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ISSUE **194**

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## An Idea Whose Time has Come

By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen



The recent launch of *GreenAcres*, one of the first integrated retirement villages in Peninsular Malaysia, heralds a new era for Ipoh. This 'City that Tin Built' is set to gain renewed vigour, emerging from the doldrums that the slump in tin prices brought. Ipoh is now given the opportunity to show off its salubrious environment and ambiance as the perfect place for seniors to live out their golden years in peace and safety while enjoying an active communal lifestyle with other like-minded seniors.

*Continued on page 2*



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# Less encumbrances, less maintenance, less baggage – greater freedom

According to Mrs Chong Heng Kiong, co-founder, TI Homes & *GreenAcres* and a retired registered nurse, “This project represents the culmination of a long journey. It started off with a simple idea of providing a better quality of life for retirees since many retirees have bemoaned the fact that there are no good options presently in Malaysia to cater for the elderly.”

Her son John Chong, the other co-founder and Executive Director, concurs, “A retirement village is a community of independent seniors. It is not a nursing home. It is not a place where you sit and wait for the inevitable. It is a place for you to enjoy life after retirement, where you can age gracefully and with full dignity.”

## Australian Standards

*GreenAcres* is being developed in the fast upcoming township of Bandar Meru Raya, and residents can expect an international level of wellness facilities and care features, similar to Watermark in Sydney and Rylands in Melbourne. Indeed, the design of *GreenAcres* was a collaboration between Malaysian and Australian architects who have brought out the best living conditions whilst keeping seniors in mind.

*GreenAcres* project consultant is ZenCare Lifestyle Australia, helmed by its founder Richard Lim who has spent almost 16 years in the retirement and aged-care industry in Australia. He is a founding director of Jeta Gardens, Australia’s first ageing-in-place development in Brisbane Queensland, whose stake he has since relinquished and after two decades in Australia, Richard is bringing his expertise and talent home to Malaysia. ZenCare will be behind the management of *GreenAcres* as well as carrying out periodic quality audits based on Australian RV Accreditation Standards to ensure that all services are up to mark.

“Living in a retirement village is about making a lifestyle choice, insistence on a good quality of life within a vibrant community with freedom of choice and peace of mind.”

A study undertaken in Hong Kong revealed that residents living in a communal environment (senior accommodation) showed higher psychological well-being than residents living alone or with their families. With the *GreenAcres* development, children of elderly parents can rest assured that their parents are leading an active, happy life within the cocoon of a well managed environment with other active retirees,” said Richard.

## Better Psychological Health and Increased Lifespan

Validating the Hong Kong study, global surveys have revealed that retirement village residents generally enjoy a higher personal well-being (happier); are in better psychological health; are less likely to suffer from depression and have an increased lifespan.

At *GreenAcres*, residents will have plenty of choices, from what activities to engage in, explore new hobbies and make new friends. The freedom to travel or visit family and friends without worrying about home or garden is there. Retirement becomes a period of new opportunity and life begins anew.

## Communal and General Facilities

Communal facilities at the purpose-built ‘community centre’ include a restaurant, mini cinema, karaoke room, gym, multi-purpose hall and meditation room. There will also be space provided for visiting doctors and hairdressers among others. Wellness programmes and excursion activities will be offered regularly and a Village Shuttle will be available to take residents to major shopping centres in town. Staff on standby at a monitoring station 24/7, provide additional security and assurance to residents and their families outside.

Each unit at *GreenAcres* is designed to provide comfortable and secure accommodation. In place are elder-friendly touches like grab bars in the bathroom, emergency call system, minimal curbs and wide doorways for wheelchair access. These design elements provide the freedom to enjoy a secure, active and independent lifestyle without the day-to-day concerns of maintaining a large house or garden. Security is also taken care of since *GreenAcres* is a gated and guarded community.

Every resident has his or her own fully self-contained unit, and units are designed with the need for privacy in mind. To reduce effort in moving in, each unit comes partly furnished with kitchen cabinets and built-in wardrobes in the bedroom. Residents are



The Community Centre



John Chong,  
Executive Director



Mrs Chong Heng Kiong,  
Co-Founder

free to customise the look of their unit with their own furniture and decorations to make the unit feel like home.

## Vibrant Community – True Independence

“It is time to relinquish images of old folks’ homes populated by people waiting for the inevitable. *GreenAcres* will be a vibrant community, which offers companionship, social, intellectual and physical activities for its residents. In reality, it is a community of independent people enjoying life. Residents are free to come and go as they please. No restrictions are placed on your movement,” continued John Chong, enthusiastically.

“With living at home or with family, you are depending on the help and goodwill of family members or the foreign maid. A retirement village offers security and freedom of choice of activities. You can choose to take part or to be alone. This is true independence. In times of crisis, other like-minded residents can offer immediate support. The staff at *GreenAcres* will be trained in first aid to act as first responders in case of any sudden emergencies and several private hospitals are a 10-15 minute drive away,” he added.

The *GreenAcres* philosophy has been infused with the experience of its Australian partners in the aged-care industry. Their mission is to enable residents to enjoy a good quality of life and remain independent for as long as possible. They bring to the project an empathic understanding of the ageing process that affect the seniors psychologically and physiologically and the resulting issues, fears and needs faced by them and this knowledge is then built into the facilities and activities in *GreenAcres*.

## Lifetime Lease

Unlike a normal property, you do not actually buy the physical unit at *GreenAcres*. Rather you buy a lifetime lease over the unit, which entitles you to occupy, use and enjoy it, including the facilities of the clubhouse. Although you do not own the unit, your right to occupy, use and enjoy it is secured by contract and by registration with the local authorities. You are free to move out and surrender the

lease at any time, at which point a portion of the lease payment will be returned to you according to a pre-agreed formula.

The first phase of *GreenAcres* will see 110 landed units available. There will be six layouts to choose from, the smallest being one bedroom suites at 750 sq ft, up to the largest at 1100 sq ft. The second component will be low-rise apartments with elevators. There will be three blocks, four storeys per block.

Units are not for sale but leased out to interested parties for personal use, at the starting price of RM300,000 for a lifetime. Additionally, there will be a monthly maintenance fee starting from RM300 depending on the size of unit leased.

For MM2H retirees, this may be the ideal opportunity for securing a retirement home. With the new requirement which came into effect this year where MM2H residents may only purchase homes worth more than RM1 million, the *GreenAcres* lease may be the perfect option.

## Phase 2 Aged Care

Built on a land size of thirteen acres, *GreenAcres* addresses the needs of the elderly at many levels, from social to psychological needs and subsequently in Phase 2 of the project, different levels of care needs at its aged-care facility, run by trained nursing staff. The aged-care facility is expected to come up in another two years. Envisioned is a home providing a level of care that is just a notch below a hospital’s and will fill the gap for step-down care. Understandably, preference for acceptance at the aged-care facility will be given to those who have already leased one of the units.

*GreenAcres*, which has commenced construction, will complete by the first quarter of 2016.

TI Homes, an Ipoh company, has been involved in property development, primarily landed residential projects, since 1993. Their current projects include Tiara Lake Park and Taman Meru Mutiara.

For further information, contact TI Homes at +605 253 6555.

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# IPOHecho

## From the Editor's Desk

By G. Sivapragasam

# FOR A NEW BEGINNING

*The path to harmony is to promote individuality. We need to profile a Malaysian identity that we can all be proud of...*

As we celebrate Hari Raya this year I am hoping that the people who make up this nation will take time to reflect on the direction the nation is taking and if it is what will lead us to the destination we all desire.

I do not think that anyone will seriously dispute that the survival of a society, let alone its progress, is dependent on the unity of its people. And again few will dispute that recent issues are posing serious challenges to this. I am hoping that these divisions are promoted not so much by the general populace as by pockets of vocal minorities to serve their private agenda. However, if this trend is not arrested I fear that issues that really have little significance in the general scheme of things will inflate and acquire a momentum that becomes uncontrollable.

Lately, in the web sites, one notes that the champions of the various divides spew such hatred, abuse, scorn and contempt delivered in such a positively uncouth and ugly manner that it is alarming. We are treating each other as mortal enemies rather than fellow citizens.

