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ISSUE 86

November 16-30, 2009

PP 14252/10/2010(025567)

## NEWS

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### The IPOH echo Writer of the Year Competition

The writing competition is now closed. Results will be announced in the January 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 issue. Watch this space!

# KACANG PUTIH

## From Ipoh to the World



*From very humble beginnings, the 'kacang putih' industry in Ipoh has grown not only to be famous throughout the country, but also into a multi-million-ringgit business.* continued on page 2



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## The potential of the village has been overlooked. It is time to put Kacang Putih Village on the tourist map of Ipoh.

Though no one is willing to say what the annual turnover of the industry is, a very conservative figure would place it at more than RM5 Million a year.

The various types of fried and baked beans, and as well as other items, such as *muruku* and crispy tapioca chips, are being packed and sent to various parts of the country every month. Some containers of the snacks are even shipped abroad.

While some families involved in the business set up their retail outlets in the front portions of their houses in Kampong Kacang Putih in Buntong, others have ventured into opening shops in the city.

The industry began in the late forties when six families of immigrants from South India came to settle down in the city.

They were from the Ettayapuram Village in Tamil Nadu. Their settlement, the original Kampong Kacang Putih, was located at the foot of Gunung Cheroh.

Initially, they started as petty traders selling only steamed lentils (better known locally as 'kacang

cycles.

### Relocation to Kampong Kacang Putih

After the Gunung Cheroh's rock-falls tragedy in 1974, the traders and their families were resettled away from the cliff-face of limestone hill by the then State Government to the present village, which has since grown into a striving community of mainly wooden and zinc houses.

Gunasegaran, chairman of the Kacang Putih Traders Association, said that about 40 families were now involved in the business using latest processing technology.

The families are sceptical of going big and are happy with their day-to-day production. Currently, this is a demand or consumption based business, and the traders produce just the amount that can be sold.

They do not go into any marketing; customers including dealers come to their houses to buy their produce.

Gunasegaran said that except for one family, which is involved in the export, the others only sell in the local market. On the



ducer is different. Traders from Kuala Lumpur usually order in bulk and export to other countries.

Association treasurer Sivaragan said that he supplies raw ingredients, which are from Thailand, Australia, China and India, to the traders.

The price of the raw ingredients has gone up by 30% this year. However the producers are absorbing the additional cost to maintain the price of their snacks.

Checking on a few processing centres in the kampong showed that the living quarters of the families are separated from the production area.

The floors are tiled and neat, and the utensils and equipment are clean and well maintained.

The raw ingredients and finished products are hygienically handled. Health officers from Ipoh City Council regularly inspect the premises, including their retail outlets.

### Factory Export from Ipoh

Former association's chairman, C. Ratnasamy, invested about RM60,000 to set up a factory at the Silibin Industrial Estate in Taman Rishah in 1992.

The factory, PERNIAGAAN KACANG PUTIH S.R., is now exporting

its products to Australia, Singapore and East Malaysia.

His son Arumugam, who manages the business, said that he is negotiating with dealers in Indonesia and Middle East to expand his business.

The factory produces about 30 varieties of Kacang Putih and its daily output is about 3,000 kg.

### Training Course

Sendra Segar, who has been in the business for the past 12 years, conducts two-week courses on behalf of Kementerian Kemajuan Luar Bandar in Ipoh on processing Kacang Putih. The course consists of both theory and practical.

The course is free and is tailored for unemployed and low income Malaysians. He conducts the course when there are

30 applications.

### Future of Industry

B.K. Kumar, president of Indian Chamber of Commerce and son-in-law of late S. Paloo, one of the pioneers who started the business, said that the individual families are not in a position to set up their own factories.

The best solution for them is to form a co-operative and put up factory for the export market. The families can continue to produce in their houses for local consumption.

Kumar had requested the State Government to provide land to build a showroom and gallery and to gazette Kampong Kacang Putih as a Cottage Industrial Zone under its 'one village one product' policy.

He hopes the State Government and the rele-

vant tourism agency could include Kampong Kacang Putih in the tourist map.

One of the stalls in the Bazaar Medan Jaya being built in Jalan Bendahara is being reserved for Kacang Putih.

Kumar also called on operators of tour buses to bring tourists to Kampong Kacang Putih to enable them to buy fresh products.

City Council needs to install proper signage and upgrade the common areas.

Currently there is no signboard for Kampong Kacang Putih.

### Future Action

The potential of the village has been overlooked for too long and without further delay the State Government needs to call for a round table meeting with relevant bodies including the Ipoh City Council, Perak Tourism Council, tour agencies and the traders to plan out the development of the kampong and tap into the lucrative export and tour market.

A. JEYARAJ



kuda') which looked white when cooked and hence the name Kacang Putih.

They used to walk around with a four-legged rectangular wooden tray on their head to sell the lentils, and as time passed they moved on bicycles and are now using motor-

average, each family produces 500 to 1,000 kg of Kacang Putih daily and the quantity increases during festive seasons and about 40 varieties of snacks are produced.

Each family has its own recipe and the taste of the snack from each pro-

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# A PEOPLE-CENTRIC AND CARING BUDGET?

*Unless a reliable mechanism is developed to disburse the money, bureaucracy and leakages will erode confidence...*

## Blow-by Blow Account

The conduct of the farcical Perak State Legislative Assembly sitting on 28th October was well documented in the media and the blogosphere. However, blogs and online media offered readers with a blow-by-blow account of the happenings within and without the assembly hall. The State Secretariat Building, better known as *Bagunan SUK* by its Malay acronym, has gained such notoriety and prominence since the Barisan Nasional takeover on 6th February.

Today any face-off between BN and Pakatan Rakyat politicians in the august house will attract the kind of media attention seldom seen in the annals of the state parliament. The possibility of the building and its surrounding turning into a battle zone becomes a reality no sooner as words of an assembly sitting are leaked.

The Police are apt at providing that kind of atmosphere with very little urging. It has become a routine of sorts for the state police chief to declare *Bagunan SUK* off-limits to the public whenever a need arises. A court order will accompany such declaration and this will be made known to news agencies in the chief's media releases. The latest assembly sitting was no exception.

## Budget Speech

The significance of the 28th October sitting should not be overlooked. However, events leading to the proceedings were as equally dramatic as the fracas that took place inside the building. The speed by which Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir, delivered his Budget 2010 speech and moved his motions through three readings, seemed a little absurd for a practising democracy like ours. He completed his speech in thirty minutes be-



ginning at 11.20 a.m. and ending when the opposing Aduns were trickling in. Each reading was approved by the BN representatives but protested vociferously by their opposite numbers. The Pakatan assemblymen walked out after the third reading.

Budget speech is a lengthy affair as it a statement of incomes and expenditures and major policy decisions required to achieve the state's financial goals the following year. The speech will be followed by debates after each reading. It's remarkable how the assembly was able to compress a process of proposal, deliberation and decision to a mere thirty minutes. This is something unique to the Perak legislature and, therefore, deserves a mention in the Malaysian Book of Records.

Through such hasten proceeding, the aspirations of the *rakyat*, who are being represented by their Aduns are being ignored. It makes a mockery of the democratic process and a betrayal of the people's trust.

## Budget Strategies

Zambry's budget has been dubbed as "people-centric and caring" by the mainstream media. Let's see how centric and caring the budget is. His five strategies are aimed at increasing revenue collection and improving the quality of life of Perakeans while producing a skilled and knowledgeable society through continuous training.

The 2010 Budget

projects revenue at RM715.69 million with RM560.58 million allocated for operational expenditures and RM179 million for development expenditures. Compare this with Budget 2009 where revenue was projected at RM 711.84 million with RM561 allocated for operations and RM175.84 million for developments. Last year the deficit was RM25 million. This year the shortfall is RM23.89 million. This is the sixth deficit budget in a row.

Incidentally, the projected cost for maintaining the royal household in 2010 is RM9,140,498. A sum of RM6,178,835 has been earmarked as pension and gratuity payments for former state assemblymen and former Menteri Besar. The Mufti Perak department requires RM1,777,486 to operate of which RM1,013,049 has been set aside as remunerations.

The state economy is expected to expand by 3.8 per cent next year while recording a paltry 0.8 per cent growth this year. A difference of 3 per cent over the current year requires plenty of soul searching and hard work. As the state's revenue sources are limited, efficiency in collection remains a top priority.

