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# IPOH **echo**

Your Community Newspaper

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ISSUE **81**

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## NEWS

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**NEW**  
**11** KAMPUNG TALES

IN PERAK	H1N1	DENGUE
	27 Aug 09	Jan-Aug 09
Cases	376	2,316
Deaths	16	1

# RAMADAN BAZAARS

BY IPOH ECHO TEAM

Ramadan is here, the Islamic month of fasting, in which participating Muslims refrain from eating, drinking, smoking, and indulging in anything that is in excess or ill-natured. From dawn until dusk, the streets and eating places are more quiet than usual. From 4.30 p.m. onwards the activity begins to pick up in various locations dotted around Ipoh as the Ramadan hawkers begin to set up their stalls in preparation for the Buka Puasa rush.

continued on page 2

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## Food Vendors Do Brisk Business – Better Earnings in a Month Than in Whole Year

As workers stream out from their respective offices, having worked a full day on empty stomachs, the prospect of cooking a meal at home appears daunting and what better option than to head for the Ramadan bazaars where tempting fare awaits. Ipoh Echo sent its team out to seek out and sample what is on offer and to speak with the vendors.

### Kampar

Firdaus Mohd Amin 28, has a degree in computer science from University Technology MARA but finds selling *ayam panggang* (barbequed chicken) more profitable. Firdaus is one of the many itinerant traders at the *pasar* Ramadan in Kampar. He operates from a stall on an allotted lot rented out by the Kampar Town Council. Firdaus's father started the *ayam panggang* business a decade ago at the town's *pasar malam* (night bazaar) and has never looked back. The *ayam panggang* Firdaus sells comes in different forms – *ayam per-cik*, *ayam goreng tepung/Rempah* and *ayam madu*. A whole chicken sells at RM14 each while chicken parts range in price between RM 2 to RM3 a piece. "I set aside 200 birds daily for my business", said Firdaus to Ipoh Echo. If he sells all 200 chickens, that adds up to RM2,800 a day in gross revenue. Even accounting for food costs and rental for the stall, Ipoh Echo reckons that he makes between RM40,000 to RM50,000 during the month of Ramadan. Although Firdaus does not admit to such a figure, he does confess, "This is definitely better than selling computers".

Azhar Saronoh 32, better known as "Atan Murtabak", has been in the food business for over 11 years. He is another itinerant trader who op-



erates at *pasar malams* all over southern Perak. Azhar sells *murtabak* and is a regular at the *Kampar pasar* Ramadan. "Sales is brisk and seems better this year," he claimed. "Demand for my *murtabak* soars from 500 pieces a day last year to 700 pieces this time around." Azhar's *murtabak* retails at RM2 a piece, cheaper than *murtabak* sold at other *pasar* Ramadan in other parts of Ipoh. On a good day Azhar can make over RM1,000, an indication of the popularity of his *murtabak*. "I have been Azhar's regular since the day he started his business," said Puan Zaharah, a housewife, to Ipoh Echo. "I am hooked on Azhar's *murtabak*", she declared.

### Bercham

Located along Bercham main road in front of the Mobil Petrol Station, the Bercham *pasar* Ramadan is a small bazaar with 10 stalls in all. The fare is all round from soup and snacks to takeaway meals. Ipoh Echo sampled an *ikan bakar* (grilled fish) and snacks of mini *murtabak* and fried *popiah*. The grilled fish was tasty with a zingy sambal and the mini *murtabak* 'OK'.

Encik Aman Shah who sells the mini *murtabak* with his family sells 'nasi lemak' in the mornings at the Bougainvillea Club area throughout the year. During the fasting month he rents a stall at

this location and trades in the evening.

### Tasek

Located on the Tasek main road (Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah) in front of Medan Selera Tasek, this *pasar* Ramadan has more stalls. Here the *murtabak* is bigger and the usual mixture of fare is available. Most stalls have been trading here regularly for many years and they appear well patronized.

'Ana Rock Barbeque chicken' does a catering business 11 months of the year, operating from the Klebang area. During the fasting month he sets up his stall at Tasek, something he's been doing for several years. A family business, the chickens are barbequed on site, assisted by all his relatives. As regards earnings they were unwilling to be specific but they did say that they made enough "to cover cost and have a good Raya". They sell 120 birds per day. By Ipoh Echo's calculations, at RM15 per bird that's RM1,800 per day and the turnover is RM54,000 for the season. A very good Raya indeed.

'Kakchik Ayam Perchik' grilled chicken too has been trading in this area for six years. The other 11 months they trade at *pasar malams* between Kuala Kangsar and Taiping. During the fasting month they have 3 stalls in Ipoh located at Tasek, Stadium and Greentown. Fadillah Arshad looks after Tasek while her husband operates at the Stadium and another relation at Greentown.

### Silibin

White canopies neatly line the service road in front of the shops on Jalan Jelapang Silibin, which has about 50 stalls; a third of which sell drinks, and the rest food and desserts.

The food stalls in-

clude *nasi ayam/briyani/ulam, laksa, fried & soup noodles, mee rebus, popiah, murtabak, sata* (fish with coconut), *otak-otak* (Johor style), *soto, popiah, porridge, yong taufu, pasembor. Ikan panggang* (barbequed fish) and *ayam panggang* (barbequed chicken) are very popular. One stall sells pizza, pastries and *pau*, run by Chef Faizal, who gives cooking lessons, and another stall sells colourfully decorated cupcakes made by Liana who's a housewife.

Drinks here include *air tebu* (sugarcane), *cendol, kelapa, limau asam masin* (lime with preserved plum), *jambu assam*, coconut water; desserts include fruit cocktail jellies, puddings and there is even *dodol* at one stall.

Ipoh Echo's recommendations here are the *lemang* (glutinous rice



stuffed in bamboo and slow roasted over open fire) with *rendang tok* or *serunding ayam/ikan*.

### Stadium

The Stadium has more than a hundred stalls lined up in 6 rows at the front portion of the car park. The food sold are somewhat similar to those at Silibin but there are also stalls selling *pecal*, kebabs, burgers & Lebanese bread, *pau* & *dim sum, roti jala, putu piring/buluh, bubur lambok, mini murtabak, satay, apam balik, fried chicken* with fries, tortillas, dates and *taufu fah*.

Several well-known restaurants and food outlets have opened stalls here – Tasek Raban, Sabar Menanti, Allongs of Ipoh



Azman Onn buying his buka puasa dinner

Garden, Laksamana Cheng Ho, and Rojak Greentown, to name a few. Zabidin Amir runs a restaurant in Ipoh Garden behind Hong Leong Bank. Each year he rents a stall at the stadium and his daily turnover is above RM2,000. Some are first-timers, like the stall selling barbequed fish, beef and lamb. Ipoh Echo recommendations here are the *nasi ulam* with fried lung (*paru-paru*) and the caramel custard.

Ipoh Echo spoke to some customers like Azman Onn from Ipoh Garden East who buys his food at the stadium regularly because there is a wide variety and most importantly ample parking. Madam Choong Yut Sum from Ipoh Garden near the Novena Church buys *kuih muih* and *cendol* from the stadium stall. She patronizes the stalls twice a week during Ramadan. "There is a nice variety of Malay food and its all in one place." Hirwan Hambal from Tambun buys at the stadium because there is ample parking. He also likes the stalls at Medan Gopeng and Cempaka but seldom goes because it is difficult to park there.

### Greentown

The Ramadan bazaar at UDA Ocean outside Greentown Mall, has more than 50 stalls. The types of food sold include *nasi* tomato, *nasi ayam, nasi*

carrot, *nasi daging kebab ayam; cakoi madu* ('yau char kwai') at RM1 for 3 pieces; *kuih muih* at RM1 for 3 pieces; mini *akok* Kelantan (a type of cake with banana filling) at RM2 for 7; burger *goreng*; *murtabak ayam & daging* at RM2.50; Laksa Kuala & Laksa Penang; *acar buah* and *ayam bakar*.

En Rosdi who sells Ayam Bakar only does so during Ramadan. At other times he is self-employed while En Zailaini who sells Kebab Ayam/Daging also sells other days at Pasar Malam. Ipoh Echo recommendations: *kebab ayam, murtabak*, 4 types of *kuih muih* (Malay cakes).

