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IPOH echo

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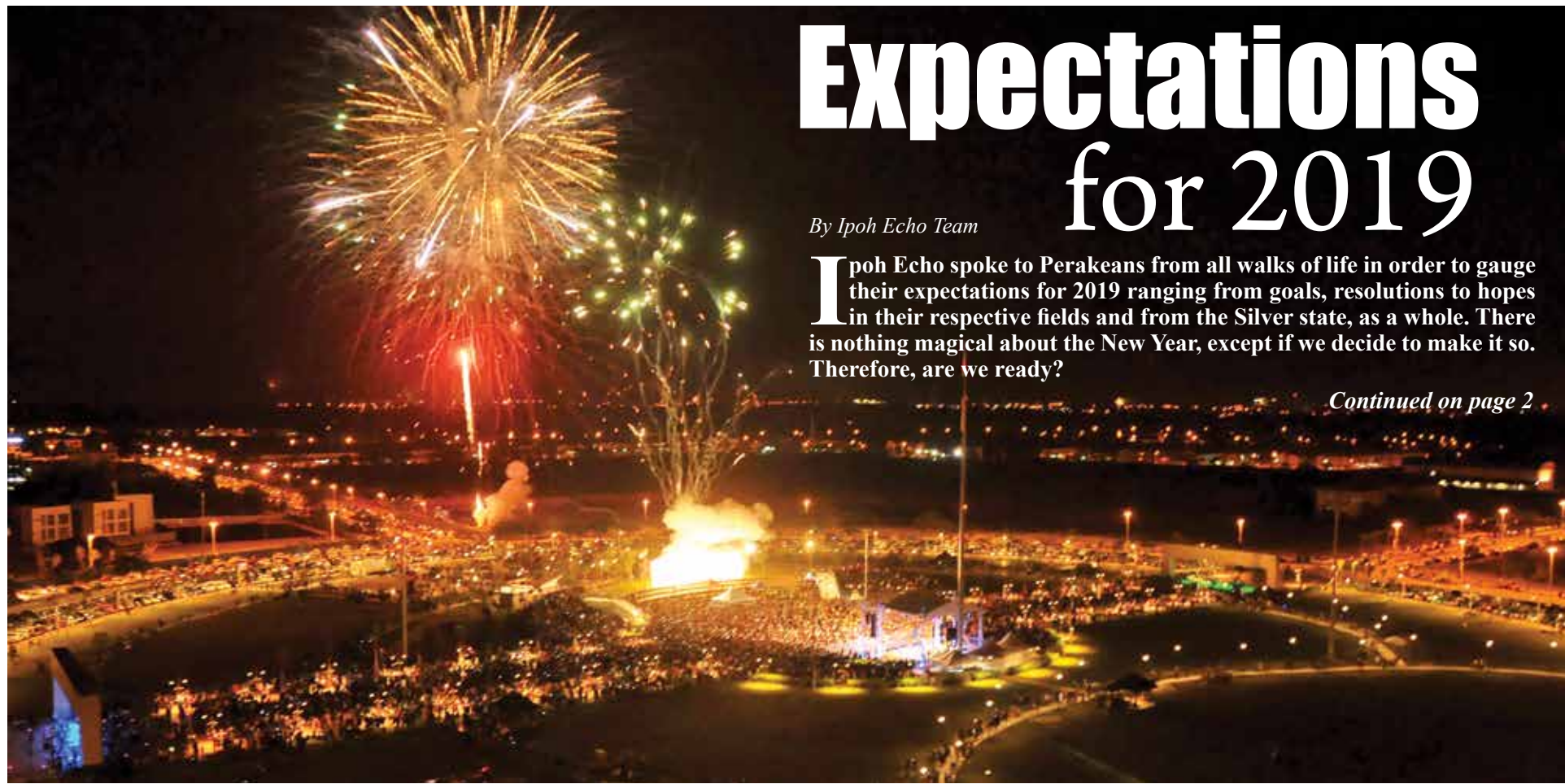
January 16 - 31, 2019

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30 SEN FOR DELIVERY TO YOUR DOORSTEP -
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ISSUE **296**