## Zambry's Proposals

Now let us consider some of the 19 proposals put forth by Zambry to allocate financial assistance directly to the needy in line with Najib's 1 Malaysia.

- **Poverty Eradication.** RM2 million for repair of houses. RM4 million for poverty eradication programme based on successful modules by developing countries. RM1 million for Yayasan Bina Upaya, a foundation formed to help manage the programme. The government aims for zero poverty by 2010.

- **Zero Squatter.** RM10 million allocation to State Secretary Incorporated (SSI) to develop 122 planned villages or RPT (Rancangan Perkampungan Tersusun). An additional RM1 million to the RM3

million allocated last year for survey works of RPT sites. TOL for squatters occupying state lands along river banks and roadways. Again, zero-squatter by 2012.

- **Senior Citizens.** RM4 million for takaful insurance for senior citizens, single parents, hardcore poor and the disabled.
- **State Education Fund.** RM2 million to be given to Yayasan Perak for the establishment of the state education fund. Each child born in Perak will be allotted RM200 as savings from this fund for their education.
- **Non-Islamic Activities.** RM3.5 million for non-Islamic activities with RM500,000 to be given to the Sikh community.
- **Special Allocations.** RM 1 million to the special education fund for Indian students and RM1 mil-

lion to the Orang Asli.

## Zero-sum Game

Politicians' obsession with zeros is legendary. Zero this and zero that, even zero-opposition. Under Tajol Rosli his target for zero-poverty and zero-squatter was by 2010, the year when Perak is supposed to become a developed state. Are these lofty aims achievable? Can you rid the state of poverty and squatters by simply pumping in money? These inherent socio-economic problems beset all developing and developed countries. At best, they can be contained but not eradicated. It's a zero-sum game.

RM200 as savings for every child born in Perak is an excellent idea. But is RM2 million enough considering our ballooning birthrate? The amount is only good for 10,000 babies. Foremost, can problem-prone Yayasan Perak be entrusted with the responsibility of implementing the policy?

Insurance coverage and funding for the aged, the needy and the marginalised, especially the Indian and Orang Asli communities, are superb. But how will the money be channelled to the deserving souls? Not through some crony institutions, I hope. The *wang ihsan* fiasco in Terengganu is one classic example.

## Implementation Process

The most difficult part of the deal is the implementation process, which is not only tedious but suspect. Unless a reliable mechanism is developed to disburse the funds, bureaucracy and leakages will erode confidence, making a mess of one's objectives however noble they may be. Transparency and accountability are the other factors.

If the Auditor-General's Report 2008 is anything to go by, Zambry's budget is as good as it is made out to be. Period.

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## ANNOUNCEMENT

### VETERAN FOOTBALL CARNIVAL 2009

The 6<sup>th</sup> Veteran Football Carnival, jointly organised by MBI and Perak Football Association, is back with a vengeance. The tournament, based on the nine-a-side format, will be held over the weekend from 19-20<sup>th</sup> December at Ipoh Padang and Taman D.R. Seenivasagam. Strictly for male players aged 40 and above. Number of teams restricted to 32 only. Acceptance on a first-come-first-serve basis. Entrance: RM500 per team cash or bank draft or money order payable to MBI. Prizes: RM5,000 for champion, RM3,000 for second-place, RM1,000 for third-place and RM200 each for fourth to eight placing. Registration forms available at MBI and at all state football associations throughout the country. Forms can also be downloaded from MBI website: [www.mbi.gov.my](http://www.mbi.gov.my).



## PUBLISHER

Ipo Echo Sdn Bhd  
(Regd No 687483 T)

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## THE VETERAN POLITICIAN – TENGKU RAZALEIGH HAMZAH

*Recommendations to move people to change the way they choose political parties*

Perak Academy recently invited Kelantan Prince and veteran UMNO politician Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah to speak at it's Perak Lectures Series.

"Punctuality is the politeness of Kings" and in true royal style Ku Li, as he is more fondly addressed, arrived sharp on time at 8 p.m.

After being greeted by the guests upon his arrival, Tengku Razaleigh went over to the table of his old teacher from Anderson School, Dato' Seri N.S. Selvamani to greet him before sitting at his own table.

Tengku Razaleigh's political career began in the 60s. In the 1969 election he won the Kelantan Barat parliamentary seat and was appointed UMNO Vice President in 1975. He was also Malaysia's Finance Minister during the time of Prime Minister Hussein Onn.

In the late 80s, Razaleigh, after a dispute with Dr Mahathir, started his own party called Semangat 46 or the Spirit of 46, 46 being the year that UMNO was formed. Interestingly Semangat 46 did forge an alliance with opposition parties DAP and PAS and others for the 8<sup>th</sup> Malaysia General Election in 1990. Semangat 46 lost and was subsequently disbanded in 1996 with Razaleigh re-joining UMNO.

Tengku Razaleigh is a true veteran politician, a product from the old colonial times, who had the opportunity of political experience from the old



guard under Tunku Abdul Rahman.

The topic of his talk that night was 'Malaysia: The Challenge of the Present'. In his speech, Razaleigh said that Constitutional Democracy as we knew it has strayed from its original intent. "Democracy is not a ready made political system once we have written a constitution...the Perak constitutional crisis is a forewarning and Malaysians are watching the yet unfinished journey in Perak."

He averred that 'national unity' needs to be based on the ideals of the Rukun Negara and proposed 10 principles that political parties should aspire to have.

1. All political parties are required to include in their constitutional objectives the equality of citizenship as provided for in the Federal Constitution.
2. An economic and political policy that political parties propagate must not discriminate

against any citizen.

3. All parties shall include and uphold constitutional democracy and the separation of powers as a fundamental principle.
4. It shall be the duty of all political parties to adhere to the objectives of public service and refrain from involvement in business, and ensure the separation of business from political parties.
5. It shall be the duty of all political parties to ensure and respect the independence of the judiciary and the judicial process.
6. All parties shall ensure that the party election system will adhere to the highest standards of conduct, and also ensure that the elections are free of corrupt practices. Legislation should be considered to provide funding of political parties.
7. It shall be the duty of all parties to ensure that all political dia-

logues and statements will not create racial or religious animosity.

8. All parties undertake not to use racial and communal agitation as political policies.

9. To remove and eradicate all barriers that hinder national unity and Malaysian identity.

10. To uphold the Federal and State Constitutions and its democratic intent and spirit, the Rule of Law, the fundamental liberties as enshrined in Part II of the Malaysian Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Interestingly, Razaleigh states that these 10 recommendations are not meant for the leaders. "We can't change the leaders and it is difficult to sell ideas to them. I have tried before with UMNO. These recommendations are to move the people to change the way they choose their political parties. We made a change in 2008 and we can do it again before 2013. We don't have to

wait for the next GE."

"Any party pursuing their objectives along racial lines should not be supported. We should get together to do something as we are a greater number", he continued.

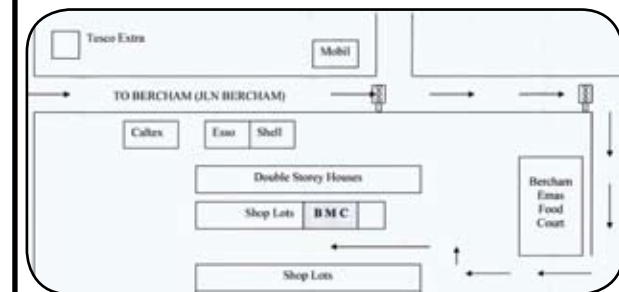
When questioned why he was still an Umno member, Tengku Razaleigh replied that UMNO had done a lot for the country. The UMNO leaders of the past like Tunku Abdul Rahman and Tun Dr Ismail, had always put the people first. Unfortunately it is not followed by today's leaders who must buck up and behave.

Bearing in mind that the majority of the populace of Perak had voted for the opposition, the views expressed by Tengku Razaleigh, a veteran UMNO politician, was an assurance that there were some in UMNO that genuinely viewed Malaysia as a multi-ethnic country.

Hence based on what Tengku Razaleigh has stated it is now up to the Rakyat, to change the perception of the rest of its members. JAMES GOUGH

## COMMUNITY NEWS

## FREE MEDICAL CLINIC



The 2010 Budget announced by the PM recently mentioned the setting up of 1Malaysia community clinics in urban areas to enable the local community to seek basic health treatments for fever, cough and flu. What is not known is that there are already several of these community clinics set up by non-governmental bodies and religious groups in Ipoh itself.

