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30 SEN FOR DELIVERY TO YOUR DOORSTEP -  
ASK YOUR NEWSVENDOR

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## Pemudah

by Emily Lowe

## Smoothing the Way for Business



**P**EMUDAH or Pasukan Petugas Khas Permudahcara Perniagaan (Special Task Force to Facilitate Business) is a high-powered task force set up to address bureaucracy in business-government dealings. The idea was the brainchild of former Prime Minister, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, initiated during his annual speech to the civil service in January, 2007. In short, the inception of PEMUDAH was to effect greater improvement in the way government regulates businesses, enhances policies and revamps public sector delivery systems, if and when the need arises.

Continued on page 2



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# A Customer-Oriented Delivery System for Both the Public and Private Sectors

Perak was the first state in Malaysia to establish a state-level PEMUDAH in November 2007, following a proposal by the *Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers* – FMM (Perak). While PEMUDAH Malaysia looks after federal policies, PEMUDAH Perak's main focus is on state policies, which are sometimes raised to the Federal Government, if necessary.

PEMUDAH Perak encourages participation of all district offices, local authorities, government bodies, quasi-government bodies and other regulatory bodies in the state along with the private sector, with the aim of improving the state's delivery system.

## Vision and Values

Following guidelines from Putrajaya, PEMUDAH Perak also aims to achieve a delivery system for both the public and private sector that is not only customer-oriented but innovative and proactive, as is globally bench-marked.

PEMUDAH Perak looks forward to a proactive collaboration between the public and private sectors and supportive governing bodies based on reasonable business terms and conditions. The purpose is to intensify services integrity and create awareness of issues faced by the business community in the state.

## Terms of Reference

- To review the status of public services delivery system in terms of processes, procedures, laws and human resources and to improve upon these.
- To benchmark the good practices in the public and private sectors.
- To co-ordinate and organise programmes amongst public service agencies in order to reinforce the competitiveness of Malaysia, particularly Perak.
- To address the relevant issues on public sector delivery system raised at State Exco meetings.

## Composition of Committee

PEMUDAH Perak is co-chaired by the State Secretary, Dato' Abdul Puhat bin Mat Nayan, representing the public sector, and FMM (Perak) Chairman, Dato' Gan Tack Kong, representing the private sector. The Secretariat is made up of the *State Economic Planning Unit* (UPEN) and FMM Perak. It is representative of the composition at federal level where the Chief Secretary and President of FMM (Malaysia) co-chair.

Other members include the State Financial Officer, Deputy State Secretary and Ipoh Mayor from the public sector; and Dato' Francis Lee (REDHA Perak Chairman), Lee Chee Meng (Perak Chinese Chamber of Commerce or PCCCI), Peter Yates (CEO Carsem), Chairman Leong Hua Kooi of Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MICCI) Perak chapter and Dato' Muhammad Muhiyuddin (Perak Malay Chamber of Commerce), among others from the private sector. The committee meets bimonthly on the first Friday of even months.

## Restructuring Exercise

In 2011, PEMUDAH Perak underwent a major restructuring exercise. A drastic move was taken to open up membership to individual companies, instead of just business associations and chambers in Perak.

As part of its restructure, six focus groups were formed:

1. Industrial Park Management Committee (IPMC)
2. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
3. Human Resources
4. Permits and Licenses for Business
5. Properties and Land Matters
6. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

A seventh focus group has been proposed – Security (encompassing both physical and online threats). These focus groups are jointly chaired by representatives from both the public and private sectors, all of whom are members of PEMUDAH Perak.

Co-chairman of PEMUDAH Perak, Dato' Gan Tack Kong, is happy that the newly revamped task force is finally meeting its objectives and resolving issues.

## Benchmarking

PEMUDAH, in general, uses the global index of "Ease of Doing Business" by the World Bank Group as a benchmark to check on the level of ease to conduct business in the country. Malaysia ranked 23 out of 183 economies indexed in 2011 but jumped five positions in 2012 to rank at number 18.

PEMUDAH Perak refers to key indicators set by the World Bank Group to improve on the ease of doing business at state level. These indicators include starting a business, dealing with construction permits, getting electricity supply, registering property, getting credit, protecting investors, taxes, cross-border trading, enforcing contracts and resolving insolvency.

## Challenges

According to Dato' Gan, initially it was tough going for PEMUDAH Perak and the mechanism of streamlining the delivery system in the state was slow, as there was no proper system in place. "It wasn't easy to change the mindset of those in the public service to see why a revamp was required," he said.



Dato' Gan Tack Kong,  
FMM (Perak) Chairman

However, the task force has been receiving full co-operation from the State Government since Dato' Abdul Puhat, the new State Secretary came on board in December 2011. While addressing state policies is a manageable task, decisions that involve Federal Government policies are still difficult to reach. "One major difficulty is seeking Federal allocation for state projects," said Gan.

## Work in Progress

The plight of the Perak Pottery Association, which is currently facing an energy crisis, is of major concern to PEMUDAH Perak. Businesses in the pottery industry are grossly affected by the inability to procure good quality fuel at a reasonable price. As a result, some companies folded as they were unable to sustain their business due to the rising cost of fuel.

The Ceramic Park Industrial Area in Chepor, which was once only open to those in the ceramics business, is now occupied by businesses from other sectors as well. Hence, the park is now home to a mixed industry, which was not the original intention.

The problem faced by the *Perak Pottery Association* affects the whole country as nearly 80 per cent of ceramic products in the country are manufactured in Perak.

## Proposals

The focus group on Human Resources proposes to establish a One-Stop-Centre (OSC), probably at the Immigration Department in Meru Raya. This is to facilitate the recruitment of foreign labour. Companies are currently forced to make countless trips to Putrajaya to process permits to hire foreign employees.

The focus group on Permits and Licensing, headed by Ipoh Mayor, Dato' Hj Roshidi Hashim and Dato' Francis Lee (REDHA Perak Chairman), has proposed that the lengthy licensing procedures be streamlined and checklists shortened. The Ipoh City Council has been tasked to provide the benchmark for other local councils to follow.

## Success Stories

Since its establishment in November 2007, PEMUDAH Perak has reduced the cost of doing business and enhanced trade and business opportunities in the state, besides improving the public delivery system. Issues resolved include the speeding up of AP approval for the export of rock materials under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, speeding up the renewal application of mining lease for Kaolin (M) Sdn Bhd, which had been pending for two years and the establishment of the State IPMC (Industrial Park Management Committee).

Dato' Gan is particularly proud of IPMC's performance thus far, especially in the



districts of Ipoh, Taiping, Manjung, Tapah, Gerik, Kerian, Teluk Intan and Batu Gajah.

Each committee is required to meet four times a year to address infrastructure issues that may crop up in their respective industrial estates. Local councils have been utilising the IPMC platform to lobby for Federal grants through *Malaysian Investment Development Authority* (MIDA).

Shining examples would be the Federal grant disbursed to industrial parks in Perak under the 10th Malaysia Plan (2011-2015). Tasek Industrial Estate in Ipoh received RM3.1 million for the upgrading of road and drainage, the Ceramic Park Industrial Area in Chepor received RM1.8 million for road works, while Kamunting Raya Industrial Estate in Taiping received RM3.4 million for road and drainage works.

With IPMC in place, PEMUDAH Perak is able to, within the shortest period of time, identify industrial land that has been left idle, and link these to interested investors quickly. This saves potential investors time and money.

On a more basic level, the approval of "Halal" certificates now requires only one month compared to three months previously, while land registration with the Office of Land and Mines now takes only one working day.

## PEMUDAH Perak

Even though the main objective of PEMUDAH, at both national and state levels, is to facilitate business, PEMUDAH Perak welcomes feedback from the general public on issues pertaining to streamlining of delivery systems in the public sector.

Mohd Jaffrey b Mohd Zainol, the Assistant Director for Investment and Industry at the State Economic Planning Unit, who also leads the Secretariat of PEMUDAH Perak, pointed out that one of the challenges faced by the task force is the lack of input from the public.