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Expectations for 2019

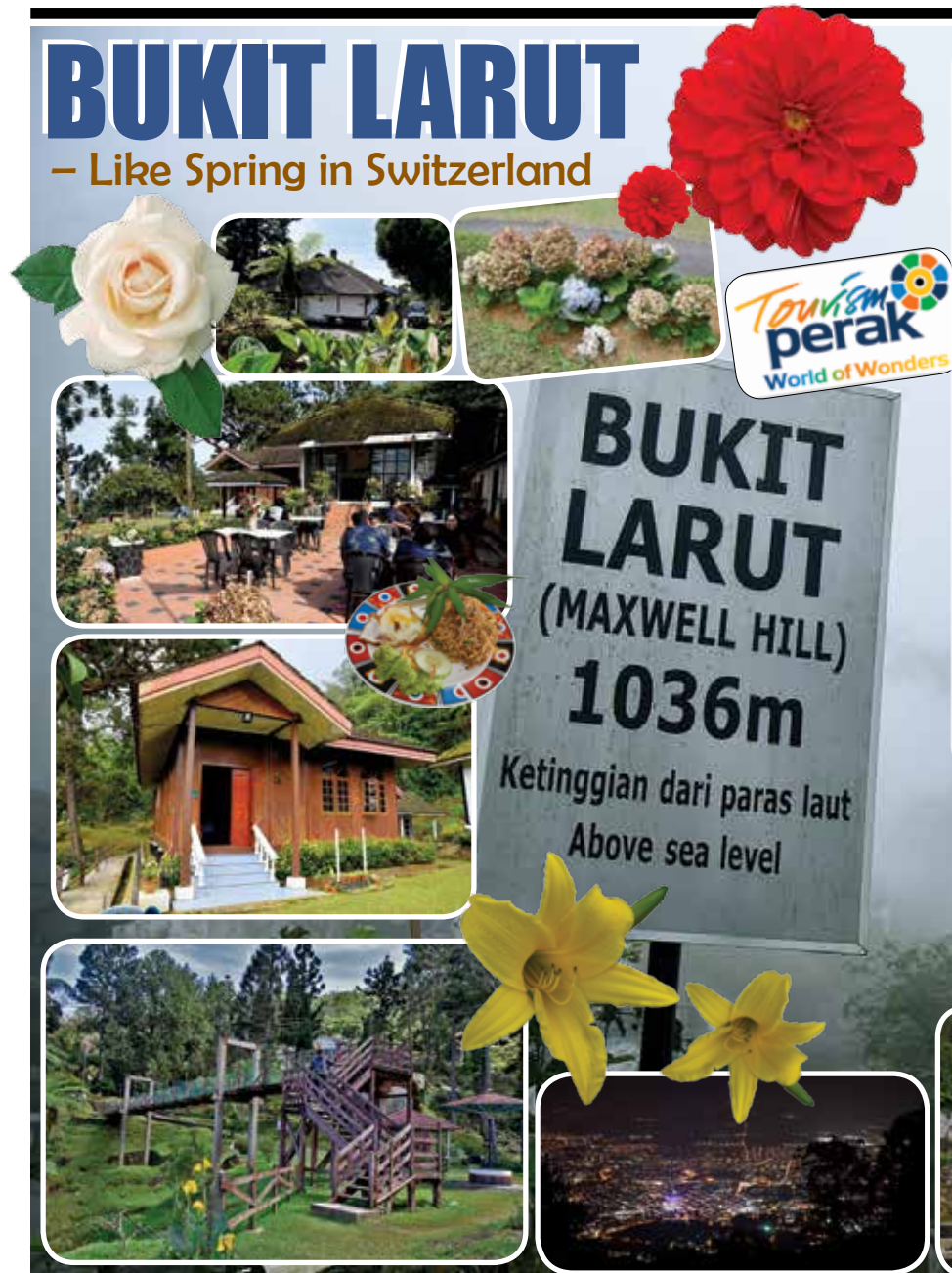
By Ipoh Echo Team

Ipoh Echo spoke to Perakeans from all walks of life in order to gauge their expectations for 2019 ranging from goals, resolutions to hopes in their respective fields and from the Silver state, as a whole. There is nothing magical about the New Year, except if we decide to make it so. Therefore, are we ready?

Continued on page 2

BUKIT LARUT

– Like Spring in Switzerland



“It's like spring in Switzerland,” said a foreign tourist of Bukit Larut, formerly known as Maxwell Hill, which towers above the heritage town of Taiping.

Bukit Larut was founded in 1884 by William Edward Maxwell, the British Assistant Resident of Perak. Standing at a height of 1,036m (3,398ft) above sea level, it is the oldest hill station in Malaysia covering an area of approximately 7241.46 hectares. Currently it is under the administration of the Taiping Municipal Council.

To get to the top, you can either hike or opt for the Land Rover service provided for by the council. The perpetually green summit is enveloped in mist and, being in the wettest part of the country, rain is a permanent fixture. The daily median temperature, hovering around 18 degree Celsius, makes Bukit Larut a perfect holiday destination.

Accommodation consists of three British colonial-era bungalows, namely, Angkasa Bungalow which takes 16 guests, is priced at RM600 a night; Beringin Bungalow which fits 12, costs RM400 a night; while Tempinis Bungalow, priced at RM600 per night, can take 16 guests.

At the peak, the panoramic vista of Taiping, stretching out to the Straits of Malacca, is a sight to behold. Equally stunning is the view of Taiping at night when thousands of flickering lights come alive like scattered stars on earth.

There are over 250 species of local birds flying freely in the wild. The highlight is in the months of April and September when the hill becomes the home for flocks of popular migratory birds such as the Barred Eagle-owl and Great Hornbill.

Drop by the Rose Garden Café between 9am and 4pm for a delightful dining experience with a choice of both local and western cuisines to choose from.

For nature lovers, it is like heaven on Earth. Come and experience the ambience for yourself. You will not regret it.

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A New Year, A New Goal, A New Attitude

Government

In his official New Year speech, **Menteri Besar** Dato' Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu explained that the tabled 2019 state budget, which runs on the theme "Together To Drive Hope", has five focus areas: Strengthening the State's Economy and Resource Sustainability, Boosting the People's Wellbeing and Economy, Driving Industrial Revolution 4.0, Expanding the State's Strategic Network Development and Ensuring a Needs-Based Expenditure.

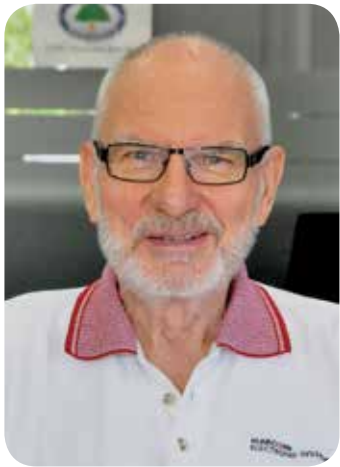
"As an administration which understands the pulse of the people, Perak Pakatan Harapan will continue to prioritise all efforts to fulfil the wishes of people from all walks of life. Even though faced with multiple challenges ever since taking over the administration, the state government gains wisdom in order to restore the glory of our beloved state," he stated.

"Reject hatred. Maintain the peace we have achieved today as a platform for greater heights tomorrow," Faizal added.



Dato' Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu

Non-Governmental Organisations



Commander Ian Anderson (Rtd)

Managing director of **ipohWorld**, Commander Ian Anderson (Rtd) commented, "As a foreigner with absolutely no influence on how Malaysia fares in 2019, and after such momentous political changes in 2018, I have two hopes for the coming year. First, I hope that the new coalition government will stop bickering amongst themselves and get on with the job of overcoming the problems that they have inherited. Second, I hope that the state government, Ipoh City Council and Ipohites will work together to take control of the city and its many problems. They need to consider the heritage and history of the city while clearing it of unsightly rubbish, illegal hawkers, traffic problems and the likes. It is a big job but it can be achieved and would make Ipoh a better place to live."

President of **Ipoh City Watch** (ICW) cum Chairman of **Koperasi Alam Hijau Perak Berhad**, (KOHIAU) Associate Professor Dr Richard Ng enthused, "My new year resolution is that the state

government will provide more covered green walkways within Ipoh to encourage the people to walk and enjoy the beautiful city. I hope the new government will put emphasis on planting more trees, bring in more electric buses or trams and turn Perak into a low carbon emission state. ICW and KOHIAU will continue to play a big role in promoting recycling by enhancing our Trash2Cash system reminding people of their responsibility towards achieving SDG Agenda 2030 of 'Leaving No One Behind'."

Sultan Abdul Kader, President of **Perak Indian Chamber of Commerce** (PICC) pointed out that the downturn of the economy is affecting the small businessmen and they are finding it difficult to pay minimum wage and have cash flow problems.

"SME's contribute a lot to the economy and the government must make it easier for them to get loans. TEKUN (micro-financing) loans should also be made easier to get. Government should implement more small projects and award them to local contractors," he elaborated.

"Meanwhile, the low prices of rubber and palm oil are affecting smallholders who find it difficult to survive. They should be given government aid. Plus, the purchasing power of our Ringgit is declining. This will benefit exporters, but majority of businessmen are not in export business. The government should try to increase the value of our currency," he added.



Dato' Lim Si Boon



Dr Richard Ng



Dato' Gan Tack Kong

Branch chairman of **Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry** (MICCI), Dato' Lim Si Boon remarked, "Businesses are cautious and still digesting the major changes in policy such as replacing GST with SST, the new minimum wages etc. The volatility of global markets adds to the uncertainty. Businesses thrive on certainty and stability, thus we look forward to global markets stabilising."

Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) Perak chairman, Dato' Gan Tack Kong told Ipoh Echo, "I hope that the city council will instal more CCTVs in Ipoh to enhance public safety similar to Penang. In the manufacturing sector, I look forward for more business-friendly and performance-oriented government departments and agencies. Do expand broadband facilities to support digital trade for industries and business to penetrate global markets."

Dato' Gan reiterated his hope that more SMEs make a paradigm shift by migrating to Industrial 4.0 in order to remain competitive and to improve productivity.

"I look forward to more foreign investments with the realisation of the Natural Gas Kinta Project scheduled for completion by end of 2019," he highlighted.

Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH) Perak Chapter chairperson, Maggie Ong, said, "My expectations for 2019 are unity, political stability and a solid economy for everyone. MAH's goals are for Ipoh, Perak to shine even brighter as the Northern Star of Tourism by focusing on domestic arrivals into our beloved state."

"Sharpened Word has taken the initiative since year 2016 to interact with the younger generation and also bring in top brains in the country who are willing to share their knowledge and wisdom to the Perak public. We shall strive to continue this effort in 2019," the coordinator of **Sharpened Word**, Peter J. Bucher or fondly known as Pak Peter, shared.

Community

Ipoh-born international author, artist and filmmaker, **Jase-min Sibo**'s biggest hope in 2019 is to see her artistic film 'Exotic Pearls' being made, which was written and inspired by real life events in Ipoh. When asked for her thoughts on the Perak arts scene, she replied, "Hope to see quality work from local artisans and courage to venture out."

Syed Hashim Wafa, 60-year-old retired teacher suggested, "Ipoh must regain its lost glory. We must promote tourism. The government can build a cultural village like that in Kuching, introduce hop-on-off buses to the tourist spots, promote limestone caves and temples which are unique to Ipoh as tourism sites, upgrade the airport and get more airlines to fly to Ipoh. We can also promote medical tourism. We elected a new government for change, therefore, the government should come up with plans to develop the state."

"Whenever the government comes up with new schemes for senior citizens, it is for the public sector pensioners. Private sector retirees are left out. Government schemes must benefit all senior citizens. When one-off payments are made to pensioners, it must be given to all senior citizens. Retirees and self-employed have no income and have to live on their savings, which do not last long. During our working days, we also contributed to nation-building and paid taxes mostly at higher rates and lesser deductions," **A. Jeyaraj**, 79-year-old private sector retiree, highlighted.

He stressed that government hospitals and clinics should do annual medical check-ups as many seniors are diabetic and have high-blood pressure and are not aware of it. The welfare of all senior citizens must be safeguarded so that they can lead a dignified life.

Victor Chew, 72-year-old pensioner also the acting chairman of Rukun Tetangga for Lim / Maxwell Garden hopes to see a more proactive yet leaner civil service, complete overhaul of the education system and changes in the prosecution of corruption, whereby people involved will not only face jail sentences but have their property confiscated.

"I expect a more professional police force that will treat all cases fairly and a judiciary system that is independent of influence. I also expect citizens to be more responsible at the same time know their rights. They have to play a positive role and not expect the government to do everything for them. They need to be critical but willing to help correct things," he stressed.

Shireen Ho, 71-year-old retired teacher, shared, "The euphoria of the new government still lingers today, but impatience is creeping in for real change. After the rumble and tumble of new faces and new policies hastily announced, 2019 should be entering a settling process."

She cited instances such as a safer and cleaner environment to arise from better waste management systems, stricter anti-smoke measures and traffic regulations as well as court justice to be accelerated in resolving the IMDB scandals that had affected our country's economy.

"While expectations run high, the ultimate lies in efficient and well-sustained implementation by the relevant authorities, both at federal and state levels. Otherwise, expectations will remain as dreams, stuck and stagnant," she sighed.

SeeFoon Chan-Koppen, Ipoh Echo's own Food columnist, said, "My wish for 2019 for Ipoh is for all restaurants to take better care of their toilets. The toilets in most of the local restaurants and food courts are horrendous. As a food commentator I will go anywhere and everywhere to taste good food but when nature calls, the entire great food experience can turn into a nightmare as one approaches the facilities with trepidation, armed with a tissue doused in scent, holding one's breath as best as one can and rush out as quickly as possible".



Syed Hashim Wafa



A. Jeyaraj



Shireen Ho



SeeFoon Chan-Koppen



By Fathol Zaman Bukhari

ANOTHER TUMULTUOUS YEAR AHEAD?

According to Moody's rating, real GDP growth for 2019 may drop to 4.7 per cent after averaging at 5 per cent in past years. It is definitely not a rosy prediction.



The unexpected victory by Pakatan Harapan over incumbent Barisan Nasional at the 14th General Elections was a watershed in the nation's history. After over six decades of one-party rule the formidable and seemingly unbeatable Barisan Nasional was ousted from power bringing an inglorious end to a kleptocratic government helmed by Najib Razak and his cohorts. May 9, 2018 will remain etched in the nation's history as the day a 92-year old former Prime Minister was returned to power by Malaysians who had grown tired of a coalition party that made countless promises but fulfilled little. Corruption, both political and monetary, was on the way up blurring the line separating fact from fiction. The word "corruption" becomes synonymous with the party that being associated with it means you are not the upstanding and honest person we all want to believe.

Nonetheless, the nation's year of embracing change had been both sporadic and euphoric. After almost nine months in power, expectations have given way to disappointments that may derail Tun Dr Mahathir's vision of a New Malaysia. When hard realities hit squarely on ordinary Malaysians' faces, many are beginning to have second thoughts. The Pakatan Harapan (PH) government has been dogged by pitfalls, some due to its own doing while many were spillovers from the previous administration.

Let us examine some of the more pertinent reasons.

Malaysia, surprisingly, had a peaceful transition of government despite some anxious moments over increased race-based fears fanned by the country's right-wing elements. Political rallies and protests had remained largely peaceful and well contained. The only exception was the overblown Seaford Sri Maha Mariamman Temple fracas which resulted in the tragic death of one fireman, Muhammad Adib. His death, however, is being questioned as to whether it was accidental or deliberate. A public inquest will determine the cause. Hopefully, it will put to rest the many speculations – good and bad.

Despite the constant political gossiping and obsession with who and who and why so-and-so is with so-and-so, one important development of New Malaysia is the broadening political space in the news media. Malaysians, unlike before, have taken to online media with much gusto and zest. They are not hesitant to say their piece despite their poor grasp of the subject matter.

Being a keen player on this media platform I find most of the arguments proffered are shallow, mono-dimensional and personal. This effectively minimise meaningful debate of the problems the *rakyat* are facing. There is a tendency now to highlight social problems that affect people across the social spectrum like drug-addiction, unemployment, child marriage, incest and the fractious racial relationship.