The Bercham Methodist Church, (a daughter church of the Canning Garden Methodist Church) set up a Clinic in June 2000 as an outreach programme to touch a needy community. To date more than 2,000 patients have passed through its doors.

The Bercham Methodist Clinic is run by a group of voluntary doctors, including several specialists, together with pharmacists and helpers. Medical consultation is free and a token sum of RM5 is charged for medication which is highly subsidised by the

Church funds or donations received from well-wishers. Blood tests can be done at a special discounted rate through the clinic.

The Bercham Methodist Clinic has held several health talks and health-screening programmes and will be holding more such events to raise public health awareness among the community.

Apart from medical aid, the clinic also offers legal aid by appointment. Several lawyers have volunteered to provide free legal consultation. So if it is too costly to engage a lawyer for legal problems, anyone can come to the clinic and make an appointment for free legal advice.

The Bercham Methodist Clinic is located at: 21-23 Persiaran Bercham Selatan 19, Taman Bercham Jaya, 31400 Ipoh. Open: Mon & Thurs (except public holidays) from 7-9pm. Enq: Mrs Lau Siaw Ngow 012-6287813 or Steven Teoh 012-5227150.

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MUSINGS ON FOOD

by See Foon Chan-Koppen

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SeeFoon goes back on the prowl for taste treats, this time venturing further afield to Pusing



Over the years of living in Ipoh, I've often heard the name Pusing whose most famous dish has always lingered in the recesses of the Foodie part of my mind, partly because of the squeamish connotations the dish conjures up and in large part because it piqued my curiosity.

**Puppy Duck?**  
I am referring to the infamous *Kow Tsai Ngap* or Puppy Duck. Whether it is an urban legend or its original recipe really came from preparing dog meat (which I'm inclined to believe is true considering that the Chinese are notorious for eating anything under the sun that moves), I finally went with some friends to satisfy my palate and my



curiosity. The historical fact that Pusing was a large communist enclave during the first Emergency might lend credence to the dog eating rumour as food had to be scarce at that time. It does require some effort to get there as Pusing is about 15 km outside of Ipoh. If you take the Lumut highway, continue past the turn offs for Falim,



Menglembu and after a large Petronas station on the left, you'll see a huge sign board at a traffic junction on the right that says Daerah Majlis Batu Gajah. That is your signal to take a right and follow that road till you come to the T junction that is Pusing. The restaurant Ming Feong is on the left a few shop houses down after turning left on the main road of Pusing.

The restaurant is unprepossessing, the old style coffee shop of another era with ample fans, well spaced out tables and the usual listings of their specialties in Chinese on the wall. The lady who served us was friendly noting that we were unfamiliar with the dishes and made the recommendations for us.

Naturally the first dish that came to our lips was the Puppy Duck. When I asked her about the doggie origins of the dish she denied it vehemently and said that she has never known the restaurant to have ever served dog in its 48 years of operation!

The 'Puppy Duck' came in a clay pot, cut into bite-size pieces, drenched in a very dark sauce that was slightly sweetish. The duck was the 'Fan Ngap' a kampong variety of duck that is less fat than the usual farm raised species. The duck was tender although somewhat bony, lack-

ing meat. The sauce was strongly redolent of old ginger which imparted its flavour and permeated the duck pieces – RM23.

The next to arrive was one of their signature dishes, a preparation that the owner had personally learnt in Hangzhou, China. Called *Sai Wu Wan Yu* or West Lake Carp, this is big Carp, deep fried to a crisp and coated with a slightly sweet sauce. RM18/20 depending on size of fish.

Highly recommended was their *Lam Yu Pai Kuat*, pork ribs marinated with red preserved bean curd and deep fried. Tasty, but too sweet for my palate although my friends loved it – RM16.

We followed this up with the *Sang Har Meen* fresh water prawns with crispy noodles served with a thickish egg sauce. RM15 with two prawns. The *Tau Cheong Fah Lam*, pork brisket braised with preserved yellow beans was tasty RM10 and the Hakka *Taufu Pok Mun Har Mai* fried bean curd puffs braised in soya sauce with dried prawns, superlative – RM7.

All in all Ming Feong serves good wholesome Hakka style food at reasonable prices.

**Kuih Therapy**  
But a visit to Pusing is not complete without a foodie

browse at the stalls diagonally across the street from Ming Feong where the almost lost tradition of Hakka-style *kuih* is still available and makes the drive out to Pusing just to buy them worth every mile.

There are about three larger stalls and a few smaller stalls selling a mouth-watering array of *kuih*. Unlike the ubiquitous



**Rare Hak Pang**  
wind. It is a flat pancake made with the above mentioned plant and glutinous rice flour, with no filling and flavoured with coconut



Nonya Kuih, the *kuih* here in Pusing is strictly Hakka, with the most interesting and rare one being the *Hak Pang* or black pancake, its colour derived from the *Kai Si Tang* (literally translated to mean chicken sh\*t climber) a local creeper that is touted to remove

milk. It has an interesting chewy texture quite unlike the soft texture of usual kuihs and is not too sweet. Even I with my absence of

a sweet tooth, loved it. Other *kuihs* in these stalls are equally interesting with my favourites being the glutinous rice balls filled with sesame or coconut. Most *kuihs* sell for 35 cents with some going as high as 60 cents! A steal when compared to their city cousins.

While browsing check out the *cucur udang* (fried prawn pancakes), the fried sweet potato balls, the *Wu Tao Ko* (steamed taro cake), the *Mok Su Pang* (tapioca cake) and a host of others. Another interesting stall sells *Hahm Yoke Chung* glutinous rice dumplings with pork fat, dried prawns, mushroom, black-eyed peas RM3 for the 'pillow' dumplings with salted egg – RM1.70 for normal wedge shaped without salted eggs.

So get in your cars and take a leisurely drive out to Pusing. Tasty treats await.

**MING FEONG RESTAURANT**  
Owner: Chook Hing Ho, P.P.N. P.P.T. A.M.P.  
37 Main Road, 31550 Pusing  
Tel.: 05-2881362

POPIAH

Popiah is a spring roll with a filling made up of a little bit of this and a little bit of that. The 'little bits of this and that' are mainly: finely grated well-cooked turnip, (*sengkuang*), blanched bean sprouts, French beans and grated carrots, lettuce leaves, thinly sliced fried tofu, crispy-fried shallots, and shredded omelette, topped with a crunchy crushed prawn cracker. Some may also include pork (lightly seasoned and stir-fried), and the better ones will have shrimp or crab meat. Popiah is eaten accompanied with a sweet sauce and optional chilli sauce, which is applied on bare crepe-like paper-thin skin. The act of making the Popiah skin from a lump of dough is an art form in itself.



**Recipe**

**PENANG LOBAK (FIVE-SPICE ROLL)**  
By MARGARITA LEE

**Ingredients:**  
500g pork/chicken (with a little fat attached)  
1 bulb of garlic, diced  
1 Bombay onion, diced  
1 tbsp chopped spring onion  
10 pieces water chestnuts, diced  
1 egg  
1 large piece bean curd sheet, cut into 14x7 cm each piece

**Seasoning:**  
½ tsp pepper  
2-3 tsp five-spice powder (ng heong fun)  
1 tbsp sugar  
3 tbsp light soya sauce  
1 tbsp oyster sauce  
2 tsp sesame oil  
2 tbsp corn flour or sweet potato flour

**Dipping sauce:**  
4-5 tbsp Thai sweet chilli sauce

3 tbsp Tomato ketchup  
1 tsp lime juice  
2 pieces of peanut candy (optional)  
Sugar to taste

**Method:**  
1.Cut the pork or chicken into small strips.  
2.Combine meat, water chestnuts, onion, seasoning and egg in a mixing bowl. Mix well. Add spring onion to mixture. Marinate meat for at least 1 hour or preferably several hours in the fridge.  
3.Put 1-2 tbsp marinated mixture onto each bean curd skin piece. Form into a long roll. Roll up tightly and twist both the ends.  
4.Steam rolls for 5 to 8 minutes. Remove, leave it

to cool.  
5.In a wok, heat the vegetable oil to 350°F. Fry the rolls until golden brown, about 2 minutes, turning 2 to 3 times. Drain on paper towels.  
6.Cut roll into slices and serve with dipping sauce.

