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ISSUE **225**

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USED CARS: DEAL OR NO DEAL?

■ By Tan Mei Kuan and Nantini Krishnan

In view of the weakening ringgit and a likely price hike for new cars next year, Ipoh Echo checks out the potential of second-hand cars making waves in the market. We spoke to former luminaries of the business, used-car dealers, banks and the end-users themselves to let our readers decide if a pre-owned car is indeed a worthy investment despite perceived negativities.

Continued on page 2



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Used Cars: Then and Now

According to Roland Rama Rao, from the 1960s onwards, the two biggest car dealers in Ipoh were Wearne Brothers and Universal Cars. His father was then the sole proprietor for the Motor Show-room which dealt with the two market players. Back then, second-hand car companies did not exist as a separate entity, as the new car company themselves would absorb the used vehicles via trade-ins.

Roland, who is happily retired now, has over 40 years experience in the motorcar industry. He noted that there were not many players in the market then. Customers would look for the dealers and loans were provided by the car company itself.

For him, websites like Mudah.my are for individuals seeking a better price for their cars after consultation with the car dealers.

"The scenario is very different today. Nowadays, the car buyers are very well-versed because they are able to access the information online. However, now would not be best time for the industry with the drop in petroleum price, introduction of GST and the increase in toll rates. Previous economic downturns were in 1997 and 2005," said the Teluk Intan-born Roland to Ipoh Echo.

"Government policies only take new cars into consideration, leaving the used-car dealers unprotected and with many uncertainties. Everything is dependent on prevailing market sentiments. If new cars don't sell so too would second-hand cars," he reasoned.

Prominent Dealers in Ipoh

Established 35 years ago, **Yew Xin Enterprise** is a family-owned business offering Perak-based cars with some sourced from Kuala Lumpur. Lam Wei Jun, 30, son of founder, Lam Chack Tin, defines a good second-hand car as, "A car without accidents,

its engine in good condition, well-cared for by its previous owner and without interior damages."

Yew Xin offers both new and used models from Toyota, Honda, Nissan, Perodua and Proton with prices ranging from a few thousand ringgit to below RM100,000. Besides dealing with car insurance and loan, it provides excellent car service, reasonable price and a two-week guarantee for buyers.

"It'll be a tough market next year. It's like a cycle, if the sales of new cars decrease, we would be affected too because

without new cars, there would be no trade-ins. What is the use of a huge demand if we cannot provide? Moreover, the current purchasing power is low," he posited.

Address: Lot 3050 (S), Jalan Raja Permaisuri Bainun, 30250 Ipoh.

Tel: 05 241 4997

Opening hours: Every day from 9am-6pm except Sunday from 11am-3pm.

Lim Weng Choy, 40, is the executive director of **Onn Fatt Credit Sdn Bhd (Aun Fatt Used Car)**, also a family-owned business founded by his father, Lim Moon Soon, in the 1970s. Onn Fatt offers Japanese cars, national cars, four-wheel drive, saloon cars and commercial vehicles with prices ranging from a few thousand ringgit to RM150,000. Loans are arranged for customers and the car warranty lasts from one week to ten days. Dealing with new and used vehicles, hire purchase and general insurance, Onn Fatt does not accept flood-damaged vehicles.

"We've plenty of repeat customers, as we walk the talk and keep our word. Once we inspect the car we'll know whether it's good or bad," said Lim who is also the committee member of The Perak Motor and Credit Association since 2012.

"Banks calculate loan repayment points, which I feel is a little unfair. Those working as hawkers will have difficulty proving the legitimacy of their income. Previously banks considered gross income but today they calculate the nett income," he pointed out. However, he is sure business in used cars will boom in the near future due to the hike in prices of new cars.

Address: Lot 29822, Jalan Pasir Puteh, 31650 Ipoh.

Tel: 05 254 3972, 255 3972

Opening hours: 9pm-6pm every day except Sunday.

Established in 2000, **Tai Ming Motors Enterprise** is owned by 46-year-old Chan Kum Ming who is also the deputy chairman of The Perak Motor and Credit Association. Tai Ming offers Japanese cars with prices hovering between RM30,000 to RM120,000. For him, a good second-hand car is one which is accident-free, has low mileage and a nice coat of paint. The most sought after models are Honda City, Toyota Vios, Toyota Camry and Honda Accord. Tai Ming makes a point not to accept cars over ten years old.

"The weakening ringgit and the increase in new car prices are music to our ears. It'll make second hand cars more saleable. But right now the association feels that the market is sluggish," Chan told Ipoh Echo.

"Banks are stricter now. How many among us actually have all the required documents to apply for a loan? Guidelines and policies differ from one bank to another. For instance, some require a basic salary of RM2500 while some require fresh graduates age 23 years and below to have a guarantor," he lamented.



Roland Rama Rao



With a 40-year history, The Perak Motor and Credit Association members are made up of credit companies, used and new car dealers. The registered association serves as a meeting place to solve issues relating to the auto industry besides organising talks and seminars on related current issues such as the GST margin scheme. Ipoh alone has over 100 members in it. Members meet every three months. A national-level meeting is held every December in Genting.

Address: Lot 2796s Jalan Raja Permaisuri Bainun, 30250 Ipoh. Tel: 05 255 7737

Opening hours: Every day from 9am-6pm except Sunday

Danny S.C. Cheah, 53, considers **Public Car Dealer** as a "baby" (newcomer) of the industry, as they were established just six years ago.

"In Malaysia, we need cars as the public transportation is not efficient enough as compared to Singapore," said Danny, who has been with the company since its inception.

Japanese cars of three to nine years old are available at Public Car Dealers with price ranges from RM20,000 to RM60,000. They offer a one month guarantee and handle the loan for clients.

"Currently, business is bad. The difficulty in obtaining bank loans is the reason. For example, even if you have a salary of RM5000 but a commitment of over 70 per cent, the banks would reject," Danny moaned.

Address: Lot 13247, Jalan Raja Permaisuri Bainun, 30250 Ipoh. Tel: 05 255 7924

Opening hours: 9am-6pm every day except Sunday

Loan Applications

Car loan is also known as hire-purchase loan. The term hire-purchase is derived from the fact that when you take up a car loan, the car technically belongs to the lender (the bank). The interest rate for a used car is significantly higher compared to that of a new car. But even with the higher interest rate, used cars are still much cheaper than new cars when factoring average depreciation cost. To get the best deal on your used car loan, don't settle on the first bank you see. Do a bit of homework and also footwork.

Some second-hand car loans in Malaysia have a maximum financing margin of 90 per cent, so you should always expect to pay at least 10 per cent upfront to the car dealer. If you can afford it, consider paying a higher amount upfront, which will in turn lessen your principle loan amount and the interest.

In Malaysia, the maximum repayment period for a car loan is nine (9) years. The longer you stretch the repayment period, the less instalment amount you will pay per month, though at the expense of incurring more interest over the long run.

According to a former bank manager, with the weakening ringgit, banks are worried about their asset quality because of non-performing loans. The requirements for a second-hand car loan are very stringent, and qualifying is by no means easy. This is because when the clients do not pay back the car loan on time, the bank will repossess the car. Once the physical car repossession process is completed, banks often choose to put the car on the auction block in an effort to recoup the remaining balance. The amount from the sale is then subtracted from the balance on the original loan, but the value of a second-hand car drops faster than the loan value.

Beside banks, credit companies do provide car loans. This is what the former banker terms as the "grey market", where loans are provided to those who don't qualify. The downside is, the interest rates are much higher than established rates. "It operates like an *ah long* (unofficial money lender)," he remarked.

Feedback from Buyers

A survey was conducted with people who had bought second-hand cars. They were asked about the car they bought and their satisfaction level, including problems and complaints.

Fadzi Haron, 45, who previously owned a second-hand Kia Sephia is one unhappy customer. According to Fadzi, car salesmen use clever wording to help persuade you into buying a vehicle. The first thing most used car dealers do when they take a car in trade is get rid of any repair records provided by the previous owner. "They'll also remove any service reminder stickers from the windshield that may provide a clue as to when the vehicle was last serviced or when the next service is due. They want the car to be sold as a clean sheet of paper. I'll definitely not encourage people to buy a second-hand car," Fadzi implored.

Hakim, 23, once owned a second-hand Proton Wira. He too had a bad experience. According to him, used cars are a good purchase for some people while new cars are a great choice for others. "I chose to buy a new car because I don't want a car that would break down. I want to avoid a fat repair bill. The good point of owning a new car is that you don't have to worry about it breaking down compared to a used car," said Hakim. "Moreover, new cars are more attractive."

According to Qilah, 25, the advantage of buying a used car is that it is less expensive. The relative advantage of the used-car is that it allows a buyer to pick a nicer model. "If you want a used car, start by checking the prices of the vehicles that interest you. Before buying, try to arrange a test drive at night and another on a rainy day. You can get a much higher spec on a second-hand car than a new car. And buy one from a reputable dealer," she added.

