

A Place for the Talented

Page 3



SeeFoon dishes out her dragon favourites

Page 5



Hospital Fatimah Committed to Cancer Care

Page 7



INSIDE

P E R A

TOURISM NE

Supplement



Papan Landfill urgent as Bercham fills up



Implementation of Ipoh's Solid Waste Sanitary Landfill located just north of Papan is becoming urgent as the one in Bercham is reaching maximum capacity. However, regulatory requirements set by various agencies have not been fulfilled as revealed by the State Department of Environment (DOE) office that a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) study of the site has not been completed. Ipoh Echo conducted an investigation into the status of the proposed project.

Continued on page 2

THE HAVEN
Lakeside Residences

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The Star
Mon, 23 Jan 2012

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“The project would carry on even if it has to be modified” – UPEN

The proposed area for the Papan landfill is a vast and picturesque valley of disused mining ponds amidst lush greenery against a backdrop of the rolling hills of the Kledang Range. The ponds, filled with tilapia and patin fish are juxtaposed with cows and buffalo grazing the wild grass as one comes across abandoned farms of lemons, marrow, papaya, jack fruit and young oil palm trees. The farmers of these plots had abandoned their farms in early January this year after receiving eviction notices sent to them by the Batu Gajah District Office which gave them 14 days from December 28, 2011 to vacate their premises.

While the vegetable and fruit farmers harvested their crops and left, the fish and cattle breeders were left in a quandary. A total of 30 of these farmers and breeders who had been toiling their land from 5-21 years, all of them illegally, turned to their respective state assemblymen, YB Sivakumar (Tronoh) and YB Lim Pek Har (Menglembu) for help. Their only plea to Ipoh City Council was to allow them to continue to earn their livelihood at the same location or at least provide them an alternative site. Interestingly though is that several of these farmers have their plots located next to the Asian Rare Earth radioactive depository for many years and now due to the setting up of the future solid waste landfill, have to vacate their farms.

Asian Rare Earth Depository

The Asian Rare Earth Depository is a radioactive storage facility to store rare earth which was produced by Asian Rare Earth refinery (ARE) a Mitsubishi Chemicals company in the 80s. Its presence caused a sudden surge in leukaemia, birth defects and miscarriages to residents in that area. After much public pressure the plant was closed in 1992 and its waste of over 80,000 steel barrels was ‘entombed at a designated hilltop depository’. The entire clean-up is reported to have been completed in 2011. The monitoring of the ARE facility falls under the Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB), the department that monitors and enforces nuclear activity in the country.

Papan Sanitary Landfill

The Papan Sanitary landfill came into existence in July 2008 during a state council meeting and was subsequently gazetted in October 2009. The site is located in between the towns of Papan and Lahat and covers an area of 560.24 acres or 226.73 hectares and was intended to be the next landfill site after Bercham which is just 96 acres in size.

Unlike Bercham which has a population of 125,712 residents and 158 housing estates within a 5km radius the new site has 53,516 residents and 34 housing estates within the same radius.

Based on its location and size the site would accept solid waste from the Districts of Ipoh, Batu Gajah, Kampar and Central Perak. The lifespan of the landfill is projected to last 35 years.

The new facility is classified as a Level 4 sanitary landfill site and its infrastructure includes facilities for system leachate collection, controlled collection and release of methane gas, facilities to wash and clean the garbage transport trucks and have a daily closing or intermediate cover to prevent odour. Ipoh City Council has last November appointed Selektta Spectra Sdn Bhd as the concessionaire for the project who will also build and operate the facility.

EIA Report

At its preliminary stage, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG) appointed a consultant to carry out the Department of Environment’s (DOE) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) study.



Helpless fish and cattle breeders

During the course of the study the Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB), the department that monitors the Asian Rare Earth radioactive depository, raised its objection, saying the landfill site was located well within the 1.7km buffer zone from the ARE Depository explaining that no development should take place within the buffer zone. A review of the site map of the facility confirmed that two-thirds of the landfill site was well within the buffer zone.

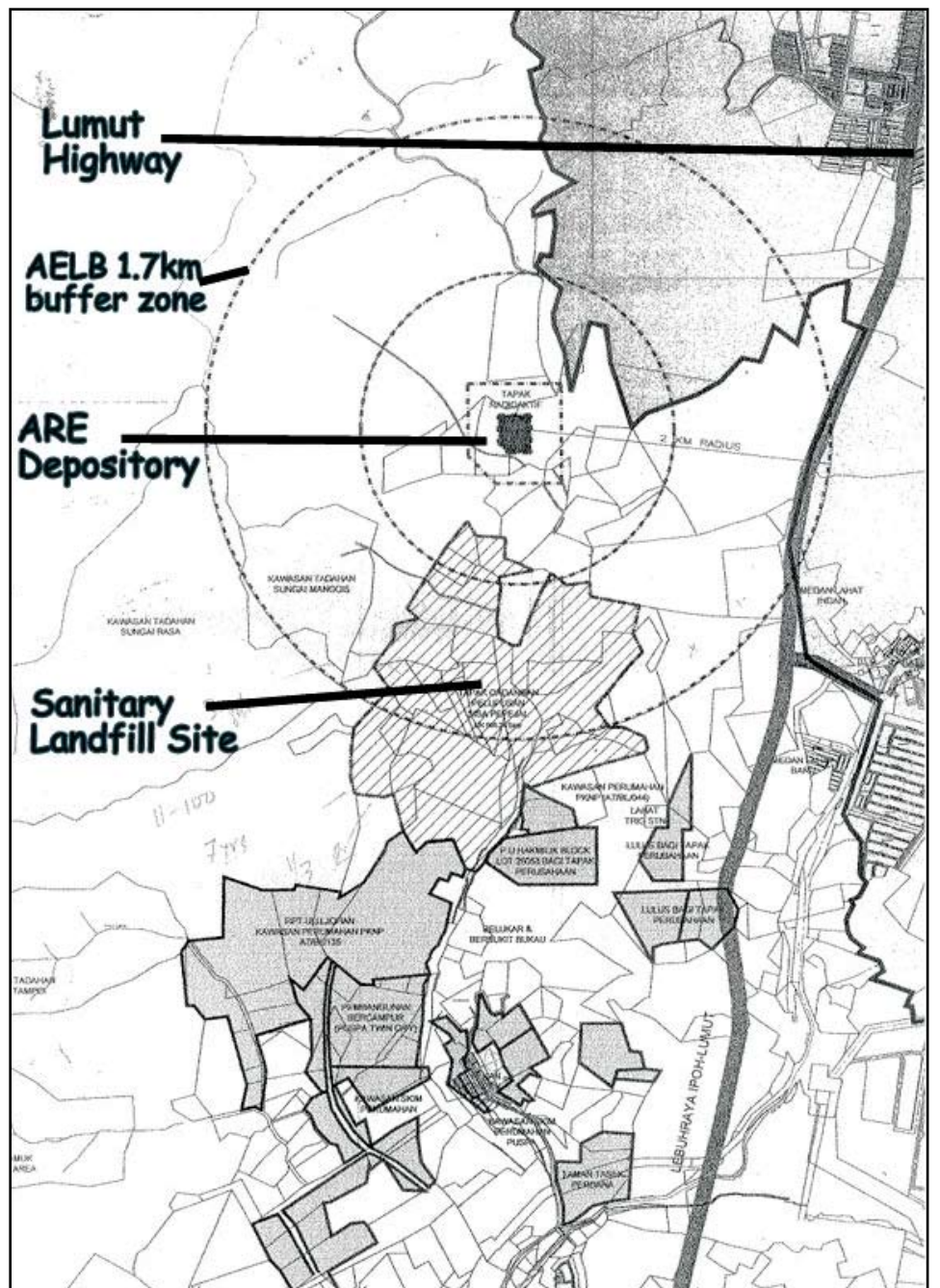
This being the case, Dato’ Chor Chee Huang, the Minister of Housing and Local Government (MHLG), announced last June that since two-thirds of the site could not be utilised for the landfill the project was ‘not viable for a long-term project’ and subsequently ‘aborted’ the project. The Ministry subsequently wrote an official letter several months later informing the Perak State Government that it had dropped the project.

MBI Takes Over Project

When MHLG aborted the project Ipoh City Council (MBI) took over the project and proceeded to implement the landfill project.

At the initial stage to start our report Ipoh Echo approached Ipoh City Council for a copy of the site map and discovered that indeed the landfill location was within the 1.7km ARE buffer zone.

A subsequent check with the Director of AELB, Raja Dato’ Abdul Aziz, verified



Map of Papan-Lahat landfill

that the map in question was the same which the Board had based its objections on. Abdul Aziz also clarified that “the buffer zone is 2km in radius. However, since it encroached onto the Lumut Highway, the Board reduced the buffer zone to 1.7km”.