Tip: You can keep Lobak in the deep freezer after steaming, deep fry before serving.

NAME	WHERE	COMMENTS	PRICE (RM)	
KEDAI KOPI KONG HENG (Day only) From 8.30am Wed. closed	75 Jln Bandar Timah (Leech St), Old Town	Not the original seller but good all the same.	1.70	★★★★★
ANEKA SELERA (Night only) 016-5009348	Ipoh Garden	Very tasty and has enough filling.	1.60	★★★★★
LOKE WOOL KEE RESTAURANT – pork free (Day only) 10.30am-4.00pm	26 & 28 Jln Mustapha Al-Bakri (opp. Kamdar), New Town	Tasty but could do with a bit more filling.	3.20 for 2	★★★★★
KEDAI MAKANAN & MINUMAN TAMAN TIMUR From 1.30pm onwards	61 Jalan Perajurit, Ipoh Garden East	Taste is normal.	3.0	★★★★★

Our next food review will be YAU YU ONG CHOY  
Email your favourite recommendations to: food@ipohecho.



## LETTERS

We reprint some of our reader's comments from our online paper. Go to <http://www.ipohecho.com.my/> to read more. The views expressed in these letters are not necessarily shared by the Editorial Board. We reserve the right to refuse or modify the letters we publish.

## A LAMENT FOR IPOH'S LIMESTONE HILLS

Don't. Don't slice me, don't cut me up, dynamite me. Rape me. Don't. I am the life source of Ipoh. Don't kill the goose that lays the golden egg. I am the limestone hills that have stood in the Kinta Valley for millions of years, watching over Ipoh. Silent sentinels created by nature and entrusted to you to watch over all of you. I provide the cement, the sands and the stones to build Ipoh. But now you must stop. Or you will kill the goose and there will be no more golden eggs.

Many years ago, whenever I came back to Ipoh, my eyes feasted on the beauty of the limestone hills of my childhood, and devoured this banquet of visual delights. But now with each visit there is great trepidation – I hardly dare to look. The hills of Ipoh have been reduced,



carved out, chopped to bits. More hills are rapidly disappearing. Who are those who have the power to grant licenses to destroy these hills? Whoever they are, they must know that when more and more of these hills are carved out, raped, pillaged and turned into money-making machines, the life blood of Ipoh will be drained. Such relentless raping of the limestone hills will surely bring about an irreparable loss to Ipoh.

Soon like the discarded mining pools, abandoned when the tin dried up, Ipoh will be a wasteland. Does no one care if our children and their children never get to see these beauties of nature, never get to breathe the pure clean air and nev-

er get to walk into the cool caves of Ipoh? In the fifties, the limestone hills of Ipoh gave this town in the Kinta valley such beauty and greenery that inspired poets to wax lyrical. For all the years when I was away in foreign lands, I remember these hills, the valley where I grew up.

In sadness, I write this in the hope that somewhere in the hierarchy there is someone with foresight, with conscience, and ultimately with power, who can stop the murdering of these hills. Let us hope he or she will come up with a creative plan to balance the preservation of beauty and making money. A thing of beauty is a joy forever, wrote Keats, an English poet. Let us preserve the beauty of Ipoh. Let her be a joy forever.

**Dr Moni Lai Storz & Mona Lai-Chin**  
(Sisters in a common lament)

## A FEW COMMENTS ON TOURISM IN PERAK

1. The lady (Dato' Hamidah Osman, Perak Se-nior Executive Councillor for Tourism) is spinning some old tunes again! The 10 places she mentioned are as old as the hills around Ipoh. James Gough brought up some fresh ideas like our heritage zone in the Old Town, yet she had no suggestions except to ask people to come forward. Who are these people? Does she know? Will she invite them? If not, how do you expect them to barge in to her 'roundtable conference'? What about Belum? No mention! Doesn't she know that eco-tourism is big business? My God, what does she know?
2. A few flights from Singapore and Medan do not tourism make! These are facades of 'improved tourism'. Like the front put up by all previous and present governments of Perak, they are only raising false hopes for Ipohites! Now they want to expand the runway and facelift the terminal building and spend RM60 million on a white elephant! Who is going to benefit? The people of Ipoh or some cronies who will get the contract and make lots and lots of money? One may as well keep the airport as it is for small tiny carriers to

- fly in a few rich guys who cannot sit for 2 hours in a car, bus or train from KL. This Airport is doomed from the start because of its geographical location! Forget it and use it for commercial pilot training using small planes! Better still develop it into a public transport hub! More central than MERU and less congested than the present one in Medan Kidd!
3. I like the idea of Medical Tourism! I have proposed it before but we need to clean up our act. We need to ensure that Ipoh and the Kinta Valley is a healthy area for people to want to stay after being treated! Look at the dust created by cement and limestone factories around our air-trapped valley and you will at once know that people will not want to come here for health reasons! Send those factories out of this Valley and we can talk health and medical tourism.
4. She talked so much about 'we' promoting 2N and 3D packages. Who are the 'we'? Some cronies that cannot promote anything and if the State does it for them, they cannot sustain and maintain facilities and then all our tourists will come once and then spread the word never to return and telling others never to come to Ipoh? Look at how Gua Tempurung was handled! These

- caves had the potential of those in Guilin China
5. Our hotels are so lousy that even Malaysians are complaining of the poor facilities and services they offer. What will foreigners who come for the first time here feel and what will they tell their friends back home!
6. Talking about cleaning Ipoh City up! O yes, this is the never ending story! Try and try again and again, Ipoh will not be as clean as before. Why? We have lousy people managing the cleaning up job who let contractors play havoc with the job! Why? You and I know will do lah! Then the Ipoh public must also be blamed. They create private dumping sites for their own convenience! Why, because the collectors do not collect regularly! Damn good excuse, right? WRONG! If they don't collect regularly, you keep your trash in a bin in your own house until they come! It is time we pass a law whereby leaving any rubbish outside the house is an offence except in the 2 hours before collection time. Then make sure the collectors inform all house owners when they will show and make sure they show during those times.
7. House owners in a region will also report wanton neighbours for not obeying the 'rubbish law'. They should

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Perak Academy lecture 'Ipoh Days'** by Professor Wang Gung Wu and book launch: 'Ipoh When Tin was King', Author: Dr. Ho Tak Ming. Tuesday, 17th November 2009, 12 noon, at: Mezzanine Floor, Ipoh City & Country Club (ICCC), Jalan Tuanku Bainun (Jalan Kampar), Ipoh. RM35.00 (inclusive of lunch at 12.30 p.m.). For reservation call: **05-5478949/016-5518172** or email: [contact@perakacademy.com](mailto:contact@perakacademy.com).

**Perak Chest Society** in conjunction with World COPD Day 2009, is organising a talk on 'Breathless NOT Helpless' and video discussion: 'Home Pulmonary Rehabilitation'. At 2.00 p.m., Saturday, 28th November 2009, at the Perak Chest Society, 178-180A, Jalan Pasir Puteh, 31650 Ipoh. For further details contact: Ms Tina or Ms Yau – **05-2556302**; or visit: [www.pcs.org.my](http://www.pcs.org.my).

**Public Talk on Cancer Avoidance.** Sunday, 22 Nov 2009 at Syuen Hotel, Ipoh, 2.00 p.m. Organised by Menglembu Farmasutika Enterprise and Total Health Concept, supported by Biolution Lab Services. Entrance will be by an RM10.00 donation to the Lions Club of Ipoh Evergreen's Cancer Awareness Fund. Tickets are available by contacting 05-2826115/05-2826118, or from SL Chan Optometry Centre at Psrn Greenhill (**05-2433952**) or Biolution Lab Services at Bercham (**05-5468044**). For details: Ms Vivien Hoong (Lions Club of Ipoh Evergreen) **016-5509128**; Mr Ng Swee Yiam (Farmasutika) **05-2826115**; Ms Wong Joo Bee (THC) **012-5173448**.

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Check out Perak Women for Women's charity ballet performance on November 25<sup>th</sup> at the State Secretariat banquet hall. Be thrilled to the musical that is 'The Little Mermaid' and 'New York! New York!' Support our local talent and contribute towards the setting up of a one-stop service and information centre for women and children located at 52 Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah by PWW.

