

IPOHecho

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*L*ooks like the Tiger is being tamed financially as some cheers are in store for owners of flats and condominiums, as well as property developers in the city. The cheers come in the form of discounts. For the owners of flats and condominiums, there is a 6% discount on their annual assessment, while for the property developers a 45 % discount on land premiums.

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Reductions in assessments and land premium welcomed by all

Flat and Condominium owners had till last year paid 16 % assessment on the estimated value of their properties on par with owners of other dwellings. Now, they need to pay only 10%.

Translated into cash, there will be a saving of between RM100 and RM600 annually for each unit of flat or condominium. About 11,000 owners in the city are eligible for the discount.

REHDA appreciative

"Since many of the owners are paying management corporation charges to cover the cost of maintaining common areas, in addition to assessment rates, the reduction of assessment to 10% by the Perak State Government is fully appreciated by all concerned," commented Dato' Francis Lee Yew Hean, chairman of Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association (REHDA) Perak Branch.

According to him, there are currently about 250,000 units of rateable holdings within the city. They consist of vacant lots, residential, industrial, new and traditional villages and planned kampong lots. "As there are only about 11,000 units of flats and condominiums within Ipoh City Council, representing a 4.4 % of total rateable holdings, this reduction will have minimal effect on the total assessment revenue of the Ipoh City Council. "The reduction of assessment for the flats and condominiums from 16 % to 10 % or a 37.5 % reduction will only translate as a short-fall of some 1.65 % of assessment payable to Ipoh City

Council," said Dato' Lee, adding, "The members of REHDA, Perak Branch, would wish to record our sincere appreciation to the Perak State Government for the timely decision on the following policy matters which would provide further enabling factors to promote the development and industrialization of Perak."

On the short-fall to the revenue due to the discount, Ipoh Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim said "the council would find other ways to ensure our financial standing remains healthy." Dato' Roshidi, who announced the discount for the assessment at the council's full board meeting recently, said those eligible for the discount should not be confused by the notice sent to them earlier. The council would make the adjustment when they come to pay the assessment.

Need less from MBI

The discount for this category of owners was decided by the Perak Government following an appeal by REHDA and other main NGOs to the city council, which was passed on to the state government for approval. In most cases, the owners of the high-rise buildings need to pay management charges as much as RM200 a month to maintain their surroundings which include maintaining premises, roads and street lighting, clearing drains, landscape and gardens and collection of rubbish to a common collection point. Hence this category of residents does not require the same facilities as those provided by

MBI to residential properties. Generally for most locations the main service provided by MBI is the collection of rubbish from a common point.

Happy condo owners

Those who will benefit from the assessment discount are appreciative of it. They said that the saving from the discount would cover some of the monthly payments



Dato' Francis Lee

to the management corporations. Condominium owner Joseph Loh, who lives at Bercham Prima in Bercham, is pleased with the reduction. However, he added that it would be "nicer if the rate could be further reduced to 5% as per the rate at his other unit in Puchong, Selangor". Another condominium owner Andrew Leong declared the reduction as 'good'. "Nowadays any price reduction is hard to find and if there is no loss in quality, is most welcome."

Premium Calculation

On the discount to premium payable on land to the State Government, Datuk Lee said that since the Valuation Department effected a change in the

method of calculating the market value of a given piece of land for the purpose of premium payment, premiums payable took a hefty jump. The previous practice of determining the unit cost of the land which was based on total gross area had been substituted by the adoption of nett area. The effect of this change had resulted in an increase of premium payable varying from 100% to 200%, depending on the nett area available for development." We are grateful to the State Government for the blanket 45% discount on all premium payable in response to an appeal by the main NGOs in Perak," said Dato' Lee. The discount represents a stop-gap measure and the State Government is now reviewing the formula for calculating premium payable, with the understanding that the leviable premium shall remain status quo.



Zambry On Development

Commenting on the decision, Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Zambry Abdul Kadir said the Valuation Department's move to adopt the nett area instead of gross area in the calculation of land premium had resulted in far higher premiums for land applicants. He said after discussing with various parties, the state executive council decided to offer a 45% discount on land premiums. The discount was in line with the state's policy to

look after the welfare of the people. "On one hand it is good to increase the value of the land but on the other, it may not be good for development. It would especially burden developers and land owners as they would have to pay an exorbitant price for land premium," he said.

According to Zambry, the state's focus now was to encourage development and therefore they do not want this to hamper any housing projects or industrial development.

JAMES GOUGH

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MAYOR ROSHIDI SEES A BRIGHT YEAR AHEAD

Ipohites hold on dearly to the Mayor's promise to turn "vision into a reality"...

Dato' Roshidi Hashim ended his second year in office with this rather amusing reminder to Ipohites, "As the Mayor of Ipoh City it's not a small task that is just confined to maintaining cleanliness and such stuff. It is a position that requires one to have a vision and the capability to turn this vision into a reality".

Roshidi has done something which previous mayors had not – delivered a New Year message in English. Nationalistic feelings aside, it was like a breath of fresh air. And this was done at the final city council full-board meeting held on Thursday, December 31, 2009.

However, the Mayor's opening remarks at the beginning of the meeting should take precedence as they are indicators of the Council's achievements for Year 2009. Some of the more pertinent points raised are the following:

***Revenue Collection:** Bills totaling RM120.54 million were issued by MBI to its customers between January and November 2009. They represent an increase of RM1.16 million over the corresponding period in 2008. A sum of RM115.99 million was collected within that period, a shortfall of RM3 million over the 2008 figure. Arrears, as at November 2009, stand at RM48.63 million, an increase of RM1.98 million compared to 2008. Unpaid

assessment bills form the main bulk of these arrears. The council will continue with its incentive scheme to encourage prompt and full payment of assessment bills. Among the prizes for the lucky draw are two LCD colour TVs, a holiday package to Medan, a sofa set, a washing machine and two vacuum cleaners. A goodie bag and a lucky draw coupon await those who pay their assessment bill in full (one year) and at MBI counters only.

***Star Rating:** The council will increase efforts in documenting all work-related matters so as to ease the process of accessing its performance by PM's Department's MAMPU (Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit). Roshidi aspires for a 5-star rating in 2010. In line with this goal, the Council will fill all 50 vacancies it has advertised by January 2010. The additional manpower will boost its capacity.

***Infrastructure Works:** The Council is focusing on upgrading existing infrastructures rather than build new ones. For Year 2009 the Council has spent RM47.5 million out of the RM72.6 million allocated via federal funding under the MARRIS (Maklumat Rekod-rekod Jalan Raya Malaysia) project. Upgrading of

roads and traffic lights is on-going.

***Landscaping:** The Council will continue with its greening efforts by planting leafy trees within city limits. A total of 3,580 trees were planted in 2009. Of this, 884 trees were planted by the council while the remaining by developers.

***Health:** The grading of restaurants and eateries in Ipoh continues into 2010. As at December 2009, 70 restaurants have been graded A. The Mayor hopes more restaurants will be similarly graded as the owners now have more time to ensure the cleanliness of their premises based on the Council's guidelines. He also encourages owners to use grease traps to reduce drain blockages, the major cause of flooding in the city.