It takes time to change behavioural patterns but many Malaysians are becoming more comfortable with how they digest and disseminate information. A case in point is the debate on the recent abdication of the Yang di Pertuan Agong. A once taboo subject has gained much traction with the media savvy of all races with some even tracing the faults to the monarch's demeanour, health and affairs of the heart.

The PH government has encouraged dialogue and in doing so it opened itself to criticism unlike the previous BN government. The downside, however, is its unpreparedness in taking these criticisms to another level. Its public engagement is largely sporadic and defensive prompting many to perceive that faults committed are true.

Some of the most admirable achievements of the PH to date are its inclusiveness (for youth, women and minorities less the transgender community), better checks and balances (with greater independence of the Judiciary, stronger Parliament, reduction of powers of the prime minister and a freer media), tougher enforcement for corruption, more openness in the appointments of civil servants. And above all, better control of government contracts and institutional spending. These developments accelerate the return of lost pride on the international stage. The accomplishments, attained in a short span of nine months should not be dismissed as frivolous. From a global perspective, they are definitely momentous and something to shout about. They reinforce the fact that the nation, despite its many shortcomings, is still salvageable.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that these successes are not reasons for PH leaders to rest on their laurels. A major portion of the populace is still dissatisfied with the government's performance. Minister Maszlee's handling of his Education portfolio, especially the black school shoes and swimming lesson in hotel episodes will negate whatever advances the government has made.

The other negativity is the economy. Generally, the public feel that the economy has slowed down. Adverse international conditions, which the country has no control, plus financial burdens inherited from the previous BN Government are of no consequences to the rakyat. Consumers have not seen a meaningful change in the cost of living despite the abolition of the much-dreaded GST (Goods and Services Tax) and the floating of petrol prices effective Saturday, January 5.

There is no real sense of what are the plans for the economy and measures taken to move the country towards greater prosperity. There is an urgent need for perceived achievements, real or otherwise. Cynicism is fast setting in and if nothing is done it will have a serious impact on progress thus far.

Let us see what is happening in Perak. The Ahmad Faizal government is still tittering in a balance and has not steadied yet. Faizal, for whatever he is worth, has not

made much impact on Perakeans prompting many to doubt his capacity and seriousness in handling matters of the state. He is either on enforced sabbatical or away on duty in Putrajaya. He has even missed some very important appointments in Ipoh which require his presence. This is most unbecoming when it involves the Istana.

Pot shots taken by Umno lawmakers are to be expected, as was evidenced during the state assembly sitting in December last year when rumours of an impending vote of no confidence crisscrossed the cluttered assembly floor.

Insofar as ordinary Perakeans are concerned lingering problems that may impinge on their livelihood are prices of daily necessities, especially petrol and food. On Wednesday, January 9 two petrol kiosks near my place of work ran out of RON 95. Only RON97 was available. Could it be a sabotage or had the sudden drop in price of RON 95 be the reason?

Political pundits are predicting that Year 2019 will be more challenging than the previous. According to Moody's rating real GDP growth for 2019 may drop to 4.7cent per after averaging at 5 per cent in past years. It is definitely not a rosy prediction.

By the way, prices of fish, seafood and vegetables in the market are way beyond the reach of the ordinary folks. Today, chicken, a luxury item during my formative years, has become the staple food of Ali, Ah Chong and Muthu.

EYE HEALTH – FATIGUE

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



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

Ever felt your eyes are so tired that they feel like as though they are going to pop out of their sockets? This is not surprising any more these days because there is so much demand placed on our eyes by screens in everything from computers, laptops, smart phones and even from the monitors right in front of you when you travel on an airplane! So lifestyle modification and some adjustments to ease the strain would need to be made.

Here are some pointers to help reduce eye tiredness.

1. MONITOR

If you are going to be working in front of computer monitor, then do get a monitor which has a fairly large screen size or you will end up sitting closer to it which will only add to the eye tiredness, neck pain and even perhaps backache. Investing in a decent sized screen so that you are not literally sticking your face into it would be a very good step to take. Seating distance should also ideally be approximately 50-70cm away from your monitor. If you have to sit in front of your monitor with your face very near the screen, your chin jutting forwards and your back hunched up, then you can be almost certain that you will suffer from eye strain and even neck pain. Additionally, people think that increasing the text size is only for those with poor vision but in fact larger text size is less taxing on the eyes and helps reduce eye strain. So, for "eye-sake", get those fonts a little larger than you require them.

2. BRIGHTNESS

Never push the brightness of your monitor all the way up to result in glare. Always adjust the screen brightness to be comfortable for you, keeping it only as bright as you would need it to be, and not any brighter. You will find this helpful when you have to work long hours in front of the screen. Secondly, brightness of your room lighting that you are working in is more than just creating a good ambience. This is often an overlooked fact. Maintaining your room lighting at an optimum brightness is an important aspect of reducing eye strain. The room lighting in which you work in should not be so much brighter than your computer screen.

3. CORRECT READING GLASSES

If you are above 40 years of age, chances are you have presbyopia and would need glasses to read print. Do make sure that your prescriptions are correct and suitable for the distance between your eyes and PC monitor. You will need to indicate to your optometrist about your ideal working distance so that the powers can be adjusted to be most comfortable for you.



And finally, when tired, take a break! The 20-20-20 rule where you take a break every 20 minutes, looking out 20m for at least 20 seconds is helpful. This relaxes your eyes.

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

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Are You Afraid of Keeping Dogs?

It is a sad end to the Year of the Dog...

Ipohites have had their fair share of their pet dogs being attacked by cruel people. In some cases, their pets have been targeted by the council's dog catchers, who may or may not realise that the dogs they have rounded up are properly licensed.

On the other hand, many people claim that they are afraid to venture from their homes, and walk on the lanes, because they fear being bitten by dogs. Not all the dogs they encounter are strays. Some are badly trained dogs, which have managed to escape their enclosures and their handlers.

On Thursday, January 3, six dogs, including four puppies, were found dead in their owner's compound, in Puchong, Selangor. They were believed to have been poisoned, and the case is currently being investigated by the veterinary department.

The dogs' owner, Alex Chandran, said that his sister had suspected something was wrong when she noticed that one of the dogs was behaving strangely. She gave the dog some water, before she left home, to collect her children from school. At the time, she did not realise that the problem warranted more serious action.

On her return, she noticed another dog showing similar behaviour and informed the dogs' owner.

Alex rushed home, when he heard about the dogs in a weakened state, and they were not their normal selves. When he arrived, he witnessed all six dogs dying, one by one.

The female dogs were four years old, and the puppies were two months old. On further inspection of his property, he found traces of food waste that he did not recognise. He claimed that the food was not what he normally fed to his dogs.