Entry is by donation or sponsorship. For details contact PWW office: **05-5469715/012-5212480** or Witzl at **012-5088818**.

## PWW CHARITY BALLET



be awarded a percentage reward from the fine collected!

So my dear lady, before you accept an invitation for an interview, get all your facts right first so that people like my good self do not attack you!

**Victor Chew**  
November 08, 2009

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## ORAL HISTORY



The Committee on Perak Oral History Project, a joint initiative by the Perak Heritage Society and Perak Academy, was launched on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2009, at Perak Academy. The committee oversees the recording of oral history as narrated by laymen based on their experiences. For a start, the concentration is on the Japanese Occupation

(1942 to 1945) in Perak before moving to more recent times. To date, twelve individuals of that era have had their statements recorded. The recordings, in the form a script and a compact disc, were presented to the remaining two of the twelve during the launch, in appreciation for their efforts.

Tan Yap Pau, the Committee Chairman and event organiser, explained

the reasons behind the project. "Oral history is another form of recorded history. It is written based on personal experiences rather than hearsay, this being the only point of difference", said Tan in his introductory speech.

Professor Lynn Hollen Lees from the Department of History, University of Pennsylvania, will help guide the committee with its maiden project. Lynn was present at the launch to lend her support.

Those who are keen to have their experiences recorded please contact Perak Academy at 05-5478979 for an appointment.

**FZB**



## CONSERVATION

## THE TURTLES DESERVE BETTER

By YUEN YIN FONG

Few people realise that turtles land in Perak as they are more commonly sighted in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. I got to know that there is a turtle sanctuary in Segari when it was mentioned by one of my colleagues during our short trip to Pangkor Island recently. We decided to check the place out on our way back to Ipoh.

Since none of us have been to this place, we had to find out for ourselves its exact location in Segari.

**Beautiful Drive**

I was thinking during the journey that even if we did not find the place, the drive there was worth the trouble, as we were greeted with spectacular scenery along the stretch of road from Sitiawan to Segari. In fact, I was impressed with the road condition and the breathtaking view before us, that I temporarily forgot where we were heading!

At this point, everybody in the group was on the lookout for any sign of a turtle (the signboard, of course!) and eventually, it appeared before us. Great! We were on the right track. We meandered along the narrower path and eagerly anticipated where it would lead us.

We were soon greeted



by a grand mansion-like structure, complete with a gigantic platform that looks out to sea. One of the kids blurted, "Is this a turtle hotel or what?!" Honestly, all of us were dumbfounded and didn't know what to say, until we noticed a signboard (which was not obvious at all) that said '... the property of Jabatan Agama Islam'. It was not the place that we were looking for but we did not want to give up yet. It didn't help that we had promised the kids that they were going to see some turtles.

Then we saw it – the splendid stretch of beach shortly after the bend from the aforementioned structure. Our hopes were high again; it looked like the kids (and adults) won't be disappointed after all. We were excited after that long ride (approximately 35 km from Lumut) to finally see 'Pusat Pengurusan Penyu,

Pasir Panjang Segari" in front of us.

**Romantic Location – Almost Derelict**

It couldn't be more romantic; with the sea to our left and the sound of waves in the air, as we walked into the centre. We saw what looked like an exhibition area but to our horror, the cases were dusty and some exhibits were missing! It looked like many other poorly maintained establishments that we often see in our country. It was really an emotional roller coaster ride for us. The disappointment, then excitement and disappointment again – we were simply lost, not knowing what to expect next.

We decided to explore the place on our own. It was not going to be a wasted trip. There had to be something we could take home – at least some photographs! There were



a number of ponds, some fenced, some not. The unfenced ponds housed several turtles each in them, and the kids were happy enough at his point with what they saw. The consolation is that the ponds looked clean and well-maintained, as opposed to the exhibition area.

**Gaining Entry**

Then God decided to be kind to us. In walked two gentlemen with a turtle in one of the men's hands. I guess they saw how desperate we were when a few of us started to fawn over the little creature. Apparently this one was caught in the nets of the local fishermen and hence brought to the centre for further action. As he proceeded to place the turtle into one of the fenced areas, I asked if we could get a closer look at the turtles inside. He gave us a once-over and must have wondered what a

strange mix we were. You see, our group comprised members of all age groups and colours, very unlike their typical visitors – families and student groups.

We were subsequently granted entry and it was amazing indeed, to see the turtles ranging from newly-hatched ones to two-year-olds. We were told by the kind gentleman that the centre sometimes buys turtle eggs from the locals which will then be hatched and released as part of their turtle conservation effort.

**Tourist Attraction?**

What's sad is that this centre is supposed to be a main tourist attraction (according to its objectives) but there is so little official information on it. It is potentially an education and tourism main draw to the state of Perak and I wish more could be done to encourage this.

A quick search on the internet only resulted in mentions of it in some private blogs. And some of these bloggers also noted how they managed to explore the place upon a lucky encounter with some personnel on site – pretty much like our own experience. Visiting hours are from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. daily, so this place deserves more publicity by the relevant authorities. It may not be a profit-generating enterprise but they have to realise that the benefits returned are immeasurable.

So, I suggest you give this place a try. Although there is no public transportation available, it is easy enough to get there by car. If you use the road from Lumut to Taiping, you will come to Segari after about 30 km from Lumut. You will see a junction to the Lumut Power Plant. Follow this road for a few kilometres until you see a road going left. This little road will end at Pasir Panjang Beach where the centre is located.

It is highly recommended for half day trips especially for Ipohites. Forget about paying for expensive tours in faraway lands. Adventures should begin at home here in Perak.



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## OPINION

## “Writing is easy: All you do is sit staring at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead” ~ Gene Fowler

No other competition that I know of has a more attractive prize than the Ipoh Echo's writing competition. We may not be talking about the Booker, the Whitbread or the Pulitzer, but at RM1.50 per word, I am tempted to churn out reams of stories, under different names and stealing people's identities, just so I can increase my chances of winning.

In contrast, the average writing competition in the United Kingdom awards a prize of GBP100 (about RM560). When thousands contribute with such a disgustingly high standard, it can be very deflating.

I won my first competition at nine and the prize was a book. So, if getting paid is the icing on the cake, then to be a potential Ipoh Echo free-lance writer, must be the cherry on the icing on the cake. No letters of application, no interviews, no presentation of past work. It couldn't be

any easier.

Thus, I was incandescent with rage when 'Anonymous' (a contributor to the 'Letters' page of the Ipoh Echo) felt that Perak was a poor topic in the competition.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Nevertheless, anyone is entitled to his or her opinion. Perak, boring? A resounding no.

Perak, uninteresting and uninspiring? Surely not!

So, does that mean Perakians are tedious and lack stimulus? No. No. No.

Writing talent does not emanate from topics that the writer finds interesting. It helps. But talent means using one's imagination and creativity, to write with the aim of informing, educating or changing another person's opinion.

Talent is the ability to tap into your resources and utilize your memory and



powers of observation and translate these into your own voice, personal opinion, to engage the reader.

Most Malaysians value English. A low participation level might mean people feeling less confident about writing in English. Maybe, they couldn't be bothered. The upside is that one's chances of winning are greater. Nowadays, we are more familiar with text-messages and watching films to

reading, that we become lazy with using proper words and grammar.

If the Echo is flooded with entrants, then it would be refreshing to know that our public consists of people with an enquiring interest in reading and writing English. The downside is that competition is stiffer.

However, Anonymous echoes the sentiments of the average Perakian. When the competition was announced, I worked on

friends and family, to put pen to paper.

Regretfully, their comments mirrored Anonymous's. "Write about Perak? LOL." "Ipoh? Ahhh, boring-one." "Nah, KL more better. Got action." "Ipoh. Perak, Both also same-same. What to do? Nothing to see."

Some excused themselves and blamed examinations or a heavy workload. A few had to 'go out of town'. Others had to entertain visitors. And there were those who did not know how to.

It has been frustrating, more so because I cannot enter this competition. It is like essay-writing – three A4 pages length. Just conjure images of Perak – pomeloes, Parit – (the town, or our disgusting drains), police (or lack of), Perak's plentiful food, promiscuity (in the back-lanes of Jalan Yang Kalsom), Perak's personalities.