***Super Kinta:** The Super Kinta market has been earmarked by a Chinese company from Wenzhou, China, as a potential centre for the sales of Chinese-made goods and products. Discussion between MBI and the Wenzhou company is in progress. The company, meanwhile, has agreed to rent two office units at the MBI-owned building along Jalan Dato' Tahwil Azar at RM5,000 a month.

***Council Flats:** The Council will repaint all its flats to give them a fresh



new look. Kinta Heights will have its facade painted while the Jalan Silang Flats will be given a new coat of paint in its entirety. Waller Court and Sungai Pari Towers, meanwhile, will be rebuilt, as their conditions are too abysmal. The Mayor requests that developers keen on developing the two properties submit their proposals to the Council soonest. MBI has appointed a private developer to maintain the Harmoni Flats. If this method is forthcoming, this concept will be adopted for the maintenance of the other flats.

***Assessment Rates:** Measures to reduce the financial burden of flat and condominium owners have been taken. The Council has agreed to revise the calculation of the annual assessment rates of flats and condominiums from the previous base

rate of 16 per cent to 10 per cent. Flat and condominium owners pay to maintain their properties to their respective management committees.

***Rubbish Disposal:** The adoption of the two controversial waste management acts passed by Parliament in 2007 has been put on hold. The present rubbish disposal system will continue. The state government has approved the appropriation of a piece of state land (523 acres) in Papan as the new landfill to replace the Bercham landfill. This new site will be used collectively by the municipalities of Batu Gajah, Kampar, Perak Tengah and MBI.

***Public Complaints:** Between January and December 2009, the PR Division of MBI received a total of 6,968 complaints from the public. The complaints are being channeled to individual departments for action. The level of accomplishment varies daily and it ranges between 77 to 89.9 per cent. The Council hopes to achieve an accomplishment level in excess of 90 per cent by acting immediately on complaints. Based on Council records the highest number of complaints

come from Ipoh central. Complaints on rubbish collection have nose-dived from the number one spot to number six in the list.

***Councillors:** The Mayor is happy with the performance of councillors who have shown keen interest in the development of their respective zones. Their participation in the Mayor's *turun padang* programme is exemplary. Roshidi hopes that they will continue with the good work if they are being nominated for a second term in 2010.

Now back to the Mayor's New Year Message. Roshidi acknowledges that Ipohites today are more demanding and savvy. They reckon that amenities such as parks, green lungs, bicycle lanes, shaded pavements, public transport, libraries and a viable rubbish disposal strategy are integral to an efficient city council, one that does not compromise on qualities. Providing these will be the Mayor's promise for 2010.

Well said Datuk Bandar, Ipohites hold dearly to your pledge to "turn vision into a reality" however elusive or delusive it may sound or seem. Cheers.

ADVERTORIAL

"WHY BUY A COW WHEN MILK IS CHEAP?"

Very often people tell me that they don't have many assets except a house and some savings in the bank. Therefore, it is easier to transfer their house to their children during their lifetime especially when they feel that they are already old and having health problems.

Such perception reminds me of two stories which I thought only happened in TV dramas. In fact, it does happen in real life and many would have heard of such stories as well.

The first story is about an elderly man who transferred his house to his son because he felt that it's time to do so as he is getting older and has health problems. Soon after the transfer, he was shocked in disbelief and disheartened when he received a letter of eviction from his son's lawyer. The second story is about a mother who after transferring the house to her loved ones, was asked to live in an old folks home because they complained she was

grumpy.

Although these incidents may not happen to everyone, parents should be aware that these incidents are real. To avoid such situations, it would be much simpler for a person to distribute his/her properties and other assets to his/her loved ones with a 'WILL'. After all, it does not cost much and it protects a person against such potential problems.

A 'WILL' does not require the owner to let go of his/her properties and other assets during their lifetime. Any transfer of wealth will only take place upon the demise of the owner. In addition, a person can change his/her 'WILL' anytime he/she wants without the need to get any consent from others.

The executor of the 'WILL' is the person who ensures that the testator's wishes are fulfilled. Thus, it is important to get at least two persons who are capable of carrying out such duties. The discussion with the executors does not require the testa-



By PETER LEE

tor to reveal the contents of the "WILL", but to seek their consent on taking up such responsibilities.

So, if you consider transferring your properties to your loved ones during your lifetime for even the most respectable reasons, please ask yourself "why buy a cow when milk is cheap?"

Peter Lee is an Associate Estate Planning Practitioner (Wills & Trust) with Rockwills International Group. He is also an Islamic Estate Planner providing Wills & Trust services for Muslims. He is based in Ipoh and can be reached at: **012-5078825/05-2554853** or excelscc@streamyx.com.



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THINKING ALOUD

TRAGICALLY, THE IPOH BUS DISASTER WON'T BE THE LAST

Which one is more shocking; the fact that 10 people perished in a new bus with a driver whose record was clean? Or, the fact that this tragedy was the seventh in the previous decade? Actually, it is neither of the above.

It is the realisation that this latest disaster won't be the last on our roads. We've been here before, and every time, there'll be the customary hand wringing by the authorities, the public clamour about inadequate enforcement, the punishments – jailing the driver and fining the company.

Then, we sit back and wait for the next tragedy. We need to identify the chain of events that sparked this tragedy. Then decisively act on them – not just when the spotlight is on.

This driver was neither drunk nor 'high'. He fell asleep. Fatigue reduces reaction time, alertness, concentration, decision making and all crucial driving skills.

Driving when drowsy, like drunk driving, causes fatal crashes. Remedial measures like winding the window down, switching on the radio and drinking coffee, rarely work.

The only cure is sleep – pulling over safely into a properly designated area for a brief nap – or swapping places with another alert licensed driver.

It is better to take a

nap, than wake up in hospital, or be laid out on the mortuary slab.

The tragic consequences are numerous and alarming; personal injury, wrongful death, economic cost, property damage, rebuilding shattered bodies or futures, emotional trauma for individuals, families and community.

The following roll-call, last decade – Kuala Lipis (December 2003 with 14 deaths), Nibong Tebal (July 2006, 12), Bukit Gantang (August 2007, 22), Jelapang toll (December 2007, 7), Slim River (January 2008, 3), Rawang (April 2009, 6) – highlights Perak.

Truck drivers and commercial bus drivers, both commute and are paid to drive. Getting enough sleep is critical. Some drive, throughout the day and night, to reach a destination by a specific time. They are especially vulnerable to fatigue. This driver admitted to falling asleep. Why?

Some bus companies pay their drivers a basic monthly wage of RM500. The majority of transport employees are part-timers. Was this driver moonlighting with several driving jobs? Was he working overtime? Did he forego rest and sleep to obtain an adequate monthly income?

We should resurrect the debate about minimum pay for bus-drivers. Bus companies and authorities,



can have no excuses for the future.

Many victims, in this and other bus crashes, were thrown from the vehicle. Compulsory seat-belt use in buses should be legalised.

However, we must NOT react to the knee-jerk response of banning mid-night buses. I am one of the several hundred thousands who use this service, which saves both time and money.

Let us begin this New Year with the authorities incorporating factors such as inculcating good driving habits, sound road design, effective materials for road barriers, decent signage, and roadworthiness of vehicles.