The dogs and the remnants of the suspected food were taken away for post mortem, and analysis, after he lodged a report with the Veterinary Services Department (VSD). The VSD has also lodged a report with the police.

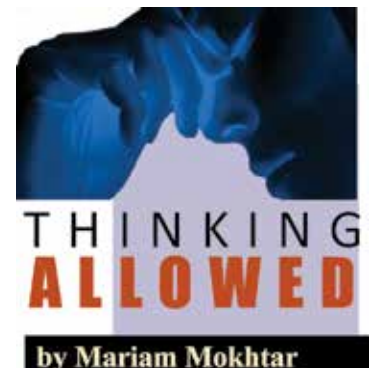
A few days later, a Seremban resident of Taman Lavendar Heights, lodged a police report about his missing dog, which he had found dead in a back lane of the housing area. He had put one of his five dogs in the care of a friend, but one dog went missing and was later found dead. The man claimed that he had found another two dead dogs nearby.

The police are currently investigating the suspected poisoning of these dogs.

Is a serial dog poisoner at work, in Seremban? Or, did the dogs eat some rat poison meant to kill vermin? Were the dogs fed with infected meat?



Pic source: malaysiakini.com



The reaction from the public has been mixed.

Some people said that they wonder if the poisoning, (if it was proved that the dogs were poisoned), was because a neighbour was unable to get the cooperation of the dog owner to quieten his dogs, or clean the area.

Living beside several captive dogs can be nauseating, if proper care is not practised. People complain about the smell of dog faeces and urine, not to mention the incessant barking and, as in one case in a terrace house in Kedah, an infestation of dog ticks.

Others wonder if the dogs had escaped the confines of the property and become hostile towards other people. People who are not used to an over-friendly dog may assume that a dog, which comes too close is about to attack.

There are also complaints about dog owners who do not clean-up after their pets, when they take them for a walk, along public lanes or parks. In some western countries, there are severe penalties, and fines of several hundred ringgit, if dog owners do not collect their dog poo and dispose of it in a suitable manner.

Another common complaint is that some people like to show off their wealth, by owning a pedigree dog, which they keep in a tiny cage at the entrance of their home, so others may marvel at their wealth. This is cruel and inhumane. Is it any wonder, that some dogs, are crippled and show disturbing behavioural traits when they are allowed out of their cage?

Some people also think that it is fashionable to give dogs (or other animals) as presents, at Christmas or a birthday. The new owner soon realises that looking after pets may be too expensive or time-consuming. Veterinary fees and medicine are not cheap. Perhaps, the owners simply tire of the responsibility of taking care of their pets, and like the pedigree dog owner, they simply abandon the dog along a back lane, somewhere.

In most cases, the dogs are not neutered, so they breed and packs of feral dogs may terrorise the community.

There are many responsible dog owners, but as in many other things, there are also many people who do not care.

Don't blame the dogs. Blame the dog owners. No dog deserves to die a violent death or be poisoned. Perhaps, it is time that laws on dog and pet ownership are tightened.

Don't Make a Purchase on Social Media?

Not trustworthy – Low barrier to entry, fake account, scam, fraud, unofficial/fake news, posts can be deleted or edited, low-security surveillance, not monitored by authorities

Privacy invaded – personal data collection by social site without clarity and transparency/purposes unknown. Disclose the place you stay through friend suggestions on Facebook, disclose your social activity, your friends & family – all make easy targets for stalking, kidnapping, identity theft, hacking, mugging.

Everyone can pose as a professional, paid reviews by online media brands

With low effort comes greater cost!

Hawker Food

Lou Mei

The chicken is juicy and succulent, and prepared to a perfectly smooth texture. In fact, the skin of the chicken is so smooth it literally slides across your tongue like it's butter on a knife!

Lo Tim Kee, Aneka Selera Restaurant
Kam Wan, 87 Lengkok Canning, Taman Ipoh, 31400 Ipoh. 7.30am-2pm.

Jack Foo



SeeFoon Discusses Dishy Options for Chinese New Year and Beyond

With Chinese New Year (CNY) around the corner, it's time to start booking restaurants or suffer the consequences of tardiness. Of course, we know that all the good Chinese restaurants will be full to overflowing and if you haven't yet booked your reunion dinner for Chinese New Year's Eve on February 4, now is the time to pick up the phone.

Yuk Sou Hin

One restaurant that is well ahead in its planning is the Yuk Sou Hin at WEIL Hotel. The whole Chinese kitchen is being moved to their ballroom where they can easily accommodate 600 people. Packages priced from RM668 for four and beginning at RM1288 to RM2998 for a table of 10, the latter offering two head Australian abalone, American lobster and Australian coral grouper, (all high-value items). All packages naturally feature Yu Sheng and their famous **Tea Smoked Duck**, with its light crispy skin, the delicate lichee wood smoke permeating both the meat and the skin, dipped into a mildly sweet plum sauce, is heaven in a mouthful.

I had my first "**Lo Hei**" (**Yu Sheng**) of the season here, the tossing of fine tendrils of white radish, carrots and a cornucopia of other titbits including a choice of Pak Fan Yu (whitebait) salmon fish skin, jellyfish, soft-shell crab and abalone starting with salmon at **RM78/98 S/L**, and going up to **abalone at RM148/RM228**. Affable and chatty KC Tong, who is back in charge after a long hiatus (hurray!), was waxing lyrical about Chef Chan's new offerings for CNY.

I had just returned from Hong Kong, touted to be the zenith of Cantonese food and I have to admit that without pork (pork-free restaurant), Chef Chan Kong Tung has curated dishes on par with any of the top ones there.

There is an indefinable taste, texture, aroma and mouthfeel to superlative Cantonese dishes, relying primarily on the freshness of ingredients, skill of the Chef and the "wok hei" or "spirit of the wok"; unlike other regional Chinese cuisines which tend to be heavier



Inimitable Tea Smoked Duck



Yu Sheng



Giant Grouper With Snake Gourd



Divine Fried Nian Gao



Crystal Prawns

on their saucing, spices and other devices. This is achieved by Chef Chan, especially when I tasted their **Crystal Prawns**, ocean fresh and umami, with pine nuts, celery, carrots, cloud ear, water chestnuts and celery, lending contrasting taste and textures.

For fish with a difference, instead of the usual steamed fish, KC suggested the **Lo Dun** or **giant grouper** slices steamed with garlic and interestingly, thinly sliced dried tangerine peel, lending a novel zest to the otherwise bland fish, prized for its velvety thick skin.

Waxed meats are de rigueur at this time of the year and surprisingly, all the waxed meats in the Fried Rice are specially ordered and made from duck, lending its sweet smoky flavours to the rice which was fried to grain by grain perfection.

