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30 SEN FOR DELIVERY TO YOUR DOORSTEP - ASK YOUR NEWSVENDOR

ISSUE **253**

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DYING CRAFTS IN IPOH

By Khaleeja Suhaimi

The late Yasmin Ahmad once remarked that Ipoh is one of the maddest places she has ever stepped foot in. Strolling through the streets and stumbling upon the locals, I'm sure most will agree with this. Back in the days when Ipoh was known for its tin-mining, it was also known for its authenticity in crafts. However, as time passed and technology became the norm, these crafts dwindled along with most of our appreciation towards them. Today, the only people who truly find value in these crafts are the craftsmen themselves. In fact, as hopeful as they can be, even they don't see the light of day anymore. Where did the appreciation and gratitude we once carried in us go?

Continued on page 2



Freshly-baked heong peah



Sewing parts of the lion



Petition writer at work



Painting the handcrafted chick blind

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Artisans Who Wouldn't Give Anything Up For Their Crafts

Traditional Heong Peah Making

Lew Yung Boon, who began working in 1988, has never left the traditional *heong peah* (fragrant biscuit) making since his first day of work.

"This business belongs to my close friend but he's over 70 years old now and can't work much. That's why I'm here to help him out," he said.

Going back to 1981, Gunung Rapat has been famous for its *heong peah* making. Until today, one of the most well-known brands is Yee Hup and people from all walks of life still get it as souvenirs.

Heong peah is a crispy, flaky biscuit with sweet fillings. It is mainly made up of oil, flour, sesame seeds, maltose, sugar and shallots. The sesame seeds play a role in creating the signature fragrance.

The traditional way is done by sticking the pastry dough to the inner walls of the traditional barrel ovens. The reason why the biscuits are done in an oblong shape is to counteract gravity's force in the oven so the biscuits wouldn't fall into the fire below.

The fire is kindled with coconut husk, kept alive and timed by workers to control the temperature. This is a task requiring skill and not many are able to handle this task as the risk of getting biscuits burnt or undercooked is high.

Usually, the coconut husks are kept alight for around one hour before sticking the pastry dough. Once the dough is pasted to the sides of the oven, it only takes about 15 minutes for it to turn brown and flaky. If the bottoms get too charred, it will be scraped off.

"This process gives the biscuit a more authentic essence, character and aroma altogether. You can tell the difference between an electrical oven *heong peah* and a traditional-made one just by the fragrance itself," Lew told Ipoh Echo.

However, most shops use electrical ovens these days for a quicker process. Besides, the traditional barrel ovens can only broil up to 200 biscuits. Priced at RM9 per pack, its freshness is guaranteed.

No. 362 is among one of the remaining houses which still practises this process in Gunung Rapat. Some of the other houses include Seng Kee Food Trading and 189 Heong Peng Ipoh, which are located along the same street.

Address: 362, Jalan Gunung Rapat, Gunung Rapat, 31350 Ipoh.

Opening hours: Every day except Sundays, 6.30am till 6pm

Contact: +605 311 3529 or +6016 560 9094



Sticking the dough in the oven

Wooden Clogs

Located in the midst of the busy streets and food havens, 68-year-old Yao Cai Yu is still very keen on making wooden clogs. It has been her forte for over 30 years and she hasn't planned to stop.

"I learned the skill from my mother-in-law. In the olden days, it was almost a must for every Chinese to have a pair at home," said Yau.

She travels from Taman Cempaka daily, taking the bus. She has four children, who aren't interested in taking over her business. Her husband used to come by to help out but he's aging now and it's getting tough for him.

"I don't blame them. I understand that the younger generation are different compared to our time," she said.

The business began operating when her parents-in-law arrived from China. At that time, clog soles were still handmade. The shapes were cut out using an axe before they were planed smoothly.

When she took over, they had already begun using machines. Thus, her job was only to get the plastic skin, consisting of various colours, nailed on the clogs. As simple as it may seem, Yau's work actually requires patience and hard work.

"Of course there aren't as many customers as I had before. The market is slowly fading away and wearing clogs is no longer a tradition," she expressed.

It would be a rare sight to witness a passer-by in clogs today. Most of them only have



Finished products



Ezekiel Velu at his booth

Petition Writing

"When I was 19, I came across so many petition writers around town and I said to myself I wanted to be like them. I wanted to type," said Ezekiel Velu, one of the few remaining petition writers around.

Sitting under the tree in front of the State Mosque along Jalan Dato' Sagor, Ezekiel has been working as a petition writer for over 50 years now. The father of four boys and one girl says that although his children are well-off, he never wants to quit. At least not yet.

"I don't receive as many customers as I used to in the past. Now, only my regular customers and those who've known my work still come," he said.

Ezekiel was a former office worker and is still using his skills to type out legal documents such as applications, wills, tender papers and anything related to it. Besides his passion towards his job, he also participates a lot in church work.

"It's like having a dictionary in the back of your mind. Hence, I never draft anything beforehand. Once I insert the paper in the typewriter, everything flows out," continued Ezekiel.

While there used to be around 40 of them, now the only ones left are Ezekiel and another dedicated Chinese petition writer who works nearby. Since computers are so widely used, Ezekiel doesn't see the point of petition writers anymore because he believes that the generation today are not interested in a job like this.

"I can complete typing out one full page in around five minutes. The only details I need are their name, address and essential information, depending on the document," he exclaimed.

With much precision in his work, Ezekiel charges each document reasonably. He mentions that the job keeps his mind active as he comes across different people every day.

Working hours: Weekdays, 8.30am to 2pm

Location: State Mosque along Jalan Dato' Sagor

Contact: +6016 559 1202



68-year-old Yao Cai Yu

these clogs at home especially to go to the bathroom. One pair costs RM7.50, depending on size and design.

Address: Central Market, Jalan Dato' Onn Jaafar, 30000 Ipoh.

Opening hours: Mondays till Saturdays (8.30am to 3.30pm), Sundays (8.30am to 2pm)

... Continued on page 6



By Fathol Zaman Bukhari

DENGUE BACK WITH A VENGEANCE

The health department had identified 60 dengue-prone areas in Perak of which nine are classified as dengue hotspots.

I was enjoying a cup of hot coffee one morning last month when the doorbell rang. It rang a few times arousing me from my caffeine-induced stupor. I had just returned from a rather strenuous morning workout, cycling around my *taman* for a good hour and a half. And at this age and time, an hour plus on a mountain bicycle is no ride in the park. It can take plenty out of you.

I had never expected anyone so early, as it was barely 8 in the morning. But past experience had shown that repeated ringing of the doorbell is an indication that something is amiss – a neighbour could be in trouble or perhaps someone is up to no good. Fortunately, it was none of that.

Upon opening the door I was greeted by two polite-looking gentlemen in grey jackets with the words “Kementerian Kesihatan” emblazoned above their breast-pockets. Having identified themselves as inspectors from the Kinta District Health Department, they asked whether I had any ornamental plants in my house. While one was talking, the other had a closer look at my potted plants. I was certain he was checking for signs of stagnant water which could be breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

“Uncle, your neighbour’s daughter two doors away has contracted dengue,” he said while pointing in the direction of the house. “We’re here to ensure that the disease is contained. We’ll be back to fog this area later.”

I was aware of this threat having read messages sent to me by friends and those on my whatsapp groups. Dengue is a recurring problem in and around Ipoh. It has been around for years increasing in intensity over the years despite efforts at combating the scourge.

This media statement by Dr Venugopalan, Deputy Director of the Perak Health Department report is not too encouraging.

“The cumulative number of those infected with dengue from January 1 to February 11 is 823 compared to 728 for the same period last year. There’s an increase of 95 cases or 13 per cent. From February 5 to 11 some 150 cases were reported compared to 141 cases in the preceding week. This is an increase of nine cases or 6.4 percent”.

The department, said Dr Venugopalan, had identified 60 dengue-prone areas in the state, of which nine are classified as dengue hotspots. Of the number, eight are in Kinta District and the remaining ones in the Larut, Matang and Selama District.

Some 9615 premises had been inspected out of which 182 are being identified as dengue-positive. Meaning, the prevalence of the disease is imminent.

I hope my morning encounter with the two officers from the Kinta Health Department is not an indication that my *taman* is one of the eight dengue hotspots in Kinta District. God forbid.

My neighbours and I have kept our compounds relatively clean and rubbish-free except for the pesky *ah long* (loan sharks) whose henchmen find it fit to leave their



oversized “calling cards” on lampposts, road signage and fences.

The council-appointed contractor trims the grass on the field in front of our houses once every fortnight. Although his overall performance is not considered *pukka* at least our designated green lung, unlike others, is trouble-free and a source of pride to residents in the area.

Dengue is defined as “an acute infectious disease caused by virus transmitted by Aedes mosquitoes. It is characterised by headache, severe joint pain and rashes”.

The disease has become a global problem since the Second World War and is common in 110 countries, especially in the tropics. Some 50 to 528 million people are being infected and approximately 10,000 to 20,000 succumb to it yearly. The earliest reported outbreak

was in 1779. It came into the public domain only in the early 20th Century.

Mosquito larvae breed in water thus ridding stagnant water is the surest way of combating the disease. Keeping our compounds and surroundings clean is therefore the mantra. But to what extent are we prepared to go if venturing out of our houses is a chore for many? I say this with much conviction, as I find the attitude of one particular neighbour rather odd. She likes to litter in front of her gates and doesn’t give a damn what people say.

EYE HEALTH — CHECKING FOR CATARACT

Ipoh Echo’s EYE HEALTH series continues with Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S.S. GILL talking to us about CATARACT examination.



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

Firstly, do remember to take a pair of **sunglasses** along with you when you go in for an eye examination. Be prepared to go through several steps through an eye examination. You will initially be made to **read a chart** from a distance to find out how well you see. A slit-lamp examination is then done in order to look for other unrelated eye problems that you may have such as dry eye, eye infections or other eye diseases. Tonometry, or eye pressure, checking forms a mandatory part of the eye examination. This is to find out whether you have glaucoma or not since such problems would **have to be controlled** before embarking on any cataract operation.

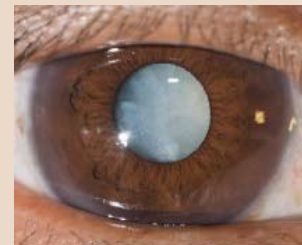
Pupil dilating by instilling eye drops into the eye is a must because the lens (*which becomes opaque to form a cataract*) cannot be viewed well until the pupils are dilated. The process of dilating your pupils may take anything between 30 minutes in a healthy person’s eyes or sometimes even up to 90 minutes for some other patients.

Most notably, **diabetic patients** take pretty **long for their pupils to dilate**. So, if you are a diabetic, patience at the consultation room would be to your advantage or you may blow a fuse with all that waiting! There is no shortcut to this part of the eye examination.

Once your pupils are dilated, the next part of the eye examination may be uncomfortable for some patients who may be more sensitive to glare but rest assured it won’t kill you! The **retina** (nerve at the back of the eye) will also be examined since an unhealthy retina could also contribute to poor vision. Knowing you have a healthy retina before going in for a cataract operation is comforting because it allows the eye surgeon to **predict on the visual outcome** following cataract operation.

Following the doctor’s verdict on whether you have a cataract or not, the sunglasses you brought along will now come in handy as you make your way home. If you are one of those sensitive individuals who cannot tolerate glare, then arrange your spouse, family member or friend to drive you home after the examination.

Should you have a cataract, it **does not mean** you have to go for a cataract operation **immediately** on the same day, much less on the same week! It is never a life and death situation unless of course you are half-blind. So, **do not be hasty**. **Medical problems** like diabetes mellitus and hypertension must be **well controlled before embarking on surgery**. Always **inform the doctor** about any underlying medical problems, **past surgeries**, previous **traumas** and **current medications** that you may be taking as some adjustments may need to be done before cataract surgery.



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A full-time swimming instructor is immediately required by a Kuala Kangsar-based educational establishment. The person they are looking for must be someone qualified to teach/train both beginners and advanced swimmers between 13 to 17 years old. He will be based in Kuala Kangsar. An attractive remuneration package, including housing, awaits the successful candidate. Those keen on applying please call Faiz: 019 279 8574 for details or email your credentials/résumé to him: fhussin@yahoo.com

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For more information, please call Gill Eye Specialist Centre, Hospital Fatimah **05-5455582** or email gillyeyecentre@dr.com

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It's 3am: Is your child safely tucked up in bed?

It's 9pm. Your younger children are already in bed, and the teenagers are watching TV in their bedrooms. A few hours later, do you think your older son is still in bed? Should you check up on him?

The bicycling tragedy, which happened in Johor Baru on February 18, is part of a worrying trend. A group of teenage bicyclists were involved in an accident with a car, driven by a 22-year-old woman, in the early hours of the morning. Eight cyclists died and a further eight were hospitalised. Their ages ranged from 13 to 17 years old.

The questions that ran through most people's minds were these: What were children doing on the streets, at 3am? Did they have their parents' permission?

Those of us who have the misfortune of having experienced Mat Rempits driving near us, performing daredevil stunts on their modified bikes, ignoring the highway code and the safety of other road users and themselves, would be horrified to learn that there is a group of younger teenagers, who are an equal menace, called the 'Mosquito Bikers'.

Is the Mosquito Bike menace common in Ipoh, or for that matter, anywhere in Perak? Some people say that it is a rural phenomenon. Is it, as some people claim, a tragedy waiting to happen? We know that some straight stretches of road, in and around Ipoh, are used by Mat Rempits for racing, but for bicycles too?

In the accident in Johore, the cyclists had amassed along a hilly stretch of the Middle Ring Road, in Johor Baru, to race. When interviewed, some of them admitted that the gatherings were always conducted after midnight so that they can race one another. Bets are sometimes placed.

According to various reports, the bikes are often modified and cyclists usually perform stunts in the middle of the road, with complete disregard for other road users. They have no care for the traffic rules and ignore attempts to persuade them to ride elsewhere.

The police are aware of these activities and have tried their best to disperse these groups, whose members come to Johor Baru, from other areas, to take part in these races. The police try their best, to contain these groups, but when the cyclists see the policemen approaching, they quickly disband, only to regroup when the coast is clear.

The policemen cannot do the job of the parents. Nor can the school discipline the children, outside of school hours. Why are the parents so lax? Why do they indulge their children, so much? It is not neglect, as some quarters have suggested, but over-indulgence.

I know one set of parents who gave in to their daughter's demands for material goods, because that was the only way they could make her do anything. If she did not get what she wanted, she would throw a tantrum. If she did not feel like going to school, there was nothing they could say or do, to make her attend. If she was told not to go out, she would threaten to harm herself.

How it is possible for several teenagers, to gather in the streets without their parents knowledge? If the parents are aware that their children are missing, are they not concerned about what they could get up to? Is this what is known as modern parenting?

Why do the teenagers gather in the streets late at night? Is it because they are bored with daytime school? Is it because the roads are empty at night, and that is the best time to practise their dare-devil stunts?

If the teenagers need a thrill, such as this dangerous stunt cycling and racing, why are we unable to channel this excess energy into something productive, during decent hours? Why should these teenagers terrorise other road users, and jeopardise their safety?

Why are these teenagers unable to form, or join, a cycling club and be taught the highway code, road manners and how to be a responsible cyclist?

We are told that the teenagers modify their bikes, to resemble motorbikes and also to make them go fast and make a lot of noise. Why can't activity clubs in schools take up the challenge of utilising the knowledge of these teenagers, into more productive projects?

There have been suggestions that these teenagers could use parks to race. Why should they? Parks are areas where people go for rest and quiet contemplation, to appreciate the beauty of the greenery. People do not want to be drowned out by noises and shouting from a group of rowdy teens.

In Ipoh, there is one place, which is a perfect area for the Mosquito teen bikers, (if they do exist in Ipoh),

to race. It is the Ipoh Velodrome*. Remember the fanfare when the place was opened to the public?

Sorry...I forgot! The Ipoh Velodrome has been allowed to become run-down. It is a white elephant. No wonder our teenagers are unable to channel their energies properly and safely, because the adults have let them down.

**Editor's note: Velodrom Rakyat is now closed for repairs.*



CHILD HEALTH

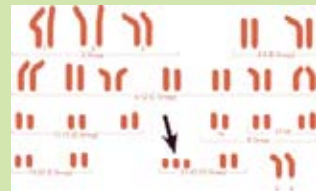
Dr Shan Narayanan
Consultant General Paediatrician, Hospital Fatimah

Down Syndrome

Down Syndrome is a Genetic Disorder. An individual with Down Syndrome has all or part of a third copy of chromosome 21. Thus they have 3 chromosomes in position 21, and therefore it is also called trisomy 21.

This syndrome was fully described by a British doctor, John Langdon Down in 1866. Hence it is called Down Syndrome. It is the most common chromosomal abnormality in humans. It occurs 1 in 1000 babies. It occurs in all races and economic levels.

Children with Down Syndrome have all or most of the following features



such as short stature, upward slant to the eye, short neck, a single deep crease across the centre of the palm, shortened hand, bent 5th finger tip, separation of 1st and 2nd toe and large, protruding tongue.

They have an increased risk for certain medical conditions like congenital heart disease, respiratory problems, hearing problems, squint, duodenal atresia, undescended testes and low muscle tone.

Every child with Down Syndrome is unique and they have the above characteristics and associations at different degrees. However, they all have growth delay and intellectual disability.

The incidence of birth of children with Down Syndrome increases with the mother's age. As mother's eggs age, there is a higher risk of the chromosome dividing incorrectly. Therefore the risk of Down Syndrome increases with the mother's age:

Mother's Age	Chances of having a child with Down Syndrome
20	1 in 11,600
25	1 in 1300
30	1 in 1000
35	1 in 365
40	1 in 90
45	1 in 30



Couples who have had one child with Down Syndrome have a slightly increased chance (1%) of having another child with Down Syndrome. Parents who are carriers of the genetic translocation are at increased risk of having a child with Down Syndrome.

There are screening tests that can indicate a possible increased risk of having a child with Down Syndrome. These include blood tests and Ultrasound Scan in early pregnancy.

If the results of these tests are suspicious then tests with more definite answers called diagnostic test is done. These are :

- Chorionic Villous Sampling, done around 10 to 12 weeks of pregnancy.
- Amniocentesis done around 15 to 20 weeks of pregnancy.

There is no cure for Down Syndrome. These children have developmental delays leading on to learning difficulties of varying severity. They benefit from early intervention which includes speech therapy, physiotherapy and occupational therapy. The various medical conditions associated with Down Syndrome can be treated.

They need more support in school. In our system most of these children go into special education. In other countries, children with Down Syndrome with mild learning difficulty go into mainstream school with extra support.

Individuals with Down Syndrome with mild learning difficulty may lead an independent life and gain employment with support. However, many of these individuals will need a lot of support throughout their life. With improving health care, these individuals live a healthier life and longer.

World Down Syndrome Day is on March 21. This day was chosen for the trisomy of the 21st chromosome. The United Nations has officially observed this global awareness day since 2012.

In conjunction with World Down Syndrome Day, Hospital Fatimah is having a Public Forum on Down Syndrome on March 21 at 2pm in the Hospital Conference Hall.

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



THINKING
ALLOWED

by Mariam Mokhtar



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

SeeFoon Revisits Kok Thai and Finds More Delights

Pics by Ginla Chew

It was a gargantuan meal. As were the portions. Ever the generous and affable host, Edward Foo and his charming wife, my foodie *kaki* Ginla Chew, were hosting some friends from the UK, Teddy Yip, his wife Wendy and their three grown children. There really is no better place than the private room at **Kok Thai** on Tasek Road where the parking is easy and the room accommodates two tables easily.

And the food is guaranteed to impress even the most jaded palates (Teddy owns restaurants in London).

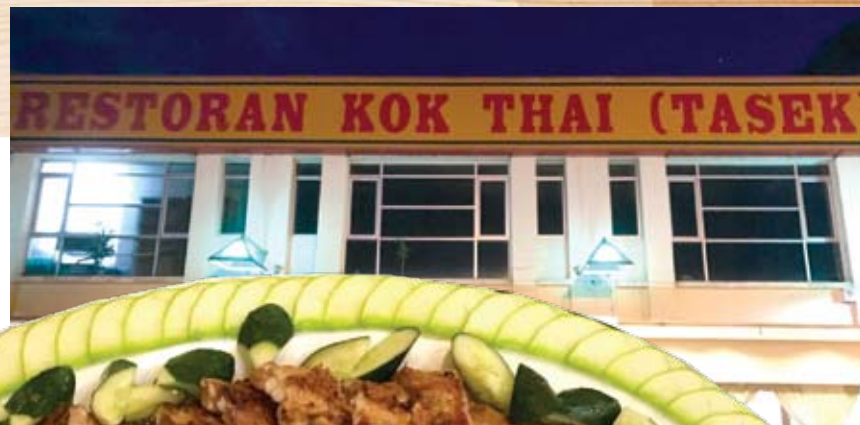
We started with the soup, a brimming tureen of clear broth teeming with goji berries, pork ribs and surprise surprise, **Loong Dun Tao** or giant grouper head, a fish prized for its thick gelatinous skin (good news for the 'ladies who lunch' "cos it's full of collagen that keeps the wrinkles at bay!"). The soup was beautifully clear and umami, no doubt a result of double boiling with all kinds of delectable ingredients that go towards a 'supreme' broth and the pork ribs cooked to a fall-off-the bone texture with none of the stringiness that can come from overcooking of meat. **RM150** for a table of 10.

The next dish was a delightful take on how to bring suckling pigs up to the next level. Now there's suckling pig and there's **SUCKLING pig**. In some restaurants the piglet is already too old and too big but here at Kok Thai, the one served was just perfect, the skin crisp and crackly and the meat with only a hint of fat. The creative part which I found delightful was that instead of serving it with the usual scallions, the dish was accompanied by a plate of sliced green apple, jackfruit, rose apple and Chinese pear. Added to the **Man Tou bun**, with a touch of the dark plum sauce, the slice of pig skin in the middle, it made the best Chinese sandwich I'd ever tasted. **RM258** for one suckling pig.

Our next item on the menu was a sight to behold as well as an enormous feast for the palate. A humongous platter covered on one side with a whole side of **Ibérico Pork Ribs** and the other with glistening large prawns, the dish brought oohs and ahhs from all around the table. Unlike some of these gaudy elaborate edifices often presented at fancy banquets, this dish came with no embellishments other than the 'what-you-see-is-what-you get' taste and freshness of the ingredients.

Iberico pork delivers flavour and texture like no other – delicate, nutty, with melt-in-your-mouth marbling, the Black Iberian Pig, more commonly known by its Serrano name of **Pata Negra or Black Hoof**, is the newest contender on the culinary scene with the most serious pedigree. The Ibérico feasts on a diet of acorns and other indigenous plants, which is what gives the Ibérico pork its unsurpassed taste and quality recognised around the world. The ribs at Kok Thai were no exception. Tender and succulent with minimal marinating, the ribs fell off the bone owing to Pata Negra's own genetic ability to store fat inside of, not just around muscle tissue, that produces its uniquely tender, rich, rosy meat – almost beefy – with a high degree of marbling. **RM180** for the ribs. The prawns or Meng Har that were served together were ultra fresh and fried to perfection with soya sauce on a bed of scallion – **RM200**.

The steamed fish that followed was surprisingly reasonable at **RM132** for a live **Lo Fu Pan or Tiger Garupa**. Steamed with a soya sauce topping, the fish was perfect both



in its delicacy of the meat and its freshness.

On another occasion I tried their **Crab meat**, *Sang Kwang* stir fry served with lettuce leaves which I found most pleasing **RM30 for 10**; followed by their **Fried Rice** redolent with *Bentong* ginger and topped with generous helping of julienned lettuce – **RM28** (for 10).

I spoke to the owner of Kok Thai who shared with me that as he owns other restaurants, he rotates his chefs around and this latest one Ah Keat is currently the one responsible for the culinary delights mentioned here.

Ann Ong who is the current manager is ever helpful and will suggest menu items according to one's taste and desires.

I have also in the past (February 1, 2013 issue 159 Ipoh Echo) reviewed their yumilicious **Poon Choy** here at Kok Thai which is also available on preorder. The price of **RM580** is good value for money considering there are 18 different ingredients that go into this delectable one-pot dish which is discovered and savoured layer by layer. Preorder in the morning will ensure you get this at night. A minimum of 5 pax at **RM58** per person is required.



Restoran Kok Thai (Tasek) Sdn Bhd

37-49, Laluan Tasek Perdana, Medan Tasek Perdana.

Tel: **05 5422 181/182**

Captain Ann Ong: **010 211 9011**

GPS: E 101° 5' 42.0" N 4° 38' 28.3"

... continued from page 2

Lion Head Maker, Kin Teck

Lion dance is often seen during Chinese New Year. It is said to bring good fortune and the symbolic meanings may vary according to different types of food, fruits or vegetables used in the ritual.

Here in Ipoh, 74-year-old Tan Khar Mee is probably among the only few lion-head makers left in Malaysia. Kin Teck used to be a sundry shop.

Tan learned this craft at the age of 11 from his uncle who hailed from China. He has been doing so for more than 40 years. He now works with his wife, Soi Lai Fong who usually works on the body parts.

"Most of the people who came to learn eventually never came back. In fact, there were two who took it seriously. One was from London who came by for three months to learn. The other one from Kuala Kangsar didn't continue and opened a mini market," said Tan.

There are two types of lions: Southern and Northern. The Southern one is related to the legend of Nian, a monster which resides in the mountains or under the sea. Many people mistakenly refer to the lion as a dragon too, which are both different.

"Lion heads can be completed within 10 days while the dragon one takes one whole month. It's harder to make and isn't really popular in business due to the price which ranges from RM5000 to RM25,000," he continued.

Unlike the dragon head, a lion head costs up to RM2000. As the years passed, he began designing his own dragons, having the statues he sees on the roofs of temples as inspiration.

The process involves binding the thin bamboo pieces to form the head shape, using pieces of paper. Other materials include aluminium, paper and cloth before painting. Tan gets the bamboo from the outskirts like Parit and Papan.

"I can do different shapes too, like mosquito, fish and hornbill of various colours. My children don't want to take over the business but I'm happy to welcome anyone who's interested to learn," said the sifu himself.

Address: 4, Market Terrace 30300 Ipoh.

Contact: +605 255 8511 or +6012 455 3242



Completed lion head



74-year-old Tan Khar Mee



Samples of his work



Shop facade



Lau Chee Wah



The many bamboo blinds

Lau Hooi Kee Chick Blind Maker

What started off a century ago by Lau Cheong from China is now in the hands of the family's third generation, Lau Chee Wah. He has been operating this business since the early 60s.

Lau and his 10 other siblings have been exposed to the industry ever since they were little. Despite the generational longevity, they have never once hired a single staff. Lau expresses that a single worker costs so much these days, how could he afford to hire?

During the 50s, bamboo blinds were said to last longer than wooden ones, which was why they were rather popular. At that time, bamboos were cut by the Orang Asli who lived all over Perak. Unlike today, raw materials used to be cheap. Now, Lau cuts the bamboo and wood by himself.

Price range varies according to measurement. It would cost RM7.50 per square foot for bamboo ones and RM8.50 per square foot for wooden ones. The time slated to complete a small blind is only around four to five days while bigger ones would take a little longer.

"The industry is indeed passive these days and doesn't receive as many orders as it did. Even if it were to be popular again, I wouldn't know how to help," he said.

Bamboo blinds are still seen today in older parts of the town. Most of the shops use it as an advertising entity and to keep away from the heat of the sun.

There used to be a machine, specialised for bamboo blinds but not much profits were made due to the permits needed.

"I only make money when there are orders. I'm not married so I don't have anyone to pass this on to but as long as I'm still alive, I'll make use of every second I have with this business," Lau added.

Address: 15, Lorong Bijeh Timah, 30000 Ipoh.

Contact: +605 254 2972

Conclusion

The most astounding thing about these artisans is the dedication and commitment they put into their trades. Never giving up in whatever they do, it is definitely a reminder for us all to begin instilling the value we have forgotten through the years; appreciation. Hopefully once we truly appreciate, perhaps these crafts won't be labelled as dying anymore.

Affordable Healthcare For All

Perak Community Specialist Hospital (PCSH) is a non-profit hospital with a mission to provide affordable healthcare for the community. Throughout the years, various departments and healthcare facilities have been established to cater to the rising medical needs for patients.



Haemodialysis Centre

In 1994, the PCSH Haemodialysis Centre was established as the first and largest not-for-profit haemodialysis centre in Perak to cater for patients in the community. Currently, the centre is running at the capacity of 18 dialysis stations including 1 in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and 1 each for Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C patients.

The centre is overseen by the PCSH Resident Consultant Nephrologist, Dr. Loo Chin Sum and well supported by 11 experienced staff nurses who are under the supervision of Sister Ratna. It currently serves 2 sessions: 7.00am–11.00am and 11.30am–3.30pm with a possibility of an additional session at 4.00pm–8.00pm should the need arise in the near future. On-going dialysis patients from other centres who wish to try the facilities and services will be given one complementary trial session.

Lithotripsy Centre

PCSH Lithotripsy Centre has been in operation since 1997. Lithotripsy is a non-invasive treatment using ultrasound shock waves to break up kidney stones or other calculus into small particles that can be passed out by the body. This procedure is conducted by the PCSH Resident Consultant Urologist, Dr. Manivannan together with a team of qualified nurses. Patients who need to engage the service may enquire details about the Lithotripsy Package with the doctor at his clinic.



Haemodialysis Centre



Lithotripsy Centre

Perak Community Specialist Hospital is located at 277, Jalan Raja Permaisuri Bainun (Jalan Kampar), 30250 Ipoh, Perak Darul Ridzuan. Call them at 05-2419000 or visit www.pcsh.com.my for more info.

Personality

Tasha Jalani

It all started when she rediscovered her connection to Islam, something that used to be a struggle for her to understand but has now become close and personal. She wanted to bring Islam to pop culture and give access for not only Muslims but also others to understand. Hence the birth of Qenza, a company she founded and owns.

“It was a long journey for me to reconnect to Islam. Then I realised I wanted to create beautiful pieces inspired by Islam, breathing contemporary style into them. I love Islamic geometry but we can’t keep on rehashing the past. The design of prayer mats has been unchanged for the last 600 years, since the fall of Ottoman empire. This was the reason why I started with prayer mats for Qenza,” said Tasha.

Her parents named her Siti Nadhirah Jalani but they called her Natasha instead. The Ipoh-born girl was an alumni of Tenby School and Main Convent. She then furthered her studies in Perth after completing her SPM and continued working and staying in Perth for 14 years.

“I like Perth’s lifestyle because it similar to Ipoh. I’m definitely not a city girl and more like a small town girl and at heart, a kampong girl. Ipohites are blessed for sure,” added Tasha.

She previously work as a chartered accountant and finally stopped working as a financial controller for a mining company at the end of October 2016 when it was becoming really difficult to juggle work and Qenza.



“I did my research, cross checked with other scholars to ensure about the patterns. Qenza’s patterns are minimalist especially where the eye falls because we want to create an experience that is peaceful and non-distracting. We also used foam for comfort, the bottom is lined with anti slip.”

When asked about her inspiration, it was through her readings, research and travelling that contribute to Qenza’s designs.

“It was in Granada that my intention solidified, that my creations need to be appealing to everyone and not just Muslims because you can see Muslim art in churches and synagogues and before the fall of the last Muslim empire, Muslims, Christians, Jews and Catholics lived in harmony with each other,” added Tasha.

“I know nothing, therefore I must continue to learn. Every preconception I have can easily be broken by just reading or speaking to someone new or going to a new place. Putting yourself in someone else’s shoes is difficult but it’s something we need to do to reflect on the other person’s experience and motivations,” she opined.

Qenza is currently available in ten countries including Malaysia (Gondolo31 in Ipoh, Twenty2 in Bangsar, Twenty2 Johor and Damansara’s GarderobeHaus), Singapore, Brunei and Australia. Readers can also visit their website at www.qenza.co for more information.

Ili Aqilah

Community

Spending Chinese New Year with Those in Need

In conjunction with Chinese New Year, The Lions Club of Ipoh Centennial organised a charity event to feed the poor on Thursday, February 9. It was led by the Charter President, Dato' Dr Wenddi Anne Chong and the Organising Chairperson Charter Secretary, Sharmila Senin.

Prior to that, the club members visited and donated daily necessities to various families all over Ipoh who were in need. Some of the things they donated were rice, oil, cans of Milo, shampoos, instant noodles, biscuits, mandarin oranges as well as an angpaw worth RM500 to each family.

The first family was in Pasir Pinji. Madam Chan who is divorced, is currently working as a nanny and sews shoe linings for a living. She has four girls, who are all still studying. However, the two elder girls are working part-time as waitresses to help their mother out.

Another one is Madam Ang's family who lives in Bercham. Her husband passed away and she has been working as a beer promoter ever since. She has five children. Her eldest son who is studying in UTAR, Kampar and doing part-time work to support his study fees.

Madam Ooi is a grandmother who sells joss sticks for a living. She lives with her 14-year-old grandson in Pengkalan as his mother passed away due to cancer and his father remarried in Kuala Lumpur but not forgetting his responsibility, he still sends them around RM500 per month.

Besides Madam Chan, there is also another family in Pasir Pinji, consisting of two sisters who are over 60 years old. They are both living in a house with a roof about to collapse. Currently they have sticks to support the roof from collapsing. Their only



income comes from selling plastic bags to coffee shops.

The families were delighted with the visit. Members of the club, too, expressed their utmost gratitude for being able to spend Chinese New Year with these deserving families for a change.

Khaleeja

RM10,000 Fine or Jail

In conjunction with the the Control of Tobacco Product (Amendment) Regulations 2017 (PPKHT), the Perak Health Department has tightened up it's no smoking ruling at 50 public parks around Perak.

The amendment, effective on June 1, states that no smoking is allowed in public parks, public transport stops, air-conditioned restaurants and cafes, playgrounds, game courts, hospital compounds, elevators, public toilets, etc. According to State Exco for Health, Public Transport, Non-Islamic Affairs, National Integration and New Villages, Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon, the public must be aware of the amendments to avoid being fined.

"Anyone found smoking around the area after June 1 will be compounded for RM5000 and if they refuse to pay it within the fine date, they can be brought to court and if found guilty will be fined up to RM10,000 or sentenced to jail for two years or both," said Mah while distributing fliers about the issue to the public at Polo Ground on February 18.

He then added that they have assigned at least 34 enforcement teams around Perak to guard the no smoking areas. Mah also said that last year the health department had issued more than 1300 compounds totalling RM319,300.

"We urge the public to be our eyes and ears and inform the Health Department if they see anyone smoking openly at parks," he added.

Luqman Hakim



Tourism

Discussions over Tea

Embarking on Visit Perak Year 2017, it is expected that industry players and members of tourism associations have planned ahead. In anticipation of this, the Chairman of Perak Tourism Association (PTA), Hj Mohd Odzman Abdul Kadir organised a 'Teh Tarik Meet' on Wednesday, February 22.

The meeting was held at Tower Regency Hotel and Apartments, Ipoh. A total of 52 industry players all over Perak attended, including those from Kampar, Manjung, Kuala Kangsar, Taiping and Royal Belum.

The objective was to exchange ideas on tourism development and to get updates on events. It was a fruitful evening, as all participated in the discussion in between tea.

Some of the upcoming events the meeting discussed were Ipoh's fifth Waiter's Race Day which is scheduled for May 14 to be held in Old Town Ipoh. Kampar, on the other hand, is having an event called WOW Kampar from March 24 till 26. The emphasis is on sports and entertainment and will be held at the Grand Kampar Sports Centre.

"In promoting Perak internationally, we've used in-flight magazines in airlines such as SIA (Singapore) and JAL (Japan)," said Chief Executive Officer of Tourism Perak Management Berhad, Zuraida Mohd. Talib.

"Perak is well-known for its eco-tourism. I think we should begin making full use of it before none of it is left," added Dr Kevin Lazarus, Director of Taiping Zoo and Night Safari.

Taiping Zoo is giving 20 per cent discount to Perak residents throughout the year as a form of support for Visit Perak Year 2017.

Among the other topics that were discussed included inviting reputable bloggers to tourism spots throughout Perak. This should help with promoting Perak, despite not having much budget to be spent.

Moreover, some of the locals themselves are not aware of the tourist locations that are being promoted. Hence, we all play a part in looking into available locations before



suggesting new ideas.

Ipoh City Council's Car Free Day is held every once a month. The meeting suggested it be held once every week in Old Town for the development but at the same time, sustaining its scope.

The participants were in agreement that the informal meeting was beneficial and should, subsequently, be held once every two months. Perak Tourism Association will organise it and the next meeting will be hosted by Lost World of Tambun.

Khaleeja

Community

Abandoned Murals

Ipoh currently boasts more than 50 murals painted at both old and new town. The murals come in assorted designs that draw the attention not only among locals but also tourists who come and visit.

Among artists who worked hard on these murals are Lithuanian painter Ernest Zacharevic, local artists Eric Lai and one of Echo Personality alumni, Kareem Kai. The murals are without doubt amazing and a great tourist lure but are they being maintained?

A visit between Jalan Masjid (Hume Street) and Jalan Sultan Iskandar (Hugh Low Street) where murals are mostly painted by locals, is proof that authorities need to assign a task force or a team to help in repairing and retouching the murals.

"It does give the 'old is gold' feeling when you look at it. But if nothing is being done to maintain them, future visitors won't have anything left to appreciate as some are in such sorry states of weathering and neglect. Perhaps retouching the colours once in awhile may help," said Siti Norfiza Nazuwan, a tourist from Kuala Lumpur who paid a visit to the mural street recently.

As for Afham Suhaimi, an Ipohite, he believes that there is no need to repaint as it may accidentally destroy the art, "I haven't been to this street for quite sometime. Maybe if they clean up the area, pluck out the weeds and clean the mud, it could give a different vibe," said Afham who is also a part-time photographer.

Since this year is Visit Perak Year, responsible parties must take action to preserve and manage the murals. Such poorly maintained murals could affect tourist visits in Ipoh.

Ili Aqilah



Little Smurfs Daycare
For children aged 3 to 6 years old

18, Jalan Meru Mutiara 24, Taman Meru Mutiara, 30020, Bandar Meru Raya, Ipoh, Perak Darul Ridzuan.
Please contact us at: 017 - 569 8828 / 019 - 474 1143
E-mail: elementsmgmtco@gmail.com



Going Herbal Does Wonders

Originating from New Delhi, India, Vaadi Herbals is a natural product which has just been launched in Ipoh by its exclusive distributor for Malaysia, Aryan Global recently. It started off back in 2006 and has been exported to more than 15 countries so far.

As we are all aware, Ayurveda is one of the world's oldest holistic healing systems developed in India some 3000 years ago. According to an ancient Sanskrit text on medicine and surgery, it was said that the Hindu god of Ayurveda incarnated himself as a legendary king who taught a group of physicians medicinal secrets.

Until today, Ayurveda remains the ideal choice for most, including Vaadi Herbals. Ranging from skin, hair, body, foot and gift kits, Vaadi Herbals' products are made purely from extracts of herbs, shrubs and fruits such as apricot, agarwood, avocado and almond.

These ingredients are individually tested before being used in the final product. In fact, the company has its own plants and warehouses in New Delhi to ensure safety and constant supply.

"I'm surprised to receive so much positive feedback on how effective this product is. It goes to show that going natural really works and should be a motivation for everyone to say 'no' to chemical products," said Aryan Global's sales advisor, Priya Vivek.



Those keen on trying out the product can contact Priya directly at 012 525 0715 or 019 789 5252.

Khaleeja

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News

Court Rules in Favour of Defendant

The Ipoh High Court ruled in favour of the Perak Malay Chambers of Commerce and Industry or Dewan Perniagaan dan Perindustrian Melayu Perak (DPPM) on Friday, February 17, over a claim on its assets and operations. The court too dismissed the plaintiff's allegations regarding the chambers' transparency and management.

According to the President of DPPM, Dato' Muhammad Muhiyuddin Abdullah, the chambers' assets were transferred legally based upon its constitution.

The former Perak Malay Chambers of Commerce Malaysia or Dewan Perniagaan Melayu Malaysia Perak (DPMM) had, during an extraordinary general meeting held on September 13, 2013, passed a resolution to rename it the Perak Malay Chambers of Commerce and Industry or Dewan Perniagaan dan Perindustrian Melayu Perak (DPPM) instead.

A resolution was also passed to transfer all of its fixed, movable and liquid assets, amounting to RM5 million, to the new entity.

The mandate to execute the transfer was given to the board of trustees namely, the President, Deputy President and Vice President.

"However, some members of the defunct chambers, led by Dato' Sabri Ahmad Tah, insisted that the name change and asset transfer were illegal and that they were the lawful owners of the RM5-million assets. They took the case to court for arbitration and it dragged on for almost seven years," said Muhiyuddin.

The high court declared DPMM's decision to abolish the original DPMM Perak branch on August 6, 2013 as invalid. And so was their claim that DPMM was a legal organisation and thus had ownership of assets in the Perak Malay Chambers of Commerce and Industry's name.

The lengthy litigation process had impacted the smooth running of the chambers, said Muhiyuddin.



"The assets belong to members of the chambers and, therefore, it's the responsibility of the management committee to ensure that they don't fall into the wrongs hands," said Muhiyuddin to reporters during a media conference held following the court ruling.

Luqman Hakim

Heritage

Living Museum Close to Completion



Restoration and relocation of the 107-year-old Kampung Teluk Memali Mosque, which was featured in Ipoh Echo Issue 244, are now about to complete.

Witnessing the reliving of this historical mosque, ATSA Architects Sdn Bhd and committee members of the Seri Bougainvillea prayer house (surau) organised a gotong royong on the morning of Saturday, February 18. It was held at the site in Taman Seri Bougainvillea, Bandar Seri Botani.

The gotong royong was attended by 40 students from Polytechnic Ungku Omar, UiTM Seri Iskandar, Lebu Cator Vocational College and residents.

They lent a helping hand with the finishing works like painting the kolah (ablution pond), landscaping and sorting out wood components.

"We've been working closely with the appointed contractor to finish the remaining site works. However, we're still short of approximately RM100,000 to complete the toilet and other facilities," said Ar. Azim A. Aziz, Chief Executive Officer of ATSA Architects.

Apart from that, they also witnessed a RM50,000 cheque presentation by the Chief Executive Officer of Rahsia Estates Sdn Bhd, Hajjah Hanizah Tun Abdul Hamid to the working committees.

After being abandoned for about 20 years, they had their first Zuhur prayer in the mosque, together with Ar. Azim himself. Full completion is expected by March. Readers keen on donating can do so to Tabung Pemindahan Masjid Teluk Memali, **1052 8000 3201** (Affin Islamic Bank).

"This mosque will be the state's new architectural gem. It'll be another historic landmark of Ipoh and Perak, per se," said Ar. Azim.

Khaleeja

Upcoming Event

Reading Films

How to Get Maximum Enjoyment from Watching Movies

"If you want to know what a filmmaker is saying, look at how he is saying it."
— Ingmar Bergman (Swedish Filmmaker).

Do you know what a movie director wants to tell you? Are you keen to know how a movie is made? Want to learn how to write a script? More importantly, do you want to be a good story teller?

If the above is a resounding yes, then please drop by and join Hassan Abd Muthalib who will guide you to understand how a good director creates film design through mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing and sound to effectively put across the film text as well as communicate what he actually intends through the film's subtext.

The session is catered for the general public but is also useful for young people who intend to make art, design, film, animation, multimedia, photography, mass communication and advertising their career.

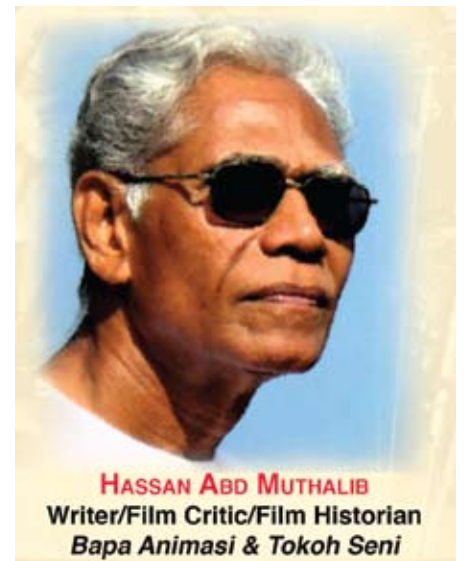
Hassan Abd Muthalib (Toko Seni and Bapak Animasi) is a former film director and animator whose writings appear in numerous international publications and has served on many international film festival juries.

Hassan Abd Muthalib was with Sharpened Word (SW) last August and he has agreed to come back and conduct a workshop on movies in Ipoh.

This is also the first workshop conducted by SW and if the response is good, Pak Hassan has agreed to conduct five more, as an extension to the first workshop so that we can get to learn as much about movie making and movie appreciation from a local legend.

Date: Saturday 18 March 2017
Venue: Old Andersonians' Club, 932 Jalan Hospital, Ipoh.
Time: 9am to 12pm
Donation: RM20/pax

For registration and further enquiries, please contact: Ms Sara (Perak Society of Performing Arts) at pspaipoh@gmail.com or Pak Peter 019 574 3572 (WhatsApp) or visit Facebook page: www.facebook.com/sharpenedword.kinta.



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Education

Sunway College Excels Again



Smiles filled the hall of Sunway College Ipoh's School of Accountancy, as students celebrated their excellent achievement once again. The auspicious event, held on Wednesday, February 15, which began with a cake-cutting ceremony, was attended by lecturers and students.

This time round, the occasion was for exceeding the world pass rate for the Foundations in Taxation, an optional subject in the Certified Accounting Technician programme.

While the criteria to maintain the Approved Learning Partner (ALP) Platinum status only requires an 80 per cent passing rate, the college attained 100 per cent. This year is their fourth consecutive year of maintaining the Platinum status.

Apart from that, the college managed to achieve 92 per cent pass rate in Corporate and Business Law and 90 per cent in Performance Management.

"Some of the graduates have left. We hope it'd be a motivation for the remaining students. This celebration is also a form of appreciation for the lecturers, reminding them of the good job they've put in," said the Principal of Sunway College, Adawiah Norli.

"This marks our second year of celebrating the good results. We hope it'll continue," she concluded.

Sunway College has a string of achievements to show. The college is providing opportunities for new students by offering a special rate to those newly registered. The initial registration fee of £174 (RM966) is now being discounted to £25 (RM139). The offer ends on March 31.

Those keen on enrolling at the college can call **05 545 4398** for details or email them at infoipoh@sunway.edu.my.

Khaleeja

Watch or Feel 2.0

The 800-seat Brother John Moh Hall was a buzzing full house as Sam Tet Secondary School brass band presented their sixth musical concert, 'Watch or Feel 2' on Saturday, February 18.

The band, consisting of over 70 young artists dressed in maroon and black attire bearing a glistening musical instrument each, was conducted by Lam Chee Choong, the music director.

True to the theme, it was a multisensory experience thanks to the interactive performers, ever-changing stage formation, synchronised lighting and responsive crowd. From classical hits dripping with nostalgia to the goosebump-inducing music heard in blockbuster movies, every piece was met with deafening cheers.

"The second half of the show will be even more exciting as we play trendy movie themes from 'Titanic', 'Spirited Away', 'You Are the Apple of My Eye' and 'Our Times'. We also play trendy hits by G.E.M., Beyond, JJ Lin and Twice," Lam told Ipoh Echo during the 20-minute intermission. Meanwhile, the repertoire for the first half of the show consisted of works by composer John Williams, Satoshi Yagisawa, Philip Sparke and Yeo Chow Shern.

The audience, some hailing from as far as Sarawak, was singing along and flashing beacons of light from their phones. The surprise encore featuring soundtracks from the latest South Korean television series, Descendants of the Sun, provided the epic conclusion for the night.

"In Sam Tet, music is part of every student's life. If you don't play musical instruments, you learn to appreciate music, that is our objective," Lau Swee Mun, the principal said. The school was awarded the cluster school of excellence status in 2015 for their active involvement in music with a strong symphony orchestra, Chinese orchestra, band and choir team.

"We send students to Turkey, Russia, Hong Kong, Japan and now our 70 band members will be going to Shanghai, China. The cost is very high and we need your support. It could easily cost RM300,000 to RM400,000," the amiable Lau explained.

Hence, the proceeds of the night will all go towards the band's expenses for participation in the 2017 Shanghai Spring International Band Arts Week Festival to be held at the end of April this year. Readers who would like to donate can channel the funds to account number **2081 6436 100466 (RHB)**.

"It is an honour and a great opportunity to be invited to represent Malaysia to perform in Shanghai. It will be an eye-opening and valuable experience for the band boys. Up till tonight, about RM30,000 is raised," Desmond Chen, chairman of parent-teacher's association added.



The Sam Tet brass band was crowned as the national champion for school category and first runner-up for the overall category in the international-level Malaysia International Wind Orchestra Festival 2016. They were also honoured with the best performance award in the national-level Sultan Idris National Wind Orchestra Festival 2016.

Mei Kuan



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Business

TMC Fertility Centre: Now in Ipoh

TM C Fertility Centre, listed in the Malaysia Book of Records for the highest number of IVF babies produced by a single IVF practice (3210 IVF babies) in 2013, opened its latest branch in Ipoh on Wednesday, February 22.

The sixth branch located in Fair Park, houses two resident specialists, Dr Liza Ling Ping and Dr Thinakaran Malapan, with some visiting specialists from neighbouring hospitals. Among the services provided are treatment of infertility, blastocyst transfer, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, in-vitro fertilisation, intracytoplasmic sperm injection, egg/sperm donation, embryo freezing, sperm banking, vaginal scanning and other assisted reproductive procedures. Obstetrics and gynaecology services such as pap smear, antenatal check-ups and breast examination are available too.

"TMC Fertility Centre's Class-100 labs have Laminar Flow, infra-red CO2 technology, uniformed temperature, humidified work area, HEPA and carbon filters to provide an environment that is free of microbes, pathogens and VOCs. No detail is spared, right down to the culture mediums and dishes, which are of IVF grade, and individual IVF Chambers to reduce temperature loss with frequent opening and closing of the hatch," Professor Emeritus Dato' Dr Khalid bin Abdul Kadir, chairman of TMC Life Sciences explained.

He added, "Many are still unaware that infertility problems can stem from either the husband or the wife. Culturally, it is assumed that fertility issues lie mainly with the



women, that's terrible! We are here to overcome that misconception. Hence this year, we'll be launching our fertility screening packages with affordable price to encourage younger couples to get themselves screened if they have not conceived naturally within one year of marriage or six months if the women is above 35 years of age. The results will help couples plan their next course of action."

Since its establishment in 1994 in Petaling Jaya, TMC Fertility Centre has since grown into a full-fledged fertility centre offering a wide range of treatment options for both male and female patients, ranging from simple to complicated cases. With branches in Kota Damansara, Kepong, Puchong,

Penang, Johor Bahru and now Ipoh, the centre is RTAC certified and ISO9001 certified. It boasts high pregnancy rates close to 66%, which is comparable to renowned world-class fertility centres.

TMC Fertility Centre Ipoh plans to increase public awareness on reproductive health with talks, activities, events and editorials, making the Ipoh branch a resource centre for all fertility related issues.

Located at **33, Persiaran Pearl, Fair Park, 31400 Ipoh, Perak**, please call **05 548 8118** for appointment. Its 24 hours careline is **018 211 1088** or **016 211 1357**. Readers also can email their enquiries to tmcfertility.ip@tmclife.com or visit their website at www.tmcfertility.com.

Business hours: Mondays to Fridays – 8.30am to 5pm, Saturdays – 8.30am to 2.30pm (closed on Sundays and public holidays).

Mei Kuan

One Year In: Caltex @ BBSK

The Caltex petrol station at Bandar Baru Sri Klebang (BBSK) celebrated its first year on Thursday, February 16 with a lucky draw.

A total of 43 prizes were given away with the top three winners bringing home a Modenas KRISS MRI motorcycle, a Hi-Sense LED 40" television and a Honeywell CL151 air cooler respectively.

The facilities available at the station are a mart, air pumps, prayer rooms and services for Touch 'n Go reload as well as e-payment. The station is also giving away complimentary pocket tissues for every refuel of RM30 and above.

Besides bringing great convenience to the residents within BBSK, the other good feedback that the station has received so far includes its good security especially for the ladies when they come to the station at night as there is a guard on duty after 7pm. Plus, a friendly and ever-smiling staff is ready to assist customers in pumping petrol and cleaning windscreens.

According to the management, the response has been very encouraging with the sales of fuel increasing every month. Residents of the integrated garden township are in for a treat as a car wash facility is in the pipeline and is expected to materialise in the third quarter of this year.

The station is located at **PT187008, Jalan Kuala Kangsar, Bandar Baru Sri Klebang, 31200 Chemor, Perak**.

Mei Kuan



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Arts & Culture

When Journalism, Sports and Horror Meet

Three guest panelists spoke at the February edition of Sharpened Word held on Saturday, February 18 at the Old Andersonians' Club. They were Professor Dato' Ahmad Murad Merican, Keeshaanan Sundaresan and Julya Oui.

Professor Dato' Ahmad Murad Merican, a writer cum academician, hails from Penang. He has written 11 books and still writes a column today.

"Writing is not just a skill. It's a tool and one needs to practise. To be a good writer, you have to be a good storyteller," he said.

Journalism school exposed him to non-fiction writing. While studying, he also worked as a stringer for Malay newspapers before becoming a full-time journalist with Bernama.

Murad wrote his first article when he was 16. At the age of 18, he started writing for the Penang-based Straits Echo. He has been writing for over 40 years now. Features, for him, are rather captivating as they are more people-oriented. The stories add colour to people's lives.

Writing is not solely creativity or a hobby. In order to be a writer, one must keep on writing to develop one's niche along the way.

"To develop a style you need to read a lot. I've read books and articles by known writers and scholars for over 30 years. That's how you identify yourself in writing," he remarked.

"I was originally from Tapah but moved to Ipoh which is relatively quaint. Growing up here, nothing else mattered," said sports journalist, Keeshaanan Sundaresan.

As Keesh never really opted to learn about the world, sports journalism has taught him some of the most incredible things about the world today. He began writing with Ipoh Echo, before making his way into online journalism. Currently, he is the Chief Editor of FourthOfficial.com, a local sports portal.

"It's that intensity and idea of people, regardless of their background, religion, sexual identity, who can unite and become one within a specific period of time that drew me into sports. I'm attracted to the stories that exist behind sports itself so I owe it all to the athletes," he continued.

His first involvement in sports led to understanding what football meant to different cultures and eventually realised that there are a lot of similarities between countries. To Brazilians, it is more than just a religion while to China, it is a necessity.

He alluded to online games like FIFA 17 and Dota 2 which have been recognised as a legitimate form of sport. Like athletes, these players train 14 to 16 hours a day and get paid monthly.

Murad and Keesh both agreed that anyone can be a journalist, even without factual evidence and this is a sad fact. Anybody can dominate the online world but space for expression are limited in hard copies.

Hence, the education system has to play a role. Students need to be taught on



questioning things rather than just accepting. It is important for journalists to evolve before the world is fed with things that are untrue.

Taipung-born Julya Oui is a screenwriter and an author of horror stories. She claimed that Taiping used to be a very scary town while she was growing up. The dim streetlights and huge trees along certain stretches of the town frightened her.

"After dinner we'd go to my uncle's house. There were 12 to 14 of us who would sit in a big circle and end up telling horror stories. I was a terrified six-year-old," Julya exclaimed.

Experiencing the toilet outside her house and television series like Twilight Zone were contributing factors to her writing. She used to write poems in primary school and enjoyed the rhymes.

Julya got into writing because she used to tell her own version of horror stories to her friends. As her stories scared them, she thought maybe she could be a writer one day.

"I can't go a day without writing. That's why I carry a notebook with me and prefer it to computers. When I hear something that sparks my imagination, I'll jot it down," she continued.

As a screenwriter, when she writes script, she writes around it. Her stories speak through her characters. She also writes film and book reviews.

Khaleeja

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.

Free Obesity Symposium, Saturday **March 4**, 8am-2pm at Auditorium Kompleks Rawatan Harian, Hospital Raja Perempuan Bainun, Ipoh. For registration, contact: Pn Noraini **05 208 7341** or **05 208 7469**.

Westlake International School (Kampar) Charity Fundraising Carnival on Saturday **March 11**, 10am to 3pm at the school campus. All are invited to come and join the carnival! For more information, contact: **05 467 2222**.

Perak Academy Perak Lectures Series. Social critic, Nadeswaran or more popularly known as Citizen Nades (the Sun) will talk on the subject of corruption in government agencies. Saturday, **March 11**, 4pm at Ipoh Swimming Club, Ipoh. For details and reservations contact Ms Lum at **05 241 3742** or **016 221 3742**.

Perak Society for the Promotion of Mental Health 43rd AGM, Saturday **March 18**, 3pm at Lot 18200, Batu 8, Ulu Kinta, Tambun 31150, Perak Darul Ridzuan. For more details kindly contact: **05 533 2167** or **05 533 5457**.

Free Public Health Talk: Understanding Wound Care presented by Tai Clinic. Presenter: Mr Simon Lam (Wound Specialist based in Melbourne). Saturday **April 8**, 2.30pm at Tai Orthopedik Surgeri, 46 & 48, Jalan Onn Jaafar, 30300 Ipoh. Limited participants. Refreshments will be served. To RSVP contact Ms Wu at **05 253 5737** or Cecilia at **013 438 4388**.

Sultan Yusoff School Batu Gajah Class of 1967 Golden Jubilee Reunion Dinner, Saturday, **April 29**. Former students from that class who are keen on attending please make your reservations with either one of the following personnel: Gregory Wong Guan Seng **012 517 2858**, Dr Bhupindar Singh **012 499 6444** or Gopalan Nair **450 2620**.

Free Arts and Culture Lessons. The Perak Department for Arts and Culture (JKKN Perak) is conducting free music, dance and theatre lessons at its complex along Jalan Caldwell for enthusiasts aged 7 and above. **Traditional dance and music: Every Saturday** from 9.30am to 12pm. **Children's theatre: Every Saturday** from 3.30pm to 5.30pm. **Adult's theatre: Every Tuesday** from 8.30pm to 10.30pm. These lessons will last till the end of the year. For information call Fairus at **018 958 9049** or JKKN Perak at **05 253 7001**.

The Dementia Day-care Centre is open daily from 9am till 5pm. 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. The centre also welcomes volunteers. For more details kindly call April at **05 241 1691** before 5pm.

Garden Market @ PORT Ipoh. Friday, Saturday & Sunday nights, 6pm onwards. Food trucks, book, antiques, vintage comics, collectibles, buskers, bundle, pre-loved items, etc. Wayang Pacak on Friday and Saturday nights.

St John Ambulance Malaysia Perak is recruiting volunteers who are interested to join the Emergency Rescue Unit, Volunteer must be 18 years to 50 years of age. Training will be provided to all volunteers. Those who are interested call up **05 254 5946** or **012 550 4002** Manin Singh for registration and more details.

Filming in Perak

The state government will set up a filming office to provide opportunities for locals to produce films.

Dato' Nolee Ashilin Mohammed Radzi, the Executive Councillor for Tourism, Arts, Culture, Multimedia and Communications, said the state government is planning the structure and it will be operational soon.

"We want Perak to be one of the film hubs where producers and industry players can do their filming. We want to encourage local filmmakers to have their productions here because in the past they have done dramas and documentaries here," she said.

"Although the films were taken in Perak, the state didn't get the kind of exposure expected," she added, after the premiere of *Kanang Anak Langkau: The Iban Warrior* which was held in conjunction with Visit Perak Year 2017 at Ipoh Parade on Saturday, February 18.

According to Nolee about 80 per cent of the film was shot in the jungles below Gunung Korbu.

Rosli Mansor





iSpeak

A. Jeyaraj

Maintenance and Security at Railway Subway

In response to the letter from Panirchelvam (Ipoh Echo, Feb 1-15 2017), I visited the subway on an evening with Panir and our photographer. A middle-aged man was sitting at the entrance. There was a bit of garbage along the entrance, otherwise the place was relatively clean. It was smelly at the base of the stairway. About half of the fluorescent lights on the wall were not working and the place was rather dark. The lights on the ceiling were not switched on.

While we were inspecting, a girl walked down the stairs from the station side and we spoke to her. She said that she is teaching in Slim River and travels daily and uses the subway because it is a shortcut. When it is late she waits for someone to come along and follows them. Since it is smelly she carries balm with her to smell. She comes across drug addicts and so far they have not disturbed her.

R. Manogaran, a retiree who goes to the Maha Ganapathy Temple which is across the road from the entrance said that he has seen up to about five addicts in the area. They use the toilets in the temple and since the toilets are for the public, no one stops them. A few of the cars parked in front of the temple have been broken into, but it cannot be confirmed as the work of the addicts.

I visited the place at different times, excluding nights, to assess the situation. At times the place was clean, dry and not smelly. At other times there was litter at the entrance and smelly at the bottom of the stairway. During rainy weather, sections of the floor and stairways were wet. Most of the time I see a middle-aged man sitting at the concrete sidewall at the entrance. Apart from meeting the teacher, during my other visits I did not come across anyone using the subway. Very few people know of its existence.

I spoke to Mohd Zahrin, the Station Master and he said that he was aware of the problems and action is being taken. Auxiliary Police are to patrol the subway and the CCTV is monitored by the police. I informed him that only one CCTV is installed at the station side and a second one has to be installed at the other end. Two-way mirrors has to be installed so that people can see whether any one is using the subway. All the lights must be working. I told him that KTM has to publicise the existence of this entrance. If many passengers start using this entrance, then the traffic jam in front of the station can be reduced.

Zahrin informed me that vagrants sleep in the main hall at night and he calls the Welfare Department to take them away. He added that they return in a few days.

After meeting Zahrin, I spoke to a couple of KTM staff and they said that they never use the subway at night. They said that passengers have been robbed and threatened at knife point by addicts. To them this is not new and asked why I am raising the issue now.

Solution

I think to solve the problem permanently, KTM must contact NGOs like Victory Life Centre which carries out rehabilitation of drug addicts. They can take the addicts to their centre and counsel them. Welfare Department must put the vagrants in homes from which they cannot leave. If the addicts are just chased away they would cause problems in another place.

This is Visit Perak Year and we must not expose our social ills to the tourists.



Financial Planning

The Growing Up Years

This is Part 9 of a continuing 12-part series on financial planning. After having learned about some of the ways to save for our children's education last issue, this issue we are going to learn how we may want to educate our kids pertaining to money.

In Adam and Aida's case, they have put Alisa in the care of her grandparents while they are at work. So, when it comes to financial education, both the parents and grandparents have to make concerted efforts and be consistent in educating their children and grandchildren alike.

There's an old proverb that goes, "Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it". Let's take a look at some age-specific guidelines that we may employ when teaching children about the value of money.

Pre-Schoolers

It is certainly not too early to start them young. By the time children are old enough to understand what money is and to receive and spend it, they are ready for a pre-budget. This pre-budget should be simple enough to encourage children to divide their money into different categories.

Parents can begin by setting up three piggy banks: one for Giving (charity), one for Savings, and one for Spending. They then can divide the children's allowance and gifts (like their 'duit raya' or 'angpows') into three equal parts and have the children place equal amounts in each piggy bank.

Money placed in the 'Charity Bank' is to be used to help others in need. For example, earthquake victims or a child with a hole-in-the-heart may appeal for funds through newspaper article. This will teach the child not only about the value of money but also caring for others.

Money placed in the 'Spending Bank' is to be used to buy the things the children want and which parents should not buy for them. These would include small toys, sweets, chocolates and so on. However, they need to understand that once those funds are gone they are not permitted to take from the giving or savings banks to buy items they want.

Money placed in the 'Savings Bank' is for the purpose of attaining a certain short-term goal. Examples would be saving to buy that remote-controlled car or that little

doll or to buy a special gift for daddy and mommy's birthday.

Primary Years

By the time children reach the age of seven they should be ready to move into a mini-budget. With this mini-budget, expenditures and income should be recorded in a small notebook. Here, we'd separate the 'Savings Bank' into short-term and long-term savings and to teach our children to record their expenses.

Short-term savings should be for something for which they need to save for less than a year while long-term savings is for something they will have to save for longer than a year. As an encouragement, parents may offer to top up the difference or make a 'matching contribution' into their 'Long-term Savings Bank'.

The goal with this mini-budget is to get children into the habit of keeping tabs on their finances and saving for both short-term and long-term goals.

Teen Years

These are critical years – the transition into adulthood. By this time the basics of personal finances and budgeting should be understood by children and are being applied.

Basically in this phase, we want to empower our teenage kids with greater financial decision-making responsibilities. Let them decide on what they want to spend on and allow them to face the consequences. After all, they should be allowed to make some mistakes and it's better for them to make little mistakes now than bigger ones later in life.

In addition, parents should also start teaching their kids about the concept of 'work-for-allowance'. Parents can start getting their children to work within the home during their school-break and pay them a reasonable wage. They will then realise the true value of money and would exercise greater control over their expenses.

Conclusion

As parents, we have to be very careful of the seeds we sow and how we go about nurturing them. Money may not grow on trees but certainly our efforts will bear much fruit in our children.



Sport

Safety in Extreme Sports

"Jom Bersukan Ekstrem Dengan Selamat" or "JomBEDS", a programme organised by Persatuan Mendaki Perak (PsMP), was held on Sunday, February 12 at Victoria Bridge, Kuala Kangsar.

According to the President of PsMP, Mohammad Zakwan Kamarul Zaman, JomBEDS is the association's inaugural programme since its inception early last year.

Zakwan said that enthusiasts of extreme sports, especially those who do not take any safety precautions, are prone to injuries and mishaps.

"We organise this programme with the objective of educating the public on the importance of safety in extreme sports," said Zakwan.

Zakwan alluded to the widely publicised incident involving a group of students who climbed the "IPOH" sign at Gunung Lang without any safety measures and was the reason behind the programme.



"We want to teach the public about staying safe at all times, be it when partaking in extreme sports or while simply relaxing.

"The programme is well received and the response, overwhelming. This goes to show that there are many thrill seekers out there but they're unable to satisfy their craving fully," he added.

A total of 250 youths, mainly students from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Seri Iskandar and Polytechnic Ungku Omar, Ipoh, took part in the programme. Many agreed that JomBEDS was an invaluable experience for them.

Nor Athirah Jamaluddin of Polytechnic Ungku Omar said, "The programme has helped to prepare us mentally and physically before we participate in any form of extreme sports."

Qurratu Faqihah Mohd Shukri from UiTM commented that JomBEDS was a good experience for thrill seekers like her. "It should be held annually and frequently," she added.

The event was officiated by state assemblyman for Chenderoh, Dato' Zainun Mat Noor, who had a go on the flying fox.

Association secretary, Ain Nur Nadrah, said that participants paid RM30 as registration fee of which, RM1 would go to the Save Syria Fund.

Among those present to lend their support was Malaysian motorcycling ace and Moto3 World Championship racer, Khairul Idham Pawi.

Activities conducted were flying fox, rope swing, rappelling and tree climbing.

Luqman Hakim



Chan Soon Keat Won Perak's Leg



Against all odds, Chan Soon Keat from Pulau Penang surprised everyone at the Malaysia Tennis Junior 2017 Perak's leg when he beat the fourth favourite, Mohd Irzad Shazurin from Johor, and won the Below-16 Men category.

The battle at Ipoh City Council's Tennis court first saw Chan lose the first match 0-6 but bounced back and won the second and third matches; 7-5, 7-6(5). According to Mirzan Mahathir, the president of Lawn Tennis Association of Malaysia (LTAM), the four-day tournament from February 11 to 14 received over 235 entries.

"It is ecstatic to know more and more contestants are participating in this tournament. The tennis scene in Malaysia has the potential to be bigger and better," said Mirzan.

When asked for his opinion regarding the fact that tennis will not be in Sukan Malaysia (SUKMA) held in Perak next year, Mirzan and his team are preparing for an appeal.

"We want tennis to be in SUKMA 2018, that is our aim. But I do understand that we have to prove to the National Sports Council of Malaysia (MSN) that it is a sport worth competing in," said Mirzan.

Following Perak's leg will be Johor's leg to be held next month. The Malaysian Tennis Junior 2017 has 18 categories where the top eight of each category from each leg will be invited to join the Malaysian Tennis Master 2017 to be held in November later this year.

Ili Aqilah

Sultan Azlan Shah Cup Returns

The annual prestigious hockey tournament, the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup Men's International Hockey Tournament is back for its 26th consecutive year, scheduled from **April 26 till May 6 2017**.

Joining Malaysia Men's team this year is world number 1 ranked, Australia, New Zealand, India, Japan and Great Britain who last attended the cup in 2013. Previously ranked at 14th, Malaysia is currently ranked 13th in the International Hockey Federation (FIH) early this year.

"It can be assured that the games this year will be more fierce and challenging. Out of the six teams, four are currently in the top 10 rank of FIH. It will definitely be an interesting cup," said the chairman of Sultan Azlan Shah (SAS) Cup, Dato Rahim Md Arif.

The Malaysian team finished fourth last year leaving Pakistan at 5th, Canada at 6th and Japan at 7th. Last year also saw Australia win the Azlan Cup for the ninth time after defeating India 4-0.

Preparing for the Men's Hockey World Cup next year, the Malaysian team is determined to give their best for the SAS cup, "We are looking forward to this tournament. We finished fourth last year, so our aim now is to finish third, at least. Our boys are up against world number 1 (Australia), number 6 (India), number 7 (Great Britain), number 8 (New Zealand) and Japan currently ranked at 16th. This year is going to be a high-profile match and we hope our boys will do their best," said the CEO of Malaysian Hockey Confederation, Logan Raj.

To be held at the Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey Stadium, the 26th cup will be using a new turf called the Edel Grass Triple T System (Blue) an artificial grass solution used not only in hockey but also football, rugby, baseball, tennis and multi-sports applications. Aside from the SAS cup, the Raja Ashman Shah AHF-MHC Hockey Academy together

with FIH and Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) will be conducting several hockey-related courses such as the International High Performance Coaching Course 2017, International Professional Management Course 2017, Level 2 Coaching Course and Level 1 Coaching Course from April 29 to May 7.

Ili Aqilah



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LETTERS

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Breach of Security at Retention Pond

During my evening walks along Sungai Pari bund I pass by the retention pond in Merdeka Garden. There are sign boards saying "No entry, No Fishing and No Swimming". This is a protected place with guardhouse and security. I noticed that an opening was made in the fence and two boys were fishing. The security guard came and sent them away. I was happy that the guard was doing his job.

On other occasions I have noticed youngsters fishing in front of the guard house and the guard did not take any action. On other occasions I have seen a family consisting of father, mother and children fishing. Motor cycles are driven into the area. I suspect this is from the opening in the fence next to the low-cost houses.

I am scared to take photos directly; afraid of being confronted. I took photos discreetly and they are not that clear.

I am not bothered whether people are fishing or not. My concern is if ordinary people can enter the enclosure so easily and the guards are not taking action, then what about thieves entering and stealing the expensive equipment. Why employ guards when they are not doing their job?

Must we wait for something to be stolen before tightening security?

Anyone walking along the bund during the evenings can see for themselves what is happening.

Concerned Passer-by