There can be disagreements but expressions of it can be presented with decorum and with good manners. Bad manners are only a reflection of their own poor character. Nothing is going to be achieved by this type of behaviour. Your target is not going to be converted to your view or be persuaded to change. All it will achieve is further acrimony, bad feelings and commitment for the opposite.

Having said that, I feel optimistic that it is not as bad as is portrayed in the alternative or even in the mainstream media.

A couple of days before this Chinese New Year I observed an event in a popular Indian Muslim restaurant located in Sunway City, Ipoh that demonstrated what is actually happening at ground level. A Malay lady in her forties walked into the shop. An elderly Indian Muslim of around 60 at the cashier's counter greeted the lady with the words "Kong Hei Fatt Choi". If this was not surprising enough the Malay lady unhesitatingly stretched out her hand and said, "AngPowLoh Lei". The Indian Muslim responded by rewarding her with a few sweets.

This exchange was a revelation of how the cultures of the different communities have become common. If this is not an example of the emergence of a common culture I don't



know what is.

I am tired by all this talk of the good old days when all the communities got along with each other and lived in harmony and how the situation is changing day by day with communities becoming more and more divided. This is fiction. In truth, in the so called good old days, the communities lived isolated from each other with the majority of the Malay community confined to traditional villages, the Indians in plantations and the Chinese in mining communes in the outskirts of urban settings managed by colonials. Interaction between the various communities did exist but was limited to a very small minority.

It is only after independence with mass migration from the rural to the urban areas that the various communities have been forced to live together. In a change of this magnitude there is bound to be conflict and misunderstanding. Time is needed for the arrival of a culture of tolerance, understanding

and empathy. We need to look and promote the similarities that we share rather than focusing on the differences.

In truth, Malaysians, by and large, identify themselves as a single nationality when in foreign lands. The differences among them in these environments become insignificant and immaterial and few will dispute that the different communities that make up this nation have more in common with each other than with the people from countries of their origin.

Differences between the communities only acquire significance when they are in this country. This, however, is not incomprehensible. A very wise man analysed it as follows. Using the family unit as an example, he explained that as against the outside world the family identifies itself as a family. However, within the family itself every member is an individual, each very different from the others.

I believe the path to harmony is to promote individuality. We need to profile a Malaysian identity that we can all be proud of. Whilst we cannot rid ourselves of tribal mentality we can rise above it. It requires us to come up with a set of values that will define Malaysians as a community.

Let us use this celebration as a mark for a new beginning to treat each other with respect and dignity to build a stable and united society as all our fates are bound together.

## Advertorial



## The power of compassion

*"Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive" – Dalai Lama*

There is so much of violence, hatred, anger, power struggle and religious disharmony in the world today. How do we, as educators and parents raise children to live in such a world? Our natural instinct is to protect children from the harsh realities of all the chaos. But, deep down, we know we cannot always be there and shelter them forever. We must equip them to survive in a global world, but at the same time enable them to have the courage to make a difference to anything they feel strongly about. One most important quality is to develop and nurture a strong sense of compassion in them. Regarded and advocated as one of the greatest human virtues by all major world religions, compassion is an emotional feeling that triggers an empathetic response to another's suffering, hurt or injustice.

A child learns about love and compassion from a very young age. Children who are raised in an environment that promotes kindness, empathy and compassion develop into individuals who also practise these qualities. They are able to care for, understand and connect with all life forms. Compassion causes us to show kindness even if others behave undesirably.

Children spend their vital years either at home or in schools. As such, these two are the most important places for them to learn compassion. How can we develop this in our children?

### 1. Be a role model

Compassion cannot be learned by just talking about it. When children see adults being compassionate, they learn from this. When they see adults showing empathy towards the suffering of other people or animals, they learn to care. When they see parents and teachers 'giving' without the need to gain anything in return, they understand compassion. Very importantly, when children see the way adults interact with and treat others around them, they learn respect. This could be how we deal with bureaucracy, treat our family members and workers, how we show respect to other road users or caring for stray animals.

Children are always learning, and it is amazing to know that we have such a big influence on them and the qualities they learn.

### 2. Provide opportunities to practise compassion in daily life

Children must be given opportunities to practise compassion in their daily lives. Difficult situations with siblings, classmates, and friends present opportunities for children to put themselves in another's shoes – to practise empathy. Being involved in charitable causes organised by NGOs, clubs or church groups provide excellent opportunities for children to learn skills and practise compassion. Encouraging and helping children to perform random acts of kindness promotes the feeling of happiness and this further inspires them to do more.

### 3. Help children understand and cope with anger

Anger causes an individual to lose focus and leads to undesirable consequences. Destructive anger is also one of the main hindrances to being compassionate. We must help children to understand and manage anger. When they are able to comprehend both the positive and negative sides of anger, and how holding onto anger leads to destructive behaviour or actions, children will be able to self-regulate and in turn show compassion. We must praise them when they successfully cope with anger and behave calmly and patiently. This will encourage more positive outcomes in future.

Once we help our children begin this process, we must make sure they get lots of practise and opportunities to use their energy and compassion to make their mark on the world.

At AMETIS, being compassionate is a core value held by every individual. Children and adults are provided with various opportunities and platforms to show and practise this noble virtue. These could be in the form of reaching out to others and the less fortunate, caring for animals, posting thank you notes on the 'gratitude board' and valuing each person's contribution to the school community.

**Enrolment is now open for primary and secondary classes. Please call 05 290 5888 or 019 388 3349 for enquiries, or visit us at [www.ametis.edu.my](http://www.ametis.edu.my).**

## EYE HEALTH

## AVOIDING EYE STRESS

**Ipoh Echo's EYE HEALTH series continues with Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S.S. GILL talking to us about how to minimise eye stress.**

You feel like your eyes are going to pop out of their sockets after a hard day's work! Well, you are not alone especially when our world today is filled with bright lights from screens in computers, laptops, smart phones and even from the monitors right in front of you when you travel on an airplane! Here are some practical pointers to help reduce their effects:

### 1. ADJUST THE BRIGHTNESS OF YOUR SCREEN

The first thing that you need to do is to adjust the brightness of your monitor to an optimum level. While the software on your PC will be able to auto-adjust the brightness of your screen, this is optimum only for the running of your computer but not necessarily optimum for your eyes. For this, you would need to manually adjust it so that the screen is just right for you. One tip is to keep the screen only as bright as you need it to be, and not any brighter. You will find this helpful when you have to work long hours in front of the screen.

### 2. SITTING TOO CLOSE TO THE SCREEN

Avoid sitting too close to the screen as this causes eye fatigue or tiredness. Small screens usually force people to sit closer to the screen when working. So, if you are working with a small screen for hours on end, you may want to invest in a decent sized screen. You should be comfortably seated approximately 50-70cm away from your monitor.

### 3. PROPER REFRACTIONS

Proper prescription glasses are very important. Wearing an old pair of spectacles with outdated powers can add to eye strain. Make sure that you check on the powers annually so that you are wearing the right spectacle powers. It would be wise for those of you who spend hours in front of your computers, to indicate to your optometrist the distance in which you are usually seated away from the screen when you work so that the powers can be adjusted accordingly.

### 4. KEEPING THE ROOM BRIGHTNESS OPTIMAL

Room lighting is more than just creating a good ambience and this is often an overlooked fact. Maintaining your room lighting at an optimum brightness is an important aspect of reducing eye strain. The room lighting in which you work should not be so much brighter than your computer screen.

### 5. SEATING POSITION

If you have to sit in front of your monitor with your face near the screen, your chin jutting forward and your back hunched up, then you can be almost certain that you will suffer from eye strain. If you have to do this to be able to work effectively, then you will need to look into why this is happening. Apart from the reasons mentioned above, having a proper chair which encourages good posture is recommended.

### 6. CHANGING THE FONT SIZE

Most people think that increasing the text size is only for those with poor vision but in fact larger text size is less taxing on the eyes and helps reduce eye strain. So, for "eye-sake", get those fonts a little larger than you require them.

### 7. TAKING A BREAK

Follow the 20-20-20 rule and take a break every 20 minutes, looking out 20 metres for at least 20 seconds. Ideally after 20 minutes of working, take a short walk and drink a glass of water...but make sure you don't get into trouble with your boss!