### Medan Gopeng

Located near the Megoplex Shopping Centre at Jalan Gopeng, this Ramadan bazaar has the usual selection of Ramadan food on offer, spread over 70 stalls. Of note is the *ikan sumbat*, fish stuffed with a mixture of grated coconut and spices, roasted to perfection. Its aroma permeates the air from a distance. The *murtabak* here is tasty and the *lemang* is wonderful with *rendang*. worth trying too is the *ayam golek*, chicken with honey and the *ayam percik*, sweet and spicy and redolent with the fragrance of turmeric.

All in all Ramadan bazaars are enjoyed by both Muslims and non Muslims alike. Some stalls garner a loyal following and some of these recipes are family recipes handed down over generations, only to be savoured during this period. Licence fees for the stalls are reasonable ranging from RM300 for a covered one with canopy to RM150 for one without, for the whole period. Enterprising stall keepers can look forward to a captive audience and some can earn in this one month what others do in a whole year. Definitely a worthwhile effort.

## RAMADHAN PROMOTIONS

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IPOH ECHO

From the Editor's Desk

Fathol Zaman Bukhari



# 1 MALAYSIA – AS I SEE IT

*Fostering good racial relationship takes time. You can't bond by simply holding hands and singing Negara-Ku together or attending boot camp for three months . . .*

## Tokoh Merdeka

It is not often that one gets invited to address a gathering or speak at a public forum. So when a teacher friend asked me to be the guest speaker at his school assembly, I was elated albeit, a little nervous. Nervous because I had never before stood in front of a school assembly to speak. The last time I stood before one was in 1964 when I was still a student. The occasion, however, had nothing to do with my oratory skills but to receive a sporting award from my principal, the venerated Mr P Subaramaniam.

Yes, I had chaired meetings, sat on forum panels and spoke on raised platforms but the subject matter had always been on making Ipoh a more liveable city, one that would rival Singapore and Melbourne in stature. But to enlighten school children and instill in them adoring values is definitely not my plate of *mee goreng*. So it was with much trepidation that I accepted the invitation although I had cherished thoughts of declining, citing a mounting workload as an excuse. But, like everything else, it was difficult to refuse a good offer, especially when expectations were riding high.

Peter Khiew, the acting supervisor of the evening session of St Michael Institution, Ipoh (SMI), had me on his radar screen for awhile already. I was identified as the school's *Tokoh Merdeka* for 2009. It is customary of SMI to invite a renowned personality to

speak during the month of August in conjunction with *Hari Merdeka* which falls on August 31 each year. Former students were the choice but this time around it was different – a departure from the norm. I was neither an ex-student nor was my school anywhere near Ipoh. When I asked why the sudden change of heart? Peter replied that being a former military man I fitted the bill. It seemed incredulous how the decision was reached. Should I question Peter's wisdom? He had his reasons. Why rock the boat? I consider it an honour, one that is seldom accorded to old soldiers like me. Old soldiers never die they just fade away," said Gen MacArthur. But I am not about to slip into obscurity for some sentimental reasons.

I reached the gates of SMI at the appointed time on Saturday, August 15, 2009. There to greet me was Peter and his school *kompang* group. The incessant beating of the *kompang* did much to lift my spirits. As we walked towards the basketball court to where the students were gathered, I could barely hide my excitement. The rousing welcome was like a homecoming party for a prodigious son, of which I am not.

It was late in the afternoon and the sun was bearing heavily on us. I could feel the students' discomfort, as the heat was unbearable. After a brief introduction by Peter, I was invited to the podium

to speak. I had jotted my talking points on a piece of paper and was ready to deliver. But the sight of the poor students cringing under the merciless sun pricked my conscience. "Can they concentrate?" I asked myself. Henceforth, I decided to do away with the notes and spoke off the cuff.

## Lessons From My Past

And this was what I told the 200-odd students and staff of SMI that Saturday afternoon in August.

"I was born in a small kampong a few miles away from Parit Buntar, the administrative capital of Krian District in northern Perak with its expansive rice fields. The village's population consisted mainly of Malays who eked out a living toiling on their ancestral lands. The Chinese lived in the towns and the Indians in the rubber plantations. Before the advent of modern farming methods, paddy planting was an annual affair done manually during the rainy season. Once the fields were harvested they were left to idle and we would play football on the sun-baked ground. Life was tough but we survived in spite of the many shortcomings. We got along fine with the Chinese and were never envious of their prosperity. After all, they worked hard for it, we reasoned. My father had always insisted that a good education would take us places. He enrolled his sons at the only mission school in Parit Buntar – Anglo-

Chinese School (later renamed Methodist School).

The Malayan Emergency was still at its height. Voiced aircraft flew frequently in the sky with loudspeakers blaring imploring the terrorists to lay down their arms. Occasionally, leaflets, meant for the terrorists, were dropped but we would collect and keep them as souvenirs instead. Being children there were no barriers, real or imagined, dividing us. Regardless of races and beliefs we were one. Our youthful exuberance was played out in the open for all to see.

One source of entertainment which we looked forward to was the military band display at the town padang. It was a joy to watch the soldiers, in starched khaki uniform, marching in unison while playing on their oversized musical instruments. This was what prompted me to

make the army a career. Unfortunately, only two of us enlisted. I was commissioned into the Rangers. As an officer in an infantry battalion I had my fair share of jungle operations both in Sarawak and the Thai border. In a racially mixed outfit like the Rangers, we bonded easily with Malays, Chinese, Indians, Kadazans, Muruts, Ibans, Bidayus etc. No one felt excluded. We were colour-blind literally, a true reflection of the 1Malaysia concept so vigorously pursued by Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, presently.

Maintaining peace and security in a newly independent nation like Malaysia came with a price. Some paid dearly – killed or maimed while keeping the enemy at bay. I lost several of my men and friends. We mourned their untimely demise but that was to be expected.

You don't join the army just for the heck of it."

## My Message

My simple message to the students of SMI that afternoon was to understand the meaning of independence and freedom. The two are inter-related. Tolerance was the other factor they should cherish. I told them to jealously guard the freedom they enjoy and not allow others to ride roughshod over them.

The 1Malaysia I perceive, based on my youthful experience in Parit Buntar and in the Rangers, is so much different from the one portrayed on television and in songs and jingles. The official version seems so pretentious, superficial and in poor taste. You cannot create 1Malaysia by simply holding hands and singing *Negara-Ku* together or attending boot camp for three months!

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

### CALLING ALL YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

The Rotary International District 3300 Malaysia invites young professionals between 25-40 years of age to apply as team members for a Group Study Exchange (GSE) programme to Switzerland from 9th May - 12th June 2010.

The (GSE) programme is a unique cultural and vocational exchange opportunity for young business and professional men and women to develop professional and leadership skills. GSE participants follow an extensive and rigorous programme of international travel and team activities which includes vocational visits, cultural experience and fellowship opportunities.

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For more details on the objectives, qualification and responsibilities please call: Hj Mohd Odzman b Abdul Kadir (Chairman), Tel: 012-5186070, E-mail: [ppodzman@hotmail.com](mailto:ppodzman@hotmail.com). Closing Date for Applications: 30th September 2009.



**PUBLISHER**

Ipo Echo Sdn Bhd  
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No 1 Jalan Lasam  
30450 Ipoh Perak Darul  
Ridzuan  
Tel: (605) 249 5936  
Fax: (605) 255 2181  
Email: [james@ipohecho.com.my](mailto:james@ipohecho.com.my)

**EDITORIAL**

Fathol Zaman Bukhari  
G. Sivapragasam  
Wern Sze Gill

**REPORTER**

James Gough

**GRAPHIC DESIGN/  
PHOTOGRAPHY**

Rosli Mansor Ahd Razali

**MARKETING &  
DISTRIBUTION  
MANAGER**

Ramesh Kumar

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**THINKING ALOUD****Can We Learn From This Man?**

I have decided to devote my column in this issue to review 'Three Cups of Tea' a book which is not only a best seller but in my opinion delivers a very important message.