To end the meal we had the **Nian Gao** only served during this season, a glutinous rice cake sandwiched between taro and sweet potato slices and fried to oozing yumydeliciousness. A "died and gone to heaven" dish that I couldn't resist having a second portion. Be careful of biting down too soon as the melted rice cake is a volcanic eruption in the mouth and it can burn!

So don't wait, eat these dishes before CNY.

Yuk Sou Hin @ WEIL Hotel
292 Jalan Sultan Idris Shah
Tel: 05 208 2103

Fairway RPGC

Knowing how busy Chinese New Year will be in most restaurants, in this issue I am now going to suggest a peaceful and quiet restaurant where one can have a full choice of oriental, local and western dishes and enjoy a view of the fairways of the Royal Perak Golf Club (RPGC).

Fairway, the restaurant, operated by the Putrade All Suites, a 34-unit hotel at RPGC, has a chef all-rounder in the person of Chef Shafie who has experience in both oriental and western dishes and adds innovative touches to some of the well-loved local dishes which lift them from the mundane to special heights.

Like his **Nasi Lemak with Roasted Lamb Shank Rendang**, an enormous lamb shank braised in the rendang style and served with all the traditional nasi accoutrement: coconut rice, ikan bilis, onion sambal, cucumber slices, boiled egg and fried peanuts. The lamb shank was wonderfully tender and with the rice and other condiments, a meal for four (my group has small appetites!) **RM125** to be ordered in advance. Of course, they also have the **regular nasi lemak with chicken rendang** on the menu at **RM8.50**.

Their **Special Kampung Nasi Goreng** is well worth ordering, a hearty well-flavoured plate of spicy fried rice with prawns and chicken served with a chicken thigh topped with a fried egg and accompanied with fish crackers; **RM9.90**.



Lamb Shank Nasi Lemak

In between dishes we snacked on **Cucur Udang** which can be ordered anytime as a snack or appetiser. Very tasty morsels of fried batter filled with prawns, onions and spices. Yummilicious; **RM6**.

Fish Head Curry in the traditional Indian style is also to be ordered in advance. Their fish head is the big snapper fish head which is difficult to find in Indian restaurants these days and is very reasonably priced depending on size. Tangy, not



Chef Shafie and Ridzuan Nordin, Hotel Manager

too spicy with aubergines, ladies fingers and tomatoes; **RM113**.

Chicken Chop is reasonable at **RM17.50**, although I did make the comment that the sides of the chicken needed to be crispy. **Prawn Aglio Olio** with a choice of fettuccine or spaghetti was al dente and the prawns generous and very fresh, although you need to ask for virgin olive oil to be brought to the table for added smoothness. They also have a choice of bolognaise, marinara or carbonara sauce; **RM16.50**.

From the Chinese menu, I loved their **Lemon Chicken** and their **Sweet Sour Chicken**, both tangy in their different ways but neither too sweet nor too sour; **RM27**. These can be combined in sets too.



Prawn Spa-

Their menu is extensive ranging from snacks like sandwiches, **Pisang Goreng** or fried bananas and big meals like rib-eye steaks and lamb chops. My choice is to go for their specials.



Cucur Udang



Fish Head Curry

Fairway @ Royal Perak Golf Club (Halal)
Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah, 31400 Ipoh.
Business hours: 7am-10pm
Reservations: 05 545 1981
Putrade Allsuitses at RPGC
Muhammed Ridzuan bin Nordin GM
012 960 3434

Expectations for 2019 . . continued from page 2



Isaac David



Chong Shi Ian

Isaac David, 17-year-old student in biological sciences, opined, "Ipoh is a very beautiful place but recently I feel that the traffic has increased and road conditions, at some places, are just really bad. I hope the government acts on this as soon as possible."

"My expectation for 2019 is change by being more authoritative with my decisions and actions. I want to start back the activities which I have paused ever since I started university. I would also want to contribute to society," the Ipoh boy expressed.

Another millennial, 18-year-old **Chong Shi Ian** observed, "We witnessed a positive entry to 2019, with a smoking ban which improves air quality and breathability. This move, however, has a much in-depth purpose;

to teach us, Malaysians in general, to be considerate (particularly to non-smokers), tolerant, respectful and to be more health-conscious."

He identified the ever-occurring out-flux of youngsters from Ipoh as a major concern. Common push factors are the limited options for tertiary education, facilities for entertainment and leisure activities. Alternatively, the middle-aged population takes a hit every time the price of groceries, foods and local services hikes up.

"As such, locals need to be supportive of Ipoh's charm. The concept of 'think global, act local' essentially applies when promoting Ipoh's identity throughout the country and beyond. Having said that, Ipoh is always home," he added.

Forgotten Buildings

By Luqman Hakim



Istana Billah

Istana Billah or Billah Palace was built based on the Mandailing architectural concept. It is also known as the "Mandailing Mansion".

Mandailing is a traditional cultural group from the northern part of Sumatera, Indonesia. This group of entrepreneurial migrants settled in parts of Selangor and Perak.

The two-storey palace was completed in 1896 and was once the biggest structure in Papan, Perak. It was occupied by Raja Billah, the Mandailing chieftain then.

The palace's grandeur, located atop a hill, bore testimony to Raja Billah's connection to the royal household of Sumatera. The mansion was built for his personal use.

According to Abdul-Razzaq Lubis, an expert on Mandailing culture and history, Raja Billah and his followers settled in that part of Perak following the tin rush. However, most of his descendants left Papan in the late 1890s.

On the ground floor is a hall with eight corners and a table. The living room with a huge hall is on the second floor. The site was used by Raja Billah to celebrate weddings and special occasions as and when they occurred.

It was also a venue for residents to meet Raja Billah to discuss and exchange ideas. Meetings were normally held following Friday prayers at the Papan mosque.

Papan residents claimed that the building is spooked. The ageing structure is left to the elements without much care by either the Mandailing community or the authorities. A wire-link fence has been erected to keep trespassers away.

Locals claimed that eerie sounds of drum beats and azan (call for prayers) can be heard coming from the dilapidated mosque located next to the palace.

Billah Palace is often associated with paranormal activities and the existence of supernatural creatures. This was featured in a Malay television drama named, "Warkah Terakhir" and a documentary titled, "Penunggu Istana" shown in cinemas recently.

In February 2009, a television crew filming on location experienced something horrifying while working within the palace grounds.

The crew realised that they were not alone. Something was watching them from the first day of filming.

Paranormal activities taking place at Billah Palace are not figments of Papan residents' imagination but were confirmed and recorded on film. This will have a profound impact on Istana Billah's aura, hopefully.



Don't know where and what to eat in Ipoh?