Conclusion

Prices of new cars are set to go up effective 2016. Some are already up by as much as ten per cent. The reason points to a depreciating ringgit caused by a number of economic factors, falling petroleum price being one. And once the prices go up they will remain there for good. So buying a cheaper used car is an option to consider. We have mentioned the pros and cons. The choice is yours to consider.



• From the Editor's Desk
By Fathol Zaman Bukhari

PERAK BUDGET 2016

Revenue-generating resources of a state are limited to land, water and religious tithes. Incomes derived from these sources are comparatively small...



FOKUS 01 MEMPERKASAKAN PERTUMBUHAN EKONOMI	FOKUS 04 MEMPERTEGUKAN INTEGRASI DAN KEHARMONIAN
FOKUS 02 PEMANTAPAN URUS TADBIR	FOKUS 05 MEMPERKUJUK JARINGAN INFRASTRUKTUR
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	FOKUS 07 MENYEMERAKKAN SYARIAH
FOKUS 01 MEMPERKASAKAN PERTUMBUHAN EKONOMI	
Pelabangan	RM15.1 JUTA
Pembangunan Geopark Lembah Kinta	RM1.1 JUTA
Pertanian	RM8.5 JUTA
Perternakan	RM9.5 JUTA
Perikanan	RM0.35 JUTA
Program Mikro Kredit	RM4 JUTA
Kluster Ekonomi Keluarga	RM1 JUTA
Program Mikro Kredit Amanjaya Belia Niaga	RM1 JUTA
Kiosk Amanjaya	RM1 JUTA
BELANJAWAN BERHEMAH, RAKYAT SEJAHTERA	

An annual budget in excess of RM1 billion was tabled and passed by the Perak State Government during the end-of-year state legislative assembly sitting on Tuesday, November 17. Incidentally, this is the 11th consecutive deficit budget since 2005. The projected revenue for Year 2016 is RM1.039 billion while administrative expenditure is estimated at RM1.088 billion. So a sum of RM49.18 million is in deficit.

State budgets, unlike federal budgets, are seldom given much prominence as the impact on the *rakyat* is minimal. The revenue-generating resources of a state are limited to land, water and religious tithes. Incomes derived from these sources are comparatively small. Even if petroleum is available in the state, it only gets a fixed percentage of the overall revenue with the bulk going to the federal government. The imposition of the Goods and Services Taxes (GST) on April 1 of this year has not benefitted Perak much, as the RM39 billion gleaned from the rakyat will be shared by all Malaysians.

The popularly held notion that a deficit budget is not a good budget because it is indicative of poor financial planning is false. The shortfall can be recouped with thriftiness and prudence in spending and if this does not work, borrowing from banking institutions and, for want of a better word, "begging" from the federal government. Many states have resorted to this last-ditch effort to make ends meet.

Perak Budget 2016 focuses on seven strategies namely to enhance economic growth, to strengthen the system of governance, to promote education, human capital and enhancing the potentials of women and the younger generation, strengthening integration and harmony among Perakeans, improving infrastructure networks, raising the living standard of the rakyat and rejuvenating the Islamic spirit.

For the record, the state's agriculture sector had contributed RM9.84 billion in 2014 compared to RM9.18 billion in 2011. Mining and quarry activities generated RM375 million in 2014 compared to RM256 million in 2011. The production sector grossed RM10.05 billion in 2014 when it was only RM8.33 billion in 2011. The service sector was the most lucrative generating RM32.75 billion in 2014 as opposed to RM27.32

billion in 2011.

Operational Expenditure for 2016 is estimated at RM691.38 million out of which RM328.11 million is allocated for emoluments, RM256.33 million for services and supplies and RM10.41 for purchase of assets. The Development Expenditure is estimated at RM397.44 million of which RM192.85 million is earmarked for the social and RM152.47 for infrastructure developments.

Plans are afoot to build 41 small townships within the state. Three such towns have been built this year in Trong, Ijok and Sauk. The objective is to hasten the urban sprawl with the view of raising the living standards of rural folks to a meaningful level.

An interesting development is the setting up of an integrity unit in the State Secretary office. The unit will organise programmes and training to promote integrity within the state civil service. A corrupt-free administration is the unit's ultimate goal.

The 305.7km West Coast Expressway linking Banting in Selangor to Changkat Jering will commence construction in 2016. Some 172km of the expressway will be in Perak. The completion of this tolled roadway will help develop the western

coast of the state.

One of the goodies assigned for the poor and the not too poor are funds to build affordable homes and money for repairing and upgrading of dilapidated houses. A sum of RM25 million is being allocated for this programme. RM21.95 million has been set aside for social development programmes which includes an allocation of RM3 million for non-governmental organisations, RM1.9 million for Orang Asli and RM1 million for festivities. Incidentally, RM3 million has been allotted for women's development and RM1.25 million in aid of the PORT (People of Remarkable Talent) centre. My only complaint about PORT is it is too Malay-centric.

The *rakyat* have no qualms about the budget's relevance and its goodwill but, like all discerning citizens, we fear mismanagement and abuses.

Education

What Motivates Your Child To Learn?

"The revision questions didn't come out in the exam!" As I respond to the student, encouraging him to appreciate that an examination is meant to be an assessment of his ability, not his ability to memorise my revision questions, another student poses a similar question and an equally puzzled look arrives on my face. Later that night, as I watch my three-year-old, experimenting with a transformers toy too advanced for his age, happy to create something that doesn't quite look like a car, I realise that somewhere between the ages of three and 17, many children have lost their love of learning, instead turning into a nervous wreck terrified of not scoring in the top 5% of the class. It's no wonder they don't want to learn. Learning is terrifying!

There is a host of great advice about motivating our children but here's a few we use at Fairview's IB Diploma programme to ensure our children get an average of 37 out of 45 points in their exams (Medicine at King's College London requires a 35).

First, help your kids learn to fail well. Of course not repeating mistakes but celebrating the failure, that there is more to learn in failure than in success. Many parents respond to failure by quickly placing judgement on the child, scolding or frowning upon the individual for his wasted effort. Focus instead on giving a warm smile and an open hand, helping your child up and showing concern for his well being. If we delay our judgement for just a little longer, we will often find that children are their own worst judges and often being quite harsh on themselves. At Fairview, our team found that creating a safe environment where students were not afraid to fail also resulted in the students not afraid to try harder! In essence, because they were not afraid to fail anymore, the students were happy to "give it their all" and "go down swinging".

Once your kids are brave enough to fail well, encourage them to discover their goals. In the programme, it is important to first give our students the 'permission' to have their own goals, creating a sense of ownership by keeping a goal journal. We teach them about the different types of goals, short, medium and long. We share about the nature of goal setting, their fragile and fickle nature, that goals change with time. A great activity is to create and accomplish small, daily goals, nurturing a sense of confidence and empowerment that your children are able to achieve the goals they set. Once we have mastered a few short term goals, parents could transition to medium or long term goals. Finally, we share that the goals must follow the SMART acronym (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely).

Getting our children to be motivated enough to drive their learning requires that we raise children confident enough to fail well, have faith in themselves and employ strong goal setting behaviour.

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 affective development in education. Dr Vincent will be in Ipoh to talk on this topic 4th December 2015 8:00pm at Fairview Ipoh campus.

Fairview International School's Ipoh Campus is open for January enrolment. For more information, call 05 313 6888 or email to enquiries_ipoh@fairview.edu.my.



EYE HEALTH



Ipo Echo's EYE HEALTH series continues with Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S.S. GILL talking to us about Diabetes and the eyes.



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

The World Health Organization (WHO) has estimated that in the year 2030, Malaysia would have a total of 2.48 million people with Diabetes Mellitus (DM). "One in six diabetic Malaysians above 30 years old, are at a high risk of becoming blind, making it the second biggest cause of curable blindness in the country. DM prevalence in Malaysia has dramatically risen to almost twice in magnitude over the last decade. This means that approximately 25,000 productive individuals with families to support becoming blind every year due to diabetic eye disease."

SUDDEN BLINDNESS

"A diabetic patient runs a risk of suddenly going blind especially if they have uncontrolled diabetes and if they have never had their eyes checked." Diabetes Mellitus is one of the leading causes of **blindness** in Malaysia due to a complication affecting the eyes called **Diabetic Retinopathy**. "The disease is responsible for over 80 per cent of blindness in diabetics."