Unless they were in a coma or incarcerated in Kamunting (even that

could spawn some good stories) or walk around with blinkered vision, Perak has been the scene of political mayhem.

From the tiniest grain of sand on Pangkor's beaches to the lofty trees in Belum, there is no shortage of ideas. There have been struggles in Kuala Kangsar, and sadness in Kampar. Perak could be seen from the past, present or the future – if the Ipoh Airport became a Space Centre, as suggested by a previous politician, there might be the beginnings of a great sci-fi story.

But then, Anonymous and the others who felt Perak too limiting a topic might well want to write 1,000 words on why Perak is so boring.

All writers can bore, but not all bores can write. Anyway, writing is like prostitution. You first do it for yourself, then you do it for a few whom you like, then you might as well do it for those who are willing to pay.

MARIAM MOKHTAR

## COMMUNITY NEWS

## A WALK TO REMEMBER



Alzheimer's Disease Foundation of Malaysia, Perak Branch's Memory Walk at Taman Rekreasi Sultan Abdul Aziz (Polo Ground), Ipoh, on Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> November

was a roaring success judging from the response by well-wishers. Over 200 participants of all ages took part in the morning walk at the polo ground. The event was flagged off by

Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon, Executive Councillor for Health, Local Government and Consumer Affairs. The purpose of the walk, according to Mr. Anthony Chin, the branch chairman,

was to create awareness in the public of the disease and to seek funds for the building of a day-care centre for both patients and caregivers in Ipoh. "A building has been identi-

fied in Buntong", he said. "However, we're still short on funds." Concerned

Ipohites should come forward and offer their assistance.

FZB

Those wishing to donate can contact Dr Esther Ebenezer (013-5201220) or Korina (016-508147). Your generosity will help the branch realise its goals.

**Next Issue: A list of Alzheimer's Symptoms**

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## IPOH IN BRIEF

More pics at [ipohecho.com.my](http://ipohecho.com.my)

## THE APOSTLE



"Though I speak with the voices of angels and have no Love, I am nothing but a clanging cymbal..."  
~ from a letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.

In essence, this sums up how Christians are called to live their lives.

St John's Cathedral KL staged a free one-night musical called *The Apostle* at St Michael's Church, Ipoh. Based on the life of St Paul, the show presented the letters of St Paul in art, dance and song. The cast of about 40, consisting of a choir, musicians and performers, gave a commendable performance to a packed crowd. Cast members were not only from Malaysia but also from Nigeria, Philippines and Timor Leste.

VWSL

## ROYAL CHARITY GOLF 2009



The Perak chapter of the Malaysian Ex-Servicemen Association, organiser of the Royal Charity Golf 2009, held its inaugural tournament at Clearwater Sanctuary Golf Resort, Batu Gajah recently. At the dinner in honour of Raja Jaafar Ibni Almarhum Raja Muda Musa, Raja DiHilir Perak, the chapter's chairman, Lt-Cdr (Rtd) Hj Jayah bin Hj Said, called on members to defend the nation's independence and integrity although they were no longer in active service. The government, he said, had never forgotten the sacrifices made by members of the security forces and had rewarded them in kind. As such it was appropriate that former servicemen return the favour. Earlier in the day 116 golfers, which included Raja Jaafar and a retinue of local VIPs, participated in the championship over 18 holes. Mohd Shari Abdullah was adjudged the winner with Abdul Qadir Osman and Ahmad Sharizal Nizam as runners-up. Among the guests at the dinner were Commander 2 Brigade, Brig-Gen Dato' Zulkifli Mansor, Perak CPO, DCP Dato' Pahlawan Zulkifli Abdulah, Dato' Paduka Morshidi Abdul Rahman of GGIFA International College of Aviation and their spouses. The aviation college was the main sponsor of the event.

RM

## MIND SCIENCE DINNER



Some 200 hundred members and friends attended the Alpha Nite Dinner and Dance organised by the Mind Science Association of Malaysia (MSM) at Restaurant Lido Florex. Prior to the dinner there was a public talk by Ng Thian Watt, Chairman, Selangor Circle on Power of Thoughts which was informative and practical. The basic concept of the talk was that to Achieve, you have to Imagine, Believe and Concentrate.

Dr. Clement Fernandez, founder of MSM said that the non-profit association was formed in Ipoh 25 years ago and has branches in all major towns in Malaysia as well as in Singapore, Australia, United Kingdom and Canada. The motto of MSM is 'Change your thinking, Change your life'. Dr. Clement awarded certificates to those who had outstanding performance in the Mind Science Courses and had also promoted the organisation.

Wong Chooi Yee, President of Perak Circle said that anyone can become a member and the applicant has to undergo an initiation programme before being accepted. The Ipoh Circle has weekly meetings and those interested can contact Wong at: **017-5732879**.

AJ

## DEEPAVALI DINNER AT ROYAL IPOH CLUB



About 300 members and guests attended a Deepavali Nite at the Azlan Hall of the Royal Ipoh Club recently. It was held in the spirit of 1Malaysia. Many of the members and guests, especially the ladies, came in traditional Indian attire. A sumptuous selection of Indian food was served. Entertainment was provided by an Indian troupe with songs and dances. The above picture shows member of club's entertainment committee Gina Foo (left) with friends.

JF

## INTERNATIONAL ORCHID FEST 2009



Clearwater Sanctuary Golf Resort, Batu Gajah, hosted the International Orchid Festival 2009 recently. The floral fest attracted 29 orchid enthusiasts from all over the country including some from Taiwan and Ecuador. A total of 327 orchid varieties were on show for the judges to decide. They were classed under different categories. Winner of the open category was Mr. Sin Chan Wah with his *Blc. Keowee*. His other entry, *Bulbophyllum Annandalei*, took second prize. In the best species category, the title went to Mr. Tan Eng Tiek. Runner-up was Mr. Cha Chuan Tuck. To add a touch of festivity to the atmosphere additional activities were held simultaneously over the two-day period. Among them were a colouring and a flower arrangement competition. Over 500 visitors had a fun-filled day in the sun.

RM

## ZONE 2'S TRANSPORT WOES



At the MBI Board Meeting held 2nd November, Councillor Shahul Hamid (Zone 2/Kuala Kuang/Chepor/Meru) highlighted that his locality does not have a Public Transport Service. "It has been stopped by the service provider as it is not profitable". According to Shahul, Zone 2 consists of 11 housing estates with 5 schools. The zone residents consist of low to middle income families. Mayor Roshidi has responded that he would refer this matter to SUK (Setiausaha Kerajaan).

This is the second instance in six months that residents have complained about the lack of public transport. The first was during a 'Mayor's Meet the People Session' at Kg Seri Kinta when village head Encik Tanian requested to have a bus service to which the Mayor's prompt action in initiating one was met with a poor response and the bus service was subsequently terminated.

Meanwhile a follow up with the relevant authorities on the Public Transport Master Plan held last month revealed they are still 'fine tuning the plan'.

Ipoh Echo feels that the state should look at subsidizing bus companies as part of its social responsibility to the residents. Residents from the outlying suburbs wishing to take a taxi to Ipoh have to pay RM8-10 for a one way taxi fare, a princely sum for a low income earner wishing to go to the General Hospital.

JAG



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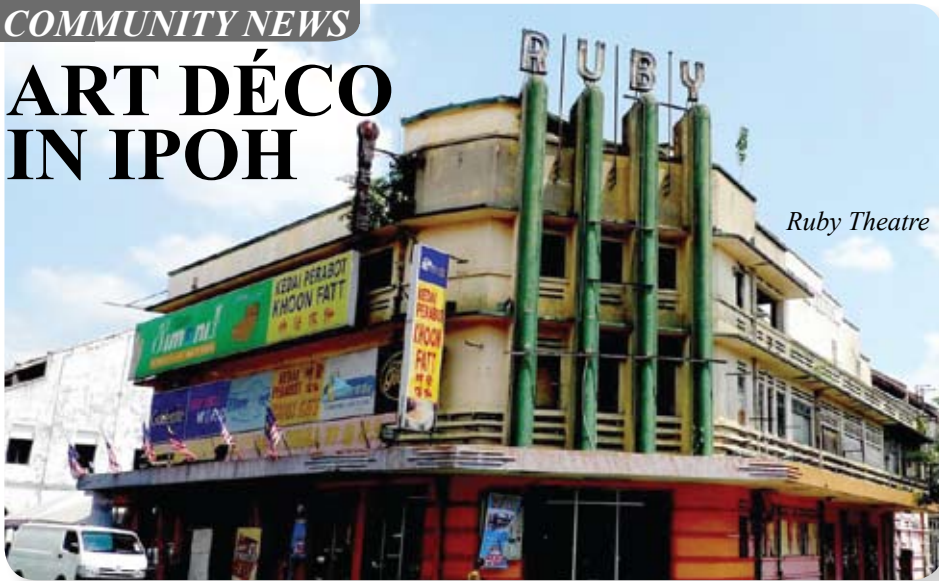
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## COMMUNITY NEWS

ART DÉCO  
IN IPOH

Ruby Theatre

Does Ipoh have Art Décor buildings? Most certainly.