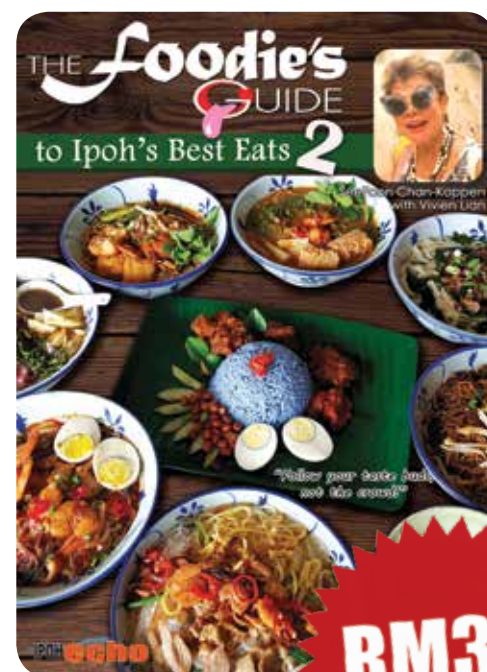
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153, Jalan Dato Lau Pak Khuan, Taman Ipoh, 31400 Ipoh.

Tel: 05 543 9726

Available at MPH, Popular, Times, Borders, Kinokuniya nationwide.

Education

Buzzing New Kindergarten Takes Flight in Ipoh



Preschoolers are being whisked away on an un-bee-liveable learning journey at Kinder Labz, which opened its doors to two six-year-olds on January 2.

Kinder Labz feels different from most other kindergartens almost as soon as you walk through the door. The theme is obvious for this buzzing new nursery, from the friendly bee logo, the vibrating hum of the music, the huge bumbling mascot and the black and yellow stripes that cover the walls and floors. Greeting you there's kid-sized blackboards, honeycombed bookcases brimming with stories, beanbags to sink into and a sticky craft corner luring you to paint. It's a bee-autiful feast for the eyes.

Located at 4 Jalan Woodward, Ipoh, it already has a swarm of more than 100 children enrolled and a waiting list for one of the year groups. It offers an all-round curriculum based on the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and a multilingual stream of Mandarin, Bahasa Melayu and English.

Head of Academic Mrs Puvanes said: "Kinder Labz truly is a beehive of learning activity. Much of our day is focused on learning objectives and everything we do is very intentional. The children are still having a great time playing and discovering, but they are also doing purposeful activities to build their skills. It's incredible to see how deep their learning journey can be, even in just one week."

Open Monday to Saturday, families are welcome to join taster days and see what the buzz about town is all about.

The new education brand belongs to Bonanza Venture Holdings (BVH), which controls a diverse group of companies in Ipoh. BVH has more than 30 years experience in the education sector, having successfully developed Tenby Educare schools group, across seven campuses in Malaysia.

To request more information contact Mrs Puvanes on 010 664 4211 or 05 242 8661.



Personality

Ipoh-born Flower Affair

Ipoh Echo speaks to brilliant duo Nureen and Yus who are florists and co-owner of *Maryamflwrs* (pronounced as Maryam Flowers) that provide fresh flowers for various occasions such as birthdays, weddings, decorations and installations.

Their journey began in 2016 when Maryamflwrs started. Yus had finished her backpacking trip while Nureen had just completed her degree. After a quick coffee session sharing about their experiences and dreams, these best friends decided to open a flower business together.

"Yus graduated in fine-art while I completed my degree in accounting. We are friends from years ago but only in 2016 did we have a chance to catch up and realised that we shared the same dreams. Our background and skills might be different from one another, but that is also what makes us good business partners," said Nureen.

As for Yus who is also a published writer, setting up a business might be risky but that's the risk she was willing to take and with a great partner like Nureen, nothing is impossible for Maryamflwrs. "We had our fair share riding the storm in this ship but it is all worth it. We started selling flowers by the side of Polo Ground and the response was great. Our family and friends also supported our business and they definitely helped to shape Maryamflwrs like you see today," added Yus.

Aside from selling flowers, MaryamFlwrs also did several flower installations including their latest collaboration with GuntingBatuKain, an Ipoh-based clothing brand where the duo provided flower props for the brand's latest collection. When asked about the future of Maryamflwrs, these girls aim to open a physical store in Ipoh next year and hopefully in five years time there will be a Maryamflwrs shop in their favourite city, Melbourne.

"I would love to see if we can do more fresh flower installations. We have started collaborating with a few friends but we are looking forward to doing bigger artistic installations. We personally believe that flowers offer more than just props; they have a soul that needs to be expressed. And only then, would we call ourselves floral-



Seeking Contributions from our Readers

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artists," said Nureen.

"If anyone is interested to start a business, don't you ever give up. It might be hard, so find your style, do your research, have a lot of practice, explore a variety of design and believe in yourself," said Yus.

Readers who are keen to see Maryamflwrs' sample of bouquets, flower installations or more, please visit their social media account at www.instagram.com/Maryamflwrs.

Ili Aqilah

Septorhinoplasty

Dr. Leow Aik Ming

Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon
Pantai Hospital Ipoh and Pantai Hospital Manjung

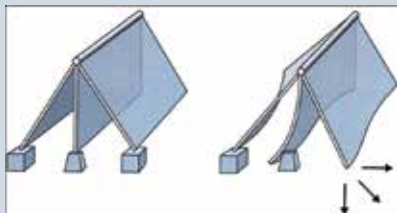
The nose is a tripod structure consisting of nasal bones that form the side walls and a central structure separating the nose into the right and left side called nasal septum. Nasal septum can be deformed through injury, trauma, disease or sometimes a previous surgery. When the nasal septum is deformed or deviated, it can have significant consequences to the overall appearance and function of the nose. A deviated septum can cause a blockage in the nose leading to breathing difficulties, chronic sinus infections, stagnating mucus, inflammation and irritation.

Septorhinoplasty is a surgical procedure performed to improve both the external appearance and internal breathing capabilities of the nose. The cosmetic benefits of septorhinoplasty are to improve the appearance of a crooked nose and shape of the nose thus creating a balance with other facial features. Some of its functional benefits may include relieving nasal blockages, snoring and sleep apnea.

During a septorhinoplasty, the internal lining of nose mucosa is first elevated from nasal septal cartilage and bone. The deviated septum caused by deformed nasal septal cartilage and bone can be removed or straightened. Sometimes the cartilage and bone can be reshaped. Additional cosmetic changes can also be carried out at the same time during septorhinoplasty which includes surgery for nasal dorsal or nasal tip. Once the procedure is accomplished, the mucosa lining is laid back down and closed. Patient should be aware that septal cartilage has 'memory', sometimes the corrected nasal septum may tend to assume its initial shape after the surgery.

Postoperative expectations of septorhinoplasty

Patients are discharged with a cast over the nasal bridge and internal splints placed along the nasal septum. Occasionally, the nose may be packed to control nose bleeding. Recovering from septorhinoplasty usually takes about 7-14 days in most cases. The cast, splints and any external visible sutures are removed one week after surgery. Most patients return to work one week after surgery. Any bruising around the eyes that may occur typically resolves within two weeks post-operative. Swelling peaks two to three days after surgery and gradually subsides thereafter. An appreciable reduction in swelling is evident at one month, but the nose will continue to heal for a full year after surgery. Routine post-operative follow up are periodically scheduled for the year following surgery to ensure optimal healing.