EYE DAMAGE

Diabetic retinopathy (damage to the retina) is an eye disease that can cause decreased vision and blindness. Depending on a patient's condition, **diabetic retinopathy** may progress rapidly or slowly. Factors that may hasten the progress include poorly controlled diabetes mellitus, heavy smoking, poorly controlled hypertension and high cholesterol. **Diabetic retinopathy** occurs when vessels at the retina leak and the retina becomes ischaemic (lacking oxygen supply). When the retina lacks oxygen, it produces a substance which induces the formation of **abnormal weak blood vessels**, which start bleeding. "Many diabetic patients are unaware that diabetes mellitus can cause eye complications and blindness."

"There was a patient in his 30s who used to skip lunch and have a carbonated drink instead. A couple of years later, he developed DM. His doctor started him on diabetic medication and advised him to go for regular eye checks. Although he was taking his medication, he did not go for any blood tests to see if his diabetes was well controlled. He also did not follow his doctor's advice to go for a regular eye check-up. One morning he woke up to find that he could hardly see in one eye. Unfortunately, like him there are many diabetic patients who are oblivious to such vision complications. I have seen so many who have chosen to ignore the need for regular eye check until they get into trouble."

W.H.O. Recommendations:

- **BODY WEIGHT:** achieve and maintain healthy body weight.
- **EXERCISE:** at least 30 minutes of regular, moderate-intensity activity on most days. More activity is required for weight control.
- **DIET:** eat a healthy diet of between three and five servings of fruit and vegetables a day. Reduce sugar and saturated fats intake.
- **NO SMOKING:** smoking increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

.....and of course, the **EYE CHECK:** Get your eyes checked regularly if you are diabetic!

For more information, call Gill Eye Specialist Centre at Hospital Fatimah 05 545 5582 or email gilleyecentre@dr.com.

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Water, Water Everywhere

Somewhere, on the ground floor of the Perak Tourist Board in Ipoh, is a grainy black and white photo of the Great Ipoh Flood. If memory serves me right, the photo was taken around 1924.

An excerpt from the book, "When Tin was King" said that in October 1918, Ipoh had not experienced much rain, but up-river, in Ulu Kinta, heavy rain had been falling and had filled the tributaries of the Kinta River.

The water worked its way along the river, and it is said that the shopkeepers were not aware of the impending floods, until they heard the noise of swirling, gushing water. They opened their windows, to find themselves surrounded by a mass of water, which seeped into their shops. Most of them were flooded with four feet deep of muddy water.

The loss to the commercial district was high. Damage to goods and offices, coupled with the disruption of services, wrecked the economy, at the time. Ipoh experienced other great floods in 1919 and in 1924.

In addition to the effect of the heavy rain, in the mountains, the activities of Perak's main industries, tin mining and rubber, caused the rivers to silt easily.

Tin tailings flowed into the rivers, as did the wash from the rubber estates. The Kinta River had to be continually dredged, to keep the waterway clear, as river traffic was the main form of transport for goods and people, before the advent of the railway.

In December 2014, various parts of Malaysia were flooded. Many people claim, it was one of the worst floods, in living memory.

Barely a year later, many places were hit by flash floods, and hundreds of people were evacuated to safety, in Perak. On November 21, 2015, the Fire and Rescue Department director, Yahya Madif, said that the number of flood victims, had risen from 286, on November 20, to 315, a day later. Flash floods had hit a variety of places, such as Batu Merah, Bagan Serai and Batu Gajah.

The heavy rains, during the monsoon season, are frequently blamed for causing the floods, but there are other contributory factors.

If we were to look around us, at homes in the cities, we observe that many people pave their front gardens. One, or two homes, would not make much difference, but when row upon row of houses do the same, the rain cannot seep into the ground.

We have a furious pace of housing development. At times, one wonders if the drainage is adequate. Certain housing estates are known to be prone to flooding.

Another problem is the monsoon drains and culverts which are not cleared of logs, branches and other detritus, regularly. When the rubbish is not cleared, the passage of water is impeded, so the water will ultimately break its banks.

Our rivers carry silt, from upriver, and if the rivermouth is not dredged, it stands to reason that flooding will occur along its course.



Our mangrove swamps act like sponges, and any excess water, from a tsunami or flooding is absorbed by the roots of the plants in the mangrove tidal estuary. If we continually cut down the mangrove trees, to convert the land into oil-palm plantations, or prawn farms, the natural soak-away qualities of the mangrove will be lost.

Indiscriminate logging of our forests accelerates soil erosion and weathering of the soil. The jungle bed filters water, and the roots of trees, hold soil in place. Logging removes the trees, and exposes the soil, so that both the leaves and roots of the trees, are not present, to absorb the excess moisture.

The resultant flooding may cause the natural habitats, of certain species, to be destroyed, with a loss of biodiversity and the possibility that some species of flora and fauna become extinct.

Logging trails disturb the soil structure, and hunting, by the timber workers all contribute towards a decline in the wildlife population. Water which falls on the compacted logging trails, is washed into rivers, thus reducing the water quality of the rivers.

With the rapid pace of development, are we building on sites which are unsuitable for people to live? Are we building on floodplains, or areas which are prone to flooding, at certain times of the year? Sometimes, it is best to leave the mangrove swamps, and other floodplains alone, to do what nature intended them to do.



**THINKING
ALLOWED**

by Mariam Mokhtar

CHILD HEALTH

Dr Shan Narayanan
Consultant General Paediatrician, Hospital Fatimah

Upper Respiratory Tract Infection (URTI) In Children

Respiratory tract infection is the most common reason for visiting the doctor. In this article, I will be discussing about Upper Respiratory Infection in general.

Children tend to get more URTI than adults as their immune system is still maturing.

What is URTI?

It is the infection of the Upper Respiratory Tract i.e. nose, sinuses and throat. The common URTIs are:

- The common cold.
- Pharyngitis: infection of the back of the throat.
- Tonsillitis: infection of tonsils.
- Sinusitis: infection of the sinuses.
- Laryngitis: Infection of the voice box (larynx).
- Flu.

What are the symptoms of URTI?

Children develop fever which can go up to 40°C. They also may have nasal congestion, runny nose, and itchiness in the throat, sore throat and cough. They may have headache, body ache decreased appetite, lethargy and less activeness. Infants and young children may not be able to express themselves thus they remain unsettled and 'cranky'.

Infants prefer to breathe through their nose, thus the slightest block can cause nasal congestion and thus breathing difficulty. The nasal congestion also gives rise to poor feeding. Infants tend to gag and choke as they are unable to spit out the mucus.

What causes URT?

The infection is mainly caused by viruses but can be caused by bacteria as well.

What is the treatment for URTI?

The treatment is predominantly, symptomatic. i.e., relieving fever, nasal congestion and coughing. Rest, lots of fluid, fever medication are the mainstay of treatment. A variety of decongestants and cough preparation can be used, however there is no evidence they reduce the duration of the illness. The decongestants and cough preparations are not recommended for children less than two years because of the possible side effects.

In infants and young children, congestion may be relieved somewhat by using a saline nasal spray and by suctioning the mucus from the nose with a rubber suction bulb.

As most of these infections is caused by viruses, antibiotics is not needed. The symptoms may take a week or two to clear.

How to prevent URTI?

Having good personal hygiene is the mainstay to prevent the spread. All carers of children with URTI should wash their hands after handling the child. The more intimate (hugging and sharing beds) contact the carer has with the affected child, the higher the chance for the URTI to spread among family members. Affected children should not share their toys. Their toys should be washed thoroughly after use. Children should stay at home from school and child care centres until the fever and other symptoms settle.

Children above six months can have influenza vaccination annually.

For more information, call Dr Shan's clinic at Hospital Fatimah 05 546 1345 or email shaniea02@gmail.com.

Han Chin Pet Soo



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ON IPOH FOOD

By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen
seefoon@ipohecho.com.my

Pics by Caroline Wong



Nosh News with Seefoon



I always make it a habit to update myself on the latest foodie trends or new dishes being offered by my favourite restaurants. One such restaurant is the Yuk Sou Hin Chinese restaurant in the WEIL Hotel.

When **Yuk Sou Hin** first opened, helmed by Master Chef-Chinese Cuisine Chung Ho Shi, with his 39 impressive years of experience, I was over the moon for its **Dim Sum** and their signature **Smoked Duck with Lychee Wood**. I immediately became a committed fan and brought all my foodie friends there for their Dim Sum which I touted as the best in Ipoh.

Today, Chef Chung is still there and their signature duck is still on the menu and as good as it ever was but alas the Dim Sum and the menu is now pork free. As all my ethnic Chinese readers of this column out there will understand, there is an ingrained prejudice in the Chinese palate that dismisses any Chinese restaurant that doesn't serve pork as being 'not up to the standard' to appeal to Chinese taste buds.

Therefore, I admit to not having frequented the restaurant as much as I used to as my friends all share this prejudice. However on my recent visit to celebrate Caroline Wong's birthday I was delightfully surprised by the quality of the of the food....pork free as it is.



