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BRIGHTENING UP OUR LITTLE INDIA



Little India, where the early immigrants from India congregated and did their thriving businesses at a time when tin mining emerged as an important industry in the Kinta Valley, is being given a major facelift. It is to be completed before Merdeka Day on August 31. The area being spruced up under a project financed by the Federal Government covers from the entrance of Jalan Leong Boon Swee into Jalan Lahat and carrying on into Jalan Sultan Yussuf (Belfield Street) up till the intersection with Jalan Sultan Iskandar Shah. The idea to give a facelift was mooted when the Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin visited the area last year and approved a RM1.5 million grant for the facelift. Plans for the facelift was drawn up by Ipoh City Council and presented to the residents in the area at a dialogue held last month to explain the changes about to be undertaken and to get their approval.

....Continued on page 2

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HIGH POTENTIAL FOR HERITAGE TOURIST ENCLAVE

• By JAMES GOUGH



K.R. Pandian at work

Works started immediately after obtaining approval from the residents. Among the changes to be made are replacing the interlocking bricks of the present pavements, laying interlocking pavers with motifs characteristic of Little India on the roads, installing decorative lamps and landscaping of the entire stretch. An arch will also be erected at the Dataran Little India (the small square in the centre of the area).

The existing memorial fountain will be demolished and in its place a stage will be constructed. A police pondok will also be located there to provide security.

Original Colours

Meanwhile the entire 12 blocks of shop-houses within Little India will be painted with its original colours once all the rest of the sprucing up work has been completed.

According to city council's engineer Encik Khairul Anuar Hj Lodin the original colours were identified by a team from the Heritage Department (Badan Warisan) which had scanned the buildings to determine the original colours.

Little India was, as the name implies, the centre for the large Indian community in the city. While this may have been the

case in the past, today the ethnic Tamils from South India no longer stay solely segregated in one place. Most of them, particularly the younger generation, are now scattered all over the city.

The area began to develop at the turn of the last century as tin ore was being discovered in the Kinta Valley in large quantities. Where others, including Chinese immigrants, moved in to work in the tin mines, the Indians moved in to do business, in particular, that of money lending.

Chettians Move In

The majority of them were Nattukkottai Chettians from South India. They came as free people, having paid their own passage, unlike those brought into the country to work in the plantation and construction sectors who were bound by contract.

They brought along their trusted book-keepers and assistants to set up their money lending business. Their simple 'business offices', sparsely furnished, consisting largely of a platformed hall with small tables and a large steel safe, were along Jalan Lahat and Jalan Sultan Yussuf.

Eventually more Indians began to move in as the Thendayuthapani Temple just a stone's

throw away, became their beacon. The population in the area soon grew to 65 per cent Indian and 35 per cent Chinese.

As a result, the area stretching from Jalan Sultan Yussuf to Jalan Lahat became dominated commercially by Tamils.



Owner Ashok Singh of Ashok Fashion

Role in Tin Mining

The Chettiar's contributions towards the economic development of Perak and the country as a whole have been rarely mentioned or publicised.

A descendant of this community is Mr M. Ramanathan, whose father was a Chettiar and used to live at their *kedangi* (a Chettiar's house), located at 68 Jalan Sultan Yussuf.

"Although the role played by the Chettians was only lending out money, they had in doing so, helped small tin mines to survive", explained

Ramanathan.

"They built their money-lending business through mutual trust and provided the finance to the Chinese miners with just a signature on a promissory note."

He said since many of the small Chinese miners

could not get loans from the Colonial banks to start their mines, they turned to the Chettians for help.

However interest charged on the unsecured loan was "18% PA at the most though most times it was 12%" stated Ramanathan when asked if the interest per annum could be 60%.

Ramanathan recalls that at the time when he was growing up in the 50s there were around 50-60 Chettians operating there. After work they would congregate at the square to catch up with news of home and events of the day. Their daily work clothes were the white *dhoti* and in the evening before dinner the square became a sea of white.

Meals for Chettians were taken at a common kitchen located behind 122 Jalan Sultan Yussuf, which had a cook imported

from India or from Krishna Bawan on Lahat Road which had an all vegetarian menu.

Exodus to India

The exodus of the Chettians returning to India first occurred in 1957 when Malaya obtained its Independence from the British. However that was minor when compared to the exodus after the riots of 1969 when a concerted effort was made to register all residents living in the country.

"Most of the Chettians took their money and went home. Those that stayed behind were those who were educated and saw a future for themselves", added Ramanathan.

In the early seventies the Chinese businesses gradually moved into the community. However 20 years on after the collapse of the tin industry in the mid 80s the Chinese businesses too have been gradually moving out of the community and Indian entrepreneurs slowly moving back in.

The manager of one of the few Chettians still located in Little India, Mr. K.R. Pandian said his father came from India and worked as an assistant to a Chettiar.

Unlike the Chettians of early days, Pandian does not stay at the *kedangi* but in a house in First Garden. His current customers come from all races who are referred as being trustworthy.

Patronised By All

Little India is now a most colourful neighbourhood, enjoying the patronage of

people of all races who wish to eat or buy something specific to Indian culture. The options range from glittering jewellery and clothing, utensils and spices. Some of the best authentic Indian restaurants are also found here.

There are 15 goldsmiths located in Little India, where customers from all over Perak would come to make their selection especially for weddings.

Business in the area is usual, except during Deepavali and Thaipusam when it will be bursting with activities, as makeshift stalls are erected along the roads causing many traffic congestions.

Heritage Tourist Attraction

Little India has already been identified earlier in city council's 2020 draft programme of administrative zones done with the Town and Country Planning Department, as being part of a cluster of Historical and Heritage Zones within the city that had the potential as a Heritage Tourist Attraction.

The upgrading of Little India is timely. Early in May, State chairman for Tourism Dato' Hamidah Osman did a walk through Panglima Lane and indicated the state's plan to preserve the location as a Heritage enclave.

Hence the linking of Little India and Panglima Core (the area stretching from the Railway Station to Panglima Lane) could be another chapter for a heritage walk and possibly another Heritage Map.

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Newsvendor (morning), Opposite Simee Market.

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Labrooy Road:

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Meru:

Perak Academy, 28 Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah.

New Town:

Fitness Junction, 2 Jalan Kelab Golf.

Tiger Lane:

P.N. Book Centre, 7 Jalan Dato Ahmad Yunus.

Golf Club Road:

SITI AWAN

• by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

Illegal Assembly

The fate of the 13 protesters charged for illegal assembly outside the Ubaidah Mosque, Kuala Kangsar on Friday, February 6, 2009, continues to be deliberated at the Kuala Kangsar Sessions Court. The sittings on April and May recorded some startling revelations which caught both the prosecuting and defence teams flat-footed.

Prosecution witness, Lance Corporal Hamzah, a traffic policeman on duty at the scene of the incident under cross-examination by defence counsel Augustine Anthony, admitted that he had only a vague recollection of the suspect, Hj Mohd Nazeer Hameed, 54, the person alleged to have lain on the road blocking the path of the royal motorcade. Mohd Nazeer was just metres away from him. "I told him to wake up and make way for the Raja Muda's limousine. He stood up and moved to the side", said Hamzah. When asked whether an identification parade was made. He replied in the negative. "I identified him

from still photos and video recordings shown to me by my superiors."

Mohd Nazeer was arrested four days after the incident. He was picked by the police at his house in Pantai Remis and was remanded in custody at the Kuala Kangsar police station. Three of the 12 were apprehended on the day of the incident while the others on different dates.

Cross Examination

Sergeant Saidi, another prosecution witness, confirmed what Corporal Hamzah had said. He too admitted to identifying Mohd Nazeer from still photos and video clips.

Inspector Ashraff acknowledged that a piece of rock, the size of a coconut, was used as a missile by the protesters to destroy public properties. He could not, however, shed any light as to the origin and purpose of rock other than to identify the rock as the one used. He did nothing, although he was the appointed Investigating Officer. Ashraff admitted this in court.

Inspector Saiful, the



officer in-charge of the PORU (Public Order Riot Unit), on duty to quell the illegal assembly said that ample warning was given to the protestors. He insisted that his warnings were audible since they were made atop a police vehicle and through a loudhailer. But when a video clipping of the incident was played his voice could barely be heard. This was pointed out to him by lawyer Augustine and he eventually agreed blaming it on the chaotic situation and noises coming from other sources.

In an earlier hearing, a member of the Federal Reserve Unit (FRU), while

under cross-examination, revealed that the order to fire tear gas came from the former Deputy Chief Police Office of Perak, SAC 1 Dato' Hadi Ho, himself. "He ordered us to fire in all directions." The firing was not aimed at any particular targets. "We fired at will," he said.

Glaring Flaws

The defence lawyer and the DPP went head-on several times while cross examining the witnesses. Augustine objected to Julia's line of questions, which he claimed would lead to the type of answers she had anticipated. The judge accepted Augustine's reasoning and cautioned Julia who would continue to do the same with subsequent witnesses. The constant bickering between the two goes to show how keen the contest

is with the opposing parties. It also contributed to the delay which is further compounded by "absent" and "missing" witnesses.

There are some glaring flaws in procedures and how the whole episode was handled by the Police. However, it is prejudicial to make any conclusion at this juncture, as it is *sub judice*.

Uncertainty

The case has dragged on for over a year and the cost to the concerned individuals is tremendous. Most do not hold a permanent job. It is no exaggeration to say that the uncertainty is beginning to affect them emotionally.

To date 34 prosecu-

tion witnesses have been cross-examined. Latest in the witness stand is the arresting team consisting of those who apprehended the defendants on and after the commission of the crime.

The 13 are being defended by Augustine Anthony and Hj Aminuddin and their team of lawyers. DPP Julia Ibrahim heads the prosecuting team while Puan Norsalha Dato' Hamzah presides. The accused are charged under Section 145 of the Penal Code and Section 27 of Police Act 1967 for illegal assembly.

The legal wrangling may drag on till June or July until a judgment is passed by the court.

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WHAT IF TOMORROW NEVER COMES?

• by Peter Lee

In our daily lives most of us begin the day by preparing our children to be sent either to our parents or nannies to be looked after if they are still infants and older children would be sent to nurseries, kindergarten or schools before we head to work. After work, we would fetch them back to let them have their bath and meal. Then it's off to tuition to ensure that they keep up in school. Thus most parents are like chauffeurs. I believe all parents don't mind it for the love of their children and they will sacrifice their time and spend whatever they can afford to give the best for their children to be successful later on. Before the end of the day, all parents would again have to prepare for the next day with the same kind of routine. It is a common routine that most of us face and many times we are so caught up in this that we forget to pause and ask ourselves what will happen to our family if we are no longer around the next day. Or another way of saying it is: what if tomorrow never comes?

The daily routine which I have mentioned would not stop for our children and spouse even though we are no longer around. They still have to carry on with their lives without you. So one of the most important things you have to do is to prepare a will for your family quickly so that they are well provided for in your absence. In my practice as an Estate Planner, many people tell me that they have to "sort out" their time to do their will or trust and very often they will procrastinate for months before they are ready to talk about it. From my experience, it only takes about 30-45 minutes only to explain the importance of having a will, the problems without it and suggestions as to the distribution of the assets to their loved ones. There will be a need to spend a longer time to discuss customized distribution to your loved ones after listening to your concerns of each intended beneficiary to be named in the will. Careful thought is to be given with regards to the distribution of the assets to the beneficiaries as to whether any conditions are to be met before the beneficiary will be entitled and whether any testamentary trust is to be created for the minor beneficiaries and dependents.

One of the points I would like to highlight which I have mentioned again and again in my previous articles is to choose the right executors and guardian (if you have minor children) for your family before you start willing away your assets to your loved ones. The appointed executor will be managing the assets after the Grant of Probate is obtained and the executor is to distribute the assets according to your will. Thereafter, once your estate is cleared of any liabilities, the executor will distribute the remaining assets to your beneficiaries according to your will. An excellent alternative to appoint individual executors is to appoint a trust company like Rockwills Trustee Bhd, which provides expertise, impartiality, professionalism and perpetual existence.

Before I sign off, I would like to take this opportunity to wish myself and all fathers a very Happy Father's Day.

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 excelsec@streamyx.com.



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THINKING ALOUD

THE PRICE OF PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT

All men make mistakes, but only wise men learn from their mistakes.
~Winston Churchill

● By Mariam Mokhtar

At one time, Ipoh imported the most Mercedes Benz cars and French brandy in the whole world. That was during the rubber and tin era. Now we are in the doldrums.

But ask any visitor or tourist what they remember about Ipoh and the three oft-repeated things are its food, the architecture of its old buildings and the hills. So, has Ipoh been staring at the solution of its malaise all this time?

Foresight and Vision

The limestone hills and the caves in our Kinta Valley are a potential money spinner. The revenue will yield more than from quarrying or any other development. All it takes is foresight, planning and vision. That is the purpose of education; to replace an empty mind with an open one.

If we involve all Ipohites, then it becomes our collective responsibility. We may need to intro-

duce an activity or project that makes these hills the property of all, and not just for the exclusive use of the rich or the elite.

Quarrying blasts the hills and would be killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. Moreover, it only benefits the quarry operator.

Ipohites will tell you that they never tire of waking up and seeing the beautiful hills in the skyline, shrouded in mists in the early morning.

Compare the hills with the PTTC (Perak Trade and Technology Centre) building in Jelapang, or the Sungai Pari towers in old town.

Which would we prefer to feast our eyes on? High-rises or hills? Which are eye-sores? Which feature is more aesthetically pleasing and good *feng shui*?

Progress in any place is not encapsulated in concrete towers or indis-

criminate building works. London, Prague and Girona are European cities which are progressive but without high-rises.

Progress will accelerate once there is good local governance, with priorities and investment in the right areas. Progress involves interaction and active dialogue with the public for a healthy exchange of ideas. Progress includes having moral and social responsibilities.

Ipoh's Priorities

- Good communication links within the city and from the city to elsewhere.
- Good educational fa-

cilities and institutions to equip our youth with skills.

- Increased provision of health/medical facilities.
- Good local housing with proper drainage and community facilities.
- A visible police force.
- Green lungs for rest and recreation.
- Maintenance of public facilities and infrastructure.
- Clean river and river-bank.
- Preservation of our cultural heritage – old buildings.
- Incentives for small shops and businesses.
- More local libraries/art exhibition centres.
- More outlets/sporting complexes within a housing area for our youth (even if a small place for basketball or futsal or remote controlled car races).
- Facilities for enjoyment of the elderly.
- Regular dialogues with councillors and politicians.
- Ipoh can claim to be a developed society when the normal people –

hard-working middle and working classes, get to share in the riches created.

- A developed society is defined not only by what it creates, but by what it refuses to destroy.

Let's Remember

But just remember the following:

Only when the last tree has been cut down,

Only when the last outcrop has been blasted

Only when the last view of the hill has been obliterated

Only when you live in the shadow of a high-rise and cannot see the sun

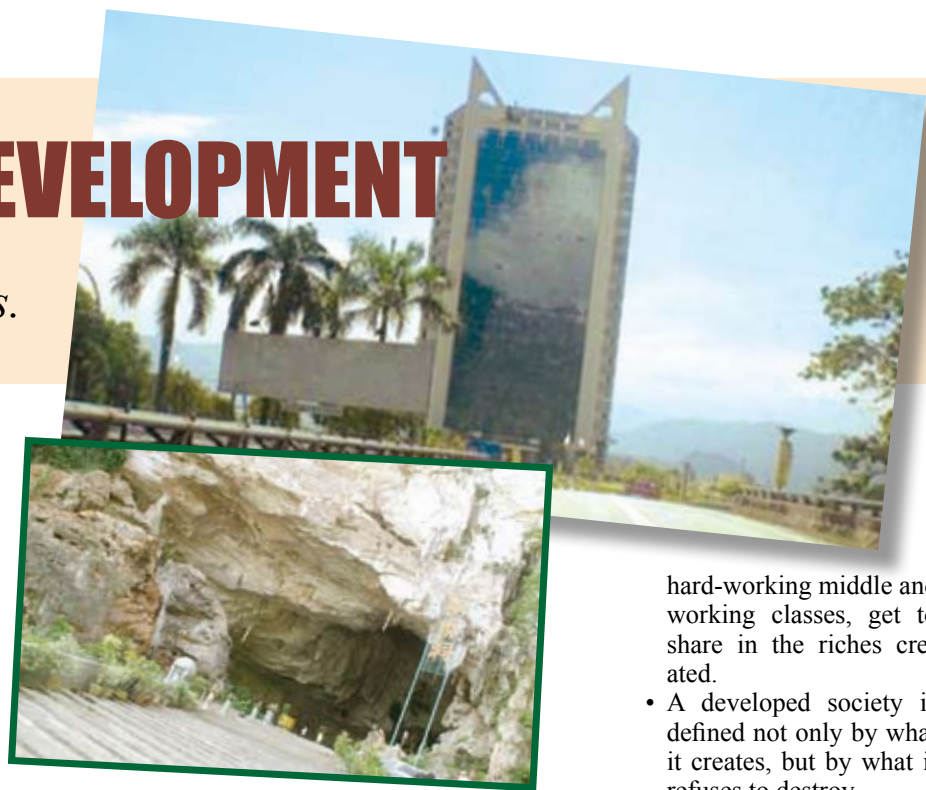
Only when the last drop is unfit for drinking

Only when the last fish has been caught,
....Only then will you find that money cannot be eaten.

Sadly, Malaysians do not passionately believe in preserving all that is good and pure about our environment, including our precious hills.

We realise that only the superior man seeks what is right; the inferior one, what is profitable. But that's human nature. Nobody does anything until it's too late.

One day, we might tell our grandchildren, "The good Earth – we could have saved it, but we were too damn cheap and lazy".





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KPJ IPOH VISITS SPASTIC CHILDREN'S HOME



KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital's staff and family members visited Sekolah Semangat Maju Ipoh Spastic children's home. This school houses approximately 40 children aged between 7 to 36 years old. Several games like musical chairs and poison ball were held to cheer up the children. KPJ Ipoh's nurses also entertained the children with a poco-poco dance performance. A simple cake cutting ceremony was held and the children were treated with snacks and refreshments. The programme ended with Chief Nursing Officer, Ms Phoo Siew Kwok and Nurses Day Chairman Sr Rosilah Jumal handing over food items and goody bags to the children.

MUSINGS ON FOOD

SEEFOON GETS STEAMED UP
NEAR THE AIRPORT

seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

I never cease to be amazed at the myriad number of great eating places waiting to be discovered around Ipoh. Having explored and tasted at many of the 'Lo Chiew Pai' or 'old signboards' and written about them, I am now exploring some of the relatively new eateries mostly set up by sous chefs or junior chefs from some of our venerable 'top' Chinese restaurants; chefs with ambition and who feel they have learnt all there is to learn and are ready to take on the challenge of establishing their own.

Chef Chan Soon Fatt is one of these. He set up Li Garden restaurant over a year ago and has not looked back since. Situated in a corner coffee shop on the left after the traffic light for turn-off to the airport, having passed the Jalan Gopeng flyover, travelling on Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah Selatan towards Pasir Pinji, the name of Li Garden emblazoned in bright lights across the front beckons.

Man with Mission

Chef Chan is a man with a mission. He'll go out of his way to cater

to your taste buds if you give him at least one day's notice. On my first visit there, again introduced by my foodie-around-town friend Ginla Chew, we were treated to a specially ordered Fish Head steamboat which Chef Chan had spared no efforts in making absolutely scrumptious.

Chef Chan had gone to the market in the morning to find the freshest fish head of the day. Depending on the local availability, the find that day was a Garoupa head which he had cut in pieces to make the soup. The steamboat was a sumptuous affair. Arriving on a portable burner, it bubbled away as our group of ten helped ourselves to home-made bean curd and vegetables, Fish balls, Fish lips (in reality shark's skin – not to be mistaken for sharksfin) and what I thought was Fish Maw but which turned out to be pigs tendons, pounded flat and deep fried. The soup base was flavoured by *Kam Wa Fo Tui* (a particular type of Chinese ham) and *Tso Hau Yu* (a type of dried flounder most probably a sole), a generous addition which lent to the stock a lingering scent and the most 'umami' taste. RM100 enough for 10 pax.

As this was the first course to be presented, we were already seated when the rest of

the dishes came in rapid succession. Next on the menu was the *Wu Tso Kai*, (a special breed known as 'whiskered chicken') half portion steamed and served in bamboo basket. This was tender, juicy and cooked to the right degree of done-ness. RM40 for whole chicken.

This was followed by the whole Lamb leg, steamed for five hours with herbs and then braised in a velvety sauce with dried bean curd (*Fu Tsok*) and onions RM60; the salted pork knuckle which was tender, succulent and worth a revisit RM15; fresh spinach done my favourite style-in broth with salted and century eggs RM9; and finally just when we thought we couldn't eat another bite, in came the bread wrapped chicken curry – RM25.

Bread Wrapped Curry

I usually avoid this dish when it is served at dinners as the usual curries that come with this dish are bland and boring and the bread, dry, but as I was writing a review, I thought it deserved a taste. Did I ever make a mistake! Not only did I have a nibble (to taste), I ended up gorging myself on both the bread and the chicken curry. The bread, according to Chef Chan, is hand kneaded, steamed and then hand ladled with oil to crisp the outside. The chicken curry was very tasty, with

Malaysian spices (as different from Indian) and surprisingly cooked without coconut milk and yet still tasted creamy.

Returning for More

As there were many more dishes in Chef Chan's repertoire, I made myself a promise to return and savour them which I did a few weeks later. This time I tried their fresh Tilapia which arrived at the table in a claypot, had the oil poured out and simple soya sauce with oodles of scallions poured in while still sizzling. RM26.

Other dishes worthy of note are their fried pork

brisket (*char fah lam*) – great for nibbling with drinks while waiting for others to arrive RM8; lotus root fried with salted eggs (*ham dan leen ngau*) RM8; a great white cabbage that came in a claypot redolent with the taste and smell of salted fish RM6 and for me the *crème de la crème*: their Beef Brisket soup.

I actually woke up the following morning with the lingering memory of its taste: tender chunks of beef brisket and shin that are specially selected for this dish for their lattice of tendons which lend a succulence to the meat that could otherwise become

dry and chewy. This is mixed with pieces of beef tripe, beef tendon, simmered with herbs for hours till tender and served with Chinese celery. RM15.

In fact even as I write this, I am tempted to go back and 'Ta Pao' or bring home, this soup for my supper tonight!

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Slipping Ipoh white coffee while eating a freshly-baked egg tart just seems to go hand-in-hand. When it comes to egg tarts, Ipoh has some of the best. There's nothing more satisfying than biting into the flaky crust of a warm tart and having the creamy egg custard melt in your mouth. Not all egg tarts are created equal and the good ones sell out rapidly. Here are the best ones.



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RECIPE



By MARGARITA LEE

STICKY RICE WITH MANGOES

Ingredients:

- 3 ripe mangoes; cut lengthwise into thick pieces
- 3 cups glutinous rice
- 3 cups coconut milk
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ cup water
- 2 tsp salt
- 4 pandan (Screwpine) leaves



Method:

1. Rinse and drain the glutinous rice. Soak rice in water for 3 to 5 hours.
2. In a double steamer, bring the water to boil, add in 2 pandan leaves.
3. Lay a piece of white thin cloth or banana leaves over the upper steamer.
4. Pour in the glutinous rice.
5. Steam for 10 minutes on high heat. Open the lid of the steamer and stir the glutinous rice. Add in ½ cup of water.
6. Steam for another 10 minutes.

Coconut Sauce:

1. In a sauce pan, add in ¼ cup of water, sugar, salt and pandan leaves.
2. Bring it to boil. Add in coconut milk.
3. Simmer coconut mixture till thick.
4. Use ½ of the coconut mixture to mix into the cooked glutinous rice.
5. Put the glutinous rice and mangoes on a serving dish.
6. Pour coconut sauce as topping.

MY SAY



• By JERRY FRANCIS

A WHOPPING COST TO RELOCATE TIN DREDGE



The 60-year-old "TT5" tin dredge at its present location

Just as I had expressed my fear earlier (IE93) that any plan to relocate the last of the giant tin dredge and preserve it as a heritage of the once renowned tin mining industry in the Kinta Valley will face a whopping bill.

It is now learnt that an estimate prepared by an engineering company to move the dredge to Clearwater Golf Resort, where it is being proposed for relocation, will cost a total of RM30 million. That is to dismantle the 60-year-old dredge at its present location at Batu 5, Jalan Batu Gajah-Tanjung Tualang and reassemble it at the golf resort about 12 km away.

Dismantling vs. Repair on Site

Dismantling the 5,000-ton dredge "TT5" and reassembling it at the new location will cost RM25 million while the cost of preparing the new site for relocating the dredge, transporting the various sections of the dredge, to repair and replace damaged parts, installing safety features, and as well as painting it will cost another RM5 million.

And what about the time it takes to dismantle the dredge and reassemble at the new location? According to mining experts, it will take over two years to complete.

Compared with just leaving the dredge where it is, and to repair and spruce it up, the bill will be less than five per cent of the total cost of relocating.

Having these figures in hand now, will the state chairman of tourism Dato' Hamidah Osman still toy with the idea of relocating the tin dredge? I hope not.

Dato' Hamidah, who was recently asked about the proposed relocation, claimed that she is yet to study the report from the consultant.

Create a Living Monument Instead

Let us assume the RM30 million could be made available, will it be worth spending just on the relocation? Imagine how we can use that amount of money to induce development around the area where the dredge is located.

In fact, there is a lot of land available at the site to turn into a living monument of the tin mining industry and call it "Kinta Tin Mining Village". Replicas of the other mining methods, such as open-cast mine and palong, could be built around it with the dredge as the centrepiece.

Thus, a new tourist resort could be created and bring economic development to the once tin mining region. It will boost the economy of the locals, who could get the opportunities to set up restaurants, souvenirs' shops and other business activities.

I share the views of many others that the dredge is left at its current location and be repaired and spruced up as a unique tourist attraction in the Silver State. It is ideally located along the main road and already has some basic infrastructure constructed by the Kinta

District Council at the cost of RM600,000. There are lighted parking bays, an office building, and a concrete path around the dredge.

I don't think merely exhibiting equipments and photographs will have a desired impact as a heritage of the tin mining industry. It takes an actual relic to have an impact.

Preservation Body Needed

We could learn from abroad how many historical and heritage relics are being successfully preserved and maintained by various non-profit organizations, particularly in Europe.

It would not be a waste of money if we could similarly set up an organisation which is dedicated to preserving the heritage of the tin mining industry, to manage and maintain the dredge. It has to be funded through an annual grant from the federal or state government and donations from various foundations.

Certainly, an entrance fee needs to be charged to meet some of the maintenance cost, but it must not be exorbitant. Presently, the dredge is being looked after by Osborne & Chappel Sdn Bhd, which had spent about RM300,000 on maintenance.

No matter how good a tourist attraction is, it needs to be promoted aggressively to be successful.

I have visited a few well known tourists' attrac-

tions abroad, travelling for hours to the sites, only to realise that we have better attractions back home, the difference being the fact that ours are not promoted as aggressively as theirs.

Make Kinta Valley a Unique Destination

Of course our last tin dredge on its own may not have enough magnetic pull to make the Kinta Valley a tourists' destination, but incorporated with other attractions it could be a unique destination.

A package tour could include visits to the fascinating limestone hills and cave temples around Ipoh, old mining towns such as Papan, Terrapins' hatchery at nearby Bota Kanan, Pasir Salak Historical Complex and the taste of the various gourmet foods, including the Udang Galah (freshwater lobster) at Tanjung Tualang.

Such a tour when aggressively promoted, will certainly bring in a steady flow of local and foreign tourists to this once largest alluvial tin mining region in the world, which at this moment loses out to Kuala Lumpur and Penang in tourist appeal.

Tourists everywhere have enough of skyscrapers, shopping complexes or even beaches and are ripe and ready for some unique experiences. This is where the Kinta Valley needs to offer and create a niche for itself and start to be competitive to other destinations in the country.

ANAK PERAK

IPOH GIRL WINS RESTIGIOUS WOMEN'S HEALTH AWARD



Dr Danielle Wilkins, Women's Health Discipline Coordinator in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, presenting award to Balveena

A fourth-year medical student from Ipoh, Balveena Dhaliwal, won the 2009 RANZCOG (Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists) Women's Health Award.

Balveena, 23, who is in the MBBS programme at Monash University's Sunway campus, was recognised for her clinical excellence.

She obtained the highest mark of any student in the Monash medical curriculum for clinical skills in women's health, as determined by the Observed Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) and in-semester academic grading.

Senior Deputy Dean and Deputy Dean (International) Professor Leon Piterman praised Balveena's achievement and the significance of the award going to a student at Sunway campus.

"Monash in Malaysia is unique in offering the only Bachelor of Medicine / Bachelor of Surgery programme delivered outside Australia or New Zealand that is fully accredited by the Australian Medical Council", Professor Piterman said.

Professor David Healy, head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology based at Monash Medical Centre in Clayton, Australia, expressed his delight at Balveena's performance receiving recognition by RANZCOG, the professional college dedicated to the establishment of a high standard of practice in obstetrics and gynaecology and women's health.

"Balveena has excelled in this area and we are all very proud of her achievement, a first for a student from our Malaysian campus," he added.

A special presentation was held in Melbourne for Faculty friends and colleagues to celebrate Balveena's award, attended by her mother, Mrs Naminder Dhaliwal.

Balveena is the eldest of the three children of Pantai Hospital Ipoh's resident Paediatrician Dr. Kuldeep Dhaliwal. She was born in Ipoh and did her early education in Main Convent. She hopes to be a gynaecologist.

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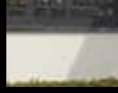
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IPOH IN BRIEF

MEN AGAINST VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN



Wanita UMNO Perak chief, Dato' Rusnah Kassim, said that the intended campaign is a follow-up on the Women Against Violence campaign launched by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development five years ago. Both are aimed at reducing domestic violence nationwide.

Rusnah felt that the first step at realising this is to invite male leaders, especially heads of village action committees, to partake in the campaign. "Men should learn to appreciate women," she insisted.

RN

MALAYALEE LADIES GATHERING FOR MOTHER'S DAY



The Perak Malayalee Association, Ladies Wing gathered for high-tea recently to celebrate Mother's Day. Each mother was welcomed with a flower by Organising Chairperson, Mrs Susila Gopalan. The mothers related their experience in being a successful mother and there was much applause, praise and cheers for them.

Ladies Wing Chairperson, Mrs Sakuntala Rajadurai said the event was aimed at fostering closer ties with the ladies.

CANNED FOOD PRODUCTS FOR CHARITY HOMES

The Ayam Brand Nationwide Community Care Campaign has entered its third year of supporting children, the disabled, single mothers and old folks through contributions of its wide range of healthy and convenient canned food products.

This year, Ayam Brand will contribute its products to 35 charity homes across nine regions in West and East Malaysia, supporting 1,800 people with nutritious meals for a two-month period. Four homes in Perak have been selected to receive support.

The launch in Perak was held recently at The Salvation Army Boys Home Ipoh. Representatives from Spastic Orphanage Home, the Asrama Bintang Rumah Wanita Cacat Infant Jesus Convent and Rumah



Sejahtera were also present to receive products comprising of Ayam Brand sardines, tuna, baked beans, mackerel, processed peas, tomato puree and others – sufficient for nutritious daily meals for the homes over two months.

This yearly campaign is an integral part of Ayam Brand's Corporate Responsibility Programme that has since its inception in 2008 benefited almost 5,000 people from 75 char-

ity organizations by providing them with healthy and convenient meals.

The objective of the Ayam Brand Community Care Campaign 2010 continues to be providing tangible support in the form of its healthy, convenient food products to the underprivileged in local charity homes – including children, the disabled, single mothers and the elderly – as part of the company's commitment to serving

society.

"We have found that support for this campaign among our own people has grown tremendously. Ayam Brand has a strong community service culture, and this campaign lets our people play an active role in helping these charity organizations and at the same time contribute to the society at each regional charity event", said Ms Khoo Wooi Ling, a company representative.

"As Malaysia recovers from the global recession, contributions to charitable organizations are growing but are still not at pre-recession levels. Ayam Brand is glad to be able to continue providing supplies of our products to these homes and their residents", she added.

"Every year we try to increase the number of

recipients in terms of the number of homes and the number of residents. This year we have added five extra homes and approximately 200 people to the programme."

Ms Khoo said that the Ayam Brand Community

Care campaign had been structured so as to reach charities in all parts of Malaysia instead of being focused in the Klang Valley alone so as to ensure that all communities could benefit.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

NEP or NEM?

Call it what you may, either acronym stirs up controversy whenever it is mentioned. In a Perak Academy talk delivered by Dr Lim Teck Ghee recently, he is of the opinion that, on the whole, the NEP has become a time warp and an umbilical cord that holds back the development of the country.

The NEM, or the New Economic Model, recently announced by the Prime Minister to replace the long running NEP, will constitute a paradigm shift from race-based to need-based affirmative action. This purported overhaul of the economic and social system will, in June after some fine-tuning, be the country's 10th Malaysia Plan.

Though the NEM is commendable and an acknowledgement by the Prime Minister that the country needs to sharpen its competitive edge in order to bring it from middle-income to developed status by 2020, will its key implementers toe the line? Will the long-term NEM be just the



new bottle that holds the old NEP? Dr Lim feels that for the plan to succeed in any significant degree, civil society will have to play a critical role in monitoring the NEM. The key implementers of the plan are the ruling government, the policy-makers and the civil service, complemented of course by the business and professional elites and the intelligentsia.

Falling FDIs and competitiveness, compounded by the brain drain and decline in standards of governance, have put Malaysia behind many of its neighbours in the region. Dr Lim stressed that it's time Malaysia comes out of its denial syndrome and take on the decade to acknowledge and curb the nepotism and political pa-

tronage brought on by 40 years of the NEP.

The NEP has seen rapid progress of a once-marginalized Bumiputra community and is a record without any parallel in the world. Therefore the time has come for liberalization and structural reforms and, though a sensitive and delicate task, will bode well for the country. Let not the well-meaning NEM be a case of 'the more things change, the more they stay the same'.

Dr Lim Teck Ghee is a leading political analyst and is the Director of the Centre for Policy Initiatives, a policy reform organisation established in June 2007. He is a graduate of the Australian National University Canberra where he received his PhD. In his academic career, besides holding a Social Science Chair at the University of Malaya, he was Visiting Fellow/Professor at various universities in Australia, the United States and Europe.

VALERIE CHAN

PAYING BACK TO SOCIETY



Most impoverished residents in Batu Gajah, needing a hearty lunch, know where to go. They would not be turned away with an empty stomach.

Irrespective of race or religion, they could just walk into a private medical clinic in the town and have their lunch for free.

A husband-wife team, both doctors, have been providing lunch daily to whoever came in for the last four years. They have partitioned part of their clinic and turned it into a dining hall, where lunch is served every afternoon, except on Fridays and Sundays. At times, the doctors would even personally serve those who walked in.

This inspiring story came to light after one of our readers brought it to our attention. "They want

to remain in low profile", said the reader. After some persuasion and an assurance that their names would not be revealed, the doctors agreed to have the story written.

When asked why he and his wife are feeding the poor, the doctor said that he comes from a poor family and knows what poverty is. "Now that I have come up in life, I want to pay back to society in this way", explained the humble doctor.

On an average, about 30 people would come for lunch daily. Sometimes more, but no one would be turned away. If there was insufficient food, they would buy from a nearby restaurant.

Drug addicts and drunkards do turn up and he has no problem with them. Mostly Indians come, however, Chinese

and Malays also come regularly.

He has set up a code of conduct; no one must talk in the dining hall.

The doctor does not accept cash donation, however, people do offer rice. He does not mind well wishers bringing some cooked food. People come to know about his service through word of mouth.

A weekly allowance is also distributed to selected people, who do not have any means of income.

Their "Good Samaritan" contribution to the community is a reflection of what Malaysia is about.

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See Foon Chan Koppen

HERITAGE

The Perak Tourist Association (PTA) together with the Kinta Heritage Group recently organised a Ipoh Heritage Walk through the streets of Old Town.

According to PTA President Hj Odzman Abd Kadir the purpose of the walk was to create awareness of the many heritage sites available in Ipoh.

The heritage trail was based on the heritage map produced by the Kinta Heritage Group which features 24 heritage buildings such as the FMS, St Michael's School, the Chinese Miners Club Han Chin Pet Soo and the Birch Memorial clock tower which are located between the roads bordered by Club Road, Clayton Road, Post Office Road and the Kinta River.

Close to 140 participants took part in the walk made up mainly of the public with a smattering of officials from Perak Tourism and tour guides.

Five tour guides from PTA guided the groups around, stopping at specific buildings to explain the background of its cultural heritage. The duration of the trail lasted approximately 2 hours.

The response from the

IPOH HERITAGE WALK



participants was positive. The Trail as a tourist product had a lot of potential. The Heritage map with a photo of the building and accompanying write up was user friendly enough for tourists to take the walk by themselves and appreciate the heritage value of the area.

Negative points raised by the participants included:

1. The sidewalks (some) were too high, uneven and pavement tiles were missing.
2. The area around the Birch Memorial clock tower was shabby and dirty. The clock was not working.
3. The tour guides conducting the tour should carry a loud speaker.

Kinta Heritage Director Jek Yap, who initially printed 30,000 of these maps and distributed them FOC to hotels and tourism bodies explained

that the intent was for it to be used as a tool to encourage tourists to visit Ipoh's heritage sites.

Kinta Heritage will be coming out with another 3 maps which will eventually cover the whole of Ipoh, Old and New Town.

Ipoh should be glad to have pro-active groups like PTA and Kinta Heritage who have the initiative to create a new and viable tourism product.

PTA Odzman aptly said that "as an NGO we have our limits but at least we can be a catalyst". Hence it is hoped that the local tour agencies and agents will now help to promote heritage tourism as a new product.

Readers who are interested in getting a copy of Ipoh Heritage Trail Map 1, can go to Perak Tourism's website: peraktourism.com to print a copy.

JAG

ECO TOURISM

THE ALLURE OF TASEK RABAN

● By ROSLI MANSOR

The hour-long ride from Ipoh to Tasek Raban was most exhilarating, as the journey took us past rustic kampong houses on stilts and on the ground interspersed with dense virgin forests that stretch up into the cloud-covered highlands. It was a sight to behold as the Kuala Kangsar-Grik Highway offers motorists a vista of rural Malaysia, especially of Perak, at its very best. Since the highway runs parallel to the Bintang

Range, the going can be a little stressful for the lonely traveller. But we were in an air-conditioned tour bus, the ride was smooth and exciting, albeit a little tiring.

The coach soon came to a stop and upon disembarking we were pleasantly greeted by the sight of a neat and spacious hut by the side of Tasek Raban. This is the Pangkalan Raban-Durian Pipit Jetty, the start point of our foray into the unknown. A motorised boat measuring about 30 feet, the size of a medium sampan, was tied to a pole stuck in the mud. This boat would take us to our destination – Kampong Batu Ring-Beng – where our hosts awaited us.

Boat Ride

The mere thought of us cramped in this puny boat scared the daylights out of me, a devout landlubber. The others were no better. They too had their reservations and were undecided whether to clamber on board or to give the whole thing a miss. But the beckoning of the boatman and his repeated assurances soothed our frayed nerves. Soon all ten of us were snugly seated in his sampan.

Pak Ramli, a native of Tasek Raban, has been ferrying people to and from Kampong Batu Ring-Beng since he was strong enough to row a boat. He knew the lake very well. His deft hands soon took control of the motorised sampan powered by an 8-hp outboard engine, as he manoeuvred his way

Lenggong is noted for *ikan pekasam* a delicacy which is eagerly sought by visitors to the region.

A welcoming party consisting of a *kompang* troupe was on hand to receive us as we berthed by the jetty at Kampong Batu Ring-Beng. The beating of the *kompang* and the accompanying song did much to lift our sagging spirits. The Kampong Batu Ring-Beng homestay programme was initiated in 2007 and our visit that day was intended at promoting it to in-bound tourists, both local and foreign. Through word of mouth, Kampong Batu Ring-Beng has acquired some prominence among visitors abroad.

Legend

The legend of Kampong Batu Ring-Beng was

threw a large slab of rock on the villagers killing all except for a small girl."

The rock, according to Alias, was the summit of Gunung Batu Ring in Kelantan, thus the name.

Homestay Programme

There are some 30 participants involved in the homestay programme.

"Our objective is to showcase the uniqueness of Tasek Raban to visitors, especially its ecology and cuisines. Freshwater fish being a staple here will be the focus of our meals, particularly *ikan pekasam* and a wide variety of *ulam* available locally", said Alias.

After the briefing we left for the houses to which we were assigned. My host was Pak Abu, another native of this lake country. His house was a simple wooden structure typical of Malay abodes in the area. In spite of its simplicity the interior was spacious while the beds were warm and inviting. Facilities for bathing and washing were spartan but in good taste. The food Pak Abu's wife prepared was tasteful and the helpings generous. I was in no mood to complain.

Soon after dusk we were bundled into a boat for a ride around the lake, the size of Perlis. A night out in the open offers a different kind of ambience and experience to the first-time visitor. Although it was barely visible in the pitch darkness, the sounds of fish jumping and splashing in the

murky water were enough to excite the meekest among our group. "That's a *tangkalan*, a denizen of the deep" said the coxswain. He could almost pick out the type of fish by the sound it made, so we guessed.

Homestay in Kampong Batu Ring-Beng is definitely different from those on offer in other parts of the country. Unlike the rest, the Tasek Raban homestay provides visitors an opportunity to enjoy Nature in a pristine setting surrounding a placid lake with rolling hills and lush jungles in the background. A night stay at Kampong Batu Ring-Beng, inclusive of meals, costs only RM60. For the many "extras" thrown in, it is definitely a bargain.

Getting There

To reach Tasek Raban, exit Plus Expressway at the Kuala Kangsar junction. Take the Kuala Kangsar-Grik Highway after the tollgate. Keep on the highway and you will cross another iconic structure, the majestic Raja Nazrin Bridge, which spans the Perak River. On nearing Tasek Raban turn right towards the Pangkalan Raban jetty. Follow the signposts. The cost of a boat ride is RM10 return.

A RM50 package covers the boat ride and accommodation. This discount is available for those wanting to stretch their *ringgit*.

Reservations can be made with Tourism Malaysia (Perak) **05-2552 772** and **05-255 1012** or call Muhammad Alias **016-565 4303**.



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in the calm waters. Small and rickety it might have been, but it worked wonders for its size.

The 15-minute ride provided us with a rare opportunity to admire the beauty of the environs. The lake, according to Pak Ramli, is a source of income for the village folks. Salt and pickled fish from Tasek Raban are found all over the country. In fact,

recounted to us by the director of the homestay project, Muhamad Alias Mat Arshad. This is his version (in his own words).

A wedding ceremony to solemnise the marriage between a cat and a dog was interrupted by a sudden rainstorm causing the guests to panic. A giant figure mysteriously appeared on the scene. It

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•By DINESH K

POI LAM MILITARY BAND CONCERT 2010

Budding musicians from the Poi Lam military band rocked the stage of the Perak State Secretariat hall recently with their concert entitled, "Team of Passion". The 34-student ensemble thrilled the crowd with a stellar performance under the guidance of conductors, Lau Meng Yong and Lester Lim from Singapore. Principal Chan Weng Keong recounted the history and development of the band in his opening address and remarked that the show was aimed at raising funds to replace the band's old instruments and uniforms. Concert advisor, Anne Leong, revealed that RM60,000 had been collected exceeding the target



by RM10,000. She took the opportunity to thank donors, sponsors and well-wishers for their generosity. Band members had been practising for about six months while preparations for the concert began three months ago. The band is adept at playing

both classic and modern numbers. Other performances that had the crowd humming and tapping along were a piano recital by pianist prodigy, Joshua Ng, an upbeat love number by student Wong Wai Shan and some dance routines by students of the school.

SMK ANDERSON IPOH QUIZ CHAMPION

Inter-School Quiz 2010 held at Olympia College recently, saw SMK Anderson Ipoh beating SMK Perempuan Methodist Ipoh to emerge champion. Questions from current affairs, local and world sports, history, geography and English were asked.

The winning team took home the challenge trophy donated by Eddy Chong from the Rotary Club of Kinta. The winners were also awarded scholarships worth RM24,000 to study any course provided by Olympia College, the main sponsor of this annual event.

Mr Dhanabalan



Segaran, an assistant director with the Perak Education Department, was the guest of honour. In his closing address he stressed the roles parents, government agencies and NGOs could play in arresting the declining standard of the English Language among

students. He believed competitive quizzes like this would have an impact and praised Rotary Club of Kinta for organising it on an annual basis since 1984. Third and fourth placing went to SMJK Tasek Damai and SMJK Poi Lam respectively. **FZB**

SPORT

A BUDDING CHAMPION



Ipoh City Council and Belati Wangsa Sdn Bhd (BWSB) organised an Under-12 badminton tournament for girls at the council's badminton hall on Sunday, May 16. Perak Malay's Sara Amira Kamarul, 12, defeated Nur Ernisa Alya Zainal Abidin, 11, of BWSB, 21-17, 21-13 to emerge champion. Sara won a cash prize of

RM200 and a medal while Nur Ernisa, RM100 and a medal. The prizes were given away by the Datuk Bandar, Dato' Roshidi

Hashim. Both players had represented Perak in the 100 Plus National Youth Tournament in Penang and Perlis. **RN**

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements must be sent by fax: **05-2552181**; or email: **announcements@ipohecho.com.my**, by the 9th or 23rd of every month in order to meet deadlines. Announcements by phone will not be entertained. Ipoh Echo reserves the right to verify any announcement before it is published.

Sathya Sai Organisation (Perak Chapter) Walk for Values. June 12 (Saturday) 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Taman DR Seenivasagam Ipoh. Organ pledge campaign, free goody bags, colouring contest, educational booth, cultural show, etc. Free entrance. Contact: Thiru – **012-5020704**, Alages – **012-5155520** or Dr Elan – **012-5263293**.

Ipoh Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPCA) Annual Charity Dinner 2010. Sunday, June 6 at Hee Lai Ton Restaurant, Jalan Sultan Iskandar, Ipoh, commencing at 7.30 p.m. For details call: Dr Sunitha 05-5467676 or Doreen 016-5608905.

YMCA of Ipoh & Ipoh Toastmasters Clubs presents 'A Bedazzling Morning' with Stephen Fernando & Peter Ng. June 12, 9.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m., at SMK ACS, Jalan Lahat, Ipoh.

Olympia College Ipoh Workshops on "Teknik Menjawab Soalan SPM" at 18, Jalan CM Yusuff, Ipoh) on June 14, 15 and 18. The workshops will be conducted by teachers from the SPM panel and will commence daily between 10 am to 5.30 pm. Attendance is on a first-come -first-serve basis. Students will be charged RM5 for study materials and lunch. For bookings and inquiries please call Mr Fong at **05-243 3868** or **017-534 1834**.

OBITUARY



Building at the corner of Jalan Theatre and Jalan Tawil Azar



Pre War Bungalow on Hugh Low Street just up from the fountain roundabout

Sung to the tune of 'Where have all the flowers gone'
(Apologies to Pete Seeger for music and lyrics)

*Where have all the buildings gone?
Long time passing
Where have all the buildings gone?
Long time ago
Where have all the buildings gone?
Guys have downed them every one
When will they ever learn?
When will they ever learn?*

**Ipoh Echo mourns the passing of many
of its old buildings.**



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IPOH IN BRIEF

EASWARAMMA DAY (MOTHER'S DAY) CELEBRATIONS



About 500 devotees and well-wishers attended an Easwaramma Day (Mother's Day) celebrations organised by the Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Ipoh at the Sri Maha Mariamman Temple's Hall in Jalan Sungai Pari recently.

The centre's chairman, Mr. B. Prithivi Raj, said that the annual programme was held to commemorate Mother Easwaramma, the mother of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and the founder of the Sathya Sai Baba Organisation, and also to pay tribute to all mothers for their selfless service to their children.

He said that the organisation is an inter-faith non-profit NGO dedicated towards the promotion of human values and selfless service to the poor, sick and needy. It conducts weekly Education in human values classes for children aged 6 to 18 to cultivate moral values among them.

It also uses the event as a platform to distribute uniforms, shoes and spectacles to needy school children and wheel-chairs and prosthetic limbs to needy people. The Guest-of-Honour was Dato' Dr. M. Majumder.

The 'Senior Member' award was presented to Mr. S. Armanathan Nair, an English Language Lecturer of Polytechnic Ungku Omar, Ipoh, in recognition of his selfless service and commitment to the Centre. He conducts the Education in Human Values classes at the Centre every weekend and is also active in the community service activities organized by the Centre.

The 'Mother of the Year' award was presented to a bank employee Mdm S. Bawani Bai, described as a kind, helpful, dedicated and caring lady who is actively involved in all the Centre's service activities.

GOLDSMITH ROBBERS BUSTED



Two years' successful run of a specialised break-in gang came to an abrupt end when five of its members were caught red-handed while breaking into a goldsmith shop at Taman Ipoh Jaya by police recently.

The gang has been active since 2008 and was responsible for 15 break-ins throughout the peninsula, five of which were in Perak.

The total value of the losses reported from the break-ins is RM10.5 million. The gang's modus operandi was to strike during weekends and long holiday breaks.

Perak Chief Police Officer Dato' Zulkifli Abdullah said that police received a report from the public that thieves were breaking into a goldsmith shop at 1 a.m. on May 9.

Police promptly went to the scene of the crime and apprehended the five suspects who were taken by surprise. The suspects aged between 37 and 51 years tried to run but were unsuccessful.

Dato' Zulkifli said police also detained four cars which were used to carry a wide assortment of cutting tools, electric saw, crowbars, pipes, ladder, hydraulic jack and oxy-acetylene torch set.

Investigations are still going on to recover the stolen goods and also to determine if there are other gang members.

Dato' Zulkifli reminded members of public not to purchase stolen jewellery as it is an offence, adding that pleading ignorance is not an excuse.

JAG

OPEN DIALOGUE ON FAITH



Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) organised a dialogue session with representatives from 18 Christian Churches around Ipoh recently.

The purpose of the dialogue which lasted two hours, was 'to have an engagement with the churches to explain the slogan behind PAS which was 'PAS For All'. This was explained by ex-MB Dato' Seri Nizar Jamaluddin.

"This is the first time we are having a formal dialogue. We exchanged ideas. Questions that were fielded were explained and subsequently we identified common issues. One of these was the use of the word Allah by non-Muslims, which according to PAS is acceptable, and we exchanged views on the topic of conversion.

A representative of St Peter's Church Dr Teoh Soong Kee, who was a spokesman for the Church group, described the dialogue as 'very positive. A lot of misunderstanding between Muslims and Christians can be avoided and issues solved through proper dialogue with the proper authorities. Today's meeting was very fruitful'.

All the participants agreed that a follow up dialogue would be a positive step forward.

JAG

FASHION CITY



Plans are afoot to turn Ipoh into a fashion city something similar to Paris, Milan and Mumbai with emphasis on footwear. This complements Ipoh's thriving shoe industry which has generated much publicity and interest of late. Dato' Mah Hong Soon, Perak Executive Councillor for Local Government, Transportation and Health, echoed the sentiments of the state government when he officiated the opening of Malaysia Footwear Design Competition 2010 at Syuen Hotel recently.

"Our booming shoe industry will make this possible provided we are geared towards achieving it", he told Ipoh Echo. Mah hoped that youths from the state would take footwear designing seriously. "Therefore, the shoe-making factories in Lahat, Bukit Merah and Menglembu should be given all the support needed by Ipoh City Council", he remarked.

Present at the launching ceremony were K.K. Tham, president of the Perak Footwear Industry Association, the organiser of the event and Tony Ting, president of the Malaysian Footwear Manufacturers' Association.

The competition was not without surprises. The winner in the men's category was Saiful Nizam Zakaria, 23. Saiful, a student of Premier Polytechnic Johor Bahru, has visual and hearing impairments. His design won him a trophy and a cash award of RM3,000. "Saiful's victory means a lot to those with physical disabilities", said Azlina Ahmad, a lecturer on design and visual communications at the polytechnic. "His talents and creativity have attracted the attention of renowned fashion designer, Bill Keith, in Kuala Lumpur. Bill is keen on having him on his team", Azlina revealed.

The prizes were given away by internationally acclaimed fashion shoe designer, Dato' Jimmy Choo.

RM

BLOOD DONATION



A blood-donation drive by the Y's Men's Club of Ipoh and the Perak Malayalee Association was organised recently to replenish stock at the Blood Bank of the General Hospital. It was held at Greentown Mall, Ipoh. Public support was most encouraging. Medical staff and nurses from the hospital were present to lend a helping hand. Thirty four pints of blood were collected from the many donors who thronged the Mall. Such drive, according to K. Letchimaman of Y's Men's Club, would be held from time to time whenever a need arises.

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HONOURING DATO' BROTHER VINCENT



The Parent Teachers Association of St Michael's Institution (SMI) honoured Dato' Brother Vincent Corkery, who was conferred with DPMP (Darjah Dato' Paduka Mahkota Perak) which carries the title of Dato' during the Sultan of Perak's birthday celebrations, with a dinner at the school hall recently.

The PTA's chairman Mr Joseph Michael Lee in his address, said Dato' Brother Vincent's achievement is a great honour not only for the LaSalle Brothers but also to St Michael's Institution.

Dato' Brother Vincent, who first came to SMI in 1958, described his 52 years of staying in the country as "a wonderful opportunity to meet wonderful people and be enriched in the process".

The dinner was an all-Michaelian affair. The function was held at the school hall and attended by past and present teachers and members of the Michaelian community. Music was performed by the school's Military Band and Michaelian Chinese Orchestra.

Tributes to Dato' Brother Vincent were presented from Mr Adrian Tsen, Old Michaelians Association President, Mr D.C. Sharma on behalf of the Form 6 Students from 1959 and Puan Hajjah Norlizah, a teacher with the school, who composed a poem in Bahasa Malaysia for him.

The conferment of the datukship was indeed a signal of recognition for the LaSalle Brothers and the school which was greeted with joy by those present as table by table took turns to pose for photographs with Dato' Brother Vincent.

JAG

HERITAGE TOURISM

A POTENTIAL REALITY

If all goes well, Ipoh could be the centre of a World Heritage Site for Tin Mining. This was revealed by Senior Executive Councillor for Tourism Dato' Hamidah Osman during a familiarisation tour at Old Town's 'Concubine Lane' recently.

Accompanying her on the tour was Ipoh Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim and the Director of Kinta Heritage Jek Yap.

Hamidah reiterated that tourism was an important economic sector for the state which had an abundance of products.

Perak Tourism had already identified 10 icons for the state and was now clustering the icons, linking Belum and the Perak Man at Lenggong and Taiping with the Matang Mangrove Forest.

The plan for Ipoh is to promote it as a World Heritage Site for Tin Mining. The centre would be Ipoh but generally "the heritage site would be the whole Kinta Valley stretching from Ipoh to possibly Kampar" explaining that "the towns of Papan and Kampar generated the income but the residents came to Ipoh for a social life".



The new tagline for Tourism in Perak will be 'Nature and History'. "For Ipoh we already have the Nature in the products of Gua Tempurung and Gopeng. Now when we

promote heritage we need to have the history behind the products whether they are buildings or even Concubine Lane to elaborate to the tourists, for them to understand and appreciate

the heritage product". This is where NGO's such as Kinta Heritage could assist, she added.

The tour only covered Concubine Lane (officially known as Panglima Lane) and Treacher Street, a distance of 200 metres but lasted for almost 2 hours. During that time she met residents along the lane, checked out the houses and was given a tour of the 100-year-old Chinese Miners Club, Han Chin Pet Soo where she even took a photograph on the back balcony upstairs overlooking the Kinta River.

Dato' Hamidah, who admitted that she was a

distant relative of the Panglima Kinta, the original owner of all the land on which is now Ipoh, said the mere mention of a name should "start a historical narrative of the person behind the name".

Hamidah also hinted that the heritage product would not be confined to Old Town but would eventually include New Town.

Hopefully when the whole plan materialises, tourism in Ipoh and the Kinta Valley will truly be an important sector which will contribute significantly towards the economy of the state. **JAG**



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