This is a must read book for all Malaysians and I mean everyone. We as a rule take all things we have for granted forgetting how fortunate we really are to have them. A book such as this opens to us a window to the desperate lives people lead in several parts of the world. It cautions us against abusing our affluence and forces us to reassess the values we hold. It is also a confirmation that one person can make a difference.

**He Made a Difference**

The book is the story of a man who, with absolutely no resources, consumed with a passion to make a difference, did exactly that by devoting his life to change the future of children in one of the remotest locations on earth. He has been doing this quietly without fanfare and publicity, building schools to serve impoverished children in the northern most regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Mortenson, forced to abort his attempt to conquer K2 just metres from its summit to rescue an injured companion, gets lost and ends up in a tiny hamlet perched on the Himalayan slopes in north Pakistan. Whilst recovering from his ordeal he visits the village school and finds it to be nothing more than an open ground and the children's study kit made up of twigs and the earth. Unable to afford a dollar a day for a teacher the village shares one with another village. Emotionally moved by the sight of children sitting quietly doing their work without a teacher in sight he promises the village head that he will return and build a school for them.

When he gets home he finds that it is not an easy task to raise funds for a village school in an Islamic area no one has heard of. After several failed attempts he gets a lone supporter, an ex-mountaineer who had climbed in that region.

The struggle however continues. When he returns, he not only has to contend with the difficulty of acquiring building materials and transporting them over impossible terrain with no infrastructure but confront

the greed of the local elite and opposition from local religious leaders.

He surmounts these problems and eventually completes the school. During the process other villages approach him to build schools in their place. Realising that the need is everywhere in the region he sees no greater purpose for his life than to make this his life mission. He has since built close to two hundred schools in and around the region.

**Extraordinary Insights**

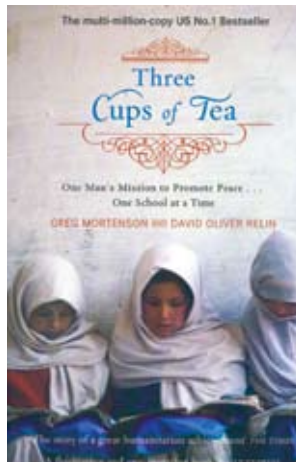
The book is not only about the struggle of a man engaged in an undertaking that requires almost super-human effort but delivers an extraordinary insight into the harsh lives led by the people of this region and their amazing resilience in the face of such overwhelming adversity. The book is also an education on the social, cultural, religious and political fabric that envelope these people at their private and personal level.

The significant message contained in this book is no more explicitly bared than by the following passages:

**Importance of Relationships**

*"That day, Haji Ali taught me the most important lesson I've ever learned in my life. We Americans think you have to accomplish everything quickly. We're the country of thirty-minute power lunches and two-minute football drills. Our leaders thought their 'shock and awe' campaign could end the war in Iraq before it even started. Haji Ali taught me to share three cups of tea, to slow down and make building relationships as important as building projects. He taught me that I had more to learn from the people I work with than I could ever hope to teach them."*

*Syed Abbas, whose influence extended up dozens of wild mountain valleys, had an acute sense of each community's needs. He agreed that education was the only long-term tactic to combat poverty. But he argued that the children of Baltistan faced a more immediate crisis. In villages like Chunda more than one child in three died. One had to water a plant before it could be coaxed to grow; children had to survive long enough to benefit from the school. With hundreds of workers digging trenches ten hours a day they completed the project in one week. Through twelve thousand*

**THREE CUPS OF TEA**

feet of pipe Mortenson provided, fresh spring water flowed to public taps in the five villages.

Finley filed a story about the visit, describing the work Mortenson was doing and quoting him about the coming war. Mortenson urged Finley's readers not to lump all Muslims together. The Afghan children flocking to refugee camps with their families were victims, deserving our sympathy. "These aren't the terrorists. These aren't the bad people. Blaming all Muslims for the horror of 9/11 is causing innocent people to panic. The only way we can defeat terrorism is if people in this country where terrorists exist learn to respect and love Americans and if we can respect and love these people here. What's the difference between them becoming a productive local citizen or a terrorist? I think the key is education."

*"Osama is not a product of Pakistan or Afghanistan. He is a creation of America. Thanks to America, Osama is in every home. As a military man, I know you can never fight and win*

*against someone who can shoot at you once and then run off and hide while you have to remain eternally on guard. You have to attack the source of your enemy's strength. In America's case, that's not Osama or Saddam or anyone else. The enemy is ignorance. The only way to defeat it is to build relationships with these people, to draw them into the modern world with education and business. Otherwise the fight will go on forever."*

*"I was just overwhelmed listening to Uzra's story, Mortenson says." Here was this strong, proud woman trying to do the impossible. Her school's boundary wall had been blown to rubble. The roof had fallen in. Still, she was coming to work every day and putting the place back together because she was passionate about education being the only way to solve Afghanistan's problems.*

*In the course of his work Mortenson learns the truth of the words of Norberg-Hodge "I used to assume that the direction of 'progress' was somehow inevitable not to be questioned. I passively accepted a new road through the middle of the park, a steel-and-glass*

*bank where a 200-year-old church had stood... and the fact that life seemed to get, harder and faster with each day. I do not anymore. In Ladakh I have learned that there is more than one path into the future and I have had the privilege to witness another, saner, way of life - a pattern of existence based on the co-evolution between human beings and the earth. Western development workers should not only blindly impose modern 'improvements' on ancient cultures, but industrialized countries had lessons to learn from people like Ladakh about building sustainable societies. "I have seen that community and a close relationship with the land can enrich human life beyond all comparison with material wealth or technological sophistication. I have learned that another way is possible."*

**Can we, in our push for progress honour the old while embracing the new?**

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## MUSINGS ON FOOD

by See Foon Chan-Koppen  
seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

## SeeFoon joins in the spirit of Ramadan



One lament I have often found myself expressing to my friends as I travel around Malaysia is, "where can I find typical Malay kampung food?" Not the type of food served up in the numerous 'warungs' or restaurants with the sign 'Tom Yam' emblazoned across the front, but your honest to goodness genuine Malay food, the kind cooked by the mother of the household in typical kampongs, which alas, like the food, is rapidly becoming extinct!

Thank goodness for Ramadan bazaars and restaurants like Tasek Raban where the tradition of kampung cuisine is alive and well and actually flourishing. Located on Jalan Sukan Kompleks opposite the row of food stalls encircling part of the stadium complex, Tasek Raban is the brainchild of Puan Jamaliah and her husband (now deceased) who started it in Lenggong by (where else?) Tasek (Lake) Raban.

### 10 Years in Ipoh

The popularity of that first restaurant led them to venture further afield to Ipoh where they have been operating now for ten years. Open every day from 11.00 a.m. till about 4.30 p.m. the restaurant is open air and packed to the gills from 12.30 p.m. on. Sinks with soap line both sides of the restaurant for the obligatory ablution for those who will use their hands but forks and spoons are also available. Self-service is the modus operandi for diners as they line up to get their plate of rice and proceed around the huge long table where every centimetre of space is filled with plates or trays of tempting offerings, to make their selection.

### 80 Different Choices

Puan Jamaliah gave us a quick run-down on her operation. Her team of around 20 workers prepare and serve over 80 different menu items every day! Some of these dishes are her own closely guarded recipes which she prepares herself, unwilling to share her family secret recipes with chefs who may then steal them to become competitors. One of these is the sauce on her *ayam bakar* (grilled chicken) which tasted yummy.

The cornucopia of dishes on the 'buffet' to choose from is mind-boggling. There were grilled fish, fried fish, fried salted fish, grilled chicken, fried chicken, curried chicken, countless numbers of cooked vegetables, raw vegetables, dips, sauces, beef in different styles, chicken innards, beef innards, bivalves like cockles, clams, and something one doesn't see too often, Siput Sedut, periwinkles or winkles for short – tiny snail-like shell fish which most people find too troublesome to eat.

### Winkles: Hard Work

Naturally being the curious food adventurer that I am, I headed straight for these tiny winkles and brought back a whole plate to my table. The next step was to figure out how to extract the meat from the tiny conch shaped shell. My friends advised me to first suck from the pointed end which they had chopped off (imagine the work involved in chopping off the tail end of these tiny gastropods no longer than an inch!), then suck it out from the other end. I failed miserably in extracting the tiny marine snail and had to ask for tooth picks, whereupon I had better luck. Cooked in a coconut broth with turmeric, the winkles were delicious but hard work for very small returns.

### Traditional Ulam

I headed for the Ulam (herbs) area next. One sel-



dom finds a stall or restaurant that serves these herbs the traditional way; a wide selection of raw medicinal and non-medicinal vegetables and leafy herbs served with a variety of sambals or dips and other provocative condiments. I soon received a lesson in identifying and naming these various *ulam*. There was *petai* (commonly known

as stink bean and has been found in research to lower blood sugar in diabetics); *gering* (shaped like petai but bigger); *pucuk ubi* (young leaves of sweet potato, tapioca and other tubers); *daun betik* or papaya leaves (good for tenderizing meat, soothe digestive system, gastric, anti-cancer); *jantung pisang* (banana flower); *paku rawan*; *daun selom*; *ulam raja* a leaf reminiscent of unripe mango (used for the cleansing of blood and to strengthen muscles and bones because of its high calcium content); *kacang botol* (4-angle bean); lady's fingers (blanched); *temu lawak* (a type of ginger that has liver & blood fat lowering activity); *pucuk cabang tiga*; and *pucuk paku* (fiddlehead fern); and *daun pegaga* or pennywort (the leaves are believed to have anti-aging properties and the whole plant expels dampness and helps in hepatitis, sore throat, bronchitis, hypertension).

I helped myself to a sampling of each and small bowls of the *sambal belacan* (pounded dried prawn paste with lime, chillies mixture), the two types of *sambal kepala* (dry fresh grated coconut) and the *sambal tempoyak* made from fermented durian. Most of my friends at the table, even though they were Malaysians, wrinkled their noses at the *tempoyak* but I tucked in with relish, combining it with the *sambal belacan*, and the coconut sambal as a lovely dip for all the raw herbs and

vegetables.

### Fish Feast

From there we moved onto the *ikan bakar* or barbecued fish. there were three types of whole fish, the *ikan jelawat* RM26/-, *ikan terubok* – RM22/- *ikan siakap* – RM24, the first two being very bony and one had to be careful picking through the fish. These

## HAWKER FOOD

## WAT TAN HOR



A reader wrote in about our review on Lui Cha (issue 80). It was pointed out that the translation for 'Lui' does not mean 'thunder' but 'to grind'. Although the two words sound the same, they are written differently in Chinese. Mr Wong, we stand corrected – it is 'ground tea'. This time we will attempt to translate Wat Tan Hor as 'smooth egg rice noodles'. Do feel free to correct us.

Wat Tan Hor is Kuey Tiau (broad rice noodles) fried and seasoned, and smothered in thick egg gravy. Ideally, the egg gravy should be thick but not too starchy. The egg gravy usually has: vegetables, prawns, meat, fishcake and of course, beaten egg and the best ones – and this is the sinful part... have oodles of Chu Yau Tsa or fried lardons! What gets the seal of approval is the accompanying chilli sauce – it is usually Sambal Belacan. Good sambal makes good Wat Tan Hor!

NAME	WHERE	COMMENTS	PRICE (RM)	
<b>RESTORAN TUCK KEE</b> 5pm-2.30am Closed every 2 weekends	61 Jln Yau Tet Shin, New Town	Has oodles of lardons – tasty & aromatic. Sambal is perfect. Noodles finer than others.	5.00	★ ★ ★ ★
<b>KEDAI MAKANAN SUN SENG FATT</b> 8.30pm-1.30am	25 Jln Leong Sin Nam, New Town	Individual portions are cooked separately. Need patience. Usually has a 45-minute wait. No pork, uses groundnut oil.		★ ★ ★ ★
<b>RESTORAN MEE CHEW</b> 11am-2.30pm Sundays off	174 Jln Raja Dr Nazrin Shah (Jln Gopeng)	Prawns are fresh. A good portion of ingredients. Tasty but a bit starchy. No special 'sambal' only served with 'chilli padi'.	4.00	★ ★ ★
<b>CHEE WAH</b> 6.30pm-midnight Rest days not fixed	12 Jln Che Tak, New Town	Gravy a bit light. Noodles acceptable. Taste normal – not much 'tai chow' flavour. Chilli sauce nothing special.	5.50	★ ★ ★

Our next food review will be **ROAST DUCK**  
Email your favourite recommendations to: [food@ipohecho.com.my](mailto:food@ipohecho.com.my)

were served with *air asam* (tamarind sauce) as a dip. Other fish like *ikan keli* (cat fish) – RM2/ and *ikan pari* (stingray) – RM5/- were as tasty and fresh and certainly value for money. The grilled chicken was juicy and Puan Jamaliah's secret sauce that she basted it with, enticing. We also had a selection of the cooked vegetables which all seemed to share a similar coconut based sauce at RM2 each.

### Choice and Value

All in all our total bill for 5 people came to RM70. This was high considering that most people usually have their one plate of rice and choice of accompaniments, working out to probably RM6-7 each. In our case, we had one of the expensive fish and many smaller dishes. I still feel that Tasek Raban gives value for money considering the vast choice of dishes. The only lament I have is that it's all cold!

Tasek Raban does a brisk business serving 400-500 customers a day. During Ramadan they open from 3.00-8.00pm and customers who wish to break fast at the restaurant may do so by booking

a table in advance. Additionally they have a stall at the Ramadan bazaar at the stadium.

**Tasek Raban**  
Jalan Sukan Kompleks  
(next to Red Crescent Hall)  
Tel: **019-521 5657**,  
**017-534 4971**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**KAMI** (Kinta Action on Mental Health Issues Society Perak) talk entitled, 'Into The Future – Issues & Concerns of the Long-Term Carer', by Dr Esther G Ebenezer. Sat. 5th September 2009, 2.30-5.00 p.m. Talk is in English. Free. Call Su: **016-546 8003**.

**Hospital Fatimah & The Perak Chest Society** is organising a public forum on Pandemic H1N1 Flu Preparedness by Dr Leong Oon Keong, Consultant Chest Physician. Sat. 12th September 2009, 2:00-3:30 p.m. at Hospital Fatimah, 4th Floor Conference Room. Free. Tel.: **05-5455777** or Fax: **05-5477 050**.

Brahma Kumaris Malaysia talk: 'Experiencing Inner Power & Protection'. Wednesday, 2 September 2009 at 7.30 p.m., Royal Ipoh Club, Jalan Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab, Ipoh. Free. Contact: Mdm Ajit Kaur – **05-5460970** or Mdm Kamala – **019-5742855**.

**FOMSO** (The Federation of Sri Lankan Organisations) will be launching the Sri Lankan Humanitarian Relief Fund in Ipoh at 11.30 a.m. on 13 Sep. 2009 at the Rayan Cultural Hall. YB Tan Sri Dato Seri Azlani V Jeyaratnam will officiate the launch. Contact Mr V Karthigesu at: **05-5472939**.

**FREE Talk:** Relationships and Karmic Connections – An Insight Through Past Life Regression by Dr Selina Chew, PhD, C.Ht. Saturday, 19 September 2009, 8.00-9.30 p.m. at the Ipoh Buddhist Dhamma Association, 108 Jalan Raja Kam, Canning Garden. Advanced reservation necessary – limited places. For bookings/enquiries call: **013-6302926**. For more info, visit: [www.life-inspirations.com](http://www.life-inspirations.com).



## COMMUNITY NEWS

## FORUM ON CURRENT CONSUMER AFFAIRS

A forum to discuss Current Consumer Affairs organised by Perak Consumer Association at Saint John Education Centre in conjunction with 'Change begins with me' campaign was attended by more than 50 people.

Datuk Marimuthu, President of Federation Of Malaysia Consumer Association (FOMCA), briefed on major consumer concerns such as world-wide increase in price of goods, climate change, water crisis, privatisation of health care, increase in crime rate and energy crisis. Malaysia imports food and 68% of farmers own less than one acre of land. The country has more than one million acres of idle land under Malay reserve and after the rice crisis the government is considering using this land for farming and not depend on imports.

Muhammad Sha'ani from National Consumer Complaints Centre (NCCC) spoke of the complaints received. He said that the majority of complaints are on housing. For every complaint received, 26 are not re-



ported. Consumers purchasing a product based on advertisement cannot get any compensation if the item does not comply with what is shown in the brochure. The seller must replace or repair defective goods. Consumers having problems with goods and services provided can lodge their complaint with Agensi Tebus Rugi.

Paul Selva Raj, from Pusat Penyelidikan dan Sumber Pengguna, spoke on increasing cost of goods and services. He urged the public to change their buying habits; instead of buying branded products they should buy house brands. Prices of goods are generally lower in the hyper markets, but eventually it would become a monopoly and they would dictate

prices.

During question time the rapid spread of H1N1 was raised and the general consensus was that the individual must be more responsible.

A. JEYARAJ

## SPORT

## FULL TAEKWONDO TEAM TO REPRESENT MALAYSIA IN RUSSIA



The National TaeKwonDo team of 10 boys and girls will represent Malaysia in the forthcoming XVI World TaeKwonDo ITF Championship in St Petersburg, Russia which is held once every two years. This will be the first time Malaysia is sending a full team overseas.

Speaking at an informal flag handover and

photo session at the MSN Hall in Perak Stadium, Wan Koon Seng, the Team Manager thanked the state government for the support given and said that the team is expected to win 2 gold medals.

The Guest of Honour, YB Zainol Fadzi, Exco member for Sports handed the national flag to the team.

VICTOR CHEW  
August 18, 2009

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## BOOK REVIEW

CHELVI MURUGIAH

## LIMESTONE HILLS &amp; CAVES OF THE KINTA VALLEY

*Man has been endowed with reason, with the power to create, so that he can add to what he's been given. But up to now he hasn't been a creator, only a destroyer. Forests keep disappearing, rivers dry up, wildlife's become extinct, the climate's ruined and the land grows poorer and uglier every day. [Uncle Vanya, 1897]*

**LIMESTONE HILLS & CAVES OF THE KINTA VALLEY** is written by S.L. Wong and the photography is by Cheang Kum Seng. Both these individuals are environmentalists with a keen interest in limestone hills conservation. This publication is the result of their lifetime effort put together with the collaboration of the Malaysian Nature Society and University Technology Petronas.

Their objective is to create awareness to readers on the beauty of our limestone hills and caves, which are being destroyed at a rapid pace in the name of development. These magnificent works of Nature are reputed to be 240 to 570 million years old, made up of ancient limestone called karst.

This 'green' publication showcases over nine (9) limestone hills in the Kinta Valley. The cover and back cover features Kinta Valley's limestone hills and the others include, Gunung Lanno, Rapat, Terendum and Dato. Featured also is

the Titiwangsa Range. The back cover inset shows the western face of the unusually shaped Gunung Rapat.

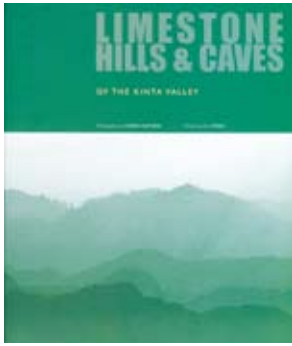
The book contains a selection of Mr Cheang's best photographs, taken over a number of years, that involved many years of exploration and dedicated work. This publication is well documented with glossary and references, valuable to students and researchers as the information contained are based on primary field research and white papers presented over the years by authorities on limestone hills in the Kinta Valley.

**Human Exploitation**

In quoting the author, "Limestone hills and caves are more valued for their commercial purpose than their immeasurable nature conservation value and therefore is very vulnerable to human exploitation. The biggest threat is blasting for the cement and marble industries".

**Need For Conservation**

The writer and photogra-



pher hope to create public awareness on the need to conserve and protect the unique natural habitat of Kinta Valley's limestone hills and caves and prevent them from being depleted altogether in the name of development.

The publication includes findings from the many explorations... revealing many hidden treasures contained in these massive caves and karst hills... from the 'jaw-dropping' magnificent limestone formations, each an original piece of 'Picasso's work of mother nature's art'... to the environment, specifically flora, fauna, insects,... to the historic evidence of life which lay within the layers

of soil perfectly preserved through time..... to drawings by aboriginal cave dwellers to fossils of marine animals and land creatures. It's a wonder to note that the research findings show strong evidence that these limestone hills and caves were submerged in water thousands of years ago!

**Rare Geological Features**

Many of us are unaware that these magnificent works of nature – the towering karst hills – are considered rare geological features found only in a few sites in South East Asia. They are certainly what makes Ipoh City unique.

Limestone Hills & Caves Of The Kinta Valley is worth browsing through and very likely to trigger the interest of readers as many may not be aware of the beauty and value of these limestone hills and caves, a part of our ecology that Ipohies take for granted.

## THE ART OF GOOD READING



Recently, the group had a 'Meet the Writers' session with 18 year-old Adeline Lee, author of *Lethal Lesson* and other stories, over tea at Indulgence.

Since October 2003, a group of avid book readers has been meeting regularly over tea on a Saturday afternoon to share their passion for the written word. The Book Club aims to promote an interest in the art and enjoyment of reading, and to review the books selected, thereby learning the art of criticism through a joint exploration of the storyline and a sharing of impressions made by the author. In the sharing, much value is added to the reading experience.

Each member takes a turn to choose a book for the group to read. The book selected should have a story as the group is primarily studying the art of story telling. Book discussions cover storylines, the writing style of the author, the use of language, the skill of the author in engaging the

reader, character strength, and so on; basically how the reader felt and what he/she got out of the book. Over time members inevitably develop the art of mindful reading and the pleasure of reading is enhanced. It also gives members an opportunity to widen their range of reading material.

The group meets every 5-6 weeks at various venues. Sometimes a venue is chosen to complement the book, for example, 'The Red Thread' was discussed at Sybil's Clinic in Papan, 'The White Tiger' at Lotus Indian Restaurant, 'The Gift of Rain' at the Old Andersonian Club. Meetings are about 2 hours long and the lively sessions make for fruitful and fulfilling Saturday afternoons.

**AUDREY POH**

Anyone interested to join the Book Club can contact the PSPA on **05-5487814**.

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## HAPPENINGS

### RENEWING FRIENDSHIPS ON THE GREEN

UM-NUS Inter-University Tunku Chancellor Golf Tournament 2009.



Photo courtesy of University of Malaya

HRH Sultan Azlan Shah and Singapore President S R Nathan with participants of the UM-NUS Inter-University Tunku Chancellor Golf Tournament 2009

**M**eru Valley Golf & Country Club played host to the first of two games played in conjunction with the UM-NUS Inter-University Tunku Chancellor Golf Tournament 2009 held in Ipoh recently.

Organised this year by University Malaya (UM) in Ipoh, the team from UM was led by UM Chancellor, HRH Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah, whilst the National University of Singapore (NUS) team was headed by NUS Chancellor, President Sellapan R Nathan.

Spanning four decades of history, this annual golfing tournament is a cherished event, and has endured success in fostering deep and lasting camaraderie between UM and NUS. Their mission, as always, is to build a warm and enduring bond of friendship between the golfing fraternities of the two Universities.

The UM team succeeded in retaining the Tunku Chancellor Cup this year.

## TRAIPSING THROUGH TOWN WITH PEI-SHYEN

*Your Essential Guide to the Latest Shops, Places to go, Hotspots and Things to do in and around Ipoh*

### Akamomiji Japanese Restaurant

Add: 36 & 38, Medan Ipoh 1E, Medan Ipoh Bistari, 31400 Ipoh.

Tel: **05-5468368**

**I**f, like me, you are a fan of Japanese food, then you would no doubt have heard of Akamomiji. This Japanese restaurant has only stepped into the Ipoh culinary scene a mere 5 and a half months ago, having opened in late February this year.

The restaurant has a charming Japanese-style frontage, with typical Japanese roof overhang on the exterior and framed windows. Contemporary tables and chairs are laid out with a sushi bar at the far end of the wall, com-



plete with a glass backdrop with a Japanese picture.

Private rooms offering typical Japanese tatami-style dining are available and private functions can be catered for. Akamomiji is open for lunch and dinner everyday.

### Beadazzle

Add: 23 Medan Ipoh 1E, Medan Ipoh Bistari, 31400 Ipoh.  
Tel: **05-5475096**



\*Closed on Tuesdays.

**A**cross the street from Akamomiji restaurant, a shop with two gorgeous dresses in the window caught my eye. I traipsed in and discovered that it was one of the very latest boutiques to open its doors for business in the area, having just opened a month ago.

Beadazzle joins a

plethora of other similar boutiques in the area, offering a range of pretty dresses for day and evening wear for the fashion-conscious woman. Imported from Hong Kong, the clothes are of the latest design, mostly in trendy prints and bright colours. There were flowy babydoll dresses in printed chiffon and empire line dresses in stretchable fabric that need no ironing and are great for travelling!

As a special opening promotion, customers get a 10% discount off all clothes for a limited period only. Beadazzle also offers manicure and pedicure services within the premises at the special package price of RM55.

Traipse along to bea-

dazzle and be dazzled!

### The Revolution

Add: 5 Medan Ipoh 1A, Medan Ipoh Bistari, 31400 Ipoh.

Tel: Mr. Yip Chan Sun – **012-5308918**

URL: <http://www.therevolutiontoys.blogspot.com/>

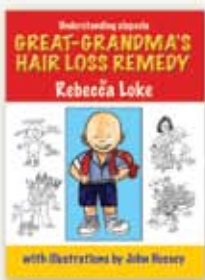
**I**f you're a fan of action figures of all kinds, The Revolution is simply the place for you. This revolutionary toy store is the source of collectibles of all kinds, ranging from movie toys to Japanese action toys. There are Transformers, Star Wars, Marvel and Gundam, just to name some of the popular few. Even the recent movie, G.I. Joe, has its action figures grace the

podium of glory. All you die-hard collectors are in luck as all the toys are sold at its Manufacturer Suggested Retail Price (MSRP), cutting out on additional profit made by the retailer. Also, the friendly sales assistant (a student who claims to be a geek for toys) was quick to inform me that most of the toys sold are manufactured by Hasbro, and Tomy, a prominent Japanese toy company. So fans can rest assured that the toys are top quality. So traipse along to The Revolution and be ready to be transported into a world totally different from our own – after all, it is where you can marvel at the light saber (as in Star Wars) in its full glory.



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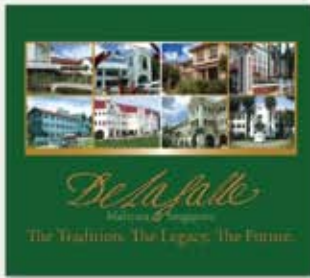
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## POLYTECHNICS - 40 YEARS ON



Since its inception in 1969, polytechnics have played a major role in nation building. It is an institution of higher learning that offers technical training for deserving candidates who opt for the technical field as their profession of choice. The numerous polytechnics in the country have produced many graduates to satisfy industrial needs. To commemorate the institutions' invaluable contributions over the last 40 decades, the Department of Polytechnics and Community College, Ministry of Higher Education, organised a fitting ceremony at the country's oldest polytechnic, Ungku Omar Polytechnic, Ipoh, recently.

The ceremony was officiated by the Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah, and graced by the department's director, Dato' Hj Imran Idris. In attendance were current and former directors of the 27 polytechnics nationwide led by Mohd Jayus Nasir, the director of Ungku Omar Polytechnic. In his keynote address, Saifuddin acknowledged the contributions by polytechnics in producing quality human capital sought after by industries.

Tan Sri Dato' Ir. Othman Merican, the first director (then principal) of Ungku Omar Polytechnic (1969-1974), received the 'Tokoh Pengarah Politeknik' award in recognition of his services for the betterment of the polytechnic.

## PAS YOUTH ENTERTAINS MEDIA TO LUNCH



Dewan Pemuda PAS Perak (PAS Youth) entertained media representatives to lunch at Laksamana Cheng Ho Restaurant in Ipoh recently. The primary objective of the get-together was to introduce the movement's new executive committee line-up. Ustaz Hj Zawawi Hassan, the state Pas Youth Chief, in his opening remarks outlined the movement's strategies for the months ahead. He revealed plans to restore public's confidence in Pakatan Rakyat in the wake of recent developments affecting the state. Among programmes already in place and in the pipeline are the Karnival Jom Serta PAS currently in progress in the various districts. PAS Youth plans to meet active non-governmental organisations to propagate its ideas. Zawawi spoke at length the upcoming public demonstration planned for on October 17 at Stadium Perak. The gathering at the stadium is aimed at remonstrating the party's displeasure with Barisan Nasional in administering the state. Zawawi will meet the Sultan to highlight Umno's use of mosques for political purposes and its meddling in the affairs of the State Religious Department. Dr Muhamad Al-Hiss, the youth wing secretary, took Dato' Seri Ali Rostam, MB Melaka, to task for his remarks regarding the controversy surrounding the sale of alcohol in Malay-dominated areas in Selangor recently.

## FLY THE JALUR GEMILANG



Ipoh City Hall kicked off the 'Fly the Jalur Gemilang' campaign with a simple ceremony in front of MBI's building on Wednesday, August 20. Mayor, Dato' Roshidi Hashim, took the lead in singing the Negara-Ku along with his staff while the national flag was raised in front of the assembly. The staff then sang a number of patriotic songs. The ceremony ended with Roshidi mounting a miniature Jalur Gemilang on the roof of his staff car and the cars of the council's departments' heads and senior officers.

KINDERLAND'S 24<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GRADUATION CONCERT

Was held recently at the Dewan Jubli, Politeknik Ungku Omar. 40 graduates and 160 children took part in the concert as guest of honour, Mr Arthur Ng, Regional Manager of Crestar Education (M) Sdn Bhd looked on. The highlight of the evening was the award presentation to the high achievers who scored well in their exams. These included Ho Yen Chiew who received straight As in SPM (2008); and 11 year old Arathi Jeyaratnam the only successful nominee from Malaysia to attend the people to people world leadership forum in Washington D.C. Arathi, eldest daughter of Dr Jeyaratnam and Dr Anjalai, was nurtured in Tadika Kinderland Ipoh, since she was 4 years old, which according to her father, played a vital role in laying the foundation in her early development.

## PRAYERS FOR GOOD RESULTS



Some three thousand students and their parents converged at the Sri Siva Subramaniyar Temple in Simpang Pulai to perform the annual Kalvi Yathirai or Educational Pilgrimage organised by Sri Murugan Centre (SMC) and which was held simultaneously at 17 centres in the country.

This event is for conducting prayers for students sitting for their UPSR, PMR, SPM and STM examinations to obtain good results. From now onwards SMC will be giving intensive coaching for the students.

Renowned motivational speaker, Sai Krishnan, gave a talk on how to prepare for the forthcoming examinations and tips on answering questions. The event ended with offering of food for the devotees.

## PRO MUSICA 2009 – SUPERLATIVE OPERA FROM THE PROS



Ipohites were treated to an evening of opera when Perak Academy in association with Opera Plus and the Flanders Opera Studio of Belgium staged Pro Musica 2009 at Syuen Hotel recently.

Four soloists Sabine Conzen, soprano; Ines Madeira, mezzo soprano; Enrico Casari, tenor; Andrew Ashwin, baritone; accompanied by students of pro Musica Master classes; with Hein Boterberg at the piano, staged by Ronny Lauwers and directed by Madam Loh Siew Tuan, impressed the audience with their range and virtuosity as they sang their way through a programme of excerpts from Donizetti, Rossini, Handel, Puccini, Massenet, Gounod and Beethoven.

The young students in particular showed great promise in their poise, confidence, mastery and control as some performed solo while the rest provided choral support. This stage presence is likely to be the result of the Pro Musica International Master Classes Programme which is currently in its third year of a Summer School at Bellevue, the Penang Hill Hotel owned by Datuk Seri Lim Chong Keat who is one of the movers and shakers behind the events which were staged in Penang, and Kuala Lumpur, in addition to Ipoh.

Artistic Director Loh Siew Tuan also deserves mention as the Director and vocal coach for the Master Classes in Penang. A renowned voice coach, Loh during her tenure as the Visiting Professor of Opera at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels, mooted the idea for the setup of OperaPlus, an independent training centre dedicated to assisting young singers in the advancement of their vocal, musical and drama capabilities. Today, the Master Classes are attended by students from Thailand and Malaysia and as far away as New Zealand.

Thanks to the generosity of corporate sponsors including Hexza Corporation Bhd, Kinta Properties Group, Riverview Rubber Estates Bhd, Narborough Plantations plc, Kuala Lumpur Kepong Bhd, Rovski Sdn Bhd, Integrax Bhd, Rock Chemical Industries Bhd, Zoneten Photography and WHY Piano Centre, Ipohites got to benefit from the opportunity to enjoy superlative opera.

## BREAKING FAST WITH ORPHANS



Heritage Hotel Ipoh hosted a breaking fast dinner for 28 inmates of Pusat Jagaan Anak Yatim dan Miskin Nurul Iman from Kg Manjoi, Ipoh. The event was held at the hotel's Polo Café on Wednesday, August 26. Among the VIPs were Mayor, Dato' Roshidi Hashim, CPO Perak, DCP Dato' Pahlawan Zulkifli Abdullah, Commander 2 Brigade, Brig-Jen Dato' Zulkifli Mansor, Director of the Perak Fire and Rescue Department, Hj Mohd Din Rajad and members of the press. The dinner was part of the hotel's corporate responsibility towards the local community, said Ong Sook Cheng, Marketing and Business Communication Assistant Manager. The orphanage provides shelter for children of varied backgrounds – the underprivileged, the abused and the neglected. At the home the children get all the necessities and needs, including education, which they would have been deprived of otherwise. The orphans later received duit raya in green packets from the hotel management.



## COMMUNITY NEWS

## SINGAPORE FOUNDATION DONATES TO 2 IPOH INSTITUTIONS

The Tan Chin Tuan Foundation from Singapore recently provided donations to 2 deserving charitable Ipoh institutions. They were to Yayasan Sultan Idris Shah, Bercham, and Kg Simee Home for the Aged. The amount for each cheque was RM10,000.

The Tan Sri Tan Chin Tuan Foundation has its roots in Singapore. It was founded by the late Tan Sri (Dr) Tan Chin Tuan, a Singaporean banker and philanthropist in 1976. Tan was an Honorary Life President of the OCBC bank who wanted to share with society the rewards of his highly illustrious career through helping the poor and needy. He derived satisfaction from helping people and is the basis on which the foundation conducts its activities, whereby its gifts of money are wisely allocated to the deserving.

The criteria for selection of the institutions



to be helped are that they must be viable, sustainable and well managed with definable social outcomes. To this end, the foundation collaborates with local NGO's to identify viable institutions. In Ipoh the foundation worked with the Rotary Club Metro Ipoh where one of the foundation's council members is Ipoh resident and Rotarian Dato' Richard Ong a past President of Rotary.

On hand to present the cheques to the 2 institutions was its founder's grand daughter and Deputy

Chairman Chew Gek Khim and grandson Chew Kwee San. Representing the Rotary Club was its President Leong Tuck Seng while Simee Home for the Aged Treasurer Vincent Lee received the cheque from the foundation on behalf of the Home.

It was a most pleasant event whereby the children from YSIS sang and 'modelled' for the guests while 5 senior inmates celebrated their birthday with the VIP's.

## RESIDENTS' PLEAS GET ACTION

The pleas by residents from Merdeka Gardens have been heard by the relevant authorities.

**Fact:** existing pump for overflowing waters from the Pari River was not working.

**Action:** Dato Lee Kon Yin, Chairman of the BN Service Centre together with officials from the Irrigation and Drainage Department consulted with residents.

**Resolution:** Director of the Irrigation and Drainage Department, Dato' Abdul Razak bin Dahalan said the capacity of the sump to hold the overflowing water had to be increased. It also required a bigger pump to ensure water could be pumped out expediently. Razak assured residents that "the cost of construction of the bigger sump would be initiated using the department's funds while the bigger pump would be loaned to the residents. All upgrading work would be completed before the end of the year".

**Fact:** For the pump operations to run efficient-



ly, rubbish which currently runs into the sump from the connecting drains has to be trapped. The solution to this was to construct a rubbish trap.

**Action:** As maintenance of the rubbish trap was beyond the scope of the Irrigation and Drainage Department, falling into the domain of City Hall to remove rubbish on a regular basis, Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim assigned Councillor and Engineer Lai Kong Phooi to advise on the corrective actions to adopt.

**Resolution:** Lai recommended that the rub-

bish trap be located at the last major manhole before entering the sump and got assurance from Mayor Roshidi that the rubbish trap will be cleared regularly.

The problem of flooding has been a concern for decades. As such the efforts taken by Irrigation and Drainage Department and City Hall to overcome the concerns of the residents of Merdeka Garden is commendable. All that is required now is the implementation of the plan, and then wait for the next heavy downpour.

JAMES GOUGH

## MODEL OF WELL MAINTAINED LOW COST FLATS

*If these flats look like this why can't others?*

Permai Lake View Apartment, a low-cost high-rise accommodation, at Persiaran Lembah Perpaduan, Ulu Kinta, consists of 9 blocks of 4 storey buildings, consisting of 576 units sited in about 10 acres of land. The flats were built by Super Boom Projects and occupied since 2006. It is a gated community with 24-hour security service with access card system with six-foot high fencing.

Mayor Datuk Roshidi said that this is the best managed high rise in Ipoh (NST June 12, 2009) The Joint Management Committee (JMC) employs 14 full-time staff to carry out maintenance work. In addition there are 7 volunteers from the developer working part-time for free. There is a suggestion/complaints box in the maintenance office.

The roads and compound are very clean. The grass has been cut and plants are grown along the walkway. Palm trees are grown on the sides of the blocks to provide shade. Flowering plants are grown between adjacent blocks for beautification. Garbage is collected from the door of each residence twice daily and carted to



a centralised rubbish collection depot outside the fence. The garbage truck does not enter the apartment area. The sheds in which the dumpsters are stored are clean and there are no flies or foul smell. Since the buildings are new the painting is intact and looks neat. Adequate parking facilities are provided. Centralised Astro receiver is provided. There are two playgrounds one for children

and the other for adults. The entrance to the corridor of the ground floor is fenced to prevent entry of motor cycles; violators are liable for a fine of RM200. JMC's from other apartments can visit these flats to see for themselves how even low-cost apartments can be well maintained. However, this is only possible if all the residents pay their monthly maintenance fee.

A. JEYARAJ

## CARE GIVERS GRADUATE

KAMI (Kinta Action on Mental-health Issues, Perak) an NGO which assists carers and care-givers to the mentally ill recently presented 25 graduation certificates to participants of their Family Support Course.

"All of us are likely to end up being a carer. However to be a carer of those with Serious Mental Illness or SMI is one of the most difficult", said KAMI Chairman, Ong Su-ming, herself a care-giver. (SMI includes Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder and Depression).

The person with a mental health disorder is usually unreasonable and difficult to deal with. For a carer it's painful to lose a loved one to mental health disorder. The emotions of grief, frustration and helplessness have to be experienced to be fully understood.

Caring for a person with SMI requires skill, stamina, patience and resilience. The stress too - physical, mental, emotional, psychological and financial - is tremendous. Added to an already difficult situation is the stigma and prejudice attached to having a family member with a mental health disorder.

Hitherto left to their own devices and individual coping mechanisms, family carers had nowhere to turn to nor resources to



Dato Dr. Suarn Singh presenting a certificate to a graduate. In the background is Ong Su-meng

tap. Because they comprise a complex group from different backgrounds and needs, there was no organising body to assist them in their onerous task of care-giving.

KAMI was started in 2003 as a family support group to create awareness amongst carers by providing information, motivation and support in all ways. It was registered in 2007.