We have repeatedly witnessed inadequate signs, dangerous stunts or reversing on the highway. We fume when buses overtake dangerously, drive erratically, speed during bad weather, not indicate, have defective lights and gener-

ally pose a danger to other road-users. High technology won't prevent accidents through carelessness or bad driving, or when the driver nods off.

Nevertheless, how can we stop this happening again? First, we need immediate action at a local and national level to reinforce good driving attitudes – zero tolerance to

bad driving habits. Severe fines, penalties and revoking driving licences would be a good start. Policemen in patrol cars, who occasionally break the rules, need to set a good example, too.

That is the very least that we owe the dead people.

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Hala Wah Keong



Lebuh Simee 2

MUSINGS ON POETS AND POETRY

by See Foon Chan-Koppen



Long before blogs, Malaysian Insider, Raja Petra, there was Cecil Rajendra, an iconoclast extraordinaire, a passionate activist who firmly believes in the pen being mightier than the sword.

Rajendra who recently gave a reading of his poems organised by the Perak Academy at the Royal Perak Golf Club, is one of the few Malaysian poets writing in the English language today.

His poetry gives voice to the socially marginalised and acts as a conscience for the environment. Not as widely read in Malaysia, Cecil Rajendra's poetry has travelled far and wide, cited by WWF, UNICEF, UNESCO, National Geographic and Amnesty International.

When I asked to verify if he was in fact a Nobel Literature nominee, he modestly brushed the question aside and said that the nomination came from Philippines and U.S.A.

The fact that there is little local media interest on him is curious – which is possibly due to the controversial content of his writings, but snubbing a Nobel nominee who's touted as Malaysia's unsung poet laureate deserves research and this is what I did, albeit briefly.

Rajendra devotes his writing in awakening people to the burning social issues that afflict Malaysia and the Third World generally – oppression,

injustice and exploitation, corruption and greed, want, hunger and poverty and ecological ruin.

But it is with Malaysia that he is focused and about Malaysia for Malaysians that he writes.

"Faults in another / that would not matter / in our loved ones / assume / cataclysmic proportions / and if i did not care / i would not dare / chart / your many imperfections"

excerpt 'To My Country' from 'Refugees and Other Despairs'

In a speech he made at the Asian PEN Conference held in Manila in the early 1980s, Rajendra's address, "The Higher Duty of a Writer in a Developing Society", sparked off a storm which was to envelope him in controversy for the rest of his life: "It becomes no longer a matter of choice, but the moral obligation and bounden duty of every responsible writer to bear witness to the times he lives in and to put his life and his work at the service of humanity."

His speech, brief and to the point, was widely reported in the Philippines press and elsewhere in the region, but virtually ignored in Malaysia. His poetry is part of a total commitment and controversy would continue to plague him back at home where in 1993 his passport was retained for 'anti-logging activities, which it was felt could damage the country's image overseas'.

His passport has since been returned to him and Rajendra continues writing his passionate pleas, his technique more Japanese

haiku than Keats or Shelley whose poetry coloured his undergraduate years, his thinking influenced by such men as Amilcar Cabral, Pablo Neruda, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X.

Cecil Rajendra is a practising lawyer and on returning to Malaysia after 13 years in the UK, initiated the country's first free legal advice centre in a depressed rural area in Penang, serving needy people who would normally have no access to legal representation; as well as a mobile legal aid clinic (MOBLAC) to take legal aid to far flung villages in North Malaysia. He is a senior member of the Malaysian Bar Council and has chaired both its National Legal Aid and Human Rights Committees. He is also a past president of the National Human Rights Society of Malaysia (HAKAM).

His first collection of poems was published in England in 1965 when he was still a law student as Lincoln's Inn, London. Since then his poems have travelled to over 50 countries and been translated into several languages including Chinese, German, Japanese, Malay, Tamil, Swahili, French, Thai, Tagalog, Urdu, Croat and Esquimaux.

In 2005, Cecil Rajendra was the first ever recipient of the Malaysian Lifetime Humanitarian Award for his pioneering legal work and inspirational poetry, recognition which is long overdue in his homeland, Malaysia, where he is its most vociferous critic and staunch patriot.

His latest work 'Tankas from a Tsunami' marks his 19th collection of poetry. A new book is

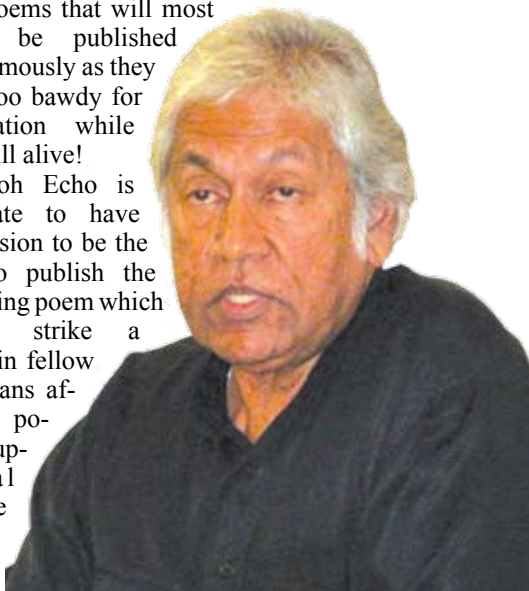
nearing completion. To be titled, 'Parables, Prophets and Pillocks' (pillock: an almost extinct word from the 16th century, meaning a stupid or annoying person, numbskull or blockhead) is guaranteed to raise a few eyebrows if not heckles. The new book which is a culmination of Rajendra's writings in the past five years, which is centred on the theme of religious extremism and political chicanery, should have people sitting on the edge of their chairs at future poetry readings.

His poetry reading that evening in Ipoh was as he promised, "to entertain and not to bore". He read from a selection of his extensive collection including some from his soon-to-be-published book.

On whether he writes on a computer, he confessed to being a 'dinosaur' and still writes with pen and paper- pulp from destruction of trees notwithstanding. "But I don't whip out pen and pad to record notes and thoughts at every opportunity. That'll be like stopping in the middle of wonderful lovemaking and saying, 'Excuse me darling, I've got to jot these feelings down!' When I sit down to write, it all comes." He

continued to confess that he has a large collection of love poems that will most likely be published posthumously as they were too bawdy for publication while he's still alive!

Ipoh Echo is fortunate to have permission to be the first to publish the following poem which should strike a chord in fellow Perakeans after the political upheaval of the past year.



Mud-Skippers

with oversize head / myopic pop-out / foraging eyes / and versatile flippers...../ these shrimp-like / slippery, slimy creatures / skip nonchalant / from this bank / to that, then back.... / prompted only by / an appetite & the tide.... Anthropologists / far and wide / come see them / perform their / self-serving antics / not in mangrove swamp / but in the mud and murky / waters of our politics!

Cecil Rajendra's books may be purchased from the Perak Academy: 28, Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah Tel: 05-5478949 email: contact@perakacademy.com Other sources: Scoob Books and Silver Fish Books.

HAWKER FOOD

PRAWN MEE

Prawn Mee or Hokkien Mee, is noodles in a lovely prawn-based soup, accompanied with prawns, thin slices of pork, half a hard-boiled egg, kangkong and bean-sprouts; garnished with crispy fried shallots and topped with chilli paste. To get the 'prawny' taste, stock is made from boiling prawn heads and shells (which may or may not be pre-fried). After straining off the solid bits, pork ribs and chilli paste are added to the clear simmering stock; that accounts for the specks of chilli oil in the soup. Equally as important is the chilli paste. Usually made from dried chilli, a dollop adds 'oomph' to this delectable dish.