Go to <http://www.perak.gov.my/index.php/component/content/article?id=188> for your complaint form (E-Aduan). This E-Aduan system is part of PEMUDAH Perak's plan to move all paperwork online.

## Future

Jaffrey hopes to see one-stop centres (similar to MBI's) being established at all local councils. In time, the public sector will be setting a benchmark for the private sector to follow. The private sector, incidentally, has been very supportive in this aspect. "The proactive stance adopted by the business fraternity is simply remarkable," he concluded.



Mohd Jaffrey b Mohd Zainol



IPOH **echo**

From the Editor's Desk

• by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

# Justice for the Innocents

*The Tapah court decision may not be in the same league as the Sagong Tasi case. It is a vindication of sorts for a community long oppressed by the very people entrusted to care for them.*

It may not be the landmark case of the year but the decision by the Tapah magistrate court to acquit and discharge four Orang Asli over the shooting of a tiger in Bukit Tapah Forest Reserve in 2010 was of significance to the Semai community. The four, Yok Mat Bah Chong, 48, Yok Rayau Yok Senian, 50, Yok Kalong Bah Papee, 51, and Hassan Bah Ong, 33, were charged under Section 64A of the *Wildlife Protection Act 1972 (Amended 1976 and 1988)* which carries a fine of RM15,000 or a five-year jail sentence or both.

The incident took place in the forest reserve near Sungkai on February 4, 2010. According to Yok Mat, they shot the tiger to save their friend, Yok Mench Yok Din, who was attacked by the animal while out foraging in the forest. The prosecution, adduced Magistrate Fairuz Adiba Ismail, had failed to prove a prima facie case against the four who hailed from different villages in Sungkai.

Based on a 2000 census, the Orang Asli population in Peninsular Malaysia stands at approximately 150,000 or 0.5 per cent of the overall population of the country. They are being divided into three groups, namely Negrito, Senoi and Proto-Malay. The Senoi forms the largest grouping with nearly 55 per cent of the total number. Senoi is concentrated in central peninsula, of which the Semai is the majority with nearly 35,000.

The Semai is found mostly in areas around Sungai Siput in the north to Tanjung Malim in the south. There is also a sizeable population in the Tapah and Cameron Highlands regions. A vital link during the Malayan Emergency (1948 to 1960), they were being courted by both the Communist insurgents and the authorities. The establishment of security posts in the Semai heartland of Cameron Highlands and areas bordering Perak and Kelantan bore testimony to this statement.

During my years in the army I had the opportunity to interact with these indigenous people in Post Brooke, Post Telanok and Post Poi. Their naivety and, to a large extent, simplicity are reasons why they have been taken advantage of by the unscrupulous among us. The pillage, unfortunately, continues to this day. For reasons of political expedience, the Orang Asli community has come under intense public scrutiny since the general election of 2008.

Legislations related to Orang Asli are the National Land Code 1965, Land Conservation Act 1960, Wildlife Protection Act 1972 (Amended 1976 and 1988), National Parks Act 1980 (Amendment 1983), and most importantly the Aboriginal Peoples Act 1954. The Aboriginal Peoples Act 1954 provides for the setting up and establishment of the Orang Asli Reserve Land. It also includes the power accorded to the Director-General of the Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli to order Orang Asli out of such reserved land at its discretion, and award compensation to affected people. A landmark case in 2002 was the *Sagong Tasi vs. Government of Selangor*. It concerned the state using its powers under the 1954 Act to evict Orang Asli from gazetted Orang Asli Reserve Land. The High Court ruled in favour of Sagong Tasi, who represented the Orang Asli, and was upheld by the Court of Appeal.

Although the Tapah court decision on Thursday, October 11 may not be in the same league as the Sagong Tasi case, its significance can never be dismissed. It is, after all, a vindication of sorts for a community long oppressed by the very people entrusted to care for them. It is poetic justice for the four who were doing what their forefathers had been doing before them – eking out a living by foraging in the jungles. The vast jungle tracts, which are slowly but surely shrinking due to human encroachments, are fair game for the powerful and the moneyed, on one side, and the weak and the poor, on the other. It is akin to the confrontation between the Red Indians and the white settlers in 19th century USA.

The fact that the quartet was defended by the likeable legal team of Augustine Anthony



and Amani William Hunt Abdullah, better known as Bah Tony, a part Semai, lends credence to its importance. Augustine had argued that there had been contradictions in the evidence produced in court. The shotgun, belonging to a Rela personnel, referred to in the ballistic report was different from the one seized from the accused. A Veterinary Services Department officer had told the court that she was the one who performed the autopsy on the dead tiger but an earlier report said that a Wildlife Department officer did the examination. The Rela officer who testified on behalf of the prosecution could not even differentiate one shotgun from another.

"The contradictions were simply too glaring for a conviction," said Augustine. "Therefore, the court was justified in dismissing the four."

The victory may be long overdue but more problems are in the offing. The latest being the slapping of Orang Asli students by a Malay teacher for failing to recite the *doa* during school assembly.

## EYE HEALTH – Nutrition for the Eyes

***Ipo Echo's EYE HEALTH series continues with Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S.S. GILL talking to us more about NUTRITION & VITAMINS for the eyes.***

It is important to eat the right foods that contain the right vitamins to help keep your eyes healthy. Good nutrition with vitamins and minerals are important for the eyes to function normally.

In this issue, Dr Gill speaks about antioxidants Lutein and Zeaxanthin – known as 'carotenoids' that are important for the eyes.

### Lutein and Zeaxanthin

Lutein and Zeaxanthin are important nutrients that have been found to reduce the risk of chronic eye diseases, including Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) and cataracts. These carotenoids are powerful antioxidants that protect the cells of the body from damage caused by free radicals.

### What is the Meaning of Antioxidant?

Antioxidants are substances that protect cells in your body from free radicals. Free radicals are produced when your immune system fights off bacteria. Free radicals are also produced as by-products when the foods that we eat are broken down into energy.

These free radicals are unstable and can damage the cells in our eyes and organs as a whole. Our bodies including our eyes are constantly exposed to these free radicals (oxidative stress). In fact, every cell in our body comes under attack from a free radical once every ten seconds.

### Some things that cause free radical production (oxidative stress):

- Ultraviolet light in sunshine – those exposed to the sun are more likely to get cataracts and skin cancer.
- Toxins: cigarette smoke, poisonous wastes of our own metabolism, the chemicals invariably found in our food, pesticides and air pollution.

Antioxidants are like the "body-guards" for the cells in our body. They protect the cells from damage by the free radicals. This is why antioxidants are important.

### How does Lutein and Zeaxanthin work?

Antioxidants Lutein and Zeaxanthin filter the harmful high-energy blue wavelengths of light and help to protect and maintain healthy cells in the eye.

### Lutein and Zeaxanthin Slowing Cataract Formation

Lutein and zeaxanthin may play a role in cataract prevention. In fact, studies have shown that lutein and zeaxanthin along with vitamin E was associated with a decreased risk of cataract formation. This is because these antioxidants may slow down the oxidation of the lens and therefore slow down cataract formation.

### Lutein and Zeaxanthin in Age-Related Macular Degeneration

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) results in visual loss. Clinical studies have shown that high levels of antioxidants and zinc significantly reduced the risk of advanced AMD.

### Foods Rich in Lutein and Zeaxanthin

Green vegetables such as: kale, spinach, turnip, broccoli, garden peas and eggs. To get the best nutrients, avoid excessive cooking and storage as heat and storage reduces the antioxidant effectiveness.

### Key points to remember:

- Eat a good balanced diet with lots of fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Discuss improving your diet or taking vitamin supplements with your GP.
- Avoid smoking. A healthy lifestyle makes all the difference!

For more information, call Gill Eye Specialist Centre at Hospital Fatimah (05-545 5582) or email: [gilleyecentre@dr.com](mailto:gilleyecentre@dr.com).