For more information on the procedure mentioned in this article, please visit the following website (www.elegantplasticsurgery.com).

Online consultation is also available if you have any enquiries, please email: elegantplasticsurgery@gmail.com.

Elegant Plastic Surgical Centre, **Pantai Hospital Ipoh**,
Tel: +605 5405457 (Receptionist) or +605 5405458 (Direct Line)
WhatsApp : +0126235458

Elegant Plastic Surgical Centre, **Pantai Hospital Manjung**,
Tel: +605 6898624 (Receptionist) or +605 6898697 (Direct Line).

An Inspiring Musical Trio

Perak Community Specialist Hospital and Perak Academy hosted a fund-raising event featuring three Singaporean prodigies. The trio consisted of a pianist, a flautist and a tenor vocalist. They performed a repertoire ranging from classical to popular music on Saturday, December 29, 2018 at the Meru Eco-Village conference hall.

The concert marked their debut in Malaysia. Almost a hundred music lovers were in attendance. Among them were the State Assemblyman for Malim Nawar Leong Cheok Keng, Perak Community Specialist Hospital (PCSH) Chairman Dato' Lee Hau Hian, Ipoh City Councillor Chan Kok Keong and PCSH Chief Executive Officer Nicholas Chan.

The show began with an opening piece that set the mood for the evening – Chopin's Scherzo No. 2 by Rae Yu. This was followed by vocal pieces from Schumann's Dichterliebe, Op. 48 and Britten's The Ash Grove by Corey. Flautist Yi Ting blew it away by performing famous Hungarian folkloric pieces such as Viitorio Monti's Czardas.

The trio eventually combined by performing, in complete synchronisation, three pieces consisting of 'Bring Him Home' from Les Miserables, 'Cinema Paradiso' from the very-famous movie of the same name and two Chinese numbers.

Without a doubt, their preparation in developing a diverse musical programme – one that really tested the boundaries of their own abilities – was evident as their experience in the international stage proved paramount.

"It's so refreshing to hear these young children invigorate our souls this evening," said the emcee, Dr Ramanathan Ramiah at the closing of the event. "We thank them for this performance."

Performers' profiles:

Pianist Pung Rae Yu, 15, from a Singaporean-Australian background has performed at many international competitions such as the VII Budapest International Chopin Competition (2018), the XXI International Frederick Chopin Piano Competition for Children and Youth, the Chopin Memorial Prize, Hong Kong's International Piano Open



Arts and Culture

A Christmas Musical

A charity concert organised by Perak Society of Performing Arts (PSPA) titled, "The Chimes of Love Volume 2" was held on Saturday, December 15, 2018 at the Wesley Methodist Church. It presented a repertoire of Christmas-themed performances to usher in the festive holidays.



The objective was to collect funds for a number of charities identified by the Church. Among them were Vineyard Keeper, Salvation Children's Home, Bethany Home, Good Shepherd Family Home, Lighthouse Hope and others.

The backbone of the concert was the hugely talented PSPA Singers consisting of sopranos, tenors, altos and basses. They provided the staggering vocals and dramatic singsongs that drove the Christmas cheers many notches high. Guest performers such as the Kinta Valley Saxophone Ensemble and Din & Phonic were present to complement the show.

Chai Jin Hann, the organiser of the event said, "The purpose of the concert is to spread the message of love, joy and care during the festive season of Christmas. We hope to join hands with the community to spread awareness of the urban poor and to reach out to them. The money and goods that you have donated in kind will be given to the needy through Wesley Methodist Church via its contacts," he added.

When asked how he managed to organise a large-scale concert for free. He responded, "Organising a concert like this requires a team which is willing to contribute its time and effort. In fact, all the committee members and singers are volunteers."

Finding a church that could help PSPA handle the donations and had good connections with various charity bodies in Ipoh was imperative, he said. So was the choice of songs and scripts.

"A challenge we faced was marketing the event," said Chai. "Although this is a free concert, we faced difficulties in giving out tickets and inviting the public, as there are many similar Christmas shows this time of the year." Despite this the concert was a hit. Chai thanked all those who had helped.

The musical was an adaptation of Charles Dickens's, 'The Christmas Carol' with a local twist. The story describes the meaning of Christmas and how it affects people.

Jack Foo

Perak Theatre Academy 2018

A final year student majoring in banking from Ipoh Vocational College emerged as the winner of Perak Theatre Academy 2018 on Sunday, December 30.

Abdul Aziz Ayeop Kharun Anuar, 18, from Meru did not expect to outperform 27 other students who partook in the competition.

"I did my best during the 10-week training. My determination to gain as much knowledge as possible from my mentors was the driving force.

"This annual programme should continue as it provides an opportunity for theatre buffs to polish their talent and be accomplished actors," said Abdul to Ipoh Echo after receiving a trophy, certificate and RM500.

Academy principal, Yusof Najmi said judges had a tough time choosing a winner because all of the participants were very talented.

"On the whole, this season's students were the best compared to previous. The programme, evidently, has produced actors who will be at the forefront of the theatre scene. Hopefully, their presence will help spice up the theatre image," said Yusof Najmi to reporters following the award-giving ceremony at the auditorium of Perak Department for Culture and Arts.

Present was Tan Kar Hing, Executive Councillor for Tourism, Arts and Culture.

Rosli Mansor



Competition (2017) and the "Developing Young Artists Award" scholarships. She won a prize at each competition.

Tenor vocalist Corey Koh, 16, is not only the youngest but the second person to be admitted, by invitation, to the National University of Singapore's Yong Siew Toh Music Conservatory. He is a student of renowned Professor Alan Bennett and has attended Master Classes in Germany by famous Soprano Christa Lehnert. He has travelled all over the globe and sung in venues such as New York's Carnegie Hall, the Marina Bay Sands Theatre, and at churches in Prague, the Bangladesh National Theatre, Germany and Mexico. Koh is fluent in many languages including Latin, Italian, French, German, English and Chinese. His list of songs for the night included Schumann's Dichterliebe, Op. 48, Handel's Where'er You Walk to pieces by Malaysia's own composer, Soon Siew Chong.

Flautist Ong Yi Ting, 15, has won accolades in several international competitions in Greece, USA, Hong Kong, Paris, Russia and Singapore. She won first prize at the 11th International Russian Rotary Children Music Competition in Moscow as well as top spot in Symphony 92.4 FM Young Talents 2012. Like her counterparts, she too has performed in numerous countries. Her highest achievement includes being the soloist of "Moscow Virtuosi", a State Chamber Orchