents, we continue to find refuge in our family home in Ipoh. It is still a place where friends and loved ones can stop for a meal, meaningful conversations or stay the night. Whenever we return home, it is as though we never left. Conversations begin from where we last left off and Dad's "You can do it" remain his parting words when we leave. Soon we will start our own families and we hope to be beacons of light to our children just as our parents have been to us.

Pa and Ma, we want to say "thank you" and we love both of you very much. From your 3 girls, Lyn, Juen and Wern.

We invite you to share how your parent has been a role model to you so others may draw inspiration from him/her. Email your stories (about 700 words) to ipohecho.parenting@gmail.com, along with a scanned photograph of your parent. We will feature the best stories here!

COMMUNITY NEWS

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2009



In conjunction with International Women's Day on March 8, Perak Women for Women Society (PWW), with the support of Ipoh Parade Shopping Complex, organised a community awareness and advocacy campaign to "SAY NO TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN". Members of the public were encouraged to support this campaign by putting their handprints on a banner.

This initiative aimed to highlight the global movement demanding an end to violence against women and encourage top of mind awareness of this problem in the gen-

eral population.


Violence against girls and women is everywhere. Recent studies conducted as part of the UN Study on Violence Against Women, reveal alarming levels of gender-based violence across the world. In the household, at school, in the workplace or in the community, girls and women experience physical, sexual and psychosocial violence on a regular basis. This must stop.

Supporting this event as one of their corporate responsibilities was GlaxoSmithkline whose mission is also to help women improve the quality of their lives by enabling them to do more, feel bet-


ter and live longer. Slide shows shown throughout the day helped in bringing clarity to their mission.

To help women empower themselves, Ms Carman Loh, an International Image Consultant, demonstrated a face makeover and offered some tips for grooming as women from the crowd listened attentively to the tips given.

This event was a success with over 400 handprints collected. Despite the shortage of volunteers, the society is to be lauded for initiating this campaign as the public were made aware of the many issues relating to women.



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For further information contact us at our Ipoh Learning Centre:



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ADVERTORIAL MAP YOUR STUDY ROUTE AT KDU COLLEGE PENANG

KDU College Penang is providing a rare opportunity for SPM and STPM leavers to experience college life through the 'Classroom Experience' programme from April 1 to 15, 2009. This programme is free of charge. Students can choose to sit in during actual lectures from a broad range of courses and get the feel of a college environment. The best learning experience only happens at the best college! Call 04-2266368 now to check the class schedule and register. Hurry, spaces are limited!

KDU College Penang was established in 1991. Located at Jalan Anson, KDU College Penang, has grown over the years with an enrollment of 2,500 students who hail from neighbouring northern states as well as foreign countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Korea, China, Mongolia, Japan and Europe. KDU College Penang has evolved into one of the leading institutions of higher learning in the country, offering a commendable range of industry-driven courses. The eight-storey college building is well equipped with

state-of-the-art teaching, learning and research facilities to provide a conducive learning environment for students enrolled in its three schools:

- **SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (SEST)**
- **SCHOOL OF ART & SOCIAL SCIENCES (SASS)**
- **SCHOOL OF HOSPITALITY, TOURISM & CULINARY ARTS (SHTCA).**

The SEST boasts strong alumni who are currently holding high positions in multi-national companies in the Engineering and Information Technology fields. To keep abreast with latest developments, KDU College has forged strong industrial ties through ongoing seminars and an advisory board to gather input from industry experts in order to enhance the curriculum.

The Pre-University Studies Department at KDU College has been producing high achievers who scored a string of A's in the GCE A-Level and



the UNSW Foundation Year. Students who have completed their pre-university studies are currently pursuing medical, pharmaceutical, biomedical science and finance degrees in prestigious universities such as Kings College, UK, University College London and Monash University, Australia.

KDU College Penang, also offers a nursing programme designed to groom compassionate nurses dedicated in the well-being of others while contributing to society positively. Nursing students at KDU College are trained under the watchful eyes of seasoned matrons. They undergo a comprehensive syllabus to ensure they are prepared to serve the community upon graduation.

Students who enrol in the SASS can expect to receive holistic, com-

prehensive and broad-based programmes. These traits are apparent in the Mass Communication and Business diplomas as well as the English Language certificate programmes. These programmes are designed in such a way to give students solid and thorough grounding in their chosen fields before they choose a major in their undergraduate studies. Students are granted the flexibility to develop personal strengths while acquiring practical application and problem-solving expertise. The KDU Mass Communication and Business graduates are highly regarded in industry as a result of the sound education they receive from KDU College.

The Design Department, a new addition to the SASS family, was set up with the intention

of making KDU College Penang the cultural centre of Penang. To live up to the high expectations, the Design Department boasts an in-house gallery, home to the artistically creative and innovative minds in the region. To date, the Design Department at KDU College has nurtured young designers who have won numerous competitions, locally and abroad. Through exciting collaborations with industry partners, government agencies and non-governmental organisations, students are encouraged to explore the creative process and propose solutions to real life problems in their projects.

Students who want the complete Swiss hospitality experience without leaving the country can consider taking up the IMI diploma or degree programmes offered in collaboration with IMI University Centre in Switzerland. The programmes are a mirror-image of those offered in Switzerland. These programmes give students the best Swiss education with the most forward thinking ideas in the modern hospitality, tourism and culinary industries.

KDU College constantly strives to provide

a superior learning experience for students enrolled under the SHTCA, as seen in the upgrading of the training kitchen at a cost of a whopping RM 1.5 million. On top of that, students are exposed to the high standards in the hospitality industry through internships with the biggest hospitality groups.

All the programmes offered at KDU College Penang are approved by the Ministry of Higher Education and the majority is accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). Small classes, ultra-modern technology and superior learning environment, coupled with a team of dedicated academics, provide an unmatched learning experience which is most conducive for life-long learning.

To remain competitive and relevant, KDU College Penang has forged ties with industry leaders in many fields through an initiative aptly called the KDU Industrial Collaboration Centre (KICC) in 2006. The KICC serves as a platform for the industry to provide feedback, cost effective trainings as well as professional solutions to enhance the marketability of KDU graduates.



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