Dr. S.S. Gill  
Resident Consultant  
Ophthalmologist,  
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## Compassion for a Special-Needs Mother

Malaysians were shocked to read about 15-year-old Muhammad Firdaus Dullah, who has cerebral palsy (CP). Immigration officers stumbled upon him during a raid to weed out illegal migrant workers. Firdaus was filthy and malnourished. Whilst his mother goes to work, Firdaus stays in a storeroom from early morning to late at night.

How do the parents of other special-needs children cope? Ipoh Echo speaks to Zahriah Mohd Faiz, who is the mother of 15-year-old Balqis. Balqis has CP.

## 1. As a mother of a special-needs child, what are your thoughts about the teenager who was found in Nilai?

It was devastating to read that he was found in that condition. Unless we really know what happened we should reserve our judgement of the mother.

## 2. Bringing up a child, is hard enough for most parents. Bringing up a special-needs child is more demanding. Do you empathise with the teenage boy's mother?

Raising a child with CP is emotionally and physically draining. Firdaus' mother will have financial traumas, face a test of her faith and must go through the experience alone, without a husband for support and strength.

My daughter, Balqis is the same age as Firdaus. Reading about him made me recall the hardship of being a new mother and raising a special-needs child.

The first time I heard the term 'Cerebral Palsy' was when Balqis was diagnosed with it. It took me two years to understand what went wrong, accept the situation and deal with it.

## 3. Firdaus' mother denies neglecting him and yet he is skin and bones. He lives alone in a store room covered in filth. Can you understand why she should think this?

There were "Before" and "After" photos of Firdaus, taken 6 months ago. My personal view is that we should remind ourselves that she has taken good care of Firdaus for the past 14½ years. Something must have happened to her during the past 6 months. We must investigate, understand and provide support for the mother, her son Firdaus, as well as all parents and children with special-needs.

## 4. What is your advice to other parents of special-needs children?

Patience and prayer help to soothe the hurt, the frustrations and loneliness. It is not easy having to care for special-needs children. We lack sleep. The child has tantrums. We get tired. Others give us "looks". We lack financial support, to buy the various aids and equipment needed to help the child.

My most important advice to Muslim parents is from this verse: "O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient." (2:153)

Life is too short to worry too much. We should go out and enjoy life, as much as possible. It may not be like other 'normal' families, but it is refreshing and good to recharge ourselves.

Life isn't over just because one has a special-needs child. Couples with a special-needs child must support one another because and the rest of the world will not.

Try to contact parents in a similar situation, and share the happiness and sadness. Only those parents with special-needs will understand.

## 5. The Minister for Women, Family and Community Development, claims that the mother should have sought help. In your experience, how easy is it to get this help?

My daughter was two, when she was diagnosed with CP, and we had no idea where to seek help. None of the medical officers in the private or government hospitals were of any use. We were left in the dark and had no idea where to seek information.

A chance meeting with my husband's old friend was critical. He suggested contacting the NURY Institute of Family and Child Development for help. NURY is a private foundation, and is not cheap, but they told us about diet and therapies for Balqis.

The help that the minister mentioned is not easy to obtain. It was only after we returned from England, where my husband was doing his PhD, that we learnt that we had to register Balqis with the welfare department and obtain an OKU (person with disabilities) card.

My husband had to meet several officers and go to several places, to sort this out. I can imagine how difficult it would be for less financially fortunate parents, who do not have the means to travel from one place to another, or the working person who does not get support from their employer.

In Firdaus' case, the mother is a single, working mother. It is even harder for her. We had no idea how to get help and I imagine Firdaus' mother would have faced the same problems as us.

Parents should be given the information and guidance; they should not have to press for answers.

## 6. One report said that special-needs schools are available. Do you agree?

In my experience, special-needs schools in Malaysia are very limited in number and offer limited services. They are in towns, thus making them out-of-reach for many.

They only cater for children with certain disabilities. There is no special-needs school that caters for children who can't walk and who are very dependent. Very few parents can afford to accompany the child or send a maid with him.

The teachers and the schools are not fully equipped to handle children with poor mobility. The schools do not have enough qualified staff, to help the teachers.

The parents who must work to support the family, and single parents who struggle to survive, do not have the time to attend school with their child. Parents who live far from the special-needs school, especially those with no car, would find it almost impossible to send the child to school.

## 7. Have you any suggestions for choosing a special-needs school?

An integrated special-needs school is one which is equipped with special-needs apparatus, facilities, teachers and therapists to provide an education for the special-needs children. Special-needs children need social interaction (in their very unique way), stimulation and a sense of belonging to society.

Field trips to public places help the community see and realise that this group of disabled children is part of society and helps the



children to see the outside world. A special-needs school helps educate the children just as a normal child in a normal school.

If Malaysia is serious about providing special-needs children with an education, to which they are entitled, it is best to learn from countries like England or Australia.

## 8. Do you think Firdaus' case is an isolated one?

Yes I have met a few. I believe there are many more like him, in Malaysia.

They have no father figure, no extended families to help. No one to turn to for support or financial help.

## 9. One report claimed that parents refused to get help from the government. Why, in your opinion, would parents refuse help?

I can't possibly think of a reason why the parents would refuse help from the government, unless it was a 'struggle' to get that help in the first place. I think parents may be put off by the procedures, the bureaucracy, the time needed and the energy and money needed to get that help in the first place.

Based on our experience, the amount of financial aid given does not cover the cost of diapers, milk, medication or additional treatments. Parents are vetted and need to go on a course, before they are considered eligible. The procedure to seek aid is not made easy.

## 10. In your case, you have had education and the means to look after Balqis. What is your advice for someone who is less financially able?

Seek help from your immediate family and friends, who in turn can offer help in caring for the child for an hour or two, so that the parents/parent can recharge themselves. The extended family can contribute small sums, regularly.

Second, the *zakat* (Muslim charity) system must be upgraded to involve special-needs children. The welfare department (JKM) needs to take note of the real problems faced by special-needs parents, reach out to them and make the procedures easier. JKM services need to be accessible by all levels of the community. Most important is to have faith in God.

## 11. Has our society contributed to this teenage boy's isolation and neglect?

Yes, definitely. Society plays an important role. Society must be more caring and understand the needs of the families with special-needs. They should stop being discriminatory and stop staring at the children, when they go out.

One person was staring so intently at Balqis that she walked into a wall. Society can help by making special-needs children feel part of the community and important members of society.

*Ipoh Echo would like to thank Zahriah for sharing her thoughts with us.*

## CHILD HEALTH

**Dr Shan Narayanan**  
Consultant General Paediatrician, Hospital Fatimah

## Thalassaemia

Thalassemia is a blood disorder. It is an autosomal recessive disorder. In this disorder, the inherited abnormal genes affect the production of haemoglobin. Haemoglobin is the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen.

Haemoglobin is composed of four polypeptide (protein) chains, which in adults, consists of two alpha (α) globin chains and two beta (β) globin chains.

Individuals with thalassaemia make less haemoglobin and thus they have less red blood cell cells...they thus have anaemia. There are 2 types of thalassaemia, alpha thalassaemia (less alpha chains) and beta thalassaemia (less beta chains).

Four genes (two from each parent) are needed to make enough alpha globin protein chains. Alpha thalassaemia trait occurs if one or two of the four genes are missing. If more than two genes are missing, moderate to severe anaemia occurs.

The most severe form of alpha thalassaemia is called alpha thalassaemia major or *hydrops fetalis*. Babies who have this disorder usually die before or shortly after birth.

Two genes (one from each parent) are needed to make enough beta globin protein chains. Beta thalassaemia occurs if both genes are altered.

The severity of beta thalassaemia depends on how much both genes are affected. The defect results in moderate to severe anaemia. The severe form of beta thalassaemia is known as beta thalassaemia major.

Thalassaemia affects males and females. The disorders occur most often among people of Italian, Greek, Middle Eastern, Southern Asian, and African descent. Severe forms usually are diagnosed in early childhood and are lifelong conditions.

Thalassaemia is diagnosed from blood tests. Family genetic studies also can help diagnose the disorder.

If a mother expecting a baby and her husband are thalassaemia carriers, they can determine if the baby is affected through prenatal testing. Prenatal testing involves taking a sample of amniotic fluid or tissue from the placenta. Genetic testing is done on the fluid or tissue to make the diagnosis.

Thalassaemia makes the bone marrow expand, thus bones widen. This can result in abnormal bone structure, especially in the face and skull. Bone marrow expansion also makes bones thin and brittle, increasing the risk of broken bones. Their spleen is enlarged as they have to clear a lot of red blood cells.

Children with thalassaemia may have slow growth and delayed puberty. Treatment for severe thalassaemia often involves regular blood transfusions and folate supplements.

The regular blood transfusion gives rise to iron overload. As a result of iron overload, the individual may have many complications. They thus have to go on chelation therapy to remove excess iron from the body.

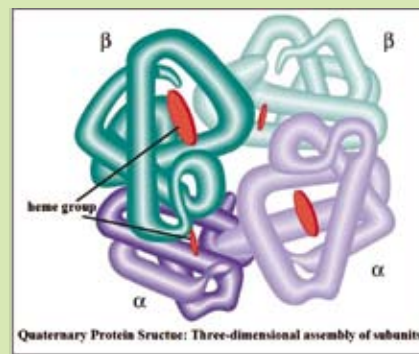
Bone marrow transplantation may help treat the disease in some patients. Bone marrow transplantation is most successful when the donor matches fully the patient's special blood characteristics known as HLA antigens. This happens when very close relatives (sisters and brothers) offer their bone marrow for transplantation and when the patient is fairly young and well treated.

**For more information, call Dr Shan's clinic at Hospital Fatimah 05 546 1345 or email [shaniea02@gmail.com](mailto:shaniea02@gmail.com).**



**THINKING  
ALLOWED**

by **Mariam Mokhtar**



Haemoglobin



## MUSINGS ON FOOD



# SeeFoon Dines like a King



By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

Pics by Ginla Chew

No, I haven't had a sex change but as the name Maharaj implies, this restaurant serves cuisine fit for a king. And the interior decor is equally befitting of royalty. Exuberant murals adorn the walls with scenes of the glorious days of the Raj and Moghul times; stunning chandeliers and other light fixtures brighten rooms; crenellated Corbel arches open up the space between tables; two private rooms, one seating twenty and the other twelve and an impressive grand function room accommodating 150 for sit down banquets, create an ambience that can only be described as lavish. Ample parking space in this Gopeng Road location, a converted bungalow that is part of the Shooting Club, completes the appeal of this newly-opened venue for dinner, lunch or banquets.

A meal here at **Maharaj** can be likened to a gourmet feast around India as they're proud to be presenting dishes from the different states such as Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, the West Coast and Northern India.

I was watching an interesting programme on TV when host Alton Brown was explaining that there is no such thing as curry powder (a term coined in the west for that mix of spices) in India. Each dish, of what we call 'curry', is an intricate combination of herbs and spices used either as a dry powder or in the form of a paste, each one a different blend and called the *masala*. It is this masala, with each state having its preferences, which gives each dish its unique flavours. Just as we have our different types of 'rempah' Indians have different 'masala'.

The menu at Maharaj is staggering. Just the fact that they have 100 different kinds of kebabs available, although only eight of them are listed on their menu, suggests the range of possibilities at this restaurant. Those familiar with Indian cuisine are always welcome to discuss with the manager, Murugan, for any dishes they may hanker for. As it is, the range of dishes I tasted on two occasions left me groaning with surfeit and toying with the idea of fasting for a week! The saving grace though is that the restaurant does not use MSG (remember my war on MSG in IE 192?) and I did not have to go through the swelling and the thirst that invariably follow my reaction to this ubiquitous flavour enhancer.

Space on this page will limit me in describing all of the dishes I tasted. I will only



list here the specials that were, in my opinion, superb and incite me to return to sample more. For appetizers we had two dishes that were as delicious as they were unusual in that I had never encountered them prepared this way before. The first was a **Bendhi Jaipuri**, sliced ladies fingers coated with batter and sesame seeds and deep fried and the second was the **Palak Pakoda** or deep fried spinach – **RM6**.

As in most Indian meals, we began with the **Tandoori Chicken**, this one succulent, juicy, lightly charred and utterly delectable; unlike others I've tried which can be dry and not flavourful. Proprietor Thangaraja tells his chef to not stint on ingredients and hence they only use fresh and not frozen meat. This also applies to their mutton which is freshly slaughtered and supplied twice a week. The **mixed kebab** dish that followed was almost a meal in itself comprising fish with mint and yoghurt, a mutton kebab, prawns and chicken. Served with their coriander, mint chutney, every mouthful is worth savouring. Total the number of kebabs ordered from the menu **RM16-18** per type of kebab. An average taster platter for five people might be **RM58**.

For mutton, try the **Mutton Chettinad**, a specialty from Tamil Nadu, mildly spiced, with a thick sauce, the mutton tender and flavourful – **RM18**. **Malabar Fish Curry** was *tenggiri* (local mackerel) centre cuts cooked in a coriander flavoured sauce with coconut milk; mild and rich – **RM16**. Another fish dish that is a 'must-have' is the **Black Pomfret Masala**, a dark, intense masala sauce enveloping a whole market-fresh pomfret with intense fiery undertones. Seasonal price. The one we had that day was **RM28**. As for other fish, I had the pleasure to sample two. One, the **Tiger Prawn Masala**, slit open, still in their shell, and grilled with a *masala* paste topping and served with lime wedges; sea-fresh and grilled to perfection; seasonal price. The other, **Prawn Curry Leaves**, medium-size prawns coated in a special masala and deep fried with curry leaves; crispy, mouth-wateringly good – **RM18**.

Chicken dishes abound on the Maharaj menu. The **Komudi Kholapur** is a dish from Maharashtra state which are chicken chunks with a thick gravy. The chicken was tender with a mild and smooth gravy – **RM15**.

Of course, no Indian meal can be eaten without the breads and rice. Six types of bread are available as well as a mini **Naan basket** – **RM3-6** for the various types and **RM18** for the **mini mixed** one. Of note are the specials, the **Pulka** which is like a chapati but much lighter and their paratha which as Murugan laughingly says as he served it, "... your Roti Canai". And there the similarity ends. The **Paratha** here is extremely flaky, crisped on both sides and delicious – **RM4.50**.

As for the rice, the **Dhum Bryani** is the best I've ever tasted, and for the rest of my group as well.

The method of cooking is what gives this its signature taste and flavour, with the rice and all ingredients sealed inside a pot using a flour dough to seal the lid, and slow cooked over low heat till the rice is done. The result in the Maharaj is an ambrosia of flavours, each grain of basmati rice, well coated in the masala, pieces of tender mutton lending its umami signature to the whole dish – **RM16**.

All in all, Maharaj Restaurant is well worth patronising. My friend Saroja Tiagi summed it up very well when she said, "I could eat here every day and not exhaust the menu. Plus I don't feel bloated and have heart burn afterwards." A good testimony indeed.



## Nosh News



By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen



## Iced Manual Drip Coffee at Happy 8 Cafe

Always ever ready for new taste experiences, sampling the **Iced Manual Drip Coffee** at the **Happy 8 Cafe** in Market St. Old Town was a first for me. It is made by allowing ice to melt and drip onto freshly ground coffee beans over a period of eight hours. The resultant coffee (and it is served cold) is absolutely heavenly. Apparently an innovation from Taiwan, this is the creation of Jessica Tan who concocts the mixture of different types of coffee beans, roasts and grinds them herself, and produces the coffee at home for serving in the Happy 8 Cafe. As it is such a long and drawn out process and the resultant coffee is in limited supply, the cafe often sells out of this, their signature special, very early in the day. But other coffees are available, from the fragrant Vietnamese drip coffee to the other special blends made by Jessica. While the price of **RM19.80** might seem high, it is worth every drop and every sip of this ambrosial brew.

Coming soon at the Happy 8 Cafe will be 'Coffee Ceremonies' an elaborate ritual of coffee tastings using different gadgets, machines and coffee drips to produce a good cuppa. It is amazing how the taste changes with the exact same mix of beans on the acidity levels of different beans and how the different modes of brewing result in different taste. Watch this space.



### Maharaj Restaurant (Pork Free)

Perak Shooting Association

36, Jalan Raja Dr Nazrin Shah (Gopeng Rd.), Ipoh.

GPS: N 4° 35.285' E 101° 5.84'

Tel: 05 243 2515

Business hours: open 24/7, 11am-3pm and 6pm-10.30pm.