DONG BO ROU OR BRAISED PORK BELLY

By MARGARITA LEE

RECIPE

Ingredients:
1kg pork belly with skin
1 whole garlic – bruised
100 ml soya sauce (Orchid Brand)
3 tbsp Shao Hsing Wine
1 tbsp dark soya sauce
1½-2 tbsp sugar

Garnishing:
Coriander Leaf

Method:

1. Boil water in pot, place pork in pot, and boil for 5 minutes.
2. Remove and drain, clean pork skin, remove hair.
3. Slice pork into 1" by 2" thick pieces



4. Put sliced pork in pot, add garlic, wine, dark soya sauce & sugar, and stir well.
5. Add in hot water to cover pork.
6. Add in soya sauce, bring to boil with high heat

7. Simmer with low heat till soft.
8. Stir occasionally (About 3 hrs)

Note: Check every 30 minutes
Serve with Chinese bun (Man Tou)

NAME	WHERE	COMMENTS	PRICE (RM)	
RESTORAN SUN HEE	59 Jln Musa Aziz (Anderson Rd.), New Town	Soup has a good 'prawny' taste. Could do with a bit more kangkong	From 3.60 to 4.00	★★★★★
STALL AFTER 10.30pm	Near Yik Foong opposite the main market.	Big prawns. A tad too oily.		★★★★★
RESTORAN SIN LOAN LEE	21 Jln Panglima, Old Town.	Prawn taste good. Chilli paste a bit sweet.		★★★★★
HOLLYWOOD RESTAURANT	Jln Lee Kwee Foh, Canning Garden	Normal		★★★★★

Our next food review will be **HOR HEE**
Email your favourite recommendations to: food@ipohecho.com.my

BUSINESS

PCCCI WOO FOREIGN INVESTORS WITH CD PRESENTATION

The Perak Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCCI) has prepared a presentation entitled 'Silver State's Opportunities' to woo foreign investors to the state.

It is in the form of a compact disc (CD). One thousand copies have been burned and will be distributed wherever PCCCI goes on a trade mission.

The compact disc shows the availability of various industries and products in Perak, including the manufacturing of water pumps, rubber products, shoes, frozen foodstuffs, pvc and poly-

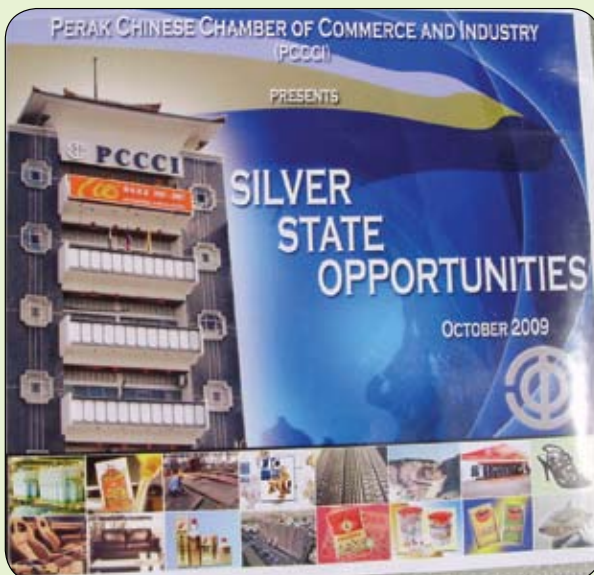
urethane leather and fresh fruits such as pomelo and starfruit.

It is learnt that PCCCI decided to have its own presentation as it is disappointed with the outdated presentation from a State Government's agency.

At its recent 13-day trade mission to Eastern Europe, the video presentation was successfully screened to promote the state.

The 27-member delegation visited Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Romania. It was led by PCCCI's deputy president Liew Sew Yee.

"We chose to visit there because they are emerging capitalist coun-



tries, which we need to know more and as well as promoting our state to them", said a member of delegation Dato' Chin

Lean Choong, secretary of PCCCI's external affairs committee.

"Face-to-face discussions were held with the

entrepreneurs in the four countries. Now they know what our state can offer and we know what they can offer", he added.

Dato Chin said the discussions included possibility of joint-ventures and bilateral trade with those countries. "At least, we have put Perak and Malaysia as a whole on their map", he said.

Early last year, PCCCI also sent a trade mission to the Middle East. The delegation visited Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Dubai and Dammam in Saudi Arabia.

Ipoh white coffee is among the agro-based and manufacturing products which have received good response following the suc-

cessful trade mission. Others are ground-nuts and pvc tents.

Apart from the various products in Perak gaining acceptance in the Middle-East countries, a number of business deals and joint-ventures were also sealed. It achieved its objective to pave the way for Perak businessmen to explore bilateral trade and investment opportunities in the Middle-East.

The tour which had resulted in fruitful business meetings with the respective chambers of commerce, was facilitated by the Malaysian Trade Commission in Jeddah and Dubai.

JERRY FRANCIS

JUNIOR GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

Clearwater Sanctuary Golf Resort Batu Gajah recently organised its 7th Clearwater Junior Amateur Open Golf Champion in collaboration with SportExel Malaysia, the foundation that assists in the development of junior sportsmen, and the State Sports Council.

The tournament attracted a total of 164 participants segregated into 7 categories from ages 18 to 8 years and below. Clearwater Resort had created a 'Super Junior' category for children below 8 years to provide them early exposure to the game.

The tournament was the 11th leg of SportExel's Malaysian Junior Golf Circuit, 2009. The overall winner of the tournament was Chan Tuck Soon, Category B (Boys 15) with a 2 day total of 142.

An up and coming golfer noted during the tournament was Bryan Teoh Wiyang from Penang who won in the DJ Category (Boys 10). Bryan, 9, had in 2009, won two international titles the Spanish Junior Open



Junior champions posing with Clearwater Chairman Kenny Yap.
L-R: Chan Tuck Soon (behind) and Bryan (in front)

in Grand Flamingo Club, Malaga, Spain and the San Diego Junior Masters Golf Tournament in Carlton Oak Golf Club, USA.

According to Amy Wong, Bryan's mother, he started playing golf when he was 6½ years old. His parents initially enrolled him for coaching with the Penang Golf Association. However his golfing potential was recognised after he signed up with a PGA basic golf programme for kids. The programme, normally held on weekends, worked for him. After 6 months, the coach informed his parents that

Bryan had the potential to succeed in golf and was ready to participate in golf tournaments. His first tournament was an inter-school tournament in July 2007 in which he was placed 12th. In 2008, Bryan participated in 14 tournaments, 12 national and 2 international including the US Skits World Championship held in North Carolina in which he was placed 6th. Of the 14 tournaments in 2008, he won 9 of them. According to Bryan's father, Mr. Teoh Hai Hock, "Bryan loves challenging and long courses and my wife and I will keep on providing sup-

port and encouragement to further develop and polish his skills in golf".

Bryan, who studies at SJK (C) Jit Sing in Bukit Mertajam has managed to keep an average of 90 marks in all subjects despite missing classes for up to 60 days due to his golfing engagements.