Ipoh Mayor, Dato’ Roshidi, when asked about the restriction for the buffer zone, seemed unsure about the buffer zone although he responded that the “Council would strictly follow the regulation for the setting up of the landfill site.” Roshidi further added that his main concern was to alleviate the problem of the 150,000 residents living close to the Bercham dumpsite. Similarly, Dato’ Abu Bakar, the Director of the State Economic Planning Unit (UPEN) also responded that the project would “carry on even if it has to be modified”.

EIA Study Not Completed

A check with the State Department of Environment (DOE) office revealed that should MBI change its plans in any way, a new EIA was needed. A spokesman for the DOE however stated that a detailed EIA for the site was not done. The EIA initiated earlier by the Housing and Local Government Ministry was aborted when just at the Terms of Reference (TOR) stage, at four months instead of the usual nine months.

The spokesman added that “a detailed EIA report for a sanitary landfill is very important because the landfill discharges a lot of pollutants”. The spokesman further added that “per DOE regulations no work can be carried out at the site until the EIA is approved. Should any work take place prior to EIA approval, DOE can take the appropriate action.”

Just before going to press, Ipoh Echo reconfirmed the above findings with Mayor Roshidi who acknowledged accordingly and again reiterated that the Council would comply fully to all the required regulations.

Undoubtedly the implementation of the new sanitary landfill at Papan is important and now made more critical as the Bercham dumpsite is also full. Considering the close proximity of a solid waste landfill next to a radioactive depository, it is assuring to note that the relevant authorities are aware of the sensitive location of the site and will ensure all the regulatory requirements are fulfilled before the start of landfill operations.



Buffaloes grazing under the shadow of ARE Depository (the white hill in the background)

IPOH **echo**

From the Editor's Desk

• by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

A Place for the Talented

For those of you who are looking for a place to exhibit your artworks, Institut Darul Ridzuan's PORT, along Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah, Ipoh is the place.

It never occurred to me that this once dilapidated government quarters on the edge of oblivion would one day be the home for the talented or the "remarkable". Located along busy Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah (formerly Tiger Lane) a stone's throw away from Fella Design, a household name in the home-furnishing industry, the converted government quarters is easily identifiable by the letterings "PORT" which stand proudly on a pedestal at the entrance to the house.

I was equally puzzled as to why this insignificant living quarters, which was reportedly a haven for drug addicts, could have acquired such prominence in so short a time. The empty building, long abandoned by the state for reasons of funding and, probably, the lack of qualified tenants, has now assumed a more likeable role since it came under the wings of Institut Darul Ridzuan, better known by its acronym IDR.

What is IDR all about? Institut Darul Ridzuan is in essence a think-tank under the ambit of the state government. It came into existence in 2005, being the brainchild of the present Chief Minister, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir who was then the Executive Councillor for ICT, Manpower and Technology. On assuming the chief ministerial post in February 2009, Zambry took it upon himself to establish the equivalent of former Premier Abdullah Badawi's famous 4th Floor Boys.

With the backing of the Chief Executive Officer cemented, IDR became fully operational in March 2009. In May 2009 Aminuddin Hashim was appointed by Zambry as its Executive Officer tasked with the responsibility of charting the course of the institution.

The youngish-looking bespectacled forty-something Aminuddin comes with the right credentials for the chief executive post. An accountant by training, Aminuddin has what it takes to bring IDR to the level of respectability envisioned by the Chief Minister. His responsibilities are varied but being a man of finance his primary role is to provide and suggest ideas on ways to better manage the state's coffers. The many economic transformational plans now in place originate from IDR. The latest being the state budget for 2012.

Economics is not the topic I am going to delve on today. What I have is more personal in nature, something to do with the many hidden talents that Ipoh possesses today. Talents which, if not exposed, will go to waste.

I have been approached a few times by friends who know of someone who is a great artist, a talented musician, a master craftsman, etc. They all suffer from one debilitating shortcoming – the lack of space to showcase their expertise. Two such talents were introduced to me recently. Both are artists in their own right, one with a college degree the other without. Their water-colour paintings of flowers and birds are flawlessly beautiful. But neither of them have the resources nor the means to bring their expertise to another level. These talents, in all probability, will be side-lined and, like many others, will soon slip into obscurity never to surface again. If such a fate awaits them, then it is only proper that we do something before the inevitable happens.

At a dinner organised specifically for the media by IDR recently, I broached the subject of latent talents to Aminuddin, the host. Aminuddin took time to explain



the intricacies of IDR and what the letters "PORT" stand for. "People of Remarkable Talents," he remarked without batting an eyelid.

"This is the place for your two artist friends," said Aminuddin. "We'll provide them the space to showcase their artworks and may extend some financial assistance if need be," he added.

The offer was simply too good to dismiss. So I am making this known to all and sundry. For those of you who are looking for a place to exhibit your artworks, Institut Darul Ridzuan's PORT, along Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah, Ipoh is the place. For details please call the centre's manager, Amir Baharuddin at **012-5258213**.

Wellness

Eye Health – Cataracts

Ipoh Echo's Eye Health series continues with Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S.S. Gill, who gives us a final checklist on cataracts.

Cataracts occur when the normally transparent natural lens in our eye becomes cloudy. In Malaysia, cataracts are the leading cause of poor vision in patients above the age of 55.

Some causes of cataracts:

- Aging: The commonest cause. Occurs in every person at some stage of life
- Secondary cataracts: Due to diabetes, steroid drugs, radiation, UV exposure.
- Trauma: Injury by blunt objects & sharp ones.
- Congenital cataracts. Babies may be born with cataracts due to infection or injury.

Symptoms may be:

- Blurry vision is commonest. Sometimes described as foggy, filmy, or cloudy.
- Hard time seeing at night, glare, hazy in bright sunlight.
- Colours seem washed-out and dull.
- "Second-sight of aging": paradoxical improvement in near vision which may be a sign of early cataract.
- Frequent change of spectacles, dissatisfied with new spectacles.

Cataract Eye Examination

- Vision check, eyelid and front of eye check, eye pressure check, then dilating your pupils with eye-drops for the full cataract and retina (nerve at back of eye) examination.
- Remember: Takes 30 to sometimes 90 minutes (especially for diabetics) to dilate pupils. Be prepared for the wait. Bring sunglasses with you to wear after eye check.
- Check eyes annually after 40 years of age especially if diabetic.

Choosing your Artificial Lens (Intraocular Lens or IOL)

1. Monofocal: Commonly used. Affordable. Improves vision for only distance.
2. Astigmatism-correcting monofocals: Treats Astigmatism and distant vision.
3. Presbyopia correcting: Corrects Near & Far vision. Pricy but worth it.
4. Presbyopia & Astigmatism correcting: Corrects Near, Far & Astigmatism.
5. (All lens types are subject to suitability – best to discuss with doctor.)

Preparing for Cataract Surgery

- Arrange time from work: avoid unfinished business that may distract rest.
- Arrange for a driver: this is always helpful. If staying very far, ward stay is best.
- Review all medications: Check with surgeon to see which ones need to be stopped temporarily during surgery.
- Eating and drinking: find out whether op under Local or General Anaesthesia.
- Hygiene: Wash face thoroughly, no cosmetics or eyeliner, hair-wash. Inform eye surgeon if your eye is red with any unusual eye discharge on morning of op or if you feel unwell for any reason.

On the Day of Surgery

- Remember: To fast from water & food if surgery planned under General Anaesthesia (G.A.) Light meal if surgery under Local Anaesthesia (L.A.)
- First, eyelids will be cleaned and eye-drops instilled until pupils fully dilated.
- If under L.A., eye-drops to numb the eye will be instilled. You are fully awake during the surgery. Cooperate with surgeon by not moving head during the surgery.
- If under G.A., you will be unconscious during the surgery.
- After surgery, once you have been given a meal, you may go home to rest. If the eye is padded, do not remove it or get it wet. If not on eye pad but on eye shield, you will need to instil eye-drops. Follow all instructions given strictly.

After the Cataract Surgery

Remember to strictly instil eye-drops regularly as instructed; Inform eye surgeon immediately if you develop any eye pain, undue redness or blurring vision; Do not miss any postoperative appointments given to you; Do not rub your eye or wet your eye; Keep the eyelid area clean and avoid eye make-up until instructed; Never stick your fingers into the corners of your eye; Avoid heavy exercise, swimming, prolonged computer use, excessive smoking or alcohol intake; Wear sunglasses when you go outdoors under the sun; Be patient as healing duration may vary from person to person depending on age, health and associated conditions like diabetes, etc.

May you have a speedy recovery with a good visual outcome!



Dr. S.S. Gill
Resident Consultant
Ophthalmologist,
Hospital Fatimah

IPOH CITY COUNCILLORS SWORN IN

Ipoh City's Councillors, a total of 25 of them, took their oath of office early in January witnessed by State Exco for local government Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon.

Ipoh Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim led the swearing-in ceremony. There was one new face in the lineup, Dato' Hj Abd Mukti Abd Rahman who replaced Dato' Hamzah Mohd Kasim (Zone 10: Kg Sg Rapat/ Pengkalan Pegoh). Abd Mukti assumed his councillors office in December.

Dato' Mah in his speech thanked the councillors for their good work throughout 2011 and urged them to continue doing so for this year. He also thanked Mayor Roshidi for the many activities during the year especially his 'turun padang/meet the people' sessions.

JAG



New Councillor Abd Mukti (2nd from right)

For more information, contact Gill Eye Specialist Centre at **05-5455582**, email: gilleyecentre@dr.com or visit www.fatimah.com.my.

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05 2451 072 (CCC)
05 2451 222 (Operator)
999 (emergency)

Ipoh General Hospital

05-208 5000

Ipoh Ambulance

05-522 2506
993 (emergency)

Ipoh Fire Brigade

05-547 4444/994
(emergency)

Perak Immigration Dept

05-5017100

Perak Water Board

05-254 6161

Ipoh City Council

Hotline: 05-2083379
General: 05-2083333

Perak Anti-Corruption Agency

05-253 1982

State Secretariat

05-253 1957

Railway Station

05-254 7987

Airport

05-318 8202

Registration Department

05-528 8805

Tenaga Nasional Berhad

05-208 8000

Lembaga Air Perak

1800-88-7788

Directory Service

103

Perak Women for Women Society

05-5469715 (office)

AA Ipoh

019-574 3572
017-350 8361

Thinking **ALLOWED** • by Francis VijeOnce the Pride of **Lim Gardens**

Full of mosquito larvae



Rubbish littered all over



Cows grazing in the field



Broken drains

As far as memory serves me, I remember playing football every evening on this wonderful open field at Jalan Lumut. Playing football on this field from the age of 6 till 18 was a must for me every day. Not only was it a place of relaxation but it was a football field for the younger generation. Nowadays, my nephew and his friends play football daily on this field. It is my hope that my son and his friends will be the future generation of footballers who will enjoy what used to be a magnificent and majestic field. This field used to be the pride of every footballer in Lim Gardens and also the envy of every footballer from the neighbouring areas.

Shame of Lim Gardens

Now at the age of 41, I still play football on this field, although only on the weekends. However, this field is no longer the pride, but more of a bane of Lim Gardens. Here is a litany of 'sins':

1. The ground is uneven, due to cut grass not being cleared away, leaving clumps dotting the entire field.
2. The grass is overgrown and grass cutting is not carried out on a regular basis.
3. The drains around the field are clogged with no water movement and now provide an excellent place for mosquitoes to breed.
4. The drains are overgrown with weeds and *lalang*. Even a small tree was recently spotted sprouting from the drain.
5. The sides of the field are littered with garbage.
6. Even the goal posts are all rusted and one of it is now broken.
7. The fences at the back of the goal posts are broken with gaping holes

in many places.

8. The benches in the field are very old and broken pieces of glass litter the ground beneath them and are not cleared away.
9. And recently, cows have invaded the field to graze and cause a mess.

As a long-time resident, it is my hope that MBI will take the necessary actions to preserve this nostalgic field in Lim Gardens. My recommendations are as follows:

1. Dig up the whole field and level the ground.
2. Have the grass cut at least every three weeks.
3. Change all the drains around the field, so that the water will be able to flow smoothly without being stagnant.
4. Have the drains cleared at least once every month.
5. Put proper garbage bins at the sides of the field, so that the residents have a proper place to throw their garbage.
6. Replace the broken goal post and have the goal posts painted with anti rust at least once every six months.
7. Replace the holes in the fences with proper fencing.
8. Replace the benches in the field with new ones. The current benches have been in existence since the 1970s.
9. Consider fencing up the whole field, as this will deter unsavoury people from using this field and prevent cows from causing a mess in the field, especially at night.

Ipoh used to have the reputation of being the cleanest city in all of Malaysia. Now it looks like we may have a new title: The Dirtiest.

Business
Taipan City

Taipan City, located within Perak's own "Cyberjaya", was launched by its developer, Andaman Group recently. Taipan City is smack in the centre of a new 1,600-acre township with Multimedia Super Corridor status. The metropolitan shop cum office development is the latest instalment by Andaman Group. It is a hub for digital businesses and a hotspot for the tech savvy.

Taipan City is a perfect location for investment and business. It is easily accessible from the North-South Expressway (ex-Jelapang/Chemor). Mydin hypermarket, Ipoh Sentral Bus and Taxi Terminal, Casuarina Hotel and Convention Centre will be some of the more prominent entities to be built close by.

The Taipan project incorporates 40 units of 3-storey semi-D and bungalow shops (freehold). Prices start from RM1million onwards. These shops are ideal as IT and computer stores, wedding gown/photography shops, restaurants, automobile showrooms, fast-food outlets, etc.

"Public response has been overwhelming. Phase 1 of Taipan City was snapped up within 2 months of its launch," said Andaman Sales and Marketing Director, Dato' Dr Vincent Tiew. Property value has appreciated



one hundred per cent since then.

"Andaman Group's focus presently is on the new Phase 4 RM100-million Taipan City," said Vincent. Phases 2 and 3 will be completed by the end of 2012. They are bound to enjoy a very high capital appreciation due to demand.

Ed



Coffin and Funeral Exhibition

In conjunction with Visit Perak Year 2012, Museum Darul Ridzuan is organising a Coffin and Funeral Exhibition. The exhibition is being held for two months from December 21, 2011 to February 29, 2012. The exhibits include funeral rites of all the major religions around the world including that of Jews. Brief descriptions are given on the ceremonies being done however the English version was full of grammatical errors.

The exhibition was launched by Dato' Zainol Fadzi bin Haji Paharudin, Exco for Culture. The opening hours are from 9.30 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. daily. The entrance fee is RM3 for adults and RM1 for students. It is free for senior citizens above 60 years old, children under 6 years and disabled persons.

The general comment was that the timing of an exhibition on this topic is not appropriate during the festive season of Christmas, New Year and Chinese New Year.

AJ





Musings on Food

seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

SeeFoon dishes out her dragon favourites

As I welcome the year of the Dragon, I can't help wondering what unexplored taste treats await my ever eager palate in the coming twelve months. Yet the memories of past food explorations linger in the recesses of my mind, ever ready to spring into active service whenever a particular food topic comes up in conversation. Certain dishes and particular restaurants remain my favourites, prompting gustatory yearnings that demand to be satiated.

So this first food musings in the Dragon year will be devoted to revisiting some of my favourite restaurants and the dishes that bring on the salivary juices.

In no particular order, I will list the restaurants and the dishes that appeal to my palate. Beginning with **Wong Kok** in Pasir Pinji, Chef Lum never fails to satisfy with his sea cucumber salad, a tangy cold dish of sea cucumber tossed with an assortment of crunchy greens, in a dressing of sesame oil with SzeChuan pepper and other spices. Another 'must-have' for me is their *Mo Mai Jook* or no rice congee, a thick foamy broth thickened with egg white and served with crispy *wonton*. Tel: **05-2435431**.

A few doors away on the corner is **Tuck Kee** and my favourites here are their braised beef short ribs, the *Har Meen* or prawn noodle soup and the *Wat Dan Hor*, or literally translated means smooth egg flat rice noodles. Tel: 05-2419071.

Still in the Pasir Pinji area, **Sun Po Po** is a great place for a late dinner or a midnight supper. Order their Indian Mee Goreng, spicy yellow noodles, the Hakka noodles or their basil fried rice. Tel: **05-2537273**.

Li Garden by the airport is great for its scrumptious fish head soup (must order in advance) chockfull of delightful ingredients like pig's tendons, shark cartilage, Yunan ham, stuffed bean curd and of course the fresh-that-day fish head chunks. While here, order the fried pork belly as appetiser and if you still have room, their braised beef brisket is second to none. Tel: **012-5183370**.

For the best fish noodle (these noodles are actually made from fish meat and without

for the price first before you order. Tel: **012-5016330**.

Further up Pasir Puteh you'll find **Kafe Pasir Puteh** which has, in my opinion, the best homemade Saito fish balls in Ipoh, bouncy, springy and utterly fresh-made that day. Tel: **012-5095970**.

For *Halal* food, nothing beats **Simpang Tiga** in Greentown where the dizzying display of *Nasi Padang* dishes is accompanied by a choice of interesting sambals. For those looking for Halal Dim go no further than on Persiaran Greentown. Especially tasty is their spicy, and has a generous preserved radish.

Sum, Greentown Dim Sum
4, Greentown Avenue.
fried carrot cake, which is helping of bean sprouts and

Indian banana leaf aficionados are not left out in my list as I often have my *Thosai* (available all day except between 1.00-2.00 p.m.) and other curries at **Ipoh Padang Curry House** on Cowan Street and once in a while I'll send out for **Samy's** specials like duck, turkey and crab curry all the way from the main road of Chemor; also *Halal*.

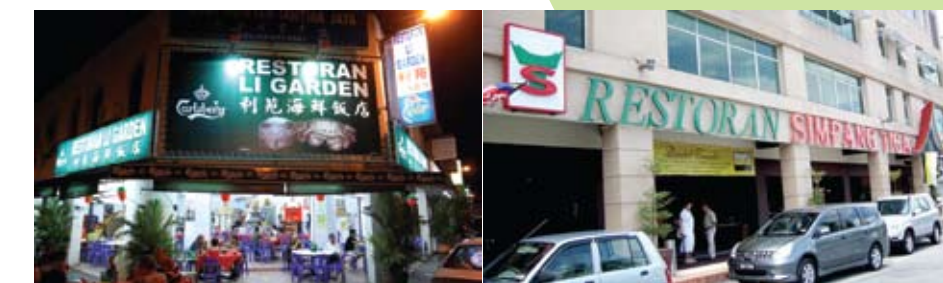
In Chemor too is another favourite haunt of mine especially at this time of the year when the giant frogs are in season. **Wong Kee** does them to an art, deep fried with ginger slices and when ordered with their Sang Yu (Snakehead) fish soup, is worth the trip to Chemor. Tel: **012-5182686**.

For the best Tom Yum Soup in all of Ipoh, order in advance with Arun at a **Different Taste** in Bercham. She speaks Cantonese and although she will always have the prawn or crab Tom Yam, you can persuade her to make a fish head Tom Yam if you give her enough notice. Here too their crab vermicelli is the best I've tasted as are their fish balls. They also serve Frog Congee. Tel: **012-5021132**.

Elsewhere in Bercham, the **Steam House** is a particular favourite with my favourite dishes being the Ham Har Tsing Fa Lam (steamed pork belly with preserved shrimp paste), their steamed egg dishes and their special steamed kampung chicken. Tel: **05-5486034**.

When my hankering turn to thoughts of shellfish, I usually pick up the phone to Sao Mei, the proprietress of **Shing Lee** restaurant, in Puncak Jelapang Maju, Sao Mei, who goes personally a few days a week to Pantai Remis to pick up seafood which can be found swimming in the many tanks in the restaurant, will also occasionally call me when she has particularly large flower crabs (all live) and roe crabs which I love. My favourites here are their Mantis prawns which I order fried with salt and pepper (with some chillies), their flower crabs steamed with cucumber and their spiny snails (an acquired taste for some). A must have is their crispy *kangkong*. Tel: **016-5935848**.

Going even further afield is the **Lemon Tree Restaurant** in Matang near Taiping which has a specialty I have never found elsewhere: the shark's liver which comes pan-fried and tastes like a slightly fishy *foie gras*. Dishes here are their fried crispy prawns, the oyster pancake, the crab with salted egg and steamed Mantis prawns. Tel: **016-5963598**.



flour of any kind) soup, **Lucky** in Pasir Puteh is the place to go and while here, order their fish balls and their *wonton* soup. Proprietor Lucky Chong always has something fresh up his sleeves, whether its lobster, large pomfret, crab or prawns. But do ask

HAWKER FOOD

Chilli Pan Mee



Most of us are familiar with Pan Mee but how many of us have tried **Chilli Pan Mee**? This spicy variance of the dry Pan Mee, which first started in Kuala Lumpur, has now made its way to Ipoh with stalls offering their own individual version of the dish. The accompanying ingredients for the original chilli version are fried anchovies (*ikan bilis*), minced pork, crispy fried shallots and egg poached to perfection. To eat the poached egg version, break the runny yolk and mix the noodles and ingredients together while it is still hot. The dish is also served with a small bowl of soup and *sayur manis* to curb the spiciness.



Places to try in Ipoh:

- 1. The Mia Noodle House**
13-1 & 15, Jalan Dato Tahwil Azar, 30350 Ipoh
Serves the original version with poached egg. RM4.50 per bowl.
Opens daily, 8.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.
- 2. Pusat Makanan Chha Yong**
No.2 Tingkat Taman Ipoh 11, Ipoh Garden South (behind Dance Centre)
Includes pork mince patties, no egg. Ask for less spicy unless you enjoy very spicy food. RM5.80 per bowl.
Opens daily, 7.00 a.m. - 3.00 p.m.
- 3. Peking Pan Mee**
Off Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah Utara (behind Dominos pizza)
Served with mild chicken curry, no egg. RM4.50
Opens daily, 7.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.
- 4. Greentown Corner**
Corner of Persiaran Greentown 11 & 7, Greentown business Centre (behind Maxis office)
Served with minced meat, no egg. RM4.50
Opens 5 days a week, 8.00 a.m. - 2.00 p.m.

RECIPE

By Shanthi Ganeshan



Quick Chicken Kuruma

Ingredients A:

1kg chicken (or one chicken) – cut into 12 to 14 pcs
Marinade mixture for chicken (half hour):
½ cup yogurt with 1tbsp. ginger and garlic paste.
2 potatoes cut into large pieces

Ingredients B:

2 tbsp. butter or oil
1 small piece cinnamon
3 pcs cardamom
3 whole cloves
1 tsp. sweet cumin

Ingredients C:

2 large onions sliced
4 Fresh red chillies

Ingredients D:

4 tbsp. Kuruma powder
1 tsp. Fish curry powder
1 tsp. Turmeric Powder
Salt to taste
1 large Tomato, cut into small chunks

Ingredients E:

10 Almonds and 10 Cashew Nuts ground into a powder
¼ cup Coconut Milk



Method:

Heat oil, sauté spices (B) followed by onion & red chillies (C). Add in chicken mixture (A) and let it cook on slow fire for 15 minutes. Next add in ingredients (D). Let it cook for another 20 to 25 minutes in a slow fire then add in almond/cashew nut powder mixed with a little water; 5 minutes later add the coconut milk. Stir on a slow fire till the milk gets well mixed and remove from heat. Do not let the coconut milk boil over. Garnish with fresh coriander leaves and serve with hot rice or Parathas.

Community

Fighting Breast Cancer Mardianah's Way

The battle with breast cancer is a long and tedious journey. For the patients it's a nightmare. Although some may recover, the struggle to suppress the pain will linger on for the rest of their lives. Breast cancer is the most common kind of cancer among women.

Mardianah Yusof, 54, accepted her fate when she was diagnosed with cancer at 45. For her, it was merely an obstacle which had to be overcome with patience and calmness.

"It's not a burden that could destroy my life," she told Ipoh Echo when met. "I've the strength and the will to fight it, as I had witnessed my own daughter succumb to the disease." Her daughter died of leukaemia at the tender age of 10.

Mardianah (pic left), who is also the President of Pink Champion Association, Perak, felt that something was not right with her body and had immediately sought medical advice. Her husband was most supportive in providing her with the moral support she needed at that point in time. Her endurance was tested to the limit when she had to undergo chemotherapy and radiation treatment 25 times in five weeks.

"The heat from the radiation was unbearable. My arms swelled due to the disruption of the flow of lymphatic fluid. I felt severe pain in the breast area," she exclaimed.

This was followed by hormone therapy which involved the use of anti-estrogen drugs to deter the growth of cancerous cells. She had to suffer a negative side effect – it expedited her menopause. She reconciles herself to her fate, accepting it as something unavoidable. In her moments of anguish, she turns to God for deliverance. "I seek his blessing," she said. Mardianah spends most of her spare time on social and welfare activities, serving those who are afflicted with the disease.

"We need volunteers in Pink Champion Association. The services of volunteers will help ease our job of imparting information more effectively. We not only motivate the cancer patients but share crucial information, especially on ways to handle the crisis wisely," she said. Two new recruits, Molly Mourin, 78, and Mahalectchimi Palamappan, 48, both cancer patients have joined in to champion the Pink Champion's cause.

Readers who want information on the association can call Mardianah at 012-5161240.

SH



Octogenarian Gets a House



Life is never short of surprises and this is evident from an event that took place in Kg Gajah recently. When luck seemed to have run out on octogenarian Siti Rafeah Hj Hadiri and her adopted daughter, Salmah, 50, it returned in the form of a brand new house delivered to her on a silver platter, literally.

Siti Rafeah had been living in a shack devoid of basic amenities, eking a living tapping rubber at a smallholder's plot nearby. She would have missed a golden opportunity to turn the tide on her fortunes had not her plight been made known to volunteers of Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan (YBU). The foundation came to her rescue and she became a beneficiary of YBU's on-going Housing Infra Aid Programme (Bantuan Perumahan Infra). The programme identifies those who are in need of housing, contingent upon their financial disposition. It is targeted at the poor and the marginalised within the state, as part of the government's poverty eradication plan.

"It never dawned on me that I'd be this lucky at such an advanced age," she told Ipoh Echo when met after the handing-over ceremony at the site of her new house in Kg Balun Bidai, Kg Gajah. Siti received a mock house key from YBU's Deputy Chairman, Khairul Azwan Harun.

"RM4 million has been set aside for the housing programme in 2012," said Khairul. "Although the amount is substantial it's still insufficient to fully realise the programme," he added. "An additional RM2 million is needed."

The house, built at an estimated cost of RM30,000, comes with all the basic amenities required to sustain a family of five. The programme also undertakes repair works costing a maximum of RM15,000. Since the foundation's inception in 2009, over 500 houses have been built and repaired throughout the state. Khairul Anwar, incidentally, is one of the foundation's founding fathers.

Pos Raia – An Orang Asli Cultural Village

The Orang Asli village of Pos Raia located 14km from the Simpang Pulai - Cameron Highlands junction will be developed into an Orang Asli Cultural Village. The cultural village, located on a 3-acre site, will have a rest area, hall, museum, handicraft workshop and chalets. The ground-breaking ceremony was officiated by the Minister for Enterprises, Farming and Commodities Tan Sri Bernard Giluk Dompok.

The village is estimated to be completed in early 2013. In his address Dompok stated that the strategic location of the village on the main road between Ipoh and Cameron Highlands would make it a landmark tourist attraction. "In doing so the village will help to promote the value and cultures of the Orang Asli community in the area."

The project when completed will be run by Yayasan Orang Asli Perak (YOAP), the Perak Orang Asli Foundation together with the mainly Temiar Orang Asli community.

According to Dato' Suki Mee, the Chairman of YOAP, visitors to the village will not just see the physical way of life but will be able to participate in the culture and customs of the community.

"There are 18 Orang Asli communities residing in the area of which the Temiar and Semai are the majority community. However, the Village will showcase all the cultures of the various communities," added Suki Mee.

During the event MHC Plantations contributed RM1M towards the project as part of the Company's CSR initiative. This is the second CSR initiative by the Company having participated in another YOAP programme, the Perak Orang Asli Educational Excellence Centre over a year ago.

JAG



Newly-Paved Silibin Road Is Sinking



The whole stretch of Silibin Road was resurfaced and upgraded to dual lanes about a year ago. However, the section of the road between Jalan Hassan and Our Lady of Lourdes Church started sinking on the left side soon after paving.

Perhaps it is due to an improper gradient of the road and stagnated rain water. When it rains, puddles of water form along the road. Despite the recent resurfacing, patchwork repairs have already been done in a number of locations. The road is uneven. In fact, the section of road in front of Gayathri Supermarket was raised to avoid flooding after rain.

A new road must not have these flaws. Engineers from MBI must visit the place and assess the situation.

A. Jeyaraj

Wellness

Eye Chat – From A Retinal Surgeon's Perspective

Happy New Year everyone – I'd like to start the New Year by talking about conditions which affect the macula – the most important part of our retina.

What Is The Macula?

The macula is the most sensitive part of our retina responsible for 90% of our functional vision. If you remember, I had previously written about *Age Related Macular Degeneration*. There are other conditions which can cause similar loss of central vision which can have significant impact on our daily activities such as reading, driving and computer work.

Macular Pucker/Epiretinal Membrane

This is the formation of a “membrane” on the surface of the macula which is formed from the presence of scar tissue. There is gradual proliferation and contraction of the cells resulting in folds at the macula. Initially, affected individuals may not have any symptoms at all but as the condition worsens, one might notice visual disturbances ranging from generalised blurring of central vision, lines appearing wavy or distortion of central vision altogether.

This *epiretinal* membrane can be associated with retinal vascular diseases (e.g., diabetic retinopathy), retinal tears or detachment, eye injury, inflammation of the eye, after excessive laser treatment (to the retina for diabetic retinopathy) or eye surgery. They can also develop in persons over 50 years old with no apparent predisposing factors.

Macula Hole

This is a retinal break involving the macula. This condition is related to aging and usually occurs in persons over 50 years of age. As we age, the vitreous gel in the eye shrinks



Distorted central vision



Straight lines appear wavy.

and pulls away from the retina. In some cases, when the gel pulls away, it can tear the retina. If this tear occurs in the peripheral retina, a retinal detachment can result. If this tear occurs at the macula, a hole is then formed. Macular holes can also result from eye injury, macular pucker, high myopia and diabetic retinopathy.

The symptoms of a macular hole would include distortion of central vision, loss of central vision and in rare cases, if a retinal detachment ensues, total loss of vision.

Diagnosis

Macular pucker and macula holes can be easily diagnosed by your ophthalmologist if he/she performs a retinal examination after dilating your pupils. Not every case requires treatment as it is usually not a rapidly progressive condition and to monitor this, a scan of the macula area with an Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) machine is often necessary. This scan provides very detailed information about the different structures at the macula and shows the extent and size of the macular pucker/hole.

Treatment

Treatment of these conditions is surgical. A procedure called a *vitrectomy* would have to be performed by a retinal specialist and the “offending” membrane peeled off. This surgery is somewhat more complex than cataract surgery, different instrumentation is required, surgical time is longer and recovery is not as quick as in cataract surgery. Nevertheless, it is necessary in many cases and is the only treatment available up to now.

For more information about retinal diseases or other aspects of eye care, please visit my blog at <http://www.lec.com.my/youcare-eyecare>.

For more information, contact: **Lee Eye Centre Ipoh**
Tel: **05-254 0095** or email: enquiry@lec.com.my. Website: www.lec.com.my

Hospital Fatimah Committed to Cancer Care

By See Foon Chan-Koppen

“When I discovered how committed Fatimah Hospital is to cancer care, I was motivated to move to Ipoh and dedicate my services to assist in creating one of the best oncology centres that Malaysia has to offer,” declared Dr Chan Wee Han, the new oncologist who has begun treating patients in Ipoh's Fatimah Hospital.

“I didn't believe it at first, but the hospital which is a non profit hospital and because of its mission of service to the community, is putting an enormous amount of money into building this eight-storey comprehensive cancer centre. The first three floors will be dedicated to cancer services whereby it will have a separate entrance for oncology patients. When completed towards the end of this year, the cancer centre will have arguably the most advanced radiotherapy treatment machine in the world. It is planned as a reference centre for radiation technology and combined with a day-care chemotherapy centre in the same building, Fatimah Hospital will serve as a beacon of light and hope for oncology treatment in all of Malaysia and perhaps in the region,” he added.

Youngest Oncologist in Malaysia

Dr Chan was conferred the MBBS degree in 2001 and received his Masters in Clinical Oncology from the University of Malaya in 2009. Practising for 2 years as Clinical Oncologist in Hospital Kuala Lumpur, Dr Chan was the youngest oncologist in Malaysia at that time. His interest in cancer care began even as a medical student where he attached himself to Hospice Malaysia and the palliative care unit in Kuantan GH, which he subsequently took charge of after completion of his housemanship.

In 2007, Dr Chan was part of the team to finalise plans for the National Cancer Centre, where he gained valuable insights in the setting up of a cancer treatment centre. Also in the same year, he was part of the scientific committee to produce the Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia's chemotherapy protocol.

Need To Make A Difference

Realising the need for oncological services in many parts of this country, he looked hard for a hospital where he could make a difference to the community. He decided on Fatimah Hospital as it was a not-for-profit, well-equipped multi-disciplinary hospital with a reputation of good affordable care to the community. Moreover, Fatimah was planning to build a comprehensive cancer centre which would have some of the most advanced services in the region. He therefore spent the entire year of 2010 together with the hospital in planning and developing their cancer services.

As he waits for completion of the cancer centre and the arrival of the state-of-the-art radiotherapy machine, Dr Chan is currently offering all forms of non-radiotherapy treatment including chemotherapy, anti-hormonal therapy and other oncological support services. Already, a proper Cytotoxic Drug Reconstitution facility is in place with chemotherapy drugs prepared in-house to ensure accuracy and safety. These are administered by an experienced oncology nurse with post-graduate oncology training and who has worked in a large oncology centre for more than 5 years.

Advanced Radiation Techniques to be Available

When the radiotherapy machine is functional at the end of this year, Dr Chan will be able to offer advanced radiation techniques such as IMRT (intensity modulated radiotherapy based on thickness, size, and irregularity of tumour); IGRT (image guided radiotherapy where CT scan is used to target the radiotherapy beam); Volumetric



Modulated Arc therapy where the machine not only shoots on the move but will vary its intensity as it does so. In addition, they will have brachytherapy services which is localised radiation where the radiation source is inserted into or beside the tumour.

“None of these treatments are available in Perak at the moment. Once the machine is installed, it'll be the first in Malaysia and perhaps even in the region,” added Dr Chan enthusiastically.

“Building a House”

Dr Chan likens the process of oncology work to that of building a house. The oncologist is the Architect. The Physicist who does dose calculations can be likened to the civil engineer while the therapeutic radiographer who delivers the actual dosage is the workman on site.

“I follow a strict protocol where each patient is individually assessed, the diagnosis confirmed with the referring physician before we discuss treatment options. What is important is that patients must feel better as a result of the treatments. I therefore conduct quality of life assessments as we proceed with the treatment protocol.”

“One area of radiotherapy treatment that most people are unfamiliar with is that of pain control. When radiation is delivered to a tumour, pain can be reduced and similarly with bleeding, so radiotherapy can also be palliative for very advanced cancers,” he added.

“The one advice I have for patients is to go to a doctor at the first sign that something is wrong. A large number of people wait too long or go to their herbalists or naturopaths hoping for a cure and by the time they present themselves to us, their cancer is at a late stage and difficult to treat. Cancer when treated early is highly curable now. So don't wait. See your doctor at the first sign that something is remiss,” Dr Chan concluded.

Contact details: Dr Chan Wee Han, Resident Consultant Oncologist and Radiotherapist, Hospital Fatimah **05-5455777**.

News Roundup

Ipoh's Most Beautiful Mom



A total of 22 mothers vied for the inaugural ICCC Most Beautiful Mom 2011 title held at Ipoh City & Country Club recently. The contestants, some of whom were from neighbouring states, had to go through three test routines – modelling in cheongsam, talent spotting and modelling in evening wear.

The five judges were Melinda Yap, Mrs Malaysia Globe 2011, Coco Lee, wife of ICCC's owner, Datin Janet Yeoh, mother of Dato' Michelle Yeoh, Jennifer Liao and Amy Chin.

The ICCC Most Beautiful Mom 2011 crown went to Lee Lay Mea, 51. She won a RM500 cash prize, a trophy and hampers. She also bagged the Best Evening Gown Mom title. Lee, who runs a business with her husband, is a mother of five and has a 2-year-old granddaughter.

First runner-up was Christte Chua. She won the Most Popular Mom title which was determined by audience ballot voting. Second runner-up title went to Chong Boon Geok. Both winners are in their forties.

Proceeds from the show will be donated to charity organisations.

EL



Hope in Sight

As part of a community-link initiative by CIMB Islamic & CIMB Bank, the Hope in Sight Project was launched in conjunction with the opening of the second CIMA Optometrist branch in Ipoh recently. The programme focuses on providing free cataract surgery for the lower income group. The event was officiated by Deputy Home Minister, Dato' Lee Chee Leong.

For those who have no proper access to eye-care treatment, this is an opportune moment to do a check-up, gratis. The number of cataract patients in Malaysia, incidentally, has hit the 28-million mark in mid-2010, and the number is growing.

Jointly organised by Lions Club of Ipoh Evergreen and Pantai Hospital Ipoh, this one-year project received a RM63,000 cash grant from the CIMB Foundation. According to Mohd Azrul Abdul Rahman, the Regional Director of CIMB Foundation, which was formed in 2007, targets three aspects namely: community development, sports and education. Community-link initiatives are wholly managed and run by volunteers among the bank staff.

Guests were taken on a tour of the roomy CIMA Optometrist centre, which is located beside the Ipoh Tesco Hypermarket. This community project is a sure hit with those who are in need of treatment judging by the number of people turning up at the centre daily.

Ann

Ipoh Lionesses Celebrate Anniversary

The Lioness Club of Ipoh had a Gala Nite at the Ipoh City & Country Club recently. About 100 guests gathered to celebrate its 35th anniversary which was launched by President of Lions Club of Ipoh Host Lion Dr S. Martin Balachandran. Also present was his spouse Mrs Juliana Martin. The celebration was a fun-filled night which included cake cutting by past presidents and committee members followed by anniversary waltz by Lions, Lionesses and guests. Games and lucky draws were held to commemorate the big day.

President, Juliet Putra thanked those present for their support in realising all the club's charity projects. She said this was also to foster fellowship among the Lions family. The get-together was organised by Sakuntala Rajadurai who said that it being the 35th anniversary, the Club decided on a memorable celebration.



CNY Dragon Babies of Ipoh



This year's Chinese New Year of 2012 was extra special and most meaningful for two new mothers with the addition of their new-borns! Two babies were born on January 23. Madam Chin Siew Wai gave birth to her first baby girl at 12.48 a.m., weighing 2.73kg; meanwhile Madam Tan Kia Im gave birth to her first baby boy, weighing 3.15kg at 11.23 a.m. To celebrate this blissful occasion, the Management of KPJ ISH presented Chinese New Year Dragon baby hampers to both mothers (pic shows CEO of KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital, En. Mohd. Nasir Bin Mohamed presenting the hamper to Madam Tan and husband). To these first time mothers, welcome to the mama's club! And you Dragon babies, go conquer the world!

A Lesson in History

Dr Cheah Boon Kheng (pic right) presented a talk recently entitled, "Fact and Fiction in Contemporary Malaysian History: Some Dominant Themes" at the Ipoh Swimming Club. It was a dinner talk organised by Perak Academy, under its "Perak Lectures" series.

The speaker was formerly professor of history at University Sains Malaysia (USM) in Penang until retirement. He has since taken up visiting fellowships at the Australian National University, the University of Singapore, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore and USM. Cheah is the author of several popular books, the latest being "New Perspectives and Research on Malaysian History" (2007).

In his talk, Cheah addressed three questions that have been raised by the Malaysian public lately. Was Malaya ever colonised? What was the role of the Malayan Communist Party in Malaysia's independence? Should Malaysian school textbooks be revised?

Cheah gave his views on the topics debated. He concluded by saying that history is partial and no one has the last word on the subject.

EL



In Aid of the Bereaved

The untimely loss of a loved one will have a lasting effect on family members, especially when the dearly departed is the breadwinner or someone whom others depend on. This was the scenario when Hadi Mohd Rashid and Narayanan Ramakrishnan passed away recently. Both Hdi and Narayanan were former staff of Ipoh City Council and members of Persatuan Persara Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh (PERMAI), the association of Ipoh Council's retirees. Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan (YBU) took it upon itself to do the needful by donating in kind to the bereaved families. Dato' Zainal Abidin Omar, Chief Executive Officer of YBU was on site to deliver hampers containing daily necessities to members of the departed, living in Kg Tengku Hussin Baru and Taman



Pakatan Jaya, respectively. "It's a form of recognition for their valuable service to the community," said Zainal to Ipoh Echo.

News Roundup

A Royal Exhibition



An exhibition showcasing the history of the Perak Sultanate from 1874, featuring nine Sultans of Perak, is on-going at Ipoh City Hall. It was launched on January 20 by HRH Raja Muda of Perak Raja Dr Nazrin Shah. His Highness was accompanied by consort, HRH Raja Puan Besar Tuanku Zara Salim, members of the royal household and state dignitaries.

It was a historic day as the Pangkor Treaty between the British and the then Sultan of Perak, was signed on the same date in 1874. The first Sultan of Perak featured is Sultan Abdullah Muhammad Shah II Ibni Almarhum Sultan Jaafar Muazzam Shah who reigned from 1874 to 1876.

Research and preparation for the exhibition took three years, with materials obtained from the National Archives, Information Department and Perak Museum. The Perak royal families also contributed to make this inaugural exhibition a reality. It is a gift from the monarch to the public in conjunction with Visit Perak Year 2012.

The exhibition is held daily from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., between now till February 29. Admission is free.

EL

CNY Joy for the Underprivileged

Kelab AmBank Group held a Chinese New Year celebration for 50 underprivileged children and youths from two homes in Teluk Intan recently. Organised under the Group's AmBank Cares Programme, the event was aimed at sharing the joy of Chinese New Year with the underprivileged children and youths of the homes. The guests were presented with clothing, goodies and *ang paws*. They were then entertained by a lion dance and magic show and later treated to a sumptuous lunch.

"The Year of Dragon is associated with ambition and passion, hence AmBank is happy to share this auspicious occasion with these underprivileged children," said Gan Yok Chuan, the Regional Manager of AmBank (M) Berhad. Community-based programmes such as this, he said are important in creating awareness about the underprivileged. They are being actively pursued by the bank in line with its objective of becoming a socially responsible corporate citizen.

Those who require details on AmBank's community programmes can contact Syed Anuar Syed Ali at 03-20361703. His email: sasa@ambankgroup.com.

Ed



Windfall for the Poor



It was a windfall of sorts for 15 Indian breadwinners from Ipoh. They were shortlisted, based on their financial dispositions, collected and collated in *e-kasih*, a data bank of Malaysians who live below the poverty line. Those shortlisted stand to gain from the issuance of Permodalan Nasional Berhad's unit trust, Amanah Saham Wawasan 2020. Each of the 15 recipients was given RM10,000 worth of ASW 2020 unit trust.

The handing-over ceremony was graced by Dato' Abdul Rahim Md Arif, Secretary of Ipoh City Council at the council's lobby recently. The opportunity is opened to those who earn less than RM1,000 from the rural areas and RM1,500 from urban areas. According to Rahim, registration of candidates began in May 2011 and the award was the result of this on-going exercise. He urged Ipohites who qualify to register with *e-kasih*. "Registration can be done online," said Rahim.

RM

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Arts and Culture

Master of His Craft

“By his work one knows the workman,” once ventured a poet. It is probably an opinion shared readily by artists. Wong Kean Choon, a well-known figure in the art circle of Ipoh, spoke of the same sentiment when asked what influences an artist’s painting style.

Kean Choon, who turns 70 this year, believes that every artist has a unique painting style borne of life experiences, preference and observations. An artist’s painting style morphs with the passage of time, as do his circumstances in life, but some distinguishing elements remain constant. It is this constant that distinguishes one artist from the other.

Born in Menglembu, Ipoh, Kean Choon knew from a young age that all he wanted to do was paint. Despite understandable objections from his parents, he enrolled in the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts and graduated in 1965. Since then, he has immersed himself totally in art and has been painting almost every day of his life for the past 46 years. In his paintings one can glean the



fluidity of strokes and colours that only total immersion and dedication can produce.

An artist’s life is a hard one, cautions Kean Choon, and one must be prepared to live a simple and austere life if art is to be one’s vocation. He also believes that the

gift of talent can only take an artist so far, the rest will depend on his perseverance and diligence. As is said, the artist is nothing without the gift, but the gift is nothing without work.

In looking at his paintings, displayed in his art studio in Menglembu, one is instantly mesmerised by Kean Choon’s fluency of strokes and colours. The confident, fluid strokes give a sense of immediacy that is so important in watercolours and which can only be achieved through many years of experience.

Despite Kean Choon’s preference, he is non-dogmatic of other art styles for every piece of art is a painted record of an artist’s personality and his reaction to his environment. Over the years, Kean Choon has been identified with rural scenes of kampong houses, chickens and ethereal, kebaya-clad ladies. It is a signature that has a timeless appeal and his unique style will surely live on long after he has gone.

Valerie Soon

Sport

Selangors Kickoff 2012 in Style

It was a big relief to the Perak Football Association when the Seladangs finished 6th in last year’s Malaysian Super League. With some terrific players being drafted during the off season, the team braced itself for some tough opening games this New Year. So far, they have been impressive.

Three wins out of four matches is something to be proud of. Norizan Bakar’s men were focused against Terengganu in their opening match and were rewarded with three points, courtesy of a Michal Kubala pile driver. While they looked shaky in the 0-1 defeat to Selangor in an away match, Perak bounced back beating Negeri Sembilan at home. Akhmal Rizal Rakhli scored two goals after being one down early in the match.

Two wins out of three was brilliant in itself but with a tough away match against Johor FC on the

cards, there was simply no room for complacency. The Seladangs battled hard to secure an impressive 1-0 victory at the JCorp stadium in Pasir Gudang with Shahrom Abdul Kalam netting the winner.

Nine points from a possible 12 isn’t bad at all, considering that Perak was tagged an underdog prior to the season. What has been the catalyst to this early success? Interesting enough, the presence of Akhmal Rizal Rakhli appears to be doing the trick upfront.

Another player that has been a revelation for the relatively inexperienced Perak side is Slovakian midfielder, Michal Kubala. He is the unsung hero being in a class of his own in midfield complementing skipper, Shahrulnizam Mustapha.

While it has been a remarkable start to the season for Perak FA, there is no room for slip-ups. The Seladangs



currently occupy third spot on the table. But with a tricky set of matches against Felda United, Sarawak FA and T-Team FC in the offing, surprises and drama are bound to occur.

Keesh

Perak Chess Tournament



Perak International Chess Association organised the Perak Open Age Group Chess Tournament at the Perak State Public Library in Ipoh recently. Although it was an open chess tournament, the 140-odd participants ranging in age from 8 to 16 years, were from Perak. It was the first chess tournament in the state for 2012.

The tournament was divided into four age groups; Under-16, Under-14, Under-12 and Under-10, with time control of ten minutes. All players received certificates of participation while the top three boys and three girls for each age group received medals and certificates. More importantly, they took home valuable experiences which would enhance their competitiveness in the future.

The winners were: Under-10 Girls – Zulaikha Efendi; Under-10 Boys – Mohd. Nasuha Md. Nazri; Under-12 Girls – Nurul Huda Afifah; Under-12 Boys – Muhamad Khairul Izwan; Under-14 Girls – Izzah Atirah Mohd. Mahadi; Under-14 Boys – Khairulanwar Iskandar; Under-16 Girls – Jazmina Muhd Sopian; and Under-16 Boys – Khor Boon Han.

EL

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.

Free Consultation For Colorectal & Ano-Rctal Problems by Pantai Hospital Ipoh (General Surgery & Colorectal Surgery Clinic) on **February 18 and March 24**, at 8.30 a.m.-1.00 p.m. For information, call **05-5405668**.

Ipoh Fine Arts Society presents Surtaal, Sunday **February 26**, 7.00 p.m. at the Dewan Serbaguna, Bangunan Perak Darul Ridzuan, Jalan Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab, Ipoh. In aid of the Perak Society for the Promotion of Mental Health. With Samuel J. Dass on the Sitar and Prakash Kandasamy on the Tabla. Admission by invitation. Contact: Mdm. Shanthi **016-5321087**, Mr. Thaneermalai **012-5555503** or Mdm. Vijaya **012-5712671**.

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iSpeak

A. Jeyaraj

Parking Nightmare at Ipoh Railway Station

Ipoh Railway Station was deserted for quite some time until the shuttle train service was started between Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur about three years ago. When the Electric Train Service with a travelling time of about two hours between the two cities was introduced more than a year ago, it has become the most popular mode of transport. Though the fare is higher than that of the express buses, people prefer to travel by train because it is much safer and comfortable.

Each train has a capacity for more than 300 passengers and there are six services daily in each direction. On the average some 2,000 passengers pass through the station daily on weekdays and the number is higher on weekends. However, there has been no increase in the availability of parking spaces in front of the station. Customers going to the Main Post Office also use this parking area. The parking bays in front of the station are reserved for KTMB staff.

The pickup area is congested. Most of the time there is double parking and at peak times triple parking to pick up the passengers. The pickup area is not properly demarcated. Taxis are parked in front of the area without drivers, causing traffic jams. At any time, cars are parked haphazardly all over the place, making it inconvenient for all drivers.

Shafruddin Nasution, Chairman, Rukun Tettanga, Lim Garden said that he goes to the station frequently to pick up his daughter. He has no choice, but to park illegally. Another regular traveller, K. Sagadevan, Secretary, Malaysian Indian Business Association said that it is convenient for him to travel by train to KL for his business trips, but is frustrated by the congestion. Jessie Tan, an Accounts Manager goes to the station to drop and pick up relatives and said that she always encounters parking problems and has to wait for a long time to get a parking space. She added that taxis are only available when trains arrive; at other times there are no taxis.

The road in front of the station is one-way traffic and after dropping off a passenger, if a person has to return to take care of senior citizens boarding the train, then he must drive all the way to the front of SMI School along Jalan S.P. Seenivasagam and make a U-turn. It would be convenient if a mini roundabout is built at the junction of Jalan Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab so that motorists can return to the station easily or alternatively an additional lane can be built along this road whereby drivers coming out of the station can turn right and return to the station.



The rear entrance to the station from Regat Tun Perak (Jelf Road) is not being utilised. There is a subway leading to the front of the station. The entrance to the subway is a simple structure with no signboard. People are unfamiliar with this and good signage would be helpful.

There is ample parking space around. Regat Tun Razak is a bypass road and few vehicles use it. Even at Platform 1 in the station there is no signboard pointing to the subway. It is essential that KTMB publicise this entrance. Residents staying on the other side of the railway line can use this entrance and avoid the traffic jam. People are wary of using subways and security guards and cameras must be placed at both entrances and it must be well lit.

The minimum taxi fare from the station is RM10. A shuttle bus service should be introduced between Medan Kidd and the station. Also buses travelling along Jalan Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab should pass through the station. If there are frequent bus services people would use it and the parking problem would be eased.

The only people who are happy with the situation are the MBI parking attendants who are very prompt in their issuance of summons for vehicles illegally parked.

We have a state-of-art train service, but the infrastructure is lacking. I urge the Mayor to *turun padang* and see for himself the situation and come up with a permanent solution. To get a true picture he must visit the place without forewarning.



Young Perak Total Empowerment Camp Huge Success



After a lapse of nearly 10 years, EWRF (Educational, Welfare and Research Foundation) Ipoh Branch successfully conducted the Total Empowerment Camp for a group of post-UPSR students at Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (Tamil) Kerajaan, Jalan Sungai Pari, Buntong, Ipoh recently. The objective of the Camp was to improve the level of English among Tamil school students as well as to instil confidence among these students as they make the transition to the secondary schools.

Under the able supervision of the Camp Co-ordinator Mr Jeyasudan and the Camp Commander Mr Roobenthiran, the team of two teachers and four wardens completely took charge of the camp and ran it like a well-oiled machine even though they were novices at the game. Starting with 50 students, there were 48 who eventually completed the 3-week stint, the remaining two dropping out for want of will or due to ill health.

The camp was inaugurated in a very traditional opening ceremony on the morning of November 20 by Tokoh Guru Dato' Seri N.S. Selvamany witnessed by the parents, participants, the branch committee led by Dato' Dr R. Gunasagaran and the press.

Over the next 21 days, various modules were conducted mainly in English by the teachers and the wardens with interactive sessions, thought provoking videos, role play, games and even song and dance sessions. Besides the educational activities the students also actively prepared for a variety show which was enacted on the final day.

Motivational talks to the students were given by a select group of speakers which included a social worker, a specialist surgeon, an entrepreneur, a police officer and a skills trainer. The educational and activity modules covered a variety of academic topics and social issues and touched on such areas as Attitude, Reality, Sexuality, Reproductive

Health and Life Experiences. Stimulating discussions were the order of the day and throughout the camp, teamwork and confidence building were the main themes.

The closing ceremony was far different to the opening day's apprehension. This ceremony was officiated by Mr Jeyakumar, the Supervisor of Tamil Schools, Hilir Perak representing the State Education Department. The Deputy President of EWRF Central Committee Ms V. Kalaiyarasi also graced the occasion. The closing ceremony presented a golden opportunity for the 'empowered' students to display their skills, talents and new found confidence. Gone was the shyness and timidity as every one of them revealed the true meaning of esprit de corps. They were one unit in thought, word and action as they went through various song and dance sequences. An extra special touch to the occasion was given by the poem "Mother" rendered by one student. The poem dwelt on the significant role and love of a mother.

Many a truth was exposed by the camp but the very clear message to take home was: "Education is the bridge to improvement of the individual and the community at large. Through the right attitude and proper application of knowledge one can achieve his / her objectives in the short or long term."

When the camp concluded, there were scenes of joy as the students had a new found sense of confidence and achievement but there were also so many of them who felt sad that the camp was over. Sad because it was time to part with their new found friends with whom they had shared so many hours exploring new avenues opened up to them in such a pleasing manner.

EWRF Ipoh hopes to keep a tab on this batch of students as they go through their secondary school education through a mentor system involving the committee members and volunteers.

The organising committee of EWRF Ipoh expressed their sincerest thanks and appreciation to EWRF HQ and the many sponsors and well-wishers, as well as the speakers for their financial and moral support. They hope to organise a similar event for Year 2012.

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Anak Perak

Corporate Matchmaker to the Poor and Marginalised

By See Foon Chan-Koppen



For someone to whom giving is second nature, Dr Peggy Wong came beaming into the restaurant bearing gifts for the three of us. Coming to Ipoh from KL just for the day, the fact that she even had time to think about a 'little something' Chinese New Year gift during her short sojourn here and I wasn't even meant to join them for lunch, warmed me to her immediately. Interviewing this chirpy, upbeat, respected global entrepreneur, socialite and philanthropist was not only smooth sailing but an uplifting experience as she regaled us with anecdotes about her philanthropic work and the adventures that it brought into her life.

Dr Peggy Chan. Wong has successfully built many businesses, but meeting children from underprivileged circumstances had such an impact on her that her focus now is on helping children in need.

"Some of these children do not even have one meal a day. Some walk for 2 hours to go to school and 2 hours back home again. There are children who go to school for only 14 days a year, as and when their parents can afford the boat fare. And there are those who carry a precious pair of shoes on their back and wear them only when they reached school."

Thus Dr Wong started *Living Hope* in May 2007 as a Corporate Social Responsibility initiative to bring both awareness and resources to these children. Since that time, Dr Wong has travelled all over Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak, to meet these children, understand their plight and bring much needed help in terms of donations that go towards the feeding and education programmes that she has set up. She firmly believes that education is the one and only way out of the vicious cycle of poverty.

A former banker with an international bank, she founded her own group of companies in Malaysia and Singapore, which is involved in joint ventures, investments and strategic alliances. She was the Charter President of the Kiwanis Club of Bukit Bandaraya, a member of the Kuala Lumpur Speakers' Club, former panel advisor of the Women's Institute of Management, a life member of the Harvard Alumni of Malaysia, Harvard Business School Alumni and member of the Corporate Malaysia Roundtable, a prestigious private sector think-tank.

Serving the poor and needy is in her DNA. Dr Wong comes from an Ipoh family of philanthropists. Her grandfather, a Chinese physician, gave free medicine to the migrant workers who came by boat to Malaysia from China. Her father is Chan Chee Keong, an industrialist who brought in several industries in the 70s and also a millionaire and philanthropist. He continued giving free medicine to the needy and helped build Chinese schools in Perak. One of our Ipoh roads is named after him. Dr Wong who was born and educated in Ipoh, followed her father in his charitable activities and it was ingrained in her to serve the underprivileged during her early years.

Her charitable works include her contributions to WWF, Kosovo war victims, J.E. victims, old folks' homes, spastic children, orphanages and families of the blind in Malaysia and internationally.

Her life is driven by three basic principles: to be a blessing to others as God has blessed her; that it is more blessed to give than to receive and her fervent belief that we come into this world with nothing and will go away with nothing. Along the way, we ought to help the poor and needy.

Often teased by her friends and nicknamed the 'Corporate Matchmaker' Dr Wong tirelessly acts as a go-between the rich and famous and the poor. "My corporate and business connections give me access to 'big guns' who need help in seeking out deserving causes to support. So the best thing is both parties are happy," she bubbles.

Living Hope has started the "One Egg-One Child" programme which provides breakfast or lunch for children from hard-core poor families, who go to school without meals on school days. It has also launched the "Educate a Child" programme by sourcing and donating school uniforms, shoes and socks, school bags, books, stationery and other educational needs.

"I prefer to deal directly with the donors and recipients. After they have established the initial contact and donation, they continue on their own and provide me with feedback. I encourage them to make personal visits or check these recipients out for themselves. I earn nothing from this except the satisfaction that I have helped some people alleviate their problems," she said.

To let marginalised children know that 'someone out there cares' as stated in their Mission statement, *Living Hope* has also successfully set up **Channel of Hope Distribution Program and the Toy and Book Library (TBL)**. To date, *Living Hope* has touched the lives of more than 27,200 children in every single state in Malaysia as well as some in Singapore, India, China and Philippines.

Driven by a personal vision to do her part to alleviate the suffering of these children and applying her corporate wisdom, she has dedicated herself to being an instrument to bring living hope and love to these little ones. Since starting *Living Hope*, Dr Wong has been to places she has never imagined and touched the lives of people she never knew existed. Her greatest joy is seeing the smiles on the faces of children who have only known hunger and poverty.

"And we have only just begun. There is so much more to do and so many more people to help," she concluded.

Dr Wong is a well sought after public speaker and author of popular *Life's Little Secrets* series of Hope, Inner Peace, Love and Wisdom. Any person or organisation wishing to help, contribute or donate: Dr Peggy Wong can be reached at:

dr.pwong@livinghopemalaysia.com.