## 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.

## MH 370 and MH 17 – Shedding a Tear or Two

I learnt about MH 17 just an hour or so after the news broke internationally – 1.30am on Friday, July 18, to be exact. It saddened me more than MH 370. Not that the people on MH 370 deserve my love and compassion less. But for Malaysia to be hit a second time with such a loss within such a short period of time is truly extraordinary.

What many Malaysians do not realise is that we are now one big extended family, whether we like it or not. The different colours, thoughts, behaviours, values, smells, taste, languages, etc.; they are what we need to get to know.

It takes time and it takes effort to understand diversity in all its complexity. Most of all, it takes interest and good intentions.

None of us should seek to simplify the world, hoping to force-change it so that we can more easily understand it on our own terms. Most especially, we should not dumb down other people's beliefs and forget what it means to unite rather than to divide.

If there is one thing that MH 370 and MH 17 speak to us about, it is this: value each other.

We are all here in this world temporarily only. So, let's enjoy each other's company and get on with making the world a better place.

Every day, we have parents; brothers and sisters; cousins; uncles and aunts; and nephews and nieces, who have to go to work not just in the kampong, not just in the nearby town, not just in the main capital cities of KL, Penang and Johor Bahru, but also internationally.

Malaysians of all races are in other countries ranging from familiar ones like Singapore and Australia to less familiar ones like Japan and Sweden. They are in the USA, China, Dubai, South Africa, Vietnam, etc. They are venturing into Myanmar, Kenya, etc.

Accidents and calamities can happen anywhere, anytime – knocked down by a bus in Pontian, kidnapped in Sabah, trapped and suffocating in an MRT in Singapore. A ferry sinks in Korea and a plane disappears in the Indian Ocean or gets shot down by a missile over Ukraine.

All this should remind us to be nice to each other.

We would be better off grieving as one big family then as if we were separate and smaller families of just Malays, Chinese, Indians and others, each casting curious glances at the neighbours who are grieving separately over their loss, just as we grieve separately over our loss, when we all should feel a sense of common loss regardless of whether we have lost anyone in the most direct sense.

And if we say that we do come together in our moment of grief, we should also make meaningful changes in our lives when we go back to work after we have mourned.

Our people still need to go everywhere within the country and outside to make a living. Accidents and calamities will happen again. Other trials and tribulations will visit us, including internal and external challenges to our nationhood.

To an extent, how we do things attract the kind of luck we have.

Will we increasingly be in search of excellence in everything that we do, or will we continue with an attitude of "near enough is good enough", forever intellectually hobbled by crazy notions of race and religious divisions, partly because we are being just plain silly and partly because we see potential for political manipulation?

Can Malaysia go to Ukraine and Russia and hold anybody to account for what happened to MH 17? If we were a big and advanced country, we would be more able to. But we are not big and we are not advanced (yet).

We will more likely be big in terms of influence even if not in size if we are united and advanced in our ways and means.

We will not successfully navigate the high seas of international geopolitics if we remain a collection of tribes rather than become united as a nation.

Those Malaysians who perished in MH 370 and MH 17 would have wished for us to build a nation in which their loved ones who survive them would feel safe, secure and happy.

Harold Kong

## Is PosLaju Up to Scratch?

One does not enjoy writing to a newspaper regarding the exasperating experience of dealing with a government-linked company. Unfortunately, it is the only way I feel I might actually get somewhere.

On Monday, May 5, I paid PosLaju RM356 to deliver a parcel from Ipoh to Vence, in Southern France. Twenty two days later the parcel was returned to Ipoh, having only got as far as Paris (600km north of Vence). How it ended in Paris, or how long it stayed there, I do not know. But I know it did not get to Vence.

As if that is not bad enough, I am now informed by PosLaju that I am to pay another RM356 to get my parcel back!

This is ridiculous. Yet those I have been dealing with at PosLaju, from counter to

management staff, think it is perfectly reasonable. They are adamant that if I do not pay PosLaju another RM356 they would "destroy" my parcel.

Surely, when PosLaju took my money and accepted my parcel for delivery to Vence, we had entered into a contract; a contract, through no fault of mine, it has failed to fulfil.

Would I experience the same had I used UPS or Fedex? If PosLaju is not up to the job then they should not have taken my money. And they most certainly should not have the effrontery to ask for more money because of their failures.

Yvonne Young

## My Say

By Jerry Francis



## Once Filled With Stagnant Water, Now With Flower-Beds



The Dataran MBI, located in the 'front yard' of the Ipoh City Council complex, has been given a minor facelift with colourful shrubs and flower plants.

Syabas, City Council. The quick response to our concerns that the Dataran was fast becoming a potential mosquitoes' breeding ground, is very encouraging. This shows the City Council is listening to our feedbacks on problems existing in the city. This will also inspire us to work more closely with the City Council, not to criticise but to give feedback so that together we can make the city clean and beautiful.

We had through our *My Say* column on March 16, 2014, urged the council's health department to look at the bases of the six ornamental concrete units, once filled with plants and cascading water, and then were filled with 5cm deep of brownish stagnant water and litter thrown by passers-by and patrons of the night eating stalls at the fringe of the Dataran.



They were in plain sight of hundreds of people walking across the Dataran between the City Council and the Greentown Business Centre daily. Many could be observed looking into the pools of stagnant water, which were emitting a stench, with disgust.

We hope that other neglected beautification sites in the city will likewise be given appropriate facelifts. Among them are the fountains at the round-about in front of the Menteri Besar's residence and along Jalan C.M. Yusuff.

## Announcements

Announcements must be sent by fax: **05-255 2181**; 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.

**Parkinson's Association's Talk, 'Creative Mindsets for Excellence'.** Sunday **August 3**, 12.30pm-2.30pm (Mandarin), 3.30pm-5.30pm (English) at Kinta Riverfront Hotel, Ipoh. International speaker: Teoh Poh Yew. A fundraising event for corporate leaders, teachers, trainers, parents and students (15 and above). Limited seats: 250 per session. For enquiries and tickets, Ms Terry Wong **05 545 5610 / 011 1640 8460** or Samuel Ng **012 557 1682**.

**The Great Daybreak Carnival 2014**, Saturday **August 16**, 9am to 4pm at Daybreak Centre Pengkalan, Lot 75242, Jalan Pulai, RPT Pengkalan Pegoh, Lahat.

**Ipoh Parade's Festival of Lights.** A 2-week carnival starting from **August 8** till 17. Don't miss this exciting carnival with large inflatables, street performers, K-pop boyband *AlphaBAT* (6pm) and animated graphics (8pm). For more information log on to <https://www.facebook.com/IpohParadeMall>, or call Lion Ipoh Parade Sdn Bhd at **05 241 0886**.

**Free Scholarships in Beauty Industry.** For those interested in pursuing a career in the spa industry, do not miss this golden opportunity for a free training programme. Interviews will be held on **August 11** at the headquarters of Beaubelle Academy – 31-6, Block D1, Jalan PJU 1/41, Dataran Prima, 47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor. For more information, contact **03 7880 8118**, Ira **016 260 1369**, Shaun **016 260 1169**, email [enquiry@beaubelleacademy.com](mailto:enquiry@beaubelleacademy.com) or visit <https://www.facebook.com/bacm8>.

**YMCA of Ipoh Toastmasters Club meets every 2nd and 4th Wednesday** of the month at YMCA, 7.45pm. The mission of a Toastmasters club is to provide a mutually supportive and positive learning environment in which every individual member has the opportunity to develop oral communication and leadership skills, which in turn fosters self-confidence and personal growth. Contact: Ramesh **016 566 2866** or Nuryani **016 594 7258**.

**Perak Academy has relocated to:** 71 A (1st Floor), Jalan Tun Sambanthan, 30000 Ipoh (opposite Maybank, Old Town). Contact numbers: Tel/Fax – **05 241 3742** (Office), Mobile – **016 551 8172**. Email: [contact@perakacademy.com](mailto:contact@perakacademy.com). Website: [www.perakacademy.com](http://www.perakacademy.com).

**Perak Society of Performing Arts (PSPA) has relocated to:** A-G-1, No. 1, Persiaran Greentown 2, Greentown Business Centre, 30450 Ipoh (next to Hong Leong Bank, the Ipoh Echo office). Contact details – Tel/Fax: **05-2427814**. Email: [pspaipoh@gmail.com](mailto:pspaipoh@gmail.com). Website: [www.pspaipoh.org](http://www.pspaipoh.org).