The architectural style that is the Lido and Cathay cinemas along Cockman Street are fine examples; the others being the Ruby theatre on Anderson Road and the Odeon cinema along Brewster Road.

Then there is the huge 'complex' that was the Grand Cinema owned by Shaw Brothers at the junction of Brewster and Cowan Street which featured a tall signboard advertising the movies being shown by the various Shaw cinemas in town. The 'complex' also housed

the Jubilee Cabaret, a popular dance spot and the Jubilee Park which offered amusement items from games of chance and a merry-go-round to regular boxing matches.

Along Laksamana Road is the Lam Loo King building which housed the Celestial Hall (remember Perak Emporium?) which was also a dance hall.

Then there were the row of shop houses at Fair Park that was recently demolished with tragic results.

All of these buildings were designed by the same Danish architect B.M. Iversen who came to

Malaya in 1928. Iversen initially worked in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore but subsequently settled in Batu Gajah and maintained

an office in Ipoh.

Recently his daughter Ruth, on one of her regular return visits, was invited by the Perak Heritage Society to deliver a talk about her father's life and his work.

Ruth described her father as one who was passionate about his work. "He loved to draw and would do so after work while listening to classical music."

Her talk included slides of her father's diary which featured drawn images of their life then. Viewing that graphic diary one could feel the joy with which it was penned.

Berthold Iversen, during his forty years in Malaysia, designed many landmark buildings from Singapore to Ipoh. The

Federal House in KL, designed by Iversen, was the winning selection as part of an architectural competition in 1951. Federal House was so named as it housed the government offices of the federated administration as well as the Post Office Savings Bank and the then Radio Malaya.

to make way for new developments. The Ipoh Swimming Club, MCA building along Brewster Road and the Geological Survey Department building along Tiger Lane are still around.

All of his later works are a huge contrast from his earlier art déco designs: probably a reflection of his



Lido Theatre

Iversen had done so much work in Ipoh from cinemas to houses that his designs are still around despite many having been destroyed or torn down

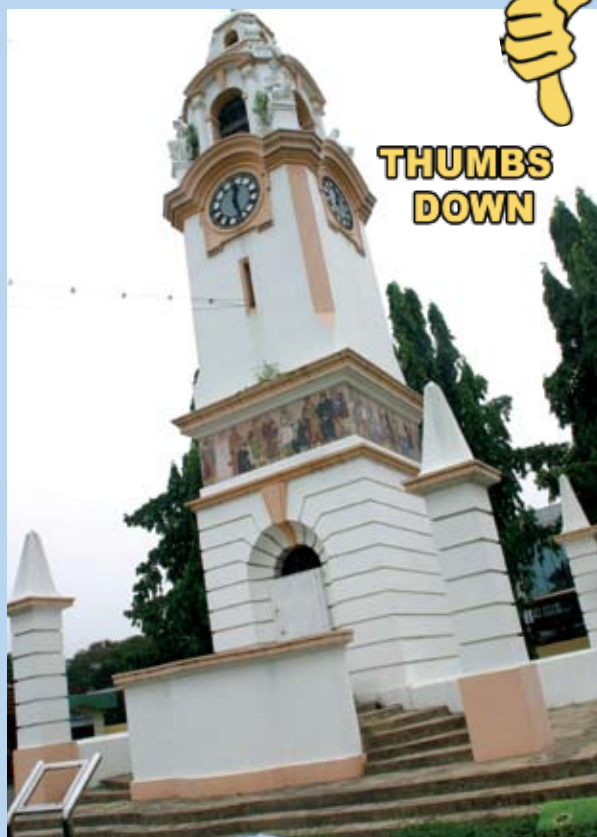
maturing process. Leaving behind such a wonderful legacy, is it any wonder then that Ruth calls Ipoh her second home.

JAG



Ruth Iversen Rollit with old Ipoh friends Pearl Wong (l) and Ong Su Ming (r).

## NO CHIME, NO TIME

THUMBS  
DOWN

The Birch Memorial Clock Tower standing in front of the Ipoh State Mosque was unveiled in 1909. The square tower has a clock on each face. The clock tower has one mother bell, 6 ft 6 in diameter weighing 1,000 pounds and four smaller bells weighing together 1,000 pounds and was designed to strike the chimes of Big Ben.

The clock used to chime every quarter of an hour. It ceased to chime for the past several years and MBI has not bothered to repair and maintain the clocks which are not working.

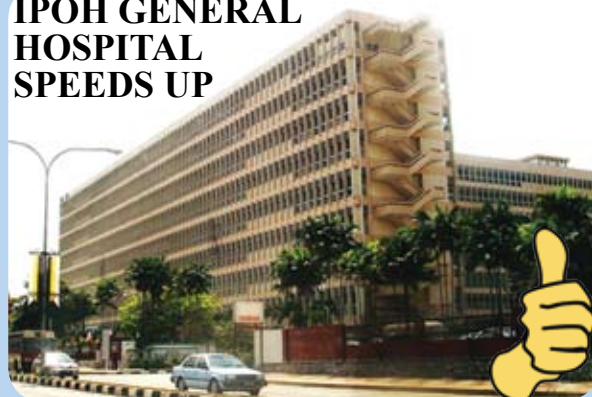
The clock tower is historical and an important landmark. It is strategically located and a tourist attraction. However, the small park surrounding the clock tower is reasonably well maintained.

MBI should repair the clock immediately and make it functional; let us hear the pleasant chimes of the clock. While doing the maintenance work, plants growing on top of the tower must be pulled out before they damage the concrete.

A. JEYARAJ

## SCENE AND HEARD

## LOCOMOTIVE

IPOH GENERAL  
HOSPITAL  
SPEEDS UP

THUMBS UP

For the past few years I have been going to Ipoh General Hospital regularly for eye checkups and usually the appointment is at 8.00 a.m. and by the time I see the doctor and collect the medicine it would be around noon. A span of four hours.

However, lately there has been a change for the good. When I went for my last field test two months ago, it took me about only an hour. Last month I had an appointment with the doctor at 8.00 a.m. and by 10.00 a.m. I had seen the doctor, collected my medicine and was on my way back home.

Keep up the good work!

A. JEYARAJ

## GOING 'LOCO'

The latest night spot to find favour with our local trendies is Locomotive which opened for business in August of this year. Located conveniently on Medan Ipoh Bistari, that new hub of dining, wining and now dancing, opposite Tesco, Locomotive boasts a uniquely designed brick bar counter, pool table and livebands on Thursdays and weekends.

Open from 5.00 p.m. till 1.00 a.m. on week-

days and 2.00 a.m. on weekends, they play music from the 70s and 80s, Hip Hop and mostly R&B and rock numbers, all in English only. Happy hours from 5.00 p.m. till 9.00 p.m. see them charging RM50 for six Tiger Beers. With music thrown in and ample parking available, Locomotive looks set to be the hotspot in Ipoh for the coming months.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

## RIVERFRONT PARK – A SORRY SIGHT

**B**untong State Assemblyman Sivasubramaniam highlighted late October the neglected state of the children's playground, Taman Persisiran Sungai Kinta, formerly known as Peoples Park, located at Jalan Iskandar Shah (Hugh Low Street) immediately after the bridge.

It was rebuilt and upgraded approximately 4 years ago at a cost of RM4 million through an allocation from the Housing and Local Government Ministry. The upgrade featured beautiful landscaped gardens with flowing ponds, children's playground and a children's wading pool built around Muslim arches with water spraying into the wading pool.

**Neglected condition**

Unfortunately just a few years later the park presents a sorrowful picture. The once lovely garden ornaments are either broken or vandalized, the water in the children's wading pool murky and the ponds dry or if filled with water is breeding a healthy tadpole or mosquito community.

Not many children come to play. Instead, beggars sleep under the several gazebos around the park throughout the day and night.



Missing manhole cover, the school is in the background

What was shocking was that 8 manhole covers in the park had been vandalized and not been replaced. Due to the proximity of the park next to the Kinta River each manhole is approximately 10 to 15 feet deep. An accidental fall into a manhole here could be fatal.

The picture of the park was one of total neglect and Assemblyman Sivasubramaniam has questioned MBI about this.

MBI's Landscape Director Meor Abdullah Zaidi explained that the responsibility to maintain the park was the owner of the food outlet at the park. Due to cost constraints the maintenance was neglected. Although the food outlet agreement expires in December, MBI has taken over the maintenance of the park since September.

**MBI Prompt Action**

A week later a team from MBI consisting of departments from landscape and valuation and together with welfare department and Councillor Lai Kong Phooi was at the park to assess the situation.

That same morning another work team of MBI workers were seen tidying up the gardens while the missing manhole covers were replaced with temporary wood covers which were nailed down. Unfortunately, still two manholes remained without covers. The water in the children's wading pool looked clearer.

Councillor Lai assured that the park will be tidied up and identified the areas that needed maintenance to get the park in shape again. The temporary manhole covers will be replaced with concrete covers. Lai also proposed a security

fence and flood lights for the park.

**Beggars**

Regarding the problem of beggars sleeping at the park, welfare officer Rohana Zubaidah said the problem with the beggars will persist. "We pick them up but once they are released, they return again."

However Puan Yeoh, headmistress of the school SJK(C) Perak, adjacent to the park, said that the beggar issue must be resolved as the Parent Teachers Association are most concerned about their children's security. A security guard was hired over a year ago to escort the students coming to the school by bus to the front gate every morning, a walk of 150 metres.

**Funding**

MBI Landscape Director Meor when contacted, clarified that all the remedial work will be completed by March 2010. The initial project was funded by the Federal Government and the allocation "again would be from Federal funds".

Hopefully once the park is restored to its original beauty or better, it would make Ipohites proud and have them frequenting it more often, and perhaps deter the beggars from claiming it as their own.

**JAMES GOUGH**

## MBI DOES ITS PART



In our September 1 issue Ipoh Echo highlighted the plight of the Merdeka Garden residents who constantly feared that the Pari River would overflow its banks each time a heavy downpour occurred.

Echo also reported the actions that MBI and the Drainage and Irrigation Department would take to alleviate the problem before the end of the year.

On November 4, MBI Councillor Lai Kong Phooi called a press conference to announce that they had done their part which was the completion of the rubbish trap to prevent rubbish from flowing into the pump area thus enabling the pump to discharge flood waters effectively and efficiently.

MBI has committed

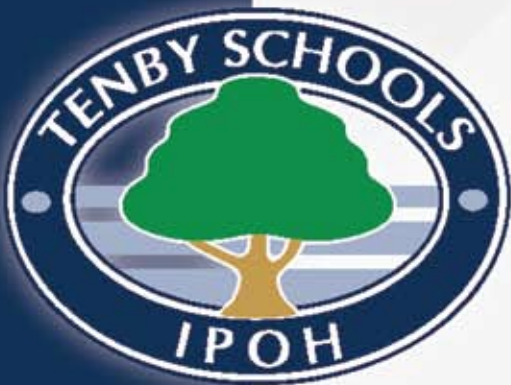
to monitor and clear the trapped rubbish 6 days per week. MBI will also put up a signboard warning residents not to throw rubbish into the sump.

With the completion of the rubbish trap "at least 80% of the problem is solved", said Dato' Lee Kong Yin, BN's Service Centre Chairman.

Dato' Abdul Razak Dahalan, DID Director, when contacted on the upgrade to be done by his department responded that they had "recently awarded the work to increase the capacity of the pump sump and work would start this month".

As for the residents they are 'satisfied' at the actions taken by MBI. "Now we have to wait and see how the system will work during a heavy downpour".

**JAG**



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## MY SAY

by  
JERRY  
FRANCIS

The collapse of the suspension pedestrian bridge across Sungai Kampar at Kuala Dipang recently has started yet another round of inquiries on the cause of the tragedy.

As usual, it takes a tragedy or a serious incident for those in the relevant agencies and departments to talk about safety, mainly as to what should or should not have been done. It is as though a veil has been lifted suddenly and they began to see clearly now.

And so, guidelines and directives on safety measures are making the headlines in the aftermath of the tragedy. More will be issued as the investigations progress.

Twenty-two school-children, who were participants of a Malaysia's camp, were on the bridge at 10.30 p.m. on October 26<sup>th</sup> when it collapsed and threw them into the swift flowing river. Three of them were drowned, while the rest either managed to save themselves or were rescued.

Commenting on the need to ensure safety measures, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said a reconnaissance team would be sent out before students converge at any facility outside school compound to guarantee their safety and security in future.

It would be among the must-dos by schools and organizers of school excursions to ensure students are out of harm's way, added Tan Sri Muhyiddin, who is also the Education Minister.

However many questions need to be answered. Not only on the stability of the newly constructed bridge, but also on why the children were crossing the bridge at that time of the night and whether there was adult supervision.

Will all the results of

## AFFIRMATIVE ACTION NEEDED TO MINIMIZE LOSS OF LIVES



*The collapsed bridge at Sek. Kebangsaan Kuala Dipang*

the investigations help to identify potential danger in the future so that the loss of lives and properties could be minimized, or become mere records tucked away in files and forgotten?

The 'tidak-apa' attitude seems to be infectious too, as even members of public are throwing all caution to the wind as shown by the drowning of three Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (Utar) undergraduates at the Batu Berangkal waterfalls also at Kampar on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

There have been a number of similar tragedies involving picnickers in the state, and yet precautionary measures and guidelines that need to be observed while at waterfalls, particularly during rainy season, have been ignored.

What is wrong with us, Malaysians? Are we taking thing easy and just wait for "whatever will be, will be"?

I understand if it is a natural disaster as no-one could predict when and how it would occur, but in a tragedy such as the collapse of the bridge (though the first in Perak) some precautionary measures could certainly have been taken.

Yet, every time a tragedy or incident occurs, investigations would usually narrow down the causes to negligence or failure to observe the guidelines.

In the history of

Perak, there have been a number of tragedies involving school-children. Among them were the capsize of overloaded boats at Kampung Gajah and Lenggong.

Others include rock-falls. The most serious was the rock-falls at Gunung Cheroh in Ipoh about three decades ago when several people were crushed to death in a long-house at the foot of a limestone hill.

The most recent incident was on January 11<sup>th</sup>, this year, in the internationally known cave temple, Perak Tong, along Jalan Kuala Kangsar in Ipoh, where thousands of tonnes of rocks had crushed into the main chamber of the temple killing a security guard.

Similarly, guidelines on safety measures, including the construction of buildings at the foot of limestone hills, were issued following the rock-falls, but have been blatantly ignored.

When are the agencies and departments going to learn that safety cannot be compromised, but should be a priority at all times.

Do they need disasters periodically to remind them of their responsibilities? Are the relevant agencies and departments incompetent when it comes to implementation and supervision of safety measures?

Remedial measures must be an ongoing effort, not after an incident. They



## YUK CHOY'S RAKAN MUDA



SMJK Yuk Choy Ipoh, with the collaboration of the Perak Chinese Recreation Club, organised a Rakan Muda Kecergasan programme to teach basic skills in football at their school's football field recently.

According to Mr. Sit Wai Yin, the Co-curriculum Senior Assistant of SMJK Yuk Choy, the program will instil discipline and promote healthy activities among the students. He acknowledged the Youth and Sport Ministry, Perak Chinese Recreation Club and Sport Department of SMJK Yuk Choy, for their continuous efforts in promoting healthy activities in the school. The programme was assisted by Mr. Chan Kok Heng, an ex-Perak and National footballer who volunteered to give the basic training. "I am grateful for my alma mater in helping me become a footballer and this is my way of giving back", he said.



# 太平山莊

Prestavest Memorial Park

Taiping 太平

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