Talent like Bryan is very vital to the development of golf in our country. Perhaps one day, we might hear Bryan Teoh Wiyang's name among the great golfers in the world.

KEESHAANAN
SUNDARESAN

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ipoh Rotary Club Anniversary Dinner. Thursday, 18 January, 7.30 pm, Ipoh City and Country Club (ICCC) Mezzanine Flr, Jalan Tuanku Bainun.

Malaysian Healthy Ageing Society is organising a workshop entitled: 'Train the Care Givers of the Elderly'. 23rd & 24th January at the Syuen Hotel, Ipoh. RM50 covers both days inclusive of coffee breaks and lunch. Contact: **03-2070 5600 / 012-364 6109**. Email: info@healthyageing.org. Website: www.healthyageing.org.

Persatuan Brahma Kumaris Ipoh public talk 'Facing Challenges with Dignity'. By B.K. Shanti from New Delhi, India. Wednesday, 20 January, 7.15pm, at No. 1, Persiaran Kin Mee, Taman Kin Mee, Fair Park, Ipoh. Contact: Mdm Ajit (**05-5460970**). Free admission.

Solo Art Exhibition by Khor Seow Hooi. The water-colourist will showcase his latest collection of water colour paintings at Syuen Hotel (1st floor) from Saturday to Sunday, 23-31 January, 10am to 7.30pm daily. For more information, call Khor at **017-3552688**.

Piano & Multimedia Concert by Dr Enoch Fernando on Sunday 24th January 2010 8.00 pm at the YMCA Ipoh. Admission by donation. In aid of Children's Home. Minimum RM5 (students). St Peter's Church: **05-5460444**; or email spciph@streamyx.com or YMCA: **05-2540809** or email ymcaipoh1@gmail.com. Tickets are also available at the PSPA Office **05-5487814**. webpage: www.enochmusic.com.

MBI-Sponsored Ipoh Aerobathon 2010. Stadium Indera Mulia, on Sunday February 28 at 7.30 am. Entrance fee RM30 per person. Registration forms available at Jabatan Hal Ehwal Komuniti (Level 7) MBI. For details call Pn Jamuna/En Anuar/Pn Elly at **05-2085577/05-2083246**.

Perak Women for Women Society (PWW) Research/survey on domestic violence. For more information please contact PWW's office at 52, Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah, or call **05-5469715**.

FREEHOLD VIRGIN LAND

SJK(C) Padang Gajah is now in operation. Interested parents can contact the school at **05-312 4813** for information on student enrolment.

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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.

TRAIPSING AROUND IPOH

I'm a regular Ipoh Echo reader and enjoy 'Traipsing Around Ipoh with Pei Shyen' but I've noticed that the feature has been missing in the last few issues. I was most pleasantly

surprised to find it back in the latest issue. I hope this will be a regular feature as I find the information very well researched, clearly written, and immensely useful, being a new kid on the block, so to speak. (I'm from Sarawak and stationed in Perak for

three years.) I look forward to regular episodes of 'Traipsing Around Ipoh with Pei Shyen' in issues to come.

Good job to Ipoh Echo for the good work. Keep it up!

Nicholas Fong
December 23, 2009

COMMUNITY FUTSAL CARNIVAL



The Perak Chinese Recreation Club (PCRC) located at Lorong Chung Thye Phin, recently held a Futsal Carnival at its premises.

It was the second time they hosted the carnival and it attracted over 300 participants from the various schools around Ipoh. The carnival catered for 3

categories of participants, under 12, 14 and 16.

According to Chong Kok Heng, one of the clubs panel of coaches, PCRC has since 2006 started a programme called the 'Perak Chinese Soccer Kids' to conduct football coaching clinics, the purpose of which is to develop football and

promote healthy physical habits among the Chinese youth of today. Its target is the age group between 8-16 years. The Futsal Carnival is an extension of this programme.

The 'Soccer Kids' programme resumed its coaching clinics for the year 2010 on January 9.

JAG

TOURISM

PERAK TO GIVE PRIORITY TO DOMESTIC TOURISM

Wooing domestic tourists to Perak will be top priority for the revamped Perak Tourist Association (PTA).

Its newly elected president Haji Mohd. Odzman bin Abdul Kadir stressed that he shares the sentiments of Tourism Malaysia when it launched the slogan 'To Know Malaysia Is To Love Malaysia'.

"There is huge potential in domestic tourism, and Perak should capitalize on it", said Mohd. Odzman, who took over from Dato' Mohd. Zainal Abidin bin Hj. Abdul Kadir after being the association's secretary since 1984.

"We can save a lot of money on promotion, compared to budgets for international tourism. We will encourage Malaysians to visit our tourist destinations in the state through various activities and programs."

He said PTA will work with Tourism Ministry and Education Ministry on how to promote tourism aggressively among students, and as well as to inform youth organisations of the various business potentials and job opportunities in

the tourism sectors.

It will also seek the opinions of major tourism players such as the YTL, EMKAY and Sunway groups, who have invested millions of Ringgit to develop the Perak tourism potentials.

"However, PTA would not completely ignore the international market, with its prime target being Singaporeans. Our eco tourism should be our selling point", he added.

Haji Mohd. Odzman has been involved in tourism since the 70's as a director of a local travel agency. In 1986, he was involved in the formation of the National Tourism Council of Malaysia (NTCM) and became one of the two Vice Presidents and later volunteered to be its Secretary General and has held the position ever since.

As PTA president, he believes that the state government must play the leading role to complement the private sector but, the public sector must play an active role in strategic planning. "We need to ask ourselves what are our strengths and weaknesses in the way of tourism products and why we have so far failed to make



Haji Mohd. Odzman bin Abdul Kadir

a similar impact as other leading tourist states."

He is confident that the state government has the political will and commitment to promote tourism in the state and is open to new ideas. Perak, he said, has good tourism products, some even surpassing other destinations in the country, which needed to be promoted.

The state needs to have its own identity, a tourism icon, that should not be changed from time to time as has happened in the past.

Mohd. Odzman outlined a 10-point plan to stimulate tourism in the state. Among them cleanliness at food outlets, improving public transportation, availability of literature on places of interest, tourist centres manned by pro-active personnel and well-trained and well-informed tour guides.

JERRY FRANCIS



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CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR ROUNDUP

CHARITY
CHRISTMAS PARTY

Salvation Army OIC, Jabid Timbangan with some of the children from the Home

The annual Christmas Party organised by Ipoh City and Country Club (ICCC) for its members recently was different from previous years as it added in the word 'Charity' for the first time.

In line with the 'adapted' theme it invited children from the Salvation Army Children's Home located just down the road, to share in the joy of the season.

According to the ICCC Group general manager, Mr Ricky Khong, "Christmas is a time of giving. For a change we thought the club and its members would share this joyful season with others less fortunate". The response from the club's junior members and parents was "extremely encouraging" added Khong.

The programme for the day included the usual Santa Claus' goodies, presents, clowns, games and balloons and a fancy dress competition.

Mr Jabid Timbangan, the officer-in-charge of the Home, elaborated that these "community events organised for children during the Christmas season, never fails to bring a smile to their faces".