Dr Cheah Yee Chung, Technical Advisor to KAMI and Consultant Psychiatrist at Hospital Bahagia concurs that "a carer is likely to be more receptive to the words of another carer than those of a psychiatrist".

The graduates today consist of 12 from the Chinese session and 13 from the Bahasa Malaysia session.

For Puan Fatima (not her real name), her hus-

band has been suffering from mental health disorder for 18 years. "KAMI has been very helpful psychologically and socially. I am now confident and have learnt how to manage my problem. I can share with others and I learn faster", said Fatima with a sigh of relief as she explained her predicament.

Lim Ai Ling has found similar relief from going through the course. Her 70 year old mother suffers from depression. KAMI has enabled her to better understand how to deal with her mother's illness and "how to recognise and anticipate when a bout of depression can occur".

Present at the ceremony was Dato' Dr Suarn Singh, Director of Hospital Bahagia and Head of Psychiatry Ministry of Health who presented the certificates to the graduates.



## KAMPUNG TALES

## THE FIRST OF MANY TALES

By YUSUF MARTIN



## Beginnings

I awoke to the customary sounds of birds twittering, playfully chitchatting outside my bedroom window, telling of the day's news and views and just where that lazy black cat was hiding, and him thinking himself so clever with his tail hanging out from under that bush.

While the kampong air was still cool, the sun not yet a fiery threat, the early morning fishermen Honda 50ed past my compound heading for the half lit mining pool lake opposite, to pull in their morning fishy catch.

As the sun slipped its nightcap off, stretched, yawned, while I followed suit with my sleepy, not yet fully awake mind, I drift back 28 years, to another state and another time which co-incidentally was my first time staying in Malaysia.

I was jet-lagged and a little culture shocked. I had groggily traversed half the planet in three quarters of a day. I had witnessed the most spectacular sunrise over Penang, and been driven into the green watery paddy lands of Kedah.

## Discovering Lat

No sooner had I arrived in the bungalow at Sungai

Petani, than the good folks I was staying with, knowing that I was a comic book nut, handed me a well-thumbed copy of Lat's Kampung Boy – luckily for me it was in English.

Lat's world of child and chicken-filled Malay kampongs was far different from the aging Victorian and Edwardian buildings I had been used to in my English seaside home, but it was also different again from the semi-suburban bungalow where I rested after my journeying – in Sungai Petani.

I did not know, staying in that bungalow, in Kedah, reading Lat's simple treatise on Malaysian country life, that one day I would uproot myself from my home of over fifty years, fly half way around the world (again) and settle in that green land of hospitality which is the languid terrain of Lat's Kampung Boy – Perak.

I did manage to visit Perak, and Ipoh, at times over a period of many years when I would come on occasional holidays. It was to be some time later, having taken the plunge to live here, that I would encounter kampongs similar to those featured in Lat's warmly nostalgic drawings, kampongs I had foolishly and in my ignorance, thought had been long since consigned to history.

## Settling in Perak

Now that I am settled in Perak, eating durian and quaffing *kopi tarik* with the locals, it is time that



I shared a little of this life, my observances and adventures in and out of kampongs, with a series of tales loosely called Kampung Tales – what else.

Malaysia is envied for its tolerance and bonhomie. Please bear with me, a foreigner, an Orang Putih Mat Salleh as I shed a little light on the simple but enduring beauty of life, as it is still lived in the kampongs of Malaysia, back in what I like to think of as the real Malaysia, away from the hustle and bustle of Kuala Lumpur and the city life.

## As The Tales Unfold.....

This journey, my journey into the simple, unspoilt life of the kampongs is life as it is led, here in this land of grace, this silver and splendid land of Perak. Together, as my

tales unfold, we will meet many people, from *kedai kopi* owner Pa Yusop, to neighbours Pak Yang and Pak Cik, relatives, friends, and enemies, who make up a vibrant, exciting community in the pastoral backwaters of this intriguing land.

Hopefully, this is a journey, which you and I can take together. A journey undertaken with all due gratitude to the Ipoh Echo staff, managers and proprietors, and not forgetting those who print and deliver the newspaper, and those diligent souls whose fingers must ache with keying in the words necessary to deliver this on line, or to our very hand phones.

It is an honour and pleasure to be with you on this exciting journey – so let us see where it takes us.

Yusuf Martin is an Englishman, now snugly settled in the kampong bosom of Perak.

His writings can be found in The Expat, Senses of Malaysia, The Malaysian Insider (online) and his various blogs on the internet.

His short stories and essays have been published in anthology volumes by publishers such as Silverfish, MPH and Matahari, while his voice has been heard on BFM radio and his girth witnessed on NTV7.

## POOR RESPONSE TO RESUMED BUS SERVICE

*Residents' indifference a cause for concern for bus company and mayor.*

Mayor Roshidi Hashim met the residents of Kampung Sri Kinta at one of his turun padang sessions recently. During the dialogue, the villagers' representative requested that the discontinued bus service between the city and the villages be resumed. The service had ceased to operate since 2001. Its resumption would benefit the 12,000-odd residents living in Kg Sri Kinta, Tebing Tinggi and Kuala Pari.

Mayor Roshidi wrote to Perak Roadways, the bus company responsible for the route. Perak Roadways responded positively. The service started on August 1 with two trips a day, one at 6.30 am and the other at 5.40 pm. Roshidi had requested for three trips.

On August 10 Ipoh Echo went to Kg Sri Kinta before 6.30 am to check on the service. Unfortunately, no bus turned up that morning. A

check with a nearby stall operator got a negative response.

Village Security Committee Chairman, Incik Tanian Mohd Ali, when asked, said that the service did resume but the response was very poor. Those using the service, said Tanian, were mainly senior citizens. He therefore suggested that Perak Roadways reschedule the service to 8 am and 12 pm or 5pm. timings which were more suited for the old timers.

The operations supervisor of Perak Roadways, Mr Yap, confirmed that response was poor. They got an average of 7 passengers daily. However, the absence on August 10 was due to a vehicle breakdown. Yap would consider Tanian's proposal and give it a try.

Looks like the good efforts of the mayor will go to waste if residents of Kg Sri Kinta, Kuala Pari and Tebing Tinggi continue to be indifferent.

## SERVICES OFFERED

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### The IPOH **echo** Writer of the Year Competition

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#### Criteria:

1. Entries must not exceed 1,000 words and must be on a topic about Perak or related to Perak.
2. All participants must be full time residents of Perak and provide proof of such.
3. Entries will be judged on flair with language, grammar, and ability to hold the reader's attention.
4. Entrants must NOT be working for any newspaper, magazine, print or online. Professionals will be disqualified.

Once received, Ipoh Echo owns all publishing rights to the articles and retains the right to publish the articles as and when it chooses. The decision of the judges is final and no appeal will be entertained. Winners and runners up will have the option to work as paid free-lance contributors to the Ipoh Echo.

Please submit your script by email (preferable) to:  
[ipohecho@ipohecho.com.my](mailto:ipohecho@ipohecho.com.my) or by post to:  
No. 1 Jalan Lasam, 30450 Ipoh.

Closing date for entries: 15th November 2009

Results will be published in the 1st of January 2010 issue of Ipoh Echo

## SPORT

### MASKED BUT THE GAME GOES ON

Despite the H1N1 scare and a blanket ban by the State Education Department on all school outings and external competitions, the Perak International Chess Association's (PICA) first Grand Prix Chess Tournament attracted close to 120 participants from all over Malaysia. Many participants took the precaution of masking themselves as they battled it out at the Syuen Hotel recently.

Mr Raymond Siew, the organising chairman for the event commented, "We are grateful to Tenby Schools Ipoh for responding immediately to our appeal for sponsorship. Chess



is a game that trains and develops minds especially young ones and Tenby's involvement is a sign of their commitment to this end", said Mr Siew.

PICA hopes to organise more of such tournaments on an annual basis

and welcomes any form of support from the public or private sectors.

Apart from the Open category, there were also the Under 12 and Under 15 categories; and prizes for Best Lady and Best Veteran players.

### THUMBS DOWN



The pedestrian walkway along Jalan Dato Maharajalela adjacent to the High Court and Town Hall is too high from the road level. It is especially difficult for women and children to get up and get down



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