## Wellness

by SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

## Advice from the Heart

“The best thing you can do for your heart is to stop smoking”, admonished Dr Abu Bakar b Mamat, the Resident Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon at Pantai Hospital Ipoh. A newbie to Pantai and Ipoh but certainly no newbie to heart and lung surgery, Dr Abu Bakar has impeccable credentials with a track record of over 300 heart bypass surgeries behind him over an 8-year period and being part of the team on seven heart transplant operations at the *Institut Jantung Negara* (IJN) or the National Heart Institute where he spent six years, prior to a posting in Kota Kinabalu.



Dr Abu Bakar

His move into private practice and to Ipoh was a breath of fresh air to this youthful-looking surgeon. “I love the ambience and the laid back pace of Ipoh and I look forward to bringing the rest of my family here.” His first medical and subsequent Masters degree was in University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and a year spent in Toronto, Canada, saw him pursuing his special interest in Pediatric Heart Surgery at the Hospital for Sick Children called SickKids.

For measures to prevent coronary artery disease which may lead to heart attacks, in addition to quitting smoking, Dr Abu Bakar also warns against passive smoke which he claims is equally devastating and often ignored. Exercise is essential as is keeping cholesterol at normal levels.

Diabetics are particularly vulnerable and there have been cases where diabetics have had a series of heart attacks and not felt any symptoms until the heart is damaged beyond repair. This is because their nerves have been affected by diabetic neuropathy and their senses numbed.

According to Dr Abu Bakar, men have a higher risk of heart disease than women until they reach menopause at which time, the risk evens out. His advice for both genders is to check their cholesterol regularly, control blood sugar, blood pressure, exercise and adopt a diet that has less fat, less sugar and full of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Anyone experiencing symptoms like chest pain, or even discomfort and shortness of breath should go to their doctor. Non-invasive tests like the ECG (electrocardiogram), the Exercise Stress Test which involves walking on an electric treadmill while being hooked up to electrodes or the Echocardiogram which is one step higher in sophistication, will easily identify or eliminate the existence of heart disease.

Early intervention may reduce the risk of heart attacks or heart failure for those with known risk factors like high cholesterol, diabetes or a family history where either or both parents have had a heart attack or died from one. In fact, Dr Abu Bakar went on to elaborate, family history increases the chances of someone having a heart attack by four times and if that person smokes, by 10 times!

When asked if he'll be carrying out any heart transplants in Ipoh, Dr Abu Bakar said, “They'll have to go to IJN for that. While I have been trained and have participated in seven of these procedures, we don't have the backup team and equipment here for an operation of such magnitude. Heart bypass surgery is another matter. That can be easily done here in Pantai Hospital itself.”

Of course, as a cardiothoracic surgeon, Dr Abu Bakar also performs surgery on the lungs for those with various lung afflictions which require surgical intervention. Having pointed his finger at smoking, both active and passive, as the main villain in heart disease, he also vilifies the habit in lung disease as well, particularly in cancer. He therefore urges all people to not smoke or quit if they do.

As he so poignantly puts it, “Heart attack not only attacks one heart, it attacks all those around you.” Now that's an aphorism to ponder for all of us.

**For more information: Clinic 308 Pantai Hospital Ipoh, Tel: 05 540 5418.**

## Education

## Applying Marketing Principles



In conjunction with Sunway College Ipoh's 10th Anniversary, the Marketing in Practice, Sales and Marketing team successfully organised an event as part of its course project. It was, in essence, a platform for business students to apply marketing principles learned in the classroom and to experience how marketing works in real life.

The event was held at the open space in front of the college and was preceded by a soft launch. A futsal tournament was organised at Sunway City's Extreme Park with participation opened to interested individuals between 18 to 25 years old. The objectives were to improve participants' sportsmanship and to foster closer ties among the players. Response was very encouraging as 32 teams took part in the competition.

During the 3-day festivity, booths selling food, T-shirts, souvenirs and knickknacks were manned by members of the project team. Practical application of marketing and promotional techniques were tried and tested. Sales were brisk. It was a learning experience for the students.

On the whole the project was a winner, as team members developed a keen sense of togetherness never seen before. There was a marked improvement in their attitude towards one another; a change brought about by days of working together as a team.

Yip Yuen Ceng

## Advertorial

## From one parent to another: Resilience – The IB Diploma Programme, an unfair advantage



One Ipoh Echo reader wrote a feedback to me recently. After reading the previous articles, she has a better idea of what the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme is. It encompasses academic excellence, enhancing skills, building character and developing perseverance – very holistic and truly an education for a future. The question is: what's next? What is in the pipeline for my child after he completes his IB middle years?

This led me to close this series with some details on the IB Diploma programme and why I call it an unfair advantage.

Perhaps the best way to start this conversation comes from Marlyn McGrath Lewis, Assistant Dean of Admissions, Harvard University USA. “IB is well known to us as excellent preparation. Success in an IB programme correlates well with success at Harvard.”

In 2014 over 120,000 IB Diploma students across 140 nationalities will have completed a revolutionary 2-year academically rigorous programme. As a student preparing to apply to tertiary education, the IB Diploma is possibly the most valuable Pre-University qualification to hold.

Research by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) UK confirm that IB applicants are more than twice as likely to be enrolled at one of the top 20 universities in the UK than A-level students. They score more first and second-class honours qualifications, are more likely to pursue higher education and earn higher salaries when they start working.

In the US, research confirms that students are able to double their chances of getting into prestigious universities like Yale and Stanford if they are an IB Diploma student. A wealth of literature confirms that IB students are better prepared for university life because they are more skilled, are able to manage their own learning, possess higher thinking strategies and are better academically prepared than their non-IB counterparts.

In Australia, IB Diploma students enjoy a warm welcome at prestigious institutions like the University of Melbourne and Sydney. In Canada, research by the University of British Columbia (UBC) indicates that IB Diploma scores of 29 perform at the same level in the first year examinations as British Columbia Secondary School Diploma students with a score of 86%.

IB Diploma students are preferred across the globe because they are different. They know as much content as any other student but are able to process information better, use more skills, manage themselves and their emotions better, are more internationally-minded and care about making this world a better place.

Fairview's IB Diploma Programme May 2014 results are outstanding with an average student score of 37 points and 3 students achieving a score of 42 points out of 45, a score received by the top 1% of the world. Fairview has realised the dreams of so many. Are you ready to realise your child's dream?

Dr Vincent Chian is currently the IB Diploma Director of Fairview International School. A former medical doctor working in psychiatry he now spends his time championing emotional and effective development in education.

\* Fairview International School currently has 4 IB World Schools across Malaysia; KL, Subang, JB and Penang. Fairview Ipoh will be an international school, with enrollment open for August 2014. For more information, call **05 313 6888** or email: [enquiries\\_ipoh@fairview.edu.my](mailto:enquiries_ipoh@fairview.edu.my).

Fairview Ipoh welcomes its first batch of students from Creche to Grade 5. The campus is now open for public viewing. Call us for an appointment!

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22. Daybreak, Lot 75242 Jalan Pulai, RPT Pengkalan Pegoh. Tel: 05-3235908/09
23. Banyan Beauty, 40 Jln Raja Dihilir. Tel: 05-2426866/012-5073866
24. Ipoh Echo's office





## Lifestyle

## Launch of Manor Born

Keris Properties Sdn. Bhd. recently held the official launching for their new high-end development project Manor Born, at *The Dales*, Jalan Tambun, on Saturday, June 28.

*The Dales* is an established and mature guarded bungalow community within the city of Ipoh. Offering a paradise escape within minutes from life's every amenity, *The Dales* continues to be one of the most sought after addresses, providing modern tranquility that embraces nature.

The new Manor Born project is an exquisite development masterpiece consisting of 18 bungalows built within a gated and guarded environment with Perak's magnificent 280 million year old Tambun Hills as its backdrop.

The serene and peaceful environment of Manor Born also offers security assurance with its 6-tier security system which consists of a guardhouse, patrolling guards, perimeter fencing, card access barrier gates, CCTV and an alarm system.

Aside from the lush and soothing environment, Manor Born's excellent central location and connectivity is also one of its unique selling points. With only a 5-minute distance away from Ipoh town and different daily amenities around its premises such as Pantai Hospital Ipoh, banks, restaurants and much more, Manor Born provides easy accessibility to all that Ipoh offers.

An additional attraction of Manor Born is its own exclusive "club" facilities which include an infinity 25-metre swimming pool, a modern gym, outdoor lounge, a sundeck and all other existing Dales facilities.

The 18 units are exquisitely crafted 2-storey bungalows with basements, each



offering 6 bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms, 2 utility rooms, 5 halls and 2 kitchens. The English styled manor measures up to 70 ft x 88 ft and is priced from RM2,500,000. Manor Born aims to build a modern and comfortable yet lush living environment without losing other aspects such as security and greenery.

Estimated to be completed in the third quarter of 2015, Manor Born is the final piece of *The Dales* project by Keris Properties Sdn Bhd.

Emily

## Community

## They Certainly have Talents

The Perak's State Council of Social Development held an Abilympics (vocational skills competition) recently at the premises of Sultan Azlan Shah Rehabilitation Centre in Bercham.

As a member of the International Abilympics Federation, the Malaysian Rehabilitation Council aims to build a team consisting of qualified contestants to represent Malaysia in the International Abilympics.

The competition is also intended to create public awareness and to nurture productive talents out of those with disabilities by providing them opportunities to acquire and enhance their vocational skills.

The competition brought in 22 participants from in and around Ipoh to compete in eight categories, which included cake decoration, word processing, dressmaking and more. A panel of judges were present to evaluate and give suggestions to the contestants.



One of the judges, Chef Syed Redzuan Syed Muhammad, 58, said that he was pleasantly surprised because the participants really exceeded his expectations when they decorated their cakes with precision and creativity.

"They should not be underestimated and deserved a chance to be employed just like the rest of us. I was particularly amazed and impressed when one of the participants, Yau Sin Lim, who is mentally challenged, was able to mix and match coloured threads that suited the embroidery well," exclaimed Zawiah Zulkifli, the judge in the embroidery category.

Through this first ever Abilympics, the State Council of Social Development has achieved its goal of providing the disabled with opportunities and avenues to lead meaningful lives and become contributing members of society.

Yvette

## Ramadan Round-up



## Pantai Hospital's Contributions

Free treatment given by Pantai Hospital Ipoh under its Corporate Social Responsibility programme have provided much relief to the lower income groups in Perak.

According to Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon, the Executive Councillor for Health and Non-Islamic Affairs, the hospital altruistic efforts helped reduced the burden faced by public hospitals. Mah was the guest of honour at the hospital's breaking of fast dinner (*buka puasa*) attended by over 300 guests at Symphony Suites, Ipoh on Friday, July 11.

## Sharing Raya Joy

Menteri Besar Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir, warmed the hearts of his 114 'adopted children' by taking them on a shopping spree to celebrate Hari Raya Adilfitri. The kids were taken to Mydin Hypermarket, Meru Raya on Sunday, July 20 and were given RM220 each to spend.

The adoption programme, initiated in 2010, has benefitted underprivileged kids from selected orphanages and welfare homes in Perak.

## Media Representatives Feted

Dato' Nolee Ashilin Dato' Mohammad Radzi, Executive Councillor for Tourism and Culture and staff of Tourism



Perak hosted a breaking of fast dinner for members of the media at Syuen Hotel, Ipoh on Monday, July 21. Nolee was grateful of the media's role in propagating tourism in Perak. The dinner ended with the presentation of hampers and *duit raya* to over 50 media representatives present.

## Spreading the Festive Joy

Majlis Belia Perak hosted a *buka puasa* feast at the Menteri Besar's residence on Thursday, July 24. Some 2000 guests, including 170 underprivileged kids from welfare homes around Perak, attended.

"The number is double the original one thousand we anticipated. Nonetheless, I am happy that everyone had a fair share of the food and goodies," said Zambry to reporters.

## An Occasion to Celebrate

Some 400 guests of MH Amanjaya Properties Sdn Bhd (MHAP) attended a breaking-of-fast dinner at MH Hotel, Ipoh on Monday, July 21.

The occasion was to celebrate the recent signing of a MoU with the State Secretariat to develop the Second Phase of Ipoh SOHO at Jalan Sultan Idris Shah. Dato' Aminuddin Hashim, Chairman of MHAP and his officers entertained the guests.

## Royal Ipoh Club Entertains Orphans

The Royal Ipoh Club entertained some 100 orphans to a



breaking of fast dinner on Saturday, July 12. Club President, Roland Rama Rao and Muslim members welcomed the young guests. After the recital of *doa selamat*, they were treated to a sumptuous spread of local dishes and desserts.

Before leaving each kid received a green-coloured packet containing *duit raya* from the Club President and members of the management committee.

## A Goodwill Gesture

Syuen Hotel, Ipoh organised a breaking-of-fast dinner for some 120 underprivileged and special needs children on Thursday, July 24. The event was held at the hotel's ballroom and there to share the children's joy were over 500 paying guests. Dinner consisted of a generous spread of local dishes, desserts and drinks.

Syuen Hotel considers this goodwill gesture an integral part of its corporate social responsibility. It plans on having a larger gathering next year.

Luqman



## Young Perak

### Triple Wins in Youth Awards

Three UTAR students stole the limelight when their names were announced as the winners of the prestigious awards called 'The Youth Awards' at the YouthsToday.com inaugural award presentation ceremony held at the Chatime Galleria in Puchong, Selangor recently. Organised by YouthsToday.com, the event aimed to recognise the potential of youths in Malaysia as well as to select its first generation of Malaysian Youth Ambassadors.

The winning trio comprising Heong Kian Kee, Lee Jia Ling and Kum Peng Han walked away with trophies, certificates and cash prizes worth RM5000 each.

Heong, a year-one Public Relations student, who also clinched the Outstanding Creativity Award, said, "The Youth Awards 2014 has given me a chance to develop my talents. Being part of this competition, has helped me transform myself for the better as well to inspire many other youths to believe in their potential talents."

"I feel very honoured and overwhelmed to be one of the 21 Youth Ambassadors out of the 1000 nominees," said Lee, a third-year Banking and Finance student. She also hoped that her win would inspire other youths to step forward to help to build a better society.

The other proud winner of Youth Ambassador Award, Kum, said, "I wish that through this award I could be a symbol of inspiration to others to lead meaningful lives. We are grateful to our lecturers, mentors, and friends for guiding us in the competition."

This award presentation night celebrated the victory of up to 26 outstanding student leaders (21 youth ambassadors and five outstanding awards) from all over the country. The participants went through a three-month journey in which they had to complete a total of three stages, namely, 'The Write-up', 'Your Ideal Product' and 'Video-fy Yourself' for them to clinch the awards.



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## Tourism

### Bike Ride @ Padang Rengas 2014



As many as 400 cyclists who participated in a cycling programme dubbed, "Bike Ride @ Padang Rengas 2014" got to enjoy the scenic countryside and visit unique tourism products along the four checkpoints stretching a 18 km route around Kuala Kangsar District.

The event, organised by Tourism Malaysia in collaboration with Kelab Roadrunners Ipoh and the Padang Rengas Parliamentary Service Centre, was to promote cycling as a platform to see touristic spots.

Dato' Nolee Ashilin Mohammed Radzi, State Executive Councillor for Health, Tourism and Culture, said that leisure cycling along the countryside is not only healthy but an experience in itself.

"I hope industry players and tourism agencies can come up with cycling packages because they will be a hit with foreign visitors keen on familiarising themselves with the rural communities," she told the media after flagging off the event in Padang Rengas recently.

The four checkpoints the cyclists had to stop at were the Lubuk Merbau Homestay, which is surrounded by paddy fields, the iron smith at Kampung Rambong, Kampong Tanah Merah where fermented fish (pekasam) is produced and a laksa factory in Kampung Paya.

Witnessing the flag-off were the Director of Tourism Malaysia (Perak), Ibrahim Seddiqi Talib, and the Director of Domestic Marketing Division Tourism Malaysia, Datuk Musa Yusof.

Those who took part were members of cycling clubs, officials from the state's tourism agencies, tourism industry players and media practitioners. One of the cyclists, Nur Farhana Yahaya, 25, said the programme allowed her to see first-hand cottage industries that are being marketed commercially.

RM

## Lifestyle

### How to Manage Your Finances

Bank Negara's Agensi Kaunselling dan Pengurusan Kredit (AKPK) provides a variety of services designed to help individuals to better manage their finances. The agency has sought the assistance of Ipoh Echo to promote its services. In this issue of Ipoh Echo we will highlight one story of people who had gained from AKPK's guidance and the agency's tips on spending wisely and responsibly. Incidentally, the agency's services are provided free-of-charge.



#### Success Story (#1)

Losing an income suddenly can be a real shocker and can leave one in shambles. Worse if there is no buffer fund to sustain oneself during that unwanted transition. Baharom (not his real name) was one unfortunate individual who was caught in the maelstrom. He did odd jobs but it was not enough to sustain himself.

Baharom lost his well-paying job in 2001 and was hounded by his bank as he could not afford to pay his housing loan commitment. It came to a point where his house was about to be auctioned by the bank not once but twice. However, there were no potential buyers. He was at a loss as to how to save his home.

He spent six months negotiating with his bank to restructure his loan. However, the bank refused his fervent requests. Eventually, Baharom gave up as he had no choice but to face the third auction by the bank. (Note: The ceiling price of the house will be lowered to attract potential buyers.)

Talking to his employer one day, Baharom was advised to seek AKPK's help. At first he was unsure if AKPK could help him. After some coaxing from his wife, he made the trip from his remote town to the city where the agency was located.

Baharom, according to the counsellor, faced countless sleepless nights. Surely money can make or break relationships. He was thankful that his family had remained intact despite the hardships he faced.

Following negotiations between AKPK and the bank, after Baharom signed up for the Debt Management Programme, the bank agreed to postpone the auction as a payment term was agreed upon.

Baharom may still be paying his housing loan installments but at least he still has a house he can call his own. He is also lucky for having his working son help him by way of a 25% monthly contribution to the monthly instalment.

The moral of this story is to encourage you to have an emergency buffer fund. Remember, it is never too late to begin allocating your salary for savings.

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## News

# Brain Drain: A Dire Consequence

In spite of its robust economy Malaysia suffers a huge outflow of talented and skilled manpower. This phenomenon is known as brain drain and it affects many developing economies in the world.

The countries who gained the most from Malaysia's brain drain are Australia, Singapore, Taiwan, United Kingdom and other First World countries. The reasons are aplenty – better pay, better prospects, better living conditions unhindered by racial, religious and ideological differences and the perennial “the grass is greener on the other side” mentality.

This was the subject of discussion at a forum held at Syeun Hotel, Ipoh recently. The event was organised and conducted by Penang Institute, who did a road show to share its findings in Penang, Johore Bahru and Kuala Lumpur.

Malaysian emigrants, according to Dr Lim Kim Hwa, Penang Institute's Chief Executive Officer, consisted mainly of professional workers such as doctors, technicians, academicians, engineers, scientists etc.

“Brain drain is one of the major worries of developing countries like Malaysia, mainly because it affects economic growth and decreases our rate of innovation,” said Lim.

While the country loses skilled workers, the influx of unskilled workers is worrying. Unskilled workers do not contribute much to the technological well-being of the country, as their presence here is merely to boost our skewed labour market.

“We lose one third of our high-skilled personnel in exchange for 95 per cent of low-skilled workers. This has led to an increase in public expenditure on transportation and health care to cater for these foreigners. We lose out on taxation which the country could get from the emigrants,” lamented Lim.

The World Bank Report 2011 revealed that Malaysia was experiencing a huge brain drain with almost a million of the country's professional workforce working



overseas. However, Penang Institute's definition of skilled workers are those with tertiary education and not just anyone. So they listed the number at around 300,000 not a million.

Lim concluded that the government should take remedial measures such as adopting meritocracy and creating an equitable working environment for all, regardless of race, to stop Malaysian professionals from leaving.

Yvette

## Creating Better Opportunities

The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) Perak held a press conference at Syuen Hotel, Ipoh recently to announce programmes for its upcoming annual dinner. The event is slated for Friday, September 12 at Syuen Hotel, Ipoh.

Award presentation will be the major fixture during the dinner. Besides the usual safety and service appreciation awards, a new category will be introduced. The talent-building award is specifically meant for new talents from within the members' organisations.

Chairman of MEF Perak, Soong Kok Hong, took the opportunity to reveal problems faced by employers present. High on his list was the issue of manpower which has affected the manufacturing and agriculture sectors to a certain degree. Procedures

in processing foreign workers, from the source countries to disembarkation points in Malaysia, are too tedious.

The existing one-stop-centre is of no consequence, as employers are still required to go from one ministry to another. Although the matter has been brought to the attention of the authorities, a permanent solution is still to be arrived at.

The introduction of the Goods and Services Tax in 2015, said Soong, will create more problems for employers. The federation hopes the government will consider giving incentives and reliefs in Budget 2015 which will benefit both business entities and individuals.

“In the interim, we'll continue with our efforts to bring in more business opportunities to Perak. We'll develop and nurture youths by providing them a likeable platform to perform without them having to leave the state for greener pastures elsewhere,” said Soong.

Yvette



## Army Organises Road Safety Campaign

To reduce the growing number of traffic accidents involving soldiers and military vehicles, Headquarters 2nd Malaysian Infantry Brigade organised a road safety campaign for its personnel recently. The campaign was launched by Lt-Col Che Bakar Ariffin, Deputy Commander of Regiment 503 (TA) who stood in for the brigade commander. The launching ceremony was held at the HQ 2 Brigade Hall along Jalan Hospital, Ipoh recently.



“The campaign is to educate and create awareness in servicemen on the importance of road safety as too many lives and vehicles are lost annually. These human and vehicular assets are irreplaceable,” said Che Bakar in his opening remarks. “Concerted efforts must be made to address the problem. This safety campaign is, therefore, a step in the right direction.”

A number of related activities were held in front and within the hall. They included a pictorial exhibition on road accidents, lectures on defensive driving and safety measures and sales of consumer goods by the nearby PERNAMA outlet. Participants were mainly service personnel from units under the command of HQ 2 Brigade.

Among the dignitaries present at the launch were senior officers from the Ipoh Police District Headquarters, Perak Civil Defence Department, Perak Road Safety Department and the Perak Road and Transport Department.

Luqman

## Malaysia-Japan Interaction Ride

In conjunction with Visit Malaysia Year 2014, the Malaysia Interaction Culture Association (MICA) and the BP Healthcare Group jointly organised the Malaysia-Japan Culture Interaction Ride 2014 starting from Tuesday, July 22 till Thursday, August 14. The ride is ongoing in Japan and it involves eight local cyclists, four men and four women.

The reasons behind the ride were announced during a press conference held on Wednesday, July 16 at BP Healthcare Headquarters, Ipoh. Former mayor and Director of BP Healthcare Group, Dato' Haji Roshidi Hashim, said that the objective was to encourage cultural interaction between Malaysia and Japan besides promoting Ipoh as a healthcare centre. BP Healthcare Group, as the main sponsor, also provided free medical check-ups for the participants.

“BP Healthcare Group would like to tell the world that Ipoh is not only rich in history but a city that emphasises the importance of healthcare,” he told reporters.

Camees Foong, Secretary of MICA, said that the cyclists would cover approximately 4000km passing through 37 cities and rural areas of Japan.

“We thank BP Healthcare Group for sponsoring the ride. Hopefully, it will help connect the world through the exchanges of cultural values,” she said.

The association will organise another cycling extravaganza in September. The event named, “1, 2, 3 Ride”, is to create awareness in the public about the goodness of maintaining a healthy lifestyle through cycling. It will be held in conjunction with Malaysia Day on Tuesday, September 16.

Yvette





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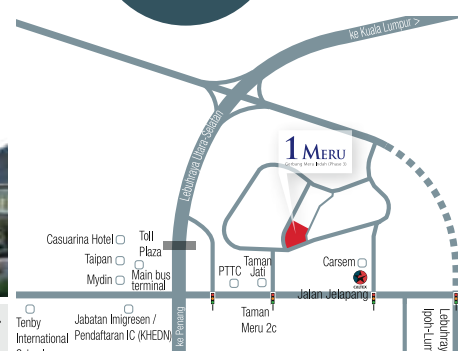
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