JAG

BIRTHING A NEW DECADE



KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital recorded 4 births (2 boys & 2 girls) on New Year's Day in the city. They were born to Mdm Lee Yee Fang, Pn Siti Nor Sharmila Azila, Mdm Iru Thayamary and Mdm Yau Sat Ling. It was truly 1Malaysia, as there were two Chinese, one Malay and one Indian baby. The management of KPJ ISH presented hampers to all the New Year babies.

Meanwhile at Perak Community Specialist Hospital (PCSH) recorded two births on New Year's Day. Santha, 29, gave birth to a baby girl, while Kamala, also 29, to a boy.



Ms Selena Yee (right), Senior PCSH Operations Manager presented hampers to Santha (2nd fr left) & Kamala (3rd from left)



Local government minister Dato' Dr Mah with the Mayor and Councillors ushering in the new year

BUSINESS

KINTA PROPERTIES HANDS OVER
KEYS IN SRI KLEBANG

Kinta Properties recently commenced handing over the remaining 26 keys to homeowners in the South Precinct of Parklane Residences, a gated and guarded community in Ipoh comprising a total of 62 homes located in the 650-acre Bandar Baru Sri Klebang.

The handover marks another great milestone in the development of Bandar Baru Sri Klebang with more than 1,400 residents making the community their home to date.

The handover ceremony took place recently during Kinta Properties' 'Meet the Residents' evening held at their 20-bay golf driving range in Sri Klebang. The devel-

oper took the opportunity to brief residents on developments to the community such as the use of CCTVs along the community's perimeter fencing.

Bernard Tan, Group CEO, Kinta Properties, briefed residents about the expansion of the community's Clubhouse facilities, which will incorporate a 25-metre swimming pool, a gymnasium, a restaurant, and play areas for children. These will be ready for residents' use by December 2010.

With nearly 100% of the South Precinct sold, Kinta Properties is now gearing up for the launch of the Northern Precinct at Parklane Residences with 1 and 2 storey detached homes and Semi-Ds in the

master-plan.

Bandar Baru Sri Klebang is a freehold, 650-acre mixed township development which incorporates detached homes, semi-detached homes, link homes and shop lots amidst lush gardens and landscaped parks. Sitting on a former rubber estate plantation, Sri Klebang is expected to have a total population of 35,000 residents upon completion in 8-10 years' time.

The show homes at Bandar Baru Sri Klebang are open daily from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. on weekends. For further information, call 012-500 8018 or 019-513 3315, or visit their website at www.sriklebang.com.my.

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IPOH IN BRIEF

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LAUNCHED: MALAYSIA DONGGUAN ASSOCIATION

Close clan relationship results in formalized international association



Malaysia Dongguan Association seated centre Angela Jiang on her left Kong Kok Ken

A luncheon ceremony to install the Inaugural Committee of the Malaysia Dongguan Association was held at Lee How Fook restaurant last month. Present at the lunch were the Director of Overseas Chinese Affairs Bureau, Dongguan, China, Ms Angela Jiang and its deputy Director Mr Guoliang Chen.

Dongguan, a prefecture-level city in central Guangdong Province, China, is often referred to as the 'Factory for the World' as it has over 15,000 foreign factories operating there. Its connection to Ipoh goes back generations with a substantial number of residents from Ipoh having their origins from Dongguan and clan relations have been maintained for generations through the local Tong-Onn Association. This link was formalised ten years ago with the holding of the World Tong-Onn Conference at the Syuen Hotel Ipoh. Since then, to strengthen the relationship, annual 'Lychee Trips' were organised for Ipoh residents to visit Dongguan.

The Malaysia Dongguan Association was formally approved by ROS in April 2009 with the purpose to attract younger clan members' involvement with the community through cultural, trade and investment opportunities. In November 2009 the association participated in the Chinese Youth Summit held at Dongguan China.

The inaugural committee comprises of 4 advisers and 9 committee members and its initial goal is commerce based. Its President Mr Kong Kok Ken in his address said initially the committee had formed three

KTMB'S COMMITMENT TO MBI



Mayor Roshidi visited the Ipoh railway station recently and was taken on board Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad's (KTMB) newly acquired electric train from South Korea. A unit was in the station as part of KTMB's exposition. Accompanying the mayor was Ahmad Shamsuddin Md Rashid, KTMB Northern Regional Manager. Roshidi was briefed on the operations of the electric train service (ETS) between Ipoh-KL-Seremban which is scheduled to start in April. Travelling time from Ipoh to KL will be significantly reduced by almost 40 per cent to one hour 55 minutes. The introduction of ETS will encourage visitors, keen on savouring the beautiful sights in Kinta Valley, to come to Ipoh. "KTMB will complement MBI in promoting Perak to in-bound tourists and in the process help improve the local economy", said Roshidi. The double tracking project between Rawang and Ipoh was completed on December 31, 2007. Works on the Ipoh-Padang Besar stretch, estimated at RM12.5 billion, are on-going and are expected to be completed by 2013, as planned.

FZB

sub-groups. The first sub-group would focus on IT and publicity development and would set up its website to provide information on cultural happenings and business opportunities in Malaysia. Another sub-group will focus on exploring business opportunities between Malaysia and Dongguan while the third group will provide assistance to the needy regardless of origin and race.

During the ceremony a cheque of RM125,000 was presented to the Association by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Bureau, another gesture of the strong bond between the home country and its overseas 'resident' community.

JAG

VETERAN FOOTBALL CARNIVAL



Club Laila Rawas from Kota Baru emerged champion in the 6th Ipoh City Veteran Football Carnival held at the Ipoh Padang recently. The runner-up was Majlis Perbandaran Kajang B. Invitations were sent to 145 local authorities and clubs to participate in the tournament, but only 30 responded.

According to the deputy organising chairman Zulkifli Jaafar Sidek, all the participants this year were from within the country unlike last year when teams from South Thailand had participated. Among the newcomers to the tournament were Grace Homecare and Perak Chinese Recreation Club (PCRC - pic).

CLASSIFIEDS

THE READING ROOM is holding Learn to Read e-classes, *Communicating in English* e-classes and *Writing Skills N Listening in English* e-classes for ages 6-11, 11-14, 14-18 and 18+ at: No. 8B Lorong Gurap, Taman Sin Lok, Off Jalan Kuala Kangsar, 30010 Ipoh.

Learn to Read e-classes are suitable for children and teens. The classes will be on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (except public holidays) from 7.30-9.00 p.m. Fees are RM200 per month and RM20 for registration.

Communicating in English e-classes and *Writing N Listening Skills in English* e-classes will be conducted every Saturday and Sunday from 4.00-5.30 p.m. for 6 to 12 year olds and 7.30- 9.00 p.m. for 13 to 18+ year olds. Fees are RM150 per month and RM20 for registration.

Parents' e-classes (Parents Resources - Learn 'Word-Best Solutions' To Parenting Challenges) are also available.

All classes start February 1. Call **The Reading Room** team at **017-5790575** or email: gmyreadingroom@gmail.com or visit <http://www.myreadingroom.spruz.com> for more details.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

RESOLUTE TAIBAH EATS YAM

Imagine having boiled coco yam and salted fish for breakfast, lunch and dinner daily! Not a meal palatable to many. That is what 66-year-old Taibah Shahudin eats for as long as she can remember. Ipoh Echo traced this gritty grandmother to her run-down house in Kampong Rapat recently.

Alerted by villagers of a destitute woman and her mentally challenged son living in a dilapidated house, we found Taibah after a short walk through a narrow kampong path guided by one eager youngster.

Taibah had sought psychiatric treatment at Hospital Bahagia in Tanjong Rambutan once. She was mentally and physically abused by her



son-in-law and suffered a serious nervous breakdown as a result. Her son, Zawil Azhar, too, suffers from depression and was treated

at the same hospital. Although discharged, Zawil has not fully recovered and requires constant attention. Taibah offers what little comfort she can to her ailing son. She gets financial aid from the state welfare services department but her youngest son, who is unemployed, steals it from her.

Taibah's problem does not end there. Her abusive son-in-law would take all edible items donated to her by well-wishers. She considers her misfortunes as fate and surrenders herself to the Almighty. "Let them take my money

and food. My children need to be fed. Allah is my Saviour", she remarked when asked.

The unattended back portion of her house, of late, has turned into a den for drug addicts. The misfits would congregate at her house to have their daily fix. "They even pinched the food I cooked", she lamented. There was electricity supply in her house once but her unwelcomed visitors had stolen the wires.

Baitumal has built Taibah a house under its hardcore-poor programme. But she is reluctant to move into her new home as she prefers to live in her present house, which belongs to her late grandmother. She plans to give the house to her youngest son as he needs it more than her.

"I don't expect much from my children. For their sake, I'm prepared to eat yam", she said while pointing to the yam patch nearby. Tears flowed freely down her cheeks.

Taibah is among the many lost souls in Ipoh who require our assistance to see her through. Those wishing to help can call Puan Ehsan at 05-3127866 and 016-5279759 or Puan Imah at 013-4180116 for details.

RMF

72ND KINTA TROOP 41ST ANNIVERSARY CAMPFIRE

Four hundred scouts and girl guides throughout Perak attended the 41st Anniversary Camp Fire in Ipoh recently.

It was organised by the 72nd Kinta Scout Troop of SMJK Yuk Choy with a theme 'Myth of the Abyss Treasure'. The chairman of SMJK Yuk Choy's board of directors, Leong Foh Sen, officiated at the opening. He called on the participants to interact and cultivate a "spirit of 1Malaysia".

The participants took part in various competitions, such as Marching Competition, Modern Cooking Competition, Backwood's Man Competition, Mini Gadget Competition, Dance Competition, Sketch Competition, Banner Competition, Scarf Design Competition and Fancy Dress Competition.

The overall champion in the competition went to Ipoh 39th Kinta Troop of the SMJK Sam Tet; the second place to 49th Kinta Troop of the SMJK Poi Lam, Ipoh; and the third place to 7th Taiping Troop of SMJK Hua Lian, Taiping.

Among the visitors was the Minister of Finance II, Dato' Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah, who admired the structure built by the scouts which resembled 'The Sphinx' in Egypt. Dato' Seri Ahmad, who was a scout during his school days in St Michael Institution, hopes that more such activities will be organised by the school to produce all-rounded students.

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ONLINE POLL ON DREDGE



Is the last tin dredge at Tanjung Taulang, a heritage of the tin mining industry or just a derelict? If it is a heritage, do we have to preserve it?

Ipoh Echo wishes to hear from the residents of the Kinta Valley, who are the best, in this case, to judge on the issue as they are the people of the once richest tin mining region in the world.

An online poll is being carried out to ascertain how many people are in favour of the preservation of the tin dredge and how many against, through our website: <http://www.ipohecho.com.my>.

Please hit on **Yes** if you are in favour of preserving the heritage, if not on **No**.

UPGRADED PAVEMENT ALONG JALAN S.P. SEENIVASAGAM



The pavement along Jalan S.P. Seenivasagam beside Ipoh Padang and opposite St Michael Institution consisted of rectangular concrete slabs placed across the drain. The slabs were not level; there were gaps in between and posed not only a tripping hazard but was downright dangerous.

However, Ipoh City Council recently replaced the slabs with standard inter-locking bricks and the slopes leading to the padang from the road are gradual. These make the pavement user-friendly to senior citizens, women and children who do not have to climb onto the elevated pavement. The city council should adopt this style for all pavements around the city.

A. JEYARAJ

IS CHIVALRY DEAD?

THUMBS DOWN



This incident occurred at the Meru Golf Club's gym. Three treadmills are placed right next to one another. On two of them, two men were chatting away as they jogged. On the third was a young woman struggling with her daily dose of cardiovascular exercise. Suddenly a loud thud was heard as the young woman fell to the floor. A concerned elderly lady who was in one corner, doing her daily stretching routine, rushed to help the young woman. Fortunately the young woman was not hurt, suffering only a bruised ego.

During the fall and afterwards when the elderly lady went to help the young woman, neither of the men on the treadmills even bothered to turn their heads, offered to help or even express concern!

The fact that the two men are Chinese, the young woman Indian and the elderly lady, Malay, begs a question from Ipoh Echo: Would the men have stopped and helped if the young woman was Chinese? Or is the age of chivalry well and truly dead, replaced by a callousness that can only be described as despicable.

SFCK

COMMUNITY NEWS

POLICE DIALOGUE WITH RESIDENTS OF LIM GARDEN



Turn-out by residents at dialogue sessions with the police on security problems in the city have been disappointing. A representative from the central police station, Chief Inspector N.S. Rames, said the response was poor at the various dialogue sessions he had with residents' associations.

He was responding to the speech by Shafruddin Nasution, chairman of Rukun Tetangga Lim Garden, who had expressed disappointment with the poor attendance. Rames said the residents should realise that the dialogue sessions were held to give them the opportunity to discuss security problems in their areas with police. The purpose of the meeting was also to foster good understanding between the

police and the public.

He added that the effectiveness of the police depends on the co-operation of the public. The police patrol housing estates regularly, however the residents should also inform the police if they see any suspicious activities in their area so that patrol cars could be sent to the vicinity immediately.

Corporal Noraini bt Abdulla from the Rakan Cop Unit explained the concept of Rakan Cop. Residents, who were registered as members of Rakan Cop, could send SMS of any suspicious activities free of charge and their identity would be kept anonymous.

The residents informed the meeting that common crimes in the area are snatch theft, house

breaking and stealing of water meters and metallic items. They also claimed that suspicious and unruly characters were sitting in the bus stop and parks and strangers on motor bikes and bicycles circle the area frequently.

Rames replied that the police could not simply arrest people for sitting at the bus stop, public parks or using public roads for no apparent reason. Police could only arrest them if they violated the law.

The residents' requested that since there is a school in the area a Police Beat Base or Mobile Police Unit be set up. Rames said occasionally Police Beat Base would operate near the school and advised the residents to inform the police if they were away on vacation so that their houses could be patrolled frequently.

AJ

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MY SAY
by
STEVE DARBY

A FRUSTRATING WAIT

After 18 months of waiting, Perak FA finally paid its coaches and players and this was made possible only after intervention by FAM. Perak would be disallowed from participating in the Super League if the association failed to honour its commitments to players and coaches.

It has been a very frustrating period when we saw a whole new squad of players and staff being paid for the 2009 season whilst others were owed money. What was more frustrating was that Perak FA did have the money as it owns lands and properties which could be converted into cash.