Under Chef Chung's masterful hands, chicken has replaced pork as filling for all the Dim Sum and every morsel is as delectable as ever. And ingenious additions to dishes have elevated the lowly Dim Sum to gastronomic heights.

As in the **scallop dumplings topped with black truffles**, the dumpling skin translucent, paper thin and the scallop ocean fresh and the black truffle lending its inimitable fragrance to each delectable morsel. **RM12 per basket**. Their **Snow Mountain Bun** has been re-invented with a fluffier bun and none of the oiliness that the



previous recipe called for.

Another new innovation is their **Yee Meen** (pre fried egg noodles) with Black Truffles and fried in truffle oil. The dish arrived with the fragrance of the truffles permeating the whole room in which we sat. And they were generous with the black truffle too as flecks of it can be found coating the noodles. Utterly yumilicious at **RM28**.

The final unusual and in fact rare dish which we had the pleasure of trying was the **soup made from the Rafflesia flower**. I was told it was the stem of the Rafflesia flower, but a little research on my part showed that it is a true parasite and has no roots, leaves or stems. This is the largest flower in the world some weighing in at 9kg with petals stretching nearly 1 metre. I suspect that what we were eating were its flower buds. Rafflesia buds reportedly has healing properties. According to folk medicine, the flower can restore a woman's body after childbirth. Specifically, the buds of the flower are boiled with water and then consumed to stop internal bleeding, shrink the womb and restore the figure. And for men? Supposedly, it can improve sexual strength. It has also been used to induce weight loss. Chef Chung just claims that the soup was for detoxing.

I was expecting something quite pungent as the blooming flower is known for its noxious odour but surprisingly the soup was very pleasant, umami with chicken and other herbs and the actual flower bits had a mushroom-like texture. **RM18 per individual portion**.

So to my Chinese friends with pork preferences to drop them and I urge you to go to **Yuk Sou Hin** and try their new specialities.

Yuk Sou Hin

Ist Floor Weil Hotel, 292 Sultan Idris Shah
Tel: 05 208 2228 Manager: K.C. Tong
Mobile: 012 937 2822



KK-style Laksa Hits Ipoh

Laksa has been one of the iconic foods in Malaysia that is enjoyed by everyone regardless of their age and who can blame them? Who can resist the hot and spicy fish broth with soft thick white noodles? The fact that it can be enjoyed at any time of the day, it is no wonder that Malaysia has a large variety of laksa styles waiting to be savoured. Curry Laksa, Penang Laksa, Asam Laksa are common and now the classic way of serving laksa is slowly making its comeback: Laksa served with a nest-shaped fried egg, known as **Laksa Sarang** (nest).

Laksa Sarang was originally from the royal town of Perak, Kuala Kangsar and now it's finally arrived in Ipoh where two restaurants have been serving Laksa Sarang in their own style.

1. Laksa Telur Goreng Bersarang (LTGB)

Located at Taman Botani, LTGB was one of the first restaurants serving the Kuala Kangsar Laksa. Customers also get to add in their choice of additional garnitures like fishcakes and fishballs. The price starts from RM3.50 and above. The rustic Malay ambiance in the cafe will definitely make you come back again to this place!

Laksa Bersarang Taman Botani opens every day except Friday from noon until 7pm, and is located at No.1, Jalan Margosa D/8, Seri Margosa, Taman Seri Botani.



2. Ipohlicious

Opened recently at Kampung Dato Ahmad Said, Ipohlicious slowly gained its popularity for serving delicious Laksa Sarang or as written on the menu, Laksa Saranghae (Saranghae means I Love You in Korean). Priced at only RM4, Laksa Saranghae is guaranteed to satisfy your Laksa craving. Side condiments to compliment your Laksa Sarang include fish crackers, hard-boiled eggs and many more.

If you are not in the mood for Laksa, Ipohlicious also offers a variety of Malay/Thai food such as fried rice and also western delicacies. Wash down your meal with a bowl of their ABC (Malaysian Shaved Ice) that comes with fruits, jelly, ice cream and biscuits.

Ipohlicious is located near Mydin Manjoi at Lorong Pasar, Kg. Sungai Tapah, Gugusan Manjoi, 30020 Ipoh.



Ili Aqilah



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Ipoh Wins Global Winner - World Luxury Hotel Award 2015



Ipoh came into the limelight at the annual World Luxury Hotel Awards 2015 when The Haven Luxury Resort (Best Western Premier) Ipoh was awarded the Global Winner in the Family category at a gala ceremony held at Harbour Grand, Hong Kong recently.

Best Scenic Environment Award

Besides the top global award, The Haven was also declared the Continent winner for Asia in the Luxury Hotel – Best Scenic Environment category, putting small city Ipoh onto the world hospitality map.

Best High Rise

Its developer, The Haven Sdn Bhd, followed that achievement up shortly after by snaring another award: FIABCI's Malaysia Property Award 2015 winner for Best High Rise Development. Think Malaysian Oscars for property development in the country – and that is FIABCI!

That announcement brought much attention to the comparatively small developer, where many guests at the gala dinner were seen asking amongst themselves, "How did this developer manage to triumph over its larger and more established peers?"



MALAYSIA PROPERTY
AWARD 2015

Residential
(High Rise) Category



FIABCI-MALAYSIA
International Real Estate Federation

Overcoming Challenges

It was in 2009 that the development project known simply as The Haven, sitting on the fringe of Ipoh's well-known limestone outcrops in Tambun, began taking shape. Between then and 2013, the year of completion, its developer was inundated with challenges after challenges.

Said The Haven Ipoh Chief Executive Officer Peter Chan, "Those who have been following our progress from the beginning would know the many problems we faced. Even though the past is best left in the past, we are aware that our struggles are far from over, despite having won more than thirty property and hospitality awards, including internationally."

Sheer Determination and Commitment

For a new developer from a modest city such as Ipoh, The Haven Ipoh has certainly come a long way. Through sheer determination and sticking to the policy of not being purely profit-driven, the developer has, against all odds, emerged victorious, in part due to its winning location, scenic environment, commitment and superb management.

Resort Immensely Popular and Reasonably Priced

It is really not difficult to understand why The Haven is so popular among guests. The newly certified 5-star hotel by Tourism Ministry of Malaysia, the first in Perak, has received numerous positive feedback from guests along the lines of "We're truly impressed with the surrounding landscape and the development of the condo with its modern architectural design within the limestone hills and natural lake." and "It's really an unforgettable experience; I think the name should be 'The Heaven Ipoh' as the scene of the lake and the surrounding mountains is out of this world. The hotel staff were really very kind and provided the best service. The pool is also one of the best that I have tried, with its view to the lake and glass walls," just to quote a couple of them posted on TripAdvisor.

Those who are well-travelled would know that for a 5-star luxury resort located in a similar setting and offering magnificent views, it would set them back by at least USD700 to USD1,500 for a night's stay per room.

Yet, The Haven, offering modern facilities amidst a natural green environment is only MYR700 to MYR1,500 per night's stay at a three-bedroom suite. This monetary savings for almost the same luxuries prove that The Haven truly offers value for money to guests.

Convenience

For readers who are not familiar with The Haven, they are probably imagining the property to be in some far off woods. They can't be more wrong. Despite being in nature, The Haven is just ten minutes' drive from Ipoh City, a stone's throw away from popular shopping malls and other city attractions. Staying true to its 5-star rating, guests to The Haven can arrange for complimentary transfer to the resort from the Ipoh Railway Station or Sultan Azlan Shah Airport upon their arrival.

For those who are driving from Kuala Lumpur, The Haven is also conveniently located just a short distance from the North-South Expressway exit into Tambun after Ampang toll.

Still, even with its proximity to all city amenities those who have checked-in to the resort would probably want to just unwind within the property, away from the hustle and bustle of city life. How often does one get to fully enjoy a peaceful sanctuary enveloped by the pristine air of Tambun, overlooking the tranquil lake with jagged limestone hills as backdrop?

Tremendous Vacation Destination – Facilities, Food and Security

And is there any better way to spend a vacation than to swim in its 60-metre long trademark seahorse-shaped pool? The 5-level infinity pool includes a Jacuzzi, lap pool, leisure pool, children's pool and wading pool.

This is where the six multi-racial chefs at The Haven's Cuisines Restaurant play that crucial role of keeping guests well-fed with a mouth-watering array of local, Asian, Western and even Mediterranean fares.

This world award-winning development, which boasts seven levels of security 24 hours a day, has hosted top dignitaries in the country, as well as several Sultans and heads of State.



Nevertheless, The Haven is most suitable as a romantic getaway or that much needed family breakaway. Moreover, the resort is well-equipped with function rooms and a ballroom, plus features facilities for team building events. Also, it is a prime venue for garden weddings.

Now, any Ipohite would be extremely proud of the achievements and successes attained by The Haven thus far. Having bagged over 30 hospitality and property awards not only in Malaysia but globally, surely the spotlight has been turned on Ipoh, making its name ring louder worldwide?

State Authorities to Leverage?

The question that begs to be answered is, "How does the state authorities leverage on this achievement to propel Ipoh further in the eyes of the world?"

The Haven has already fought, and won, half the battle. The rest is up to those in power and ordinary Ipoh folk to make good use of this foothold to achieve bigger successes.

Deserving of Support from All

Even with three towers standing tall, The Haven still needs the support of all to continue to bring glory to Ipoh. That's the least we can do for the development that has provided job opportunities to many local youth and shared the tourism pie with other product owners within the state.

Dirgahayu Tuanku

SEMOGA DIRAHMATI DAN DIBERKATI ALLAH

Duli Yang Maha Mulia Paduka Seri Sultan Perak Darul Ridzuan
Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah
Ibni Almarhum Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah Al-Maghfur-Lah

Sultan, Yang Di-Pertuan dan Raja Pemerintah
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SEMPENA ULANG TAHUN KEPUTERAAN TAHUN 2015

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COMMUNITY

La Salle Reunion Dinner



Class reunion is an exciting time to be together and reminisce on the past and find out what has become of your classmates since the last time you laid eyes on them.

Former students and staff of La Salle School, Ipoh organised a reunion dinner recently. The event was held at the school hall in conjunction with the school's 50th anniversary.

Over 200 guests attended the function. The former students were delighted to meet up with their teachers and their classmates. They had a wonderful time recalling the good old days and were pleasantly surprised by the transformation of some of them.

Among the honoured guests were Adrian Tsen, President of the Old Michaelian Association, Dato' Vincent Corkery from La Salle Centre, Shirley Yeoh, Chairman of the Parent Teacher Association, Matthew Liew, Principal from 1966-1985 and Lee Ngan Chong, son of the late Lee Kwee Foh who donated the land on which the school was built in 1964.

On the whole it was an eventful evening for the ex-students and ex-staff of the school. They looked forward to another get-together next year or an informal gathering in the near future.

Nantini

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

In conjunction with the Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which fell in October, Perak Community Specialist Hospital (PCSH) held a Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign at the newly-opened AEON Mall, Klebang (Hall 3) from Wednesday, October 21 to Sunday, October 25.

It was an overwhelming success with over 5000 people visiting the information and medical booths set up in the mall for the 5-day event.

Some of the activities organised were blood donation, seminars and talks on breast cancer, free health screening, children colouring competition, stage performances and lucky draws. The National Cancer Society Malaysia (Perak) set up a special booth where talks on ways to perform self-examination for breast cancer were held.

Dr Pang Ay Minn spoke on 'Women and Cancer' to enlighten listeners on the disease. Dietician, Hooi touched on the subject of 'Healthy Eating for Cancer Prevention'. She told her audience how to enjoy a cancer-free life with proper food. Guest speakers, Huan and Khednniey elaborated on hydrogen water and electromagnetic radiation which were relevant in cancer prevention.

Nantini



Dirgahayu Tuanku



SEMOGA DIRAHMATI DAN DIBERKATI ALLAH

**Duli Yang Maha Mulia Paduka Seri Sultan Perak Darul Ridzuan
Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah**

Ibni Almarhum Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah Al-Maghfur-Lah

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Sembah Takzim Daripada



**Presiden, Naib Presiden,
Ahli-Ahli Jawatankuasa,
Ahli-Ahli dan Kakitangan Kelab Ipoh Diraja**

COMMUNITY

House for Former Soldier



After a six-year wait, former soldier, Zakaria Mohd Piah, 52, finally got his dream house. Zakaria was formerly attached to Regiment 304 (TA) stationed in Gerik. The house was built on his own land with funds sourced from the Veteran Department of the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF).

To the ex-soldier, it was a form of recognition for the sacrifices he had made while serving in the territorial regiment along the East-West Highway for over a decade in the 1980s.

He was beaming with pride when he received a replica of the house key from Deputy Defence Minister Datuk Wira Mohd Johari Baharum. The house was built by personnel from the Taiping-based Royal Engineer Squadron. The handing-over ceremony was held at the Kampung Gerik, Gerik on Friday, November 13.

Present at the morning ceremony were Brigadier-General Mas'od bin Hj Muhammad, Commander 2nd Malaysian Infantry Brigade, Senator Admiral (Retired) Tan Sri Mohd Anwar Mohd Nor, President of MAF Veterans' Association, Major General Datuk Wira Mohd Noor Daud, Director General MAF Veterans Affairs Department and Datuk Mohd Tarmizi Idris, Adun for Kenering.

Ed

WEIL Hotel Caters at Anning

WEIL Hotel celebrated the opening ceremony of the new library at Anning Old Folk's Home and Orphanage with a delicious line-up of vegetarian delicacies.

The event was held as part of WEIL Hotel's corporate social responsibility initiatives. WEIL Hotel's Chinese restaurant Yuk Sou Hin prepared a delectable and healthy meal for the old folks, children and public who gathered to witness the event.

Mr Liew Yu-Wei, Executive Director, WEIL Resources Sdn Bhd said, "I am very proud and pleased to contribute to this meaningful event. We are also glad to see the opening of the new library which aims to provide new resources for its residents as well as the public in the nearby community. We believe the new books will supplement the orphan's education. The new library has over 300 children's books as well as some encyclopedias."



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Ear, Nose & Throat Care

By Dr Rekha Balachandran

Nasal Block

One of the commonest complaints I see is the inability to breathe through the nose or nose block.

Nasal block or congestion can cause a strange sounding speech called a "hyponasal speech" and a dry throat in the mornings from breathing through the mouth all night. This can present as:

1. Persistent block on one or both sides of the nose
2. Nasal block that changes with position, (block on the left side when sleeping on left or vice versa)
3. Occurs with other allergy symptoms like sneezing, runny nose, itchiness
4. Associated with symptoms of polyps such as inability to smell, headaches
5. Arises secondary to infections like a cold or sinus infections.

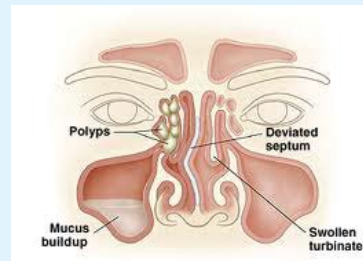
Each of these symptoms can point to different possible causes. All of them except the common cold will need further investigations.

Turbinate hypertrophy/enlargement

This is the commonest cause of nasal block. Turbinates (of which there are three in the nose) are shelves of bone at the side of the nose. This bone is covered by flesh (called mucosa) that is vascular and can vary tremendously in thickness. This enlargement is due to underlying allergies and usually causes nasal block on both sides that can increase with change of position. This can be treated by controlling underlying allergies. Of course, surgical reduction of the turbinate may also be advocated if the block is severe and the enlargement is significant.

Deviated nasal septum

The nasal septum is the thin piece of cartilage and bone that separates the two sides of the nose from each other. This septum can sometimes be bent into a 'C' or 'S' shape causing one or both sides to narrow. This causes a persistent one sided nose block that may worsen over time. This type of block does not improve much with medication and may also contribute to headaches or sinus infections on the narrowed side. A symptomatic deviated septum is best treated with surgical correction.



Nasal polyps

Polyps are grape like growths that occur inside the nose. Most of these polyps are not cancerous although a small percentage may be precancerous. The cause of these polyps can range from infection to allergies. They are characterised by nasal block, a complete or reduced sense of smell and a feeling of pressure or headaches. The diagnosis of nasal polyps is made by using a small nasal scope. To provide immediate relief, a course of nasal and oral steroids with or without antibiotics will help. Many people with nasal polyps will require surgery to remove the existing polyps and may need to take medication to prevent their recurrence. Allergy testing may help to identify if the polyps are allergic in nature and avoiding the allergens may reduce the chance of the polyps growing back.

In conclusion, nasal block can be caused by many different factors, some more serious than others. If the nasal block is continuous and troubling in nature, it is advised to seek medical advice.

Rekha ENT Specialist Clinic

Suite 509, Level 5, Pantai Hospital Ipoh. Tel: **05 540 5408**.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RekhaENTClinic

COMMUNITY

In Dire Straits

An unfortunate accident a year ago has impacted on this poor student's lifestyle. Muhammad Adam Haikal Mohd Hisam, 9, finds living dull, tiresome and lethargic. This came about after head surgery to stop internal bleeding resulting from the accident.

Muhammad Adam, from Sekolah Kebangsaan Chepor, missed classes when he was under medication and observation. His condition deteriorated after the third surgery.

Father Mohd Hisam Ishak, a bank employee who lives in Taman Chepor Raya, Chemor, is worried for his eldest son's well-being because even after a year's treatment the boy's condition has not changed much.

Haikal suffered a concussion on his head after a fall in the baby sitter's house while his father was away at work. The incident happened in September last year when Haikal was playing with his brother at the babysitter's house.

"Haikal has been receiving treatments from Raja Permaisuri Bainun Hospital, Ipoh. He underwent surgery three times. During the second surgery, a portion of his skull was removed for three months. The skull failed to function properly after re-attachment and requires further surgery. Haikal's condition is not too stable because the affected portion of the skull is getting more uneven. He received a total of 41 stitches on his head. Throughout the treatment Haikal would sometimes bleed from his nose and mouth. He suffers headaches and gets edgy as a result. The boy underwent a cerebral angiogram at Kuala Lumpur General Hospital to remove coagulated blood at the brain nerves area. The treatments are complicated and risky. Any mistake could affect the nerves of other parts of the body. However, I am thankful that so far, everything runs smoothly," he said.

Mohd Hisam Ishak works at Bank Simpanan Nasional, Ipoh as a marketing executive while his wife works at the electronics factory, Carsem (S) at Jelapang. They are blessed with two children.

In the third follow-up treatment back in August, the doctor found that Haikal still has some coagulated blood in his head. He has to undergo another surgery to replace the operated skull.

"The fourth treatment is scheduled for Wednesday, December 2 at Kuala Lumpur General Hospital. The cost will have to be fully borne by us. Hence, we would be thankful to anyone who offers to help."



"The BN Perak Service Centre through its chief, Mohd Rawi Abdullah, has come to his aid with a RM2000 donation. I welcome any assistance for Haikal's follow-up treatment."

Readers who wish to help the poor boy can deposit your money to Hisam Ishak's BSN account number: **0810041000437633** or to his Maybank account number: **158220720691**. Hisam can be reached at **012 525 0677** or **013 502 3030**.

Rosli Mansor

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Concert organised by Friends of Perak Women for Women Society*

COMMUNITY

Japan Occupational Therapy Day

Japan International Cooperation Agency together with Persatuan Pemulihan Sultan Azlan Shah celebrated Japan Occupational Therapy Day in conjunction with Japan Overseas Co-operation Volunteers 50th Anniversary Celebration of their volunteer presence in Malaysia recently.

The day, themed 'World Occupational Therapy Day' started at 9am with two Japanese related activities called 'Somemono' – which is the art of batik printing and making of the Japanese classic food, 'Onigirazu'. Five Japanese volunteers Ms Kayo Kawakami, Ms Junko Nishinaka, Ms Fumino Shiratori, Ms Yuika Oku and Mr Tsubasa Imai were invited. These five volunteers are serving as volunteers under the JICA Programme at various Special Education Schools throughout Malaysia. The event was initiated by Mr Ippei Kawasaki an Occupational Therapist attached to Persatuan Pemulihan Sultan Azlan Shah under the JICA Programme and the Occupational Therapy unit staff. Guests for the occasion were Dr Ng Kee Hong, Ms Devika (Occupational Therapist) both from Hospital Tuanku Bainun and Mr Jeyarajah, a member of the Board of Trustees and Ms Regina (CEO).

Mr Jeyarajah gave out the prizes to the winners of the batik painting competition and gifts to each child and adults with disabilities who participated in the event. Gifts and goodie bags were sponsored by Japan International Cooperation Agency. The next activity was the preparation of the food called 'Onigirazu'. It was rolling together of rice



and cut vegetables into a seaweed piece and cut into slices for consumption. The adults with disabilities had a great time preparing this.

The Japan Day ended with a party of food and fun, focusing on Japan and its culture.

News

Vale Eco-Centre



Launched on Saturday, October 31, the Vale Eco-Centre is the Brazilian company's corporate social responsibility initiative to instil awareness in the public, especially the local community on the biodiversity of the Teluk Rubiah forest. Managed by Vale in partnership with the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS), it is the gateway of the 715-acre forest preserved by the tin-ore processing company out of the 1196-acre land it occupies.

Present during the launch were the Managing Director of Vale (Malaysia), Efreim Daumas, Vale's Country Manager, Andre Kopperschmidt, MNS Honorary Secretary, Stephanie Bacon, MNS Executive Director, I.S. Shanmugaraj and guest of honour, Executive Councillor for Investment Promotion, Industrial Development and Corridor Development, Dato' Mohammad Zahir Khalid.

Back in January, Vale and MNS carried out a scientific expedition in the forest and found an abundance of biodiversity which included over a hundred plants common to the lowland dipterocarp forest, 125 bird species, including the Great Hornbill and 28 dragonfly species while its shallow seas harbour eight hard coral species.

The three forest trails available at the centre are the main trail (400m), the waterfall trail (1400m) and the coastal trail (2200m). Other activities offered at the centre include education camps, guided forest trail walks, hands-

on biodiversity experiments, bird watching, insect studies, ecological activities, coast and river monitoring.

The centre features a traditional Malay house with in-built skylight roofing, natural air ventilation and designed to contain rainwater, which is then recycled for the purpose of general cleaning or watering.

It operates from 8.30am to 6pm daily, including public holidays. Admission is free. To experience the forest trail walks, registration is required.

Vale is the world's largest producer of iron ore and pellets and the second largest producer of nickel. Its iron ore distribution centre in Malaysia, known as Teluk Rubiah Maritime Terminal, started its operations in October last year.

Commenting on concerns that the terminal might affect the local fishermen, I.S. Shanmugaraj said, "The main jetty, not reclaimed but built on stilts, is providing a new breeding sanctuary underneath. Till today, the corals are surviving. Plus, there's no massive ship traffic."

"Fishing boats and Vale vessels use separate routes. During the exclusive site visit, the media saw for themselves that there is no spill over. Hence, the effect is kept to a very bare minimum. We'll be the eyes and ears for the public," he remarked.

Mei Kuan

Pengkalan Hulu District Council Wins

After much hard work and dedication, Pengkalan Hulu Perak District Council won first place in the state level Innovation and Creativity Convention held at Perak State Secretariat recently.

The council grabbed the RM5000 cash prize together with a trophy when they introduced a new system that allowed the public to apply for amalgamation of agriculture and receive the result within a day. Previously, if anyone applies for amalgamation in the agriculture industry, they would need to wait for five months.

"Our mission has always been about serving in the best way. We want to provide the best service to the public and with this achievement, I believe we are getting better," said Mohd Syukri Azaari, representative from the district office.

Runner up went to Ipoh City Council (MBI) and Kerian District Council took third place.

RM



Announcements

Announcements must be sent by fax: **05 255 2181**; or email: announcements@ipohecho.com.my, by the 9th or 23rd of every month in order to meet deadlines. Announcements by phone will not be entertained. Ipoh Echo reserves the right to verify any announcement before it is published.

Sharpened Word next literary matinee meets on Saturday afternoon December 19. at Sepaloh Art gallery No. 16 Jalan Sultan Iskandar (Hugh Low Street). Our purpose is to celebrate all things writing and literature, and to open up the inner workings of the writer's mind to a general audience. For more info please visit their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/sharpenedword.kinta.

Spring Festival Charity Food Fair 2015, December 20, 8am-2pm at PPPJ1M Home, 152 Jalan Dato Lau Pak Khuan, Taman Ipoh, Ipoh. Organised by Pertubuhan Pengurusan Pusat Jagaan 1 Malaysia, Perak (PPPJ1M) and Lions Club of Ipoh Mandarin. For more information, contact: Mr Choong **016 543 0604** or Kenny Chong **012 500 6558**.

YWCA Ipoh Food Fair on January 9, 2016, from 9am to 2pm at YWCA, 132 Persiaran Anderson, Ipoh. Food fair coupons, at RM 10 per booklet, can be purchased from the YWCA Ipoh office. For more information, contact Mrs Linda Goon at **05 241 7635** or **017 403 8328**.

Park jetty closed for renovation. Ipoh City Council (MBI) has closed the Gunung Lang Park jetty for up-grading works for a period of five months beginning Monday, October 26, 2015

to Saturday, March 26, 2016. The boat service in the lake operates as usual from a temporary jetty.

The Dementia Day-care Centre is open daily from 9am till 3pm. The centre also holds support group meetings every **2nd Saturday and Monday of each month**. All carers who have love ones with dementia and others are welcome to attend. These are sharing sessions. For more details kindly call April at **05 241 1691** before 3pm.

Performances of Traditional Songs and Dance every Friday every week from March 25 at 8pm (except fasting month). Held at Kompleks Jabatan Kebudayaan dan Kesenian Negeri Perak, Jalan Caldwell, Off Jalan Raja DiHilir, Ipoh. Come and experience dances like Dikir Fusion, Nego (Kelantan), Joget Kete Lembu, Tangtung, Kollatum, Joget Malaysia and traditional music. Free admission. For enquiries, contact: Puan Nor Fairus Binti Alias **018 958 9049**.

YMCA of Ipoh Toastmasters Club Mission to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth. The group meets every **2nd & 4th Wednesday** at 7.45pm at 211 Jalan Raja Musa Aziz (Anderson Road), 30300 Ipoh. Contacts: Ramesh Victor **016 566 2866**, May Foo **017 466 0943** or Nur Aida **013 346 9490**.

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Education

Repainting the Memory

Almost forty eight years ago, Chan Wai Chun and her friends created a series of murals at their school, Methodist Girl's School in 1967. Guided by their beloved teacher, Mrs Vivian Chong, Wai Chun and her friends decided to do some repairing of their artwork; to give it a fresh look.

"Mrs Vivian couldn't recall where she got the inspiration from. But I do remember she took a year off to Italy, so perhaps that is where she got the idea to do the mural mosaic-style," said Wai Chun.

Some of the murals were damaged due to water-dripping, drilling and piping. Seeing how old it looks, Wai Chun decided that it was time to do some touch-ups. She contacted some of her friends who were more than eager to help.

"We have received great support from everyone. Although some of the girls couldn't make it here, they have been encouraging us to pursue this and even sent donations to fund this project," added Wai Chun when Ipoh Echo met her and her friends recently.

The mural was a series of career paths depicting women which were common in the 1960s, such as doctors, architects, teachers, rubber-tappers and many more.

"I've been trying to contact some of my former classmates who were also involved in this project. I miss them," said Wai Chun.

Are you one of Wai Chun's classmates? Please do email her at patchan787@icloud.com to catch up!

Ili Aqilah



Young Perak

Winning Angie

In August, Angie Lee Xiao Fong was crowned as one of the top three winners in the writing category of the second annual International Youth Food Culture Contest. Participating middle and high school students around the world showcased either their writing or art skills in this contest organised by Youth Food, a non-profit youth organisation based in California, United States.

Ipoh Echo caught up with the 17-year-old Poi Lam High School student who wrote the winning piece, 'When I Think of Food'.

Born and bred in Ipoh, this is Angie's first attempt in the contest, which she came across while browsing online. And it is her first international win.

"My parents are really good cooks. My dad used to be a chef in America for crew ships. From young, the whole dining table will be teeming with food every day, just like a banquet. Hence, the essay is about how they inspire my life," she told Ipoh Echo.

Drawing inspiration from the surroundings and her interactions with people, her interest in writing began when she was in Form 1 which prompted her to start a blog.

When asked on her favourite part about writing, the science stream Form 5 student replied, "I am not a really vocal person. I could express my thoughts better and people could feel my emotions via my essays."

She improves her writing skills by watching the YouTube channel "JustKiddingNews".

Citing Lang Leav as her favourite author, this is her advice for aspiring young writers. "Don't be afraid. Before, I thought I was really bad in writing. After winning, I noticed I wasn't really that bad. Show others your writings and get constructive criticisms."

Her ambition is to someday be either one of these: architect, painter or writer.

Also an avid water colour painter, Angie won the consolation prize in Dasein Fans Club Sketch Board Contest last year.

Leong Ping Chow, the principal of Poi Lam High School since 2010, is very proud of her.

"I always say this to my students during school assembly – never give up because we don't know what lies ahead. Success doesn't come easy. Without struggle we'll never achieve it," said Leong.

Read the winning article in the next issue.

Mei Kuan



Taskas Go Green Carnival

Kindergartens around Perak together with Solid Waste Corporation (SWCorp) Perak organised a go-green event recently at Casuarina@Meru on October 31.

The carnival was held to educate the kids, teachers and also parents on the importance of keeping the earth green for a better future. President of Perak Kindergarten Association, Mrs Nafizah Dato' Abdul Malik congratulated the effort made by everyone especially teachers who spent their time training the kids to perform at the carnival as well as teaching them about going green.

"It is important for both teachers and parents to provide a healthier environment for the kids to live and to learn. Our children deserve the best from all sorts of perspectives; nutritious food, healthier lifestyle and good morals to ensure a better future for them," said Nafizah.

The fun and merry carnival saw kids from several kindergartens in Perak taking part in numerous activities such as 'Best dressed made from recycled items'; singing on stage and many more.

Ili Aqilah



RM1.1 Billion Integrated Edu-City



Qi City, a RM1.1-billion integrated edu-city, is an upcoming development project comprising a teaching hospital with public and private wings, Quest International University Perak campus, three condominium blocks, retail outlets, a medical rehabilitation centre, hotel suites and a convention hall with a seating capacity for 1500 people.

Construction is expected to start in 2016 and complete in 2019. This first-of-its-kind uniquely modelled Public Private Partnership (PPP) project will be located in Bandar Meru Raya.

"Qi City's edu-city project not only serves to strengthen Perak's economic growth, it'll also be a catalyst for job creation and investment opportunities in the state," said Dato' Mohd Zahir Abdul Kalid, representative of the State Secretary, Dato' Seri Abdul Puhat bin Mat Nayan during the signing of the memorandum of agreement between Green Venture Capital (GVC) with China Energy Hua Ren Industrial Investment.

Perak State Secretary Incorporated (SSI) is an equity partner in GVC.

"What we envision with the completion of this project is a new brand of vibrancy and a hub of social, economic and education activities that will benefit the bustling Bandar Meru Raya," explained Chandragesan Suppiah, CEO of GVC.

Present at the signing ceremony were Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir, Menteri Besar Perak, Wang Wei, Chairman of China Energy Hua Ren Industrial Investment and Dato' Sri Vijay Eswaran, the Executive Chairman of GVC.

"Our model will create a more efficient cost structure both for development and the operations of the hospital by putting in place cross-subsidy measures and a collaborative-cost model with other components of the development that results in a lower expense structure that will ultimately benefit Perakeans," said Dato' Sri Vijay.

Mei Kuan



Dirgahayu Tuanku



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Fashion

Lester Captures Victorian Era



Victorian times resonated at the first-ever Lester Yim couture fashion show in Ipoh on Sunday, November 8 with the runway saturated with high necklines, ruffles aplenty and one-sided shoulder pieces resembling the era's fascinator.

Under the shade of the pure white tent illuminated with the warm glow of hanging chandeliers and strings of lights, five Ipoh-born models took to the aisle in sleek low ponytails or side braid with curls. From playful, ruffled mini to maxi pieces with a high-low hem, the dresses were strewn with constellations of bling and sequin for a delicate

shimmer.

The colour palette presented on the runway changes from fierce red, greyish silver, fair nude, to the classic black and white, perfect for the upcoming festive season. In terms of material used, the lace elevates the dresses from ordinary to ornate while the mesh creates a floaty ethereal effect.

The masterpiece of the collection is a black avant-garde gown which comes with a picture-perfect trailing hemline and embroidery, exuding that sense of old-world royalty perfectly. I especially love the attention-grabbing back slit which breaks away from the conservative period.

Clad in a quirky shirt with a padlock motif, the 38-year-old Ipoh-born Lester told Ipoh Echo, "For this first major fashion show of mine which commemorates the third anniversary of the boutique, I was inspired by the movie 'The Lord of the Ring'. It took me over three months to finish."

Initially, he was interested in interior design. However, satisfaction and happiness radiating from his clientele motivated the founder of the Dressense Boutique, who established the brand back in 2012, to switch his career direction.

"Fashion is an art, a way for me to express myself," Lester, who now has 14 years of experience in fashion design, added.

And the following is his advice for all beginner fashion designers out there: "Be hardworking, humble and well-informed on the ever-evolving fashion trends."

Thanks to Lester, the multi-ethnic crowd of over 150 had fallen head over heels for all things Victoriana.

All forty-one limited edition evening dresses and bridal gowns showcased would be made available in the middle of November at the Dressense Boutique located at No. 8, Tingkat Taman Ipoh 12, Taman Ipoh Selatan, 31400 Ipoh, Perak. It is priced at RM500 and above.

Dressense Boutique opens every day from 10am to 7pm except on Monday.

Mei Kuan

Entertainment

Star Struck: Interview with Irene Ang

What can I say about Irene Ang? In fact, it might be an easier question to ask what can't I say about her. I could list superlatives such as fabulous, amazing, inspiring, but I guess I had better tell you why I think those things about this 47-year-old CEO, entrepreneur, entertainer, mentor and cat lover during our exclusive one-on-one recently.

As the executive producer of the upcoming inspirational love story "My Love, Sinema", Irene and her team have been in Ipoh, which is the main setting of the historical film, for the past ten days. And the simple reason they chose Ipoh, according to Irene, is because Singapore does not have these locations (which shall not be named as they want to keep it a surprise until the movie is released).

Clad in a casual tank top and shorts showing off her golden tan, Irene explained: "The movie conveys the general message of not giving up, whether in love or passion, besides touching on friendship and brotherhood. We are glad to have Jeff Wang from Taiwan as this is his first Malaysian motion picture."

As the mentor for young Director Tan Ai Leng, she had this to say: "She has her own vision. My job is to make it into a viable commercial business for the long term in order to attract future investment." The film is a celebration of the once thriving movie industry in Singapore, hence it is spelt with a capital "S".

Five years of "Sinema" is set to be Malaysia, Taiwan, third quarter of

Having days, a stint as warm up part time be fully immersed that fateful day when dire need

blood, sweat and toil, "My Love, Sinema" released in cinemas in Singapore, Hong Kong and China at the end of 2016.

emceed gigs back in her school stuntwoman and an audience job, she never thought she would in the entertainment industry until she helped out a friend who was in of someone to fill in the role of

"Rosie" in what would later be Singapore's longest running and award-winning sitcom, Phua Chu Kang which spanned 17 years.

"Initially, I always *kena* (given) the mother's role due to my voice and appearance. Hence, I tried to portray a similar yet different mum in each," she said when asked on the possibility of being typecast after the well-loved hit TV series.

Constantly finding ways to give back to society, she believes that every artist could use their fame and fortune to

give back. "Just like the Chinese saying, *you qian chu qian you li chu li* (let those with wealth contribute money and those with strength contribute labour). When I thought I am helping others, the reverse happens. The more I give, the more I get inspired in return."

Her first time ever in Ipoh, Irene shared with Ipoh Echo her love for our authentic homemade fishballs. "Everywhere I go, I'll order fishball and *yong tau foo*."

As a loyal follower of her Foodporn videos, I could not resist asking her if she would do an episode here. "Personally I would be very excited to shoot here!" Our fun interview then quickly escalated into a heated discussion on Ipoh's Foodporn-worthy food, occasionally interjected by her playful Singlish chide directed towards her staff such as: "How come nobody mention the *tau fu fah*? Take it down!"

Citing Sandra Ng Kwan-yu, Anita Mui, Meryl Streep, Jackie Chan, Andy Lau and Robert Downey Jr as her role models, the down-to-earth Irene thinks that she still has a lot to learn and do.

"I know I can make people laugh. In future, I hope to get a role in which I could tug at the audience's heartstrings," she added.

And following is her advice for all the beginner actors out there: "Firstly, don't act. Be the character. Secondly, know that acting is a team effort. Third, be directable."

The CEO of Singapore's first and largest artiste management agency, FLY Entertainment Pte Ltd would be celebrating her 20th anniversary in the industry next year. "It has not been announced yet but one of the upcoming plans is to launch my book by the end of next year," she revealed exclusively to Ipoh Echo.

"I think I will never retire. At most I will semi-retire," she concluded.

Irene is the queen of the social network boards; do follow her on Instagram at: <http://instagram.com/flyirene>.

As I was leaving, she beamed, "I've never thought someone in Malaysia would watch my Foodporn videos." I think my life is now complete.

Mei Kuan



Han Chin Pet Soo



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Sport

Over 10,000 Runners

Stretching as far as the eye could see, over 10,000 local and international runners took part in the 21km, 10km, 7km and 5km categories of the 20th Ipoh International Run on the morning of Sunday, November 15. The participants were flagged from the start line at the Indera Mulia Stadium, Ipoh.

Among the runners was Dato' Shahrul Zaman Yahya, the Executive Councillor for Human Resources, Youth and Sports. Before being flagged-off, some prayed while some were engrossed in selfies and a few were seen running barefoot. However, every participant made a point to wave at the Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir, as they passed by him after the start pistol was fired.

Mayor Dato' Zamri Man was seen mingling with the participants at the end of the race. His presence was totally unexpected but was welcomed by the tired runners.

After the run, the crowd moved into the stadium for the much-anticipated lucky draw. The grand prize was a 50-inch Sharp TV. While the crowd was milling around indoors, musical band, Caliph Buskers kept them in the right mood.

"This is my second time participating and this time I ran with my friend," said 22-year-old Paul Kimani, a Kenyan, the winner of the 21km men's open category. He completed the race in 1 hour and 43 seconds and won the RM5000 prize money and a medal.

Monia Watetu, 23, also from Kenya was the winner of the 21km women's open category in a time of 1 hour, 11 minutes and 25 seconds. Her first appearance in Malaysia, Monia started running when she was in high school. She won RM4000 and a medal. The mother of two ran the race with her husband of two years in tow.

Mei Kuan



My Say

By Jerry Francis



Kinta Nature Park

It has been 17 years since the first move was made to gazette the Kinta Nature Park in Batu Gajah, but nothing has been done since. Now, only about half of one of Malaysia's biggest bird sanctuaries is available to be gazetted as a nature park. The rest of the estimated 810 ha – a heritage from the tin mining industry in the Kinta Valley, has been encroached by commercial activities.

Let us hope there will be no more delay in gazetting it before every hectare of the land has been given or taken up for other purposes.

However, there appears to be light at the end of the tunnel. After a meeting with the Perak chairman for Tourism, Dato' Nolee Ashilin binti Mohammed Radzi recently, there were some indications that the park would be gazetted soon. This is as a result of environmentalists and media persistently keeping up the pressure on the authorities about the proposal to gazette the nature park.

Nolee said the State Executive Council had approved 396 ha of the bird sanctuary to be gazetted as the Kinta Nature Park. "It will be managed by the Perak State Park Corporation, which was established some years ago to maintain the Belum Park in the Grik District," she added.

A meeting with the stakeholders was held recently and it was agreed that part of the area is to be allotted to TNB and the State Religious Department.

The bird sanctuary emerged after mining operations in the area ceased in mid 80s and the ponds surrounded by secondary jungle began to attract more than 130 species of water birds. At one of the cluster of 14 pristine ponds, Lake Pucung, five major families of herons and egrets have made one of the islands as their permanent home.

Almost 60 per cent of the birds are listed as totally protected or protected under the Protection of Wildlife Act 1976. Realising its potential, the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS), Perak, in 1998 proposed to the authorities that an area of the ex-mining land be set aside as a nature park.

The objectives are: (1) to maintain biodiversity by conserving habitats for fauna and flora, (2) to rehabilitate ex-mining lands for recreation, tourism and education, (3) to protect a scenic landscape synonymous with the Kinta District of Perak, (4) to protect a tin-mining heritage of Perak, and (5) to protect mining pools which are important water

Obituary

The Passing of a Dedicated Coach

The legacy of the great long-time coach Foo Yock Meng left a lasting impression among the swimming fraternity in Malaysia, especially those in Ipoh.

Coach Yock Meng passed away on June 30, following a year's battle against diabetes and kidney failure.

It was a devastating day when news of his demise spread to his family members, relatives and friends, especially his charges and ex-students of Sekolah Menengah Methodist (ACS) Ipoh.

His notable contributions as a coach to the Amateur Swimming Union Malaysia (ASUM) and Amateur Swimming Association Perak (ASAP) spanned over three decades.

Yock Meng was the coach of the swimming team which participated in the Barcelona Olympics in 1992 and the Atlanta Olympics in 1996.

He was the Level 3 swimming coach and coaching chairman of ASUM; grade 1 life-saving examiner; and possessed the Level 3 sports science certificate from the National Sports Council. Moreover, he was the International Swimming Federation (FINA) referee.

Due to his outstanding performance as a coach, he was awarded the 'Jurulatih Terbaik Negeri' by the Perak Sports Council and 'Coach of the Year' by the National Sports Council.

Yock Meng's most significant contribution to ACS and Malaysia was his unwavering dedication and commitment to swimming, as he single-handedly trained two ACS swimmers, Anthony Ang and Allen Ong, to represent Malaysia in the Olympics held in Atlanta.

During his tenure, he also made sure that the school water polo team emerged champions at the state and national levels.

His achievement in producing champions was due to his personal sacrifice and untiring efforts spent in the pool with his students every morning from 5am to 7am and 4pm to 6pm. He did it every day, six days a week, 12 months a year for more than two scores plus ten years.

Yock Meng was a patient and understanding person and was always available to any of his charges who needed some time and good advice on any matter. He was indeed an amazing and awesome coach, not only because of his deep knowledge of the sport but also because of his empathy, support and kindness for everyone who crossed his path.

Soft-spoken and humble, Yock Meng did not have any cross word with his colleagues. Many were impressed with his humility despite many national and state awards and accolades he received for his contributions and achievements.

We will miss him terribly, more than words can tell, as will so many others whose lives he had touched so positively. Undeniably, his departure would be a tremendous loss to swimming in Perak and Malaysia.

Yock Meng had inspired all of us to be better people. He was a great teacher, a great friend, a great mentor, a great coach and certainly a great father to his only daughter Foo Wen Yen.

Thomas Kok





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