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## AES: Cash Cow or Behaviour Control

For those who are not aware, the Automated Enforcement System (AES), or 'speed traps', were first installed on September 23, along accident-prone areas in Perak, Putrajaya, Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. Three states – Kedah, Kelantan and Penang have suspended the use of the AES.

According to the Road Transport Department (RTD), the first tranche would be 14 AES cameras; ten cameras to record drivers who break the speed limit, and four to catch drivers who jump red lights. Within the next 18 months, a further 817 cameras will be deployed.

Even before they were installed, the AES cameras attracted much controversy. Politicians from both the ruling and opposition coalitions have requested that the AES be delayed so that a proper study can be conducted and the results incorporated into future road safety plans. Members of the public claim that the speed traps are not meant to reduce traffic casualties or improve road safety, but are a covert means of "profiteering" at the expense of the motorist.

A self-employed man based in Ipoh who makes regular working trips to Kuala Lumpur said, "These AES cameras act like cash tills for the government. If the authorities want to improve the behaviour of people on the roads, they should enforce the existing laws, strictly."

"Instead of doing that, the law-enforcers, who are obviously not doing their jobs, then break the law themselves, by accepting bribes, to let off motorists who have broken traffic rules."

"It's all relative isn't it? RM50 is more acceptable to parting with than RM300 for a traffic offence. The policeman or the RTD officer is happy, the errant motorist is relieved."

Another person when contacted agreed that speed traps are a con: "They're (AES cameras) just there to create money. First, from the purchase of the cameras; secondly, from the speeding fines and lastly, from the maintenance contracts."

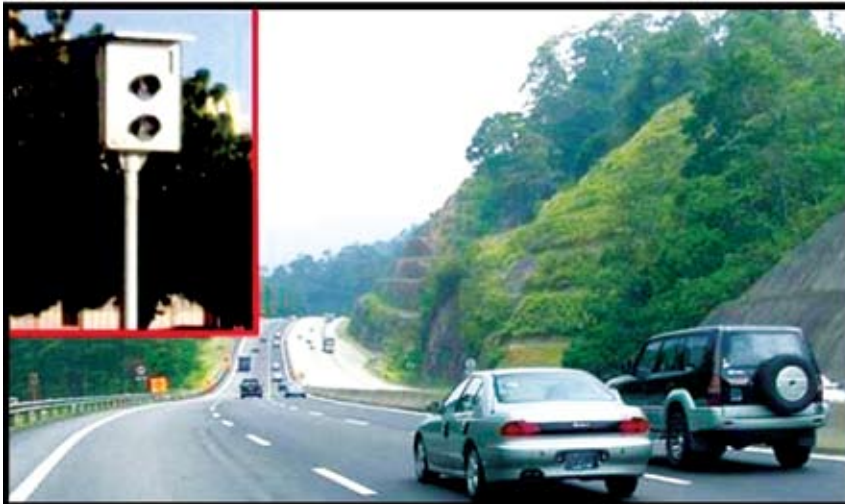
Norma, a geriatric motorist said, "The AES would be a good idea if they were only placed on genuine accident black-spots."

In a Malaysian daily, Transport Minister Kong Cho Ha said that of the 831 AES cameras, 566 were for detecting speeding and 265 were for use at traffic lights. These included 250 mobile cameras for areas which lacked electricity and communication cables.

Kong has defended the AES stating that its aim was to raise public awareness of road safety and make them more alert, not just to collect fines. He believed that the AES would help reduce the frequency of accidents and deaths.

According to the transport minister, three years after the AES was adopted, deaths from traffic accidents in France were reduced by 27%, whilst in Germany, 80% of road users did not exceed the speed limit and in Kuwait, the AES reduced accidents by 48%.

Could Kong have got his facts wrong? There is no speed limit on German autobahns.



**THINKING  
ALLOWED**

• by Mariam Mokhtar

Despite the installation of the AES last month, around 100 demonstrators staged a protest outside the RTD office in Ipoh, on October 17, in an effort to force the government to cancel the AES. They carried placards and collected signatures for their cause. Members of the group wanted to create awareness of the extra burden that has been placed

on the *rakyat*, who are already feeling the strain from recent austerity measures. They warned of similar protests in other states.

The group chanted "*Kroni kaya, rakyat derita* (cronies get rich whilst the people suffer)" as well as "*Hidup rakyat* (long live the people)". Others poured scorn on the AES and called it a sham by billing it a 'SR1M' or 'Saman (summons) Rakyat 1Malaysia', imitating the much maligned *Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia* (BR1M).

An online newspaper reported that the Transport Ministry had replied in parliament that the total investment for the AES by the two firms, ATES Sdn Bhd and Beta Tegas Sdn Bhd, (both of which have been authorised to operate the AES), was RM717 million. However, online reports stated that Jenoptik Robot (Germany) had signed a US\$53 million (RM160 million) contract to install around 550 stationary and mobile systems for ATES, whilst the deal between Redflex Traffic Systems Pty Ltd (Australia) and Beta Tegas was for 450 fixed speed cameras, at US50 million (RM151 million).

Comments from concerned citizens include:

"If the cameras cost RM311 million what happened to the other RM407 million?"

"Why are private companies involved? Is the AES really to improve road safety or is it a cash cow for crony companies?"

The online paper also quoted a New Straits Times report that in the first eight days of the AES's operation, around 64,000 traffic offences had been captured on camera.

An irate motorist said: "We have no choice but to use toll roads and fork out money. We are then harassed by these speed cameras, where motorists only slow down just because of their presence but afterwards, carry on driving haphazardly.

"The rich and powerful can get their fines waived, but what about the poor? If the authorities are really concerned about Malaysians driving dangerously, address the source of the problem and get rid of 'kopi-o licences' and weed out errant enforcement officers. There are hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of motorists, who drive without licenses, valid insurance or use vehicles which are not road-worthy."

An expat in Ipoh said, "Speed cameras are equally unpopular in England and many are destroyed with a "Nigerian necklace"; a tyre is hung over the camera and set alight.

"Crashes are often caused when people brake sharply for a speed camera. Far from making motorists safer, speed cameras distract motorists, who keep scanning for speed cameras, rather than concentrating on the road ahead."

## Community

### "Solutions for Hearing" Campaign

Perak Community Specialist Hospital (PCSH) held a "Solutions for Hearing" Campaign on October 20, from 8.30am to 12.30pm.

The hospital provided free hearing tests, blood pressure examinations, blood glucose checks, diet counselling, Body Mass Index (BMI) readings, and a Hearing Awareness Counter. The children were occupied with colouring and puzzles and colourful balloons were distributed to all children as well.

The public were very enthusiastic about the Hearing Test counter, the majority of whom were senior citizens.

Datin Y.C. Lee, wife of Medical Superintendent of The Perak Chinese Maternity Association arrived at 9.45am to tour the Screening and Promotion Counters and was accompanied by Rajindar Singh, CEO of PCSH and Dr Harvinder Singh, Consultant Rhinologist & Otolaryngologist (ENT).





## MUSINGS ON FOOD



By See Foon Chan-Koppen

Photos by Ginla Foo

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**H**oong Tho restaurant was one of the earliest restaurants in Ipoh that I reviewed in March 2009 when I first began writing this food column and also one with the longest heritage surpassed only by Hung Kee in Cowan Street.

Imagine my surprise when accepting Dato' Daniel Tay's invitation for dinner at Hoong Tho when I discovered it's been three and a half years since my last visit. And many new developments have taken place at this 'Loh Chiew Pai' meaning 'old brand name' since that time.

Since taking over from his father in 2010, Andy Onn has given this venerable establishment a facelift and upgraded the whole place. Re-opened since April this year, new toilets have made this restaurant a possible venue for long, lingering dinners with friends where before, one would eat and run! While still a fan-cooled outlet, one giant air-cooler on the ceiling helps to keep the hot humid temperatures at bay.

And concomitant with the upgrading of the physical premises, the menu too has undergone a facelift. While the traditional dishes for which Hoong Tho is famous – like their **Lenggong Fried noodles**, their **caul-wrapped spring rolls**, their **Phoenix balls** (minced pork, water chestnuts, wrapped around a salted egg yolk), their **Wat Dan** (which means silky smooth egg) style of noodles with the inimitable sauce, thickened with cornstarch and



egg white – are still on the menu, Chef Andy has creatively used Hoong Tho's traditional recipes and elevated some to culinary heights of Cantonese fine dining.

The night of Dato' Daniel's dinner, thanks to Eddie Foo, Ipoh's antiques expert, the menu was pre-ordered (recommended) and presented one dish at a time. Our first dish was a huge tureen of their **steamed chicken soup**, prepared according to the ancient Hoong Tho recipe passed down through the generations. This was clear and robust at the same time, the 'umami' flavours contributed by not only the chicken but the black dried shitake mushrooms, the dried scallops, the dried octopus and



various other special ingredients seasoned with a piece of ginger. Although pricey at RM100, the tureen was enough for double helpings for 10 people.

This was followed by a '**Wat Dan**' fish, a whole pomfret, meat sliced; the bones cut in pieces, battered, and fried to a crunchy crispiness; over flat rice noodles and topped with their famous 'Wat Dan' sauce. This is an example of the earlier mentioned accolade of elevating basic recipes to culinary heights, where the pomfret was ocean fresh, the meat firm yet tender, the bones lending texture and crunch in juxtaposition to the soft noodles and the silky smooth sauce, fluidly binding all the ingredients into one delectable taste treat. Pomfret being my favourite fish, I found myself in seventh heaven. Seasonal price.

Next to arrive was what looked like a deboned roast chicken, flattened on the plate, with a golden crisp



# SeeFoon Revisits an Old Haunt



skin. On first bite I discovered that appearances can be deceiving as what I was tasting was **minced chicken meat combined with 'Saito'** or Ikan Belida fish paste, stuffed into the chicken skin and roasted to a golden brown. The contrast of the springy meat 'farcie' against the crispiness of the skin topping made for an interesting mouth feel. A lot of preparation work for the Chef but well worth the effort for diners and hence the price of RM50 for the dish.

Next on the table was the **steamed 'Saito'** or Ikan Belida fish belly, steamed with *Tao Cheo*, (fermented bean paste), chilli and garlic. The fish was melt-in-mouth fresh and steamed to perfection. Because the fish is seasonal, it is advisable to order and check for availability.

More fish followed in the form of the fried fish paste wonton, a specialty of Hoong Tho and always available. Again this fish paste is homemade from Saito fish, wrapped in wonton skin and deep fried to a crispy crunchiness. RM1.20 each with minimum order of 4 pieces.

Of course no dinner ends without something to sweeten the palate and we opted to taste the specialty Cempedak cake, handmade fresh daily by Andy's sister and is always available for takeaway from the shopfront at RM11 per cake. This turned out to be deliciously moist, oozing with fresh Cempedak, the smaller and with a more pungent aroma than its cousin, the Nangka or Jackfruit. We topped this up with their famous custard, smooth and creamy and not overly sweet, at RM2.50 each.

### Hoong Tho Restaurant

20 Jalan Bandar Timah, 30000 Ipoh.

Andy Onn: 016-555 8858

Shop: 05-254 9673

10am-4pm; 6pm-9.30pm. Closed Tuesdays.

## RECIPE

By Margarita Lee



### Buta Kimchi (Pork and Kimchi Stir Fry)



#### Ingredients:

- 250 gm pork belly (or substitute with other meat) – thinly sliced
- 250 gm kimchi – roughly chopped
- 1 onion thinly sliced
- 1 Tbsp gochujang (Korean fermented soybean paste)
- 1 Tsp soy sauce
- ½ Tbsp sesame oil
- 2 scallions thinly sliced
- Kewpie Mayonnaise (optional)

#### Method:

1. Heat a pan or wok until very hot. Arrange pork in a single layer and leave until fat is rendered. Once fat is rendered, stir fry until cooked. Remove from wok. Remove some of the oil.
2. Sauté onion with sesame oil till soft and add in kimchi. Add in gochujang.
3. Add in pork. Stir fry until kimchi juices and sauce is reduced.
4. Sprinkle with scallions and serve.
5. Garnish with mayonnaise (optional).

## HAWKER FOOD

By VWSL

### Laksa Asam (Halal)



**W**e are looking again at *Laksa Asam* (or Asam Laksa) but the *halal* kind, in other words, Malay laksa. When compared with Penang laksa, the gravy of Malay laksa is not as thick and comes with a slice of hard-boiled egg. You won't see bits and pieces of fish floating around because the fish is ground so fine in the gravy, making it a little watery. Mint leaves or Vietnamese mint (*daun kesum*) may be used as a garnish with sliced onions, red chillies and torch ginger flower (*bunga kantan*). We were hard-pressed to find very many exceptional stalls (readers are encouraged to recommend any).

#### D'Polo Cafe Lan's Catering

Jalan Brash (across from the Polo Ground)

Gravy is mildly spicy but flavourful and comes with half a hard-boiled egg, garnished with mint leaves. Squeeze lime juice for extra tartness. The sweetness can be adjusted by adding the thick prawn paste that comes separate – RM4. Opens from 4.30pm till 2.30am everyday.



#### Laksa Ampang Ipoh

Stall under a big tree on Persiaran Wira Jaya Barat 32 (Off Jalan Raja Musa Mahadi between 2 Esso stations) A very popular stall with the local residents – RM2.50 From 2.30pm to 7pm, Sundays closed; also sells *cucur udang* and *pisang goreng*.

#### MBI Terrace Stall No. 4

Greentown Business Centre Comes with fried fritters (yeong liu), the reddish gravy is a little spicy – RM 3.50 Opens from 7pm-1am everyday (if weather permits).



## Community

# RM3.8 Million Spent On Credit Scheme

The micro-credit scheme introduced by Yayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan (YBU) in October 2010 is into its third year of operation. The scheme has helped over 1800 Perakeans to expand their business opportunities. A total sum of over RM3.8 million has been expended so far.

"It's money well spent," said Hairul Anwar Mohamed Noor, YBU's Chief Financial Officer to the media. Hairul was met after a cheque-presentation ceremony held at the foundation hall recently.

"Today 63 applicants received credits worth RM379,000 in total. The money will be used either as starting capital or for the expansion of their businesses," said Hairul to reporters at the end of the ceremony. "What's most heartening is that some of the earlier borrowers have managed to repay their loans in full and within the stipulated period."

These early birds sought a second and a much bigger loan. Their applications were approved and some received their loans at the ceremony.

Short courses on financial management, accounting and good business practices are held from time to time at the foundation office. "This is to better equip the borrowers for the challenges ahead," said Hairul.

Rashid Bah Shuyuk, 47, from Sungai Rusuk, Tapah came to know of YBU's offer after reading about it in the national daily. Rashid received RM8000 for his sundry shop business in his village. "I need not resort to *Along* (loan sharks) for the money," he said gleefully.

Widow Suria Omar, 34, from Tanjung Piandang was elated on receiving a RM3000 loan from the foundation. "I'll invest the money on a new sewing machine," she



said. Suria operates a flourishing tailoring business from her house in the coastal town of Kerian District.

Lee Book Kian, 51, from Taiping was very pleased with the RM11,000 loan he received. "I'll use the money to expand my clothing business."

Zurmarni Baharudin, 31, from Ipoh operates a beauty salon in Gunung Rapat. She acquired a soft loan of RM5,000 to start her business two years ago. Having settled in full the initial sum, she applied for a second loan. "The RM15,000 I got today will be used to purchase newer products and equipment, as the beauty business is very competitive."

The recipients were appreciative of the state government's efforts in helping them realise their dreams.

RM



Rashid Bah Shuyuk



Lee Book Kian



Zurmarni Baharudin



Suria Omar

## Sathya Sai Baba Centre Presents Uniforms for Needy Students



Sathya Sai Baba Centre, Ipoh presented uniforms and shoes to needy students from ten Tamil schools and two welfare homes for children. Representatives from the schools and homes received them on behalf of the students.

During the short ceremony, B.P. Prithviraj, Chairman of the Centre, said that for the past 20 years they have been doing this without fail. In addition, they also give monthly provisions to poor families, visit homes for the aged, provide breakfast for poor school children and pay their bus fares and provide free tuition.

Their activities are in line with the teaching of their Guru, Sathya Sai Baba, "Love All, Serve All" and "Help Ever, Hurt Never". The event was made possible through funds raised from the sale of vegetarian food during the Thaipusam festival and donations from members and the public.

AJ

## Dato' Brother Vincent Corkery, 55 Years in Ipoh



Dato' Brother Vincent Corkery has been serving the Ipoh community for five decades and appropriately has a following of well-wishers who recently held a lunch for him to mark his 55 years of service and his contribution to the Ipoh community as a LaSallian Brother.

The event was organised by Ipoh Socialite Sharmini Tiruchelvam in honour of Brother Vincent's selfless service to the community in Ipoh. Sharmini also mentioned that Vincent's birthday was around the end of October and it would be appropriate to organise a party for him.

Incidentally, Sharmini's father, the late Dato' Dr Michael E. Tiruchelvam was on the Board of Governors of SMI for three decades.

The event was well attended. Notable guests included Federal Court Judge, Datuk P.S. Gill; Sultan Idris Foundation Chairman, Tan Sri V. Jeyaratnam; Astro Deputy Chairman, Ralph Marshall, who is a Michaelian and Bishop Sebastian Francis, to name a few.

Also present was well-respected educationist Dato' Seri N. Selvamany who presented an orange shawl to Vincent for his invaluable contribution to education.

Entertainment was provided by the choirs from the three parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes, OMPH and St Michael's Church. One of the songs rendered for Vincent was When Irish eyes are smiling, while Sharmini chipped in to serenade Vincent with backing from the choir.

Undoubtedly, a warm and moving appreciation lunch for a respected member of the Ipoh community.

JAG



## Business

# MICCI Centennial Dinner

The Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MICCI) Perak chapter celebrated its 100th anniversary with a dinner at Impiana Hotel Ipoh recently.

Chairman Leong Hua Kooi said that it had been an economically challenging year globally in 2012 and Malaysia was affected due to many external factors, including the unresolved Euro Zone sovereign debt crisis and the poor economic performance of China in thirteen years.

However, due to the country's strong economic fundamentals and political stability, Malaysia's economy continued to expand in 2012, although at a much slower pace.

Leong took the opportunity to voice concerns about Malaysia's competitiveness, as the country slipped four rungs from 21st to 25th out of 142 countries, in the Global Competitive Report (GCR) 2012-2013 released by the World Economic Forum.

Referring to the recently announced Budget 2013, Leong expressed disappointment that it was too rakyat-oriented at the expense of the private sector.

He brought up a few other grouses like the retention of talent in the state, the implementation of GST (Goods and Services Tax) and the new Mineral Act in Perak. Leong hoped that there are more catalysts to drive the economy. Perak may have performed relatively well but it could do better, he insisted.

Chief Minister Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir launched a coffee table book to celebrate MICCI Perak branch centennial anniversary. A cake-cutting ceremony ensued.

Vice-Chairman, Dato' Hew Choy Kon of Perak Teamwork Sdn Bhd, was presented with a certificate of appreciation for having served MICCI Perak branch for twenty years since 1992.

Emily



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## Perak Home Exposition 2012

The annual *Perak Home Exposition* (Homex), one of the biggest in northern Malaysia, will be back for the third consecutive year. The exposition is jointly organised by the Perak Furniture Makers' and Dealers' Associations and is endorsed by the Perak State Government and Ipoh City Council. Its other supporters are the Perak Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (Perak Branch), Perak Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association (REHDA), Perak Electrical and Radio Dealers' Association and others in the furniture industry.

The exposition will bring together manufacturers and buyers so they can compare prices and qualities of the products on display. A formal launch of the event was held at a prominent hotel in the city recently.

Last year, the exposition attracted some 60,000 visitors with a turnover of RM10 million. This year, the organisers have room for over a hundred exhibitors. They will operate from 300 booths, offering the latest household products, electrical appliances, furniture and many more. Rebates and discounts will be offered. Visitors stand to win attractive prizes in lucky draws held during the duration of the show.

The quality of products from Perak is equivalent to that of other countries. Although China is famous for its cheap prices, the quality does not match our local products. However, Malaysian products are still not known by many. Therefore, the objective of Perak Homex is to open the eyes of markets in East Asia such as Korea, Japan and China. Malaysia currently exports over RM7 billion worth of finished products to USA and Japan annually.

Perak Homex 2012 will be held at Stadium Indera Mulia, Ipoh beginning Thursday, December 6 till Sunday, December 9. Opening time is between 10am to 10pm daily. Call Ms Susan Hoh at 019-526 0187 or 05-243 9608 for details or visit: [www.perakhomex.com.my](http://www.perakhomex.com.my).

Susan Ho



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## News Roundup

### Slip Road at Tambun Road Junction Opened



Motorists on the North-South Expressway, going to Ipoh city centre via the Tambun exit, need not make a U-turn along Jalan Tambun about 100m away since traffic lights were installed at the junction. This facility is also convenient for residents in Bercham who travel frequently along this route. With the traffic lights, motorists are now able to make a right turn to get into the city. The existing slip road was widened to become dual lanes.

Dato' Ramly bin Zahari, Exco for Infrastructure who officially opened the slip road, said that the new traffic lights were installed at the request of motorists for smooth flow of traffic. The existing U-turn will remain open as an added option for motorists. Dato' Ramly said that the project costing more than RM300,000 was funded by the state government and constructed by JKR.

During question time, Dato' Ramly said to ease the acute parking problem at Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun, plans are under way to build a multistorey car park.

AJ

### 9th Perak Mental Health Convention



The 9th Perak Mental Health Convention with the Theme: '100 Years of Psychiatry, Where do we go from here', was opened by Dato' Dr Hjh Nordiyana binti Hj Hassan, State Health Director at Impiana Hotel. She said that patients with a mental illness suffer from stigma and discrimination. Many people who have mental health conditions consider their signs and symptoms a normal part of life or avoid treatment out of shame or fear. A nationwide survey on mental health in Malaysia in 2006 (NHMSII) among people 18 years and above revealed that 11.2% of the adult population suffers from mental disorders. She said that people tend to visit *bomohs* rather than doctors. She added that it was a coincidence that the convention fell on World Mental Health Day which was on October 10.

Dato' Dr Suarn Singh, Consultant Psychiatrist, Hospital Bahagia Ulu Kinta, who gave the keynote address, traced the history of mental health-care from pre-1900 to the present time. The Bahagia Hospital in Tanjung Rambutan was built in 1911 and one of the buildings is still in use. The focus now is more on outpatient treatment rather than inpatient treatment and there are 49 facilities nationwide for inpatient treatment. Self-help and family support groups are being trained. There are mental health promotions and healthy lifestyle campaigns. Books have been written on mental health-care for children, adults, senior citizens and retirees.

Symposiums were held on various topics including 'Happy Family', moving away from mental institutions to community mental health centres, advocacy for the mentally ill and other more technical subjects.

AJ

### CPR & First Aid Training

For the third time, KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital was invited by Pangkor Island Beach Resort to give *CPR and First Aid Training* for their staff recently. The objective of this project was to educate the front liners, from various departments of Pangkor Island Beach Resort, on the importance of CPR training in saving lives.

A total of 18 staff attended the training conducted by four CPR and First-Aid trainers. Among the topics covered were 'Basic Life Support and CPR', 'CPR Techniques Demonstration and Practice for Adult and Child', 'Adult and Child Choking', 'Infant CPR and Infant Choking' and a first-aid workshop. The training focussed on: drowning, choking, snake bite and heart attack, which are more common in the industry.

At the end of the training, to ensure that it was well comprehended, all participants were given a practical evaluation and written test.



### Fund Raising Charity High Tea

Persatuan Pink Champion, Perak (PPCP), Breast Cancer Support Group organised a Fund raising charity High Tea in Tower Regency Hotel. Dr Sumithra, Organising Chairman and Advisor of PPCP said that breast cancer is the most common cancer in Malaysian women; the commonest among all races and age groups. The high tea was organised in conjunction with Breast Cancer Awareness month to raise the awareness among the people in Perak of the existence of the support group and the work they are doing. It was also to raise funds to continue helping breast cancer patients and send members for courses to update themselves.

Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon, State Exco for Health was the Guest of Honour and said that more than 4000 cases of breast cancer are detected every year in the country and more than a quarter will die of the disease. Self-examination remains a very useful way of early detection. Mah was pleased with the PPCP campaign of "Early



detection saves life" and their public education in Breast Self-Examination. On behalf of the state government he donated RM5000 to the society.

A Certificate of Appreciation was given to the sponsors of the event.

Guests were entertained by a dance performance by breast cancer survivors and dancers from Susan Dance Academy and a fashion show by breast cancer survivors.

AJ

### State-Wide Transformation Approach

Perak became the first state to advocate the State-Wide Transformation Approach (S.W.A.T.) programme, in line with the Government Transformation Programme.

Taking some three and a half months to prepare, with the assistance of the *Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit* (MAMPU) and the Prime Minister's Department, it was launched by Chief Minister Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir at the State Secretariat Building recently.

Another first achieved by the state is successfully coming out with a Strategic Organisation Plan for all local authorities, district and land offices and the Perak state secretariat office. The plan complements the Risk Management Plan formulated by the state secretariat office.



Perak is also first in developing a *Business Continuity Management* (BCM) plan based on a format by MAMPU.

At the launching ceremony, 25 heads of departments and government agencies received the S.W.A.T. documentation, which incorporated the four plans: Strategic Plan, Strategic ICT Plan, Risk Management Plan and Business Continuity Management Plan. They are to implement these plans for a smoother and hassle-free delivery system.

Emily

### Assistance for Rehab Centres

It was a busy morning for Perak Chief Minister, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir, when he launched two BAIDURI programmes consecutively recently; Perak state-level *PDK Ku Sihat* and *PDK Financial Management Workshop*.

In her opening address, BAIDURI chairperson, Datin Seri DiRaja Saripah Zulkifli said that the programmes were conducted with the co-operation of the Perak State Health Department and Perak Social Welfare Department.

The PDK Ku Sihat programme, launched in August, is aimed at upgrading the health of "clients" of the 36 community-based rehabilitation centres in the state. PDK stands for *Pusat Pemulihan Dalam Komuniti*.

To assist in the smooth running of the PDK Ku Sihat programme, the state government contributed RM36,000 which will be distributed equally among the 36 rehab centres. The mock cheque presentation ceremony was



witnessed by Zambry.

Due to the "windfall", the Perak PDK Financial Management Workshop was conducted to avoid cash flow problems. It was attended by the management staff of all 36 centres.

Emily



## News Roundup

### Instilling Values Through Pantun



Malay *pantun* (poem) has long been regarded as a medium to convey thoughts and wishes between two parties. It is part and parcel of the Malay culture which has withstood the test of time. However, modernity brings changes to the way people communicate so much so that *pantun* has lost its appeal. To arrest the declining popularity of *pantun*, especially among young Malays, the Department of Arts and Culture Perak organised an inter-departmental *pantun* competition recently to rekindle interest in this art form.

The final round held at the department's auditorium in Jalan Caldwell, Ipoh recently, saw over 200 people eagerly prompting their teams on. The team from the Perak Education Department was declared the winner in a closely contested match marked by wisecracks. The exchanges between the 'sellers' and 'buyers' were witty and at times comical.

The winning team took home RM1000 in cash prize while runner-up, RTM Perak, RM700. Pn Zaridah Zubir from RTM Perak was adjudged the contestant with the most creative *pantun*. She won RM200. Director Abdul Mutalib A. Rahman gave away the prizes.

RM

### Reunion Dinner



Former staff of *Perak River Hydro-Electric Power Company Ltd* and its subsidiary, Kinta Electric Distribution Company Ltd, celebrated the company's anniversary by organising a reunion dinner at the Ipoh City and Country Club recently.

The dinner began with the opening address by K. Bhaskaran, the organising committee chairman. The diners, consisting of both young and old, enjoyed a fun-filled evening, as they were entertained to songs, dances and music by some established performers in town.

Perak River Hydro Electric Power Company, registered in London in 1926, was formed to supply power to the tin mines in the Kinta Valley, as well as for domestic use. In 1930, it undertook to build a dam at Chenderoh, north of Kuala Kangsar. For many years, Perak Hydro was the largest power supplier in Malaya until it was taken over by the Central Electricity Board in 1955. By the mid-1950s its subsidiary, Kinta Electrical Distribution Company, distributed power to over 60 towns across the state.

Organising committee member, Gopalan Nair said that the reunion was aimed at maintaining the good relationship between the former staff and their families. He hoped that more of such gatherings, formal and informal, would be held in the years ahead.

Kani

### Perak Bar Annual Dinner

It was a time to rejoice for some 300 Perak lawyers and their guests. To commemorate the occasion the Perak Bar Committee, under the chairmanship of Vivekanandan Periasamy, organised its annual dinner at the ballroom of the Royal Perak Golf Club recently. Present to share the moment were the Regent of Perak, HRH Raja Nazrin Shah and his consort, HRH Raja Puan Besar Perak Tuanku Zara Salim. Among the dignitaries were the Chief Minister Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir and Mayor, Dato' Roshidi Hashim.

Vivekanandan, in his welcoming address, emphasised the need to uphold the rule of law and the establishment of a truly independent Judiciary. The Perak Bar, he said, had worked closely with the state government and non-governmental organisations in helping single mothers and the abused. Provision of legal aid, both common and sharia, is another of the committee's highpoints.

K.T. Pillai, Ipoh's emcee extraordinaire, was in his element leading the diners through a number of songs, dances and ballet routines performed by some of Ipoh's big names in the entertainment industry. The highlight was a lively satire of the current state of our courts, aptly named "Lady Justice" in reference to the Committee's logo.

Tiffany



## Educating The Masses

**Y**ayasan Bina Upaya Darul Ridzuan (YBU) is embarking on an altruistic effort to educate the less fortunate by forming an education wing known as YBU Education Services Sdn Bhd. The primary objective of this subsidiary is to help poor students in the state to pursue their education to tertiary levels. YBU's Chief Operation Officer, Jodh Singh Dhillon (pic right) said this to Ipoh Echo recently.

"The foundation has entered into an agreement with three institutions of higher learning in May as part of our plan to initiate this education programme," he said. The three institutions are Quest International University Perak, Perak Institute of Technology and TAJ International College. "The *Perak Entrepreneur and Skills Development Centre* (PESDC) will be incorporated soon," said Dhillon. The centre provides vocational skill training for successful candidates.

Quest University and TAJ College have set an allocated of RM1.5 million and RM500,000 for the programme respectively.

"Those wishing to pursue their studies in any of the three institutions can apply direct to YBU," said Dhillon. The loans provided will cover both education and living fees. The living allowance is a one-off payment based on the applicants' course. "The institutions will process the successful applicant's loan for the whole course inclusive of discounts."



The living allowance ranges between RM300 for certificate courses to RM1200 for diploma and degree courses. This is part of the state government's strategy to improve the living standards of the masses, as provided for under the Gerak Amanjaya initiative started by the Chief Minister, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir.

Quest University offers degree courses in medicine, accounts, finance and business administration. TAJ College, on the other hand, offers diploma courses in electrical engineering and business administration in collaboration with Universiti Teknologi Malaysia and Universiti Teknologi MARA. The Perak Entrepreneur and Skills Development Centre provides vocational-skill training in electronics, welding, air-conditioning and refrigeration.

The registration of new students for Year 2013 will begin early next year. "We expect some 200 to 500 to register for the programme," said Dhillon.

Those keen on applying can get details from the foundation's office at Aras D-2-1, Greentown Square, Jalan Dato' Seri Ahmad Said, Ipoh or call its office at 05-255 5945/5946.

RM





## Young Perak

### Modified Test Apparatus Introduced



The civil engineering department of Polytechnic Ungku Omar (PUO), Ipoh introduced its newly incepted permeability test apparatus recently. It was the brainchild of lecturer, Ms Panbarasi Govindasamy. A simple ceremony attended by PUO Assistant Director, Pn Hj Haslina Yusof, staff members and students was held to formalise the introduction.

Panbarasi explained her reasons for the innovation. The modified permeability test apparatus, said Panbarasi, was an idea that was on the drawing board for over two decades. The apparatus is an essential item in geotechnical laboratory works. The modifications enhance permeability tests accuracy. Panbarasi attributed her success to her frequent trips to institutions of higher learning such as Universiti Sains Malaysia. She also thanked those who had helped realise her dream.

Hajah Haslina expressed her gratitude for the lecturer's perseverance. The modified test apparatus will help reduce cost, as the polytechnic need not buy new ones. She encouraged other lecturers to emulate Panbarasi's efforts.

Kani

### Running for Fun



Ipoh's UniKL Royal College of Medicine (Perak) organised a unique race dubbed the "Fun Run" recently. Tailor-made for its students, teaching and admin staff and the man on the street, the event was held within the college compound. Participants were required to run the 2-km course in their working attire.

It was fun to see them struggling through the course dressed the way they do daily. In spite of the discomforts, many took the challenge in their stride and made a pile out of their "misfortunes". They were grouped in different categories based on their disposition and age.

Those who were placed were given medals and certificates as rewards for their efforts. One very determined group of female students won the coveted cash prize of RM500.

State Deputy Director of MARA, Encik Mohamad Nor Yahaya, gave away the prizes. He thanked the participants for making the college's outdoor activity a success. "It's a good excuse to get out in the open," he remarked.

Ed

### Blood Donation Programme at TAJ International College

Hindu Students Association, TAJ International College organised a blood donation programme in collaboration with the National Blood Centre in the college. S. Syamini who is doing her B.Ed. is the president of the association and said that they conduct this programme once every six months or so as part of their community project. She expects about 50 people including students and public to come forward and donate. They have put up posters in many places about the programme. From her experience she said people living near the college come forward to donate.

One of the donors, Mohd Salleh who is studying Automotive Engineering said that this is the fourth time he is donating and has been doing it since his school days. He feels happy to donate.

Another donor C. Gomathi doing Accounting said



that this is her second time. She finds satisfaction in helping those in need.

The association is planning to hold a dance competition for charity in November to help poor children.

AJ

### Art Competition for Tamil School Students



Over a hundred school children from 17 Tamil schools in the Larut, Matang and Selama District (LMS) took part in an art competition recently. The event themed, "Still Life, Country House and Nature" and organised by the Ex-Tamil School Teachers Welfare Association of LMS, was held at SJK (T) St Theresa's Convent, Jalan Kampung Jambu, Taiping.

Participants were divided into four categories, preschool; standard one to two; three to four and five to six. They were from Batu Kurau, Kamunting, Matang, Pondok Tanjong, Selama, Trong, Ulu Sepetang and Taiping.

Association president K. Vairavan, 57, was elated with the response and planned on having it again next year. The top three winners of each category were given cash prizes of RM30, RM20 and RM10 respectively with trophies and certificates. Trophies and certificates were also awarded to seven consolation-prize winners of each category, as a form of incentive.

The association's honorary secretary and competition organising chairman, Maj A. Munusamy (Rtd), 61, said the event was the first by the association. "Our aim is to inculcate a love and appreciation for art among Tamil school students in the district," he told Ipoh Echo. "Hopefully it'll instil interest in art in the participants while giving them an opportunity to develop their latent talent."

Children from category one to three used colour pencils and crayons on stencils of still life and country house, while the older children painted nature subjects using pastels and watercolours.

Nirmal Ariyapala

## Education

### Higher Education Loan

A total of 615 students from 50 institutes of higher learning, 17 private and 33 public, received higher education loans during a ceremony at the banquet hall of the State Secretariat Building, Ipoh recently.

Study loans have been disbursed in Perak since 1973. This year's allocation by the state government stands at RM5 million.

The students qualified for the loan, which they applied online for the 2012/2013 term after fulfilling a number of criteria. The RM5 million is part of the Perak Amanjaya 2015 vision to develop human capital. The minimum amount, which is interest-free, is RM5000 for a diploma course.

Students who graduate with first-class honours can apply for a waiver, and if approved, will have their loans converted into scholarships. Those who repay their loans



in one lump sum will enjoy a 30 per cent rebate.

Chief Minister Dato' Seri Dr Zambry Abd Kadir related stories of struggles faced by parents in putting their children through education. He then witnessed the handover of cheques to the students.

Emily



## LETTERS

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

## Consultation Required on Rape Laws

The *Joint Action Group for Gender Equality* (JAG) views with concern the government's move to introduce a bill which no longer allows judges to impose a bond of good behaviour in statutory rape sentencing. This hurried move, without proper consultation, is not the way forward.

The government's intended action appears a hasty response to the public uproar over the cases of former national bowler and the electrician who were released on such bonds after they had been found guilty of statutory rape of underage girls.

JAG maintains that it is not the court's power to sentence that was the cause of the uproar but rather the exercise of the court's discretion on how the decision was made which was seen as lacking in "reason, justice and equity". Hence, what is needed is not a blanket removal of this important discretionary power of the courts.

Statutory rape is a complex offence which needs consideration of different aspects and different factors. Instead, the issue is how judges can be better equipped with all relevant facts in each statutory rape case and the impact on the victim, the accused and society. This will enable judges to better utilise their judicial powers and make informed decisions as to why statutory rape is made an offence.

To this end, the court has full power to call for expert evidence and reports in order to understand the impact on the child victim's development and psychology. In order

to make the best decision, the retention of this discretionary power would enable the consideration of not just an appropriate rehabilitative sentencing of the offender, but also take into account the impact on the victim and society needs for justice.

The sudden announcement by the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz, to amend the rape laws is a knee-jerk reaction and requires in-depth consultation. Therefore, JAG strongly calls on the government to reconsider tabling any related Bill until full consultation is undertaken with the relevant authorities, the Bar Council and civil society organisations, to seek out wide-ranging input for comprehensive understanding and recommendations on sexual crime offences.

The latest amendments to the rape laws came about only after a Parliamentary Select Committee, which was set up in 2004, had made recommendations after extensive consultation with the public. This holistic approach is more conducive to attaining justice and fairness in legislation and application of laws in our country.

**Perak Women for Women Society (PWW)**

**All Women's Action Society (AWAM)**

**Women's Aid Organisation (WAO)**

**Women's Centre for Change (WCC)**

**Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor (EMPOWER)**

**Sisters In Islam (SIS)**

**Sabah Women Action Resource Group (SAWO)**

## The Future of Oil Palm is Bright

According to the recent round table conference (Star on August 25, 2012), an additional 6 million tons of oil is required annually due to the world population growth, growing affluence of people in India and China, and less people on starvation.

Where can you find additional land annually to produce 6 million tons of oil? America, being the largest soybean producer, has an average annual growth rate of soybean production, over the past 4 decades, of only 5 per cent compared to Brazil's more robust 14 per cent average annual increase. Experts expect Brazil to overtake America as the world's largest soybean producer within a few years.

One hectare can produce a half ton of soya oil while one hectare can produce 4 tons of palm oil. Assuming that soya oil can increase 3 million tons and palm oil can increase the other 3 million tons, they will need 6 million hectares of land to produce 3 million tons of soya oil and 750,000 ha to produce 3 million tons of palm oil. Looking at these figures, it is most unlikely they can find so much land for soya every year. As a result, they will have to rely more on palm oil to provide the annual additional 6 million tons of edible oil.

Indonesia and Malaysia produce more than 95 per cent of the world's total palm oil.

In 2011, Malaysia produced 18.9 million tons and Indonesia produced 27 million tons. Most of the larger Malaysian plantation companies own plantation land in Indonesia. Due to the severe drought in USA, Argentina and Brazil, the price of soya is currently selling near historical high and the price difference between soya and palm oil is about US\$300 per ton. I can foresee palm oil price will soon rise in tandem with soya.

The average production cost per ton of crude palm oil is about RM1300 and the average selling price has been about RM2600 in the last few years. The price went above RM4000 per ton not so long ago. What kind of business will give you that margin of profit?

Moreover, plantation land always appreciates in value and palms will start to fruit after 3 years of planting and will continue to bear fruits for another 20 or more years.

The price charts for all the leading plantation stocks, like KLK, IOI, Kulim, SOP, Trade Winds Plant, United Plantation, etc., show that their share prices have gone up 200-300 per cent in the last 3 years. The main reason for this phenomenon is that reasonably well-managed plantation companies can produce sustainable profit growth.

**Koon Yew Yin, Ipoh**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements must be sent by fax: **05-2552181**; or email: [announcements@ipohecho.com.my](mailto:announcements@ipohecho.com.my), by the 9<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> 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.

**Public Forum on 'Vaccines for Adults & Children'**, Saturday **November 3**, 3pm-5pm at KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital (5th Floor, Dewan Anugerah). Contact: Pn Aziera or Ms Sarah Toh at **05-240 8777 ext. 8111** for registration and enquiries.

**GICS presents 'Raas' – Bharvad Maldhari Raas Mandal** (a Gujarati Folk Dance from Surendranagar, Gujarat, India), **November 6**, 8pm at Maha Mariamman Temple Hall, Jalan Sungai Pari, Buntong. Free admission. Enquiries: Subain Singam **012-505 6049** or Gunasekaran: **013-520 2655**.

**Wawasan Open University Open Day, November 10 & 11** (Saturday & Sunday), 10am-4.30pm. Counselling

sessions will be provided for January 2013 intake. Enjoy 50% discount for processing and administration fee with attractive fee rebate upon registration. For more information, contact: **05-242 6323/243 6323**.

**'Leadership Camp for Young People'** organised by Perak Family Health Association, **November 16 to 18** at SUFES Campsite, Tapah. The camp is focused on teenagers between 14-19 years old. We tap on participants' physical, mental and emotional strengths to make them better leaders of the future. For more information, contact: Ms Angilin at **05-547 7849** or **05-546 7633**.

**Malaysian Gospel Music Ipoh (Workshops & Concert)**, Saturday **November 17**, Workshops: 10am-12pm & 1pm-

3pm, Concert: 7pm-9.30pm. Ticket: RM20 inclusive of workshops, concert and Adore CD. Contact: Emmanuel Assembly Of God, 127 Jalan Treacher Selatan, Ipoh, Ms Karen Kong 05-243 7172 or Mr Raymond S.P. Tan **012-471 0996**. Website: [www.mgm.com.my](http://www.mgm.com.my). Email: [admin@mgm.com.my](mailto:admin@mgm.com.my).

**Nature Survival Camp for Students (10 to 17 years old)** organised by Malaysian Nature Society (Perak), Saturday & Sunday, **November 24 & 25** at Tapak Herba, Papan. Call Ms Lee Yuat Wah **017-577 5641**, Pn Lee Sook Heng **010-387 2994** or Mr Lee Ping Kong **016-565 5682**, for details and registration.

## Sport

## Dawn of a New Horizon

Perak have sent an early warning to other teams by moving to secure several well-known personnel who will form the nucleus of the coaching staff and the first team next year. Former Negeri Sembilan and Kedah coach, Azraai Khor Abdullah has been appointed head coach for 2013, while the services of six players, namely Negeri Sembilan goalkeeper, Farizal Marlias; Felda United flanker, Yong Kuong Yong; Kedah defender, V. Thirumurugan and Terengganu forward, Abdul Hadi Yahya are being acquired.

Having released 13 players from this year's squad, including the likes of Nasril Nourdin and Akmal Rizal, Perak FA is under pressure to draft in big-name replacements. Most fans cited the club's dismal performance in the Malaysia Cup as a major cause for concern and that a massive revamp was required. As a result, the Association acted quickly by replacing Jang Jung with Azraai Khor while signing the six names who are consistently in the national team frame.

Azraai Khor Abdullah is already well known throughout the nation for his tactically astute approach, with his stint with Kedah as head coach being the most prolific of his career so far. Azraai won the "double treble" with the Canaries, lifting the Malaysian Super League, FA Cup and Malaysia Cup successively in 2007 and 2008. He was then given the responsibility of handling the Malaysia U-23 team, but after a less glamorous stint with them, Azraai returned to club football with Negeri Sembilan in 2011. Throughout his two years with the Southern Malaysian team, he led them to Malaysia Cup glory



*Azraai Khor Abdullah*



*Abdul Hadi Yahya*

names in the Malaysian soccer scene.

S. Chanturu and Khairil Kiman are two other names that will excite the Perak fans. Chanturu's exploits in midfield for Kelantan was evident throughout this year while Khairil will reinforce the team's defence.

However, Perak have to decide against renewing the contracts of Michal Kubala and Albert Bodjongo for next year, despite the former finishing 2012 as Perak's top scorer. Team Manager Khairul Azwan confirmed the decision on his Twitter recently. The hunt for new foreign players will begin shortly.

The new arrivals signal Perak FA's ambition for 2013. This year proves that the standard of Malaysian football has increased tremendously. The competitiveness of the league will rise further next year. Perak looks daunting on paper, but the onus is on the players to prove their worth on the pitch.

**Keesh**

in 2011, before winning the Charity Shield earlier this year.

In terms of players, the most heralded is none other than Farizal Marlias, who is widely recognised as the second best goalkeeper in Malaysia, behind Khairul Fahmi Che Mat. Nasril Nourdin's erratic form in between the goalposts was a factor behind Perak's tendency to concede soft goals this year.

Abdul Hadi Yahya is another name that will raise the spirits of the Seladang faithful. The 27 year-old forward is well known for his goal-scoring attributes, which saw him winning the Super League top scorer award in 2011. V. Thirumurugan and Yong Kuong Yong are also two other well-established



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## 85% Clean Ipoh

*Ipoh Echo, as a service to the Ipoh community, will be providing a regular update on the progress of the cleanliness activity in Ipoh.*

This is a followup of our report on September 16 where Ipoh Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim announced a target of 85% of Ipoh will be clean within a 12-month period.

The issue of cleanliness in Ipoh involves three areas, *Sampah, Longkang dan Rumput* (SLR) or 'Rubbish, Drains and Grass'. The three times per week clearance of rubbish has generally been given a good-job-done response. Hence for now we will focus on drains and grass.

Grass cutting has, in general, received a good report. Grass is being cut on a fortnightly basis as is the specified schedule.

However, in some areas the grass is not being cleared immediately or the next few days, especially for grass cut at fields or *padang*.

Regarding drains, residents from Canning and Ipoh Garden have reported that the drains there have not been cleaned and cleared even though the grass contractor had been appointed since July.

A check at the drains surrounding the fields along Jalan Chew Peng Loon and Jalan Carlos, Ipoh Garden in the vicinity of Hospital Fatimah, as well as at the field at Persara Ipoh behind the 'Gourmet Square' confirmed that the complaints were valid.

Canning Councillor Ceylyn Tay when contacted acknowledged that she was aware



*The field of cut grass on Jalan Carlos Ipoh Garden ...but the drains have not been cleaned*

of the issue and has reported it through MBI's e-aduan system.

Residents' feedback indicate some improvements. They suggested that MBI should have supervisors overseeing the maintenance activities to ensure adherence.

Residents have also complained about garden waste not collected, dirty and weed-infested back lanes and illegal dumpsites. We will focus on this in subsequent issues.

JAG



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