I took my case to FIFA and sought legal options with evidence supported by documents. It was a sad situation as I had two and a half great seasons with the association serving three excellent Presidents (Regent, Dato' Seri Zahid Hamidi and Dato' Mahiyuddin). All were honourable gentlemen who supported the players fully including FAM General Secretary, Dato' Azuddin, who helped us retrieve our wages.

Empty Promises

The situation changed

when there was a change in the state government. What was most baffling were the promises made by Anuar Hashim, who later became Secretary of Perak FA that we would be paid in full. They were empty promises. I know some of the foreign players have also taken their case to FIFA and I am sure the new Players Association will be acting on the local players behalf. This could be a great test case for them. The players played unpaid for three months while reaching the quarter finals of the AFC Cup – the furthest a Malaysian team had ever gone.

Gone Shopping!

We were desperate to find the funds to travel to Lebanon and eventually the air fares were found. But a travelling party of six officials from the PR Government came along and spent most of the time shopping! They certainly didn't contribute to the football whilst there. We only took 15 players and four staff to ensure that costs were at a minimum.

The then MB was preaching about values yet they were letting poor kampung boys go unpaid. I had to pay some of the young players myself. Dato' Mahiyuddin and team captain, Ahmad Shahrul, were

helping the others.

Inherited Debts

Under the presidency of Dato' Seri Zahid Hamidi and Dato' Mahiyuddin, we were breaking even and were making a profit on the AFC Cup. The inherited debts from previous administrations were the primary cause of the problem. It certainly did not help when we had people siphoning off income at the gates.

Squad Destabilised

Another disappointing aspect was the appointment of a new coach to replace me whilst we were still playing. Karathu and Raja Azlan Shah, however, denied being appointed but secretly recruited new players while telling the regular players that they would be axed the following season. It had a destabilising effect on the squad. This extremely unprofessional behaviour ultimately backfired when almost all of the squad left. I was leaving regardless as I could not work with the new management. So, why be deceitful?

Perhaps it is time the Johor FC model be emulated as they seem to be the ideal professional model – steady development in a secure economic environment.

CREATING AWARENESS: WUSHU FEDERATION OF PERAK

SPORT



Wushu swordplay

The Wushu Federation of Perak (WFP) recently held its 31st Anniversary Dinner at the Florex Restaurant. The purpose of the grand dinner was to raise funds for its activities to promote Wushu as a sport.

The WFP was formed in 1978, but only in 2008 Wushu was categorised as a core development sport on par with other sports like badminton by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. With the recognition by the government, Wushu is now included as a regular school sport event (MSSM).

Wushu is the martial art of China like what Tae Kwon Do is to Korea and Karate to Japan.

In 2008 during the Beijing Olympic Games, Wushu, which is not a sport recognised by the International Olympic Council, was nonetheless allowed to be held alongside the games.

Malaysian Wushu in 2009 was a windfall year for the sport.

At the 10th World Wushu Championships



Committee members of Wushu Federation of Perak cutting the anniversary cake. WFP President Tun Lim Keng Yaik is in orange shirt

held in Canada last October, the Malaysian team took home two gold, one silver and five bronze medals, an outstanding achievement. Additionally, a Perak Wushu practitioner, Lee Yang was also crowned the World Champion for Taiji Quan.

It was a similar showing at the recent SEA games held in Laos last month whereby Wushu contributed three gold, one silver and three bronze medals to the country's overall medal tally.

The Guest-of-Honour at the dinner was Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik, the President of WFP and Deputy Chairman of the International Wushu Federation.

During the dinner there was a total of 22 Wushu demonstrations ranging from QiQong,

Taiji Quan, Taiji Boxing to Taiji Swordplay.

As per tradition, even the committee members provided a demonstration. All of the demonstrations that night were energy packed and exciting.

The sport of Wushu is suitable for all ages. With the recognition of the sport by the government, it is hoped that more practitioners and students will be attracted to it.

The next international Wushu event will take place during the Asian Games in November this year in Guangzhou, China. Without a doubt the Wushu Federation of Malaysia is anticipating to bring home some more gold medals and the Wushu Federation of Perak is hoping its members will bring them.

JAG

HELP EXTENDS ACROSS THE STRAITS OF MALACCA

Pantai Hospital Ipoh and MBI join forces to help girl with cleft lip and palate

Like any seven-year-old girl, Puji Wathi, would dream to be normal and beautiful when she comes of age. But she was born with a cleft lip and cleft palate that gives her a nasal voice and chokes when she eats and drinks. She has to be careful because whatever she consumes travel from the palate to the nose.

Due to this condition she is malnourished and underweight for her age. Puja is bright but an introvert as her classmates in the school in Medan often make fun of her.

All these are in the past now. She successfully underwent corrective surgery at the Pantai Hospital Ipoh last month and on Christmas day after all the stitches were removed she returned home – ecstatic that her dream could come true. Thanks to those who care.

Puja is the youngest of three siblings. Her elder brother is 10 years old and her sister is 9. Her father, Nyana Silan, 39, is a Hindu priest while her mother is a housewife. They can not afford the operation for Puja because of their low income. A few years ago the Tzu Chi Association in Medan came forward to help and she was able to undergo the first phase of the operation on her upper lip. However, funds were insufficient to



Puja – beautiful & confident – a wish come true

carry out the full repair. Puja needs to undergo further operations to repair her lower lip and palate.

Her case was brought to the attention of Pantai Hospital Ipoh (PHI) and Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh during their official visit to Medan to promote medical tourism and to enhance social and economic ties as well as to share experience, expertise and organise joint programmes.

So her plight was brought across the Straits of Malacca and a meeting was held to discuss how to help Puja. Ipoh Mayor Datuk Roshidi Hashim 'adopted' Puja and is looking into her immediate needs while Pantai Hospital Ipoh undertook to perform the corrective surgery that Puja requires as well as assist in the family's travel arrangements to Ipoh.

Fortunately for Puja, Pantai Hospital Ipoh recently opened their Aesthetic and Reconstructive Surgical unit under the capable leadership of Dr Leow Aik Meng, PHI Resident Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon, and all facilities were in place for the delicate surgery to be carried out. The Unit not only handles reconstructive surgical cases such as Puja's but is offering other procedures

such as body contouring, face lifts and other cosmetic rejuvenation.

Puja, her parents and Dr Lalitha (the doctor who treated Puja in Medan) were given a grand welcome at the airport when they arrived last month to receive treatment. They were warmly received by State Health, Local government, Consumer Environment, Transport & Non Islamic Affairs Committee Chairman Datuk Dr Mah Hang Soon, Mayor Datuk Roshidi Hashim, Chief Executive Officer Pantai Hospital Ipoh (PHI) Dr Dilshaad Ali, and members of the hospital medical team. Puja was assessed and immediately underwent the corrective surgery.

CEO Dr Dilshaad said, "It is always PHI's commitment to give back and reach out to the community. Corporate Social Responsibility is one of the main pillars under PHI and the Pantai Group which advocates being socially responsible as a healthcare provider. Puja's operation is part of the hospital's initiatives under its Caring From The Heart Programme".



Official handover – Datuk Mah handing Puja to Dr Dilshaad (right)



PHI's new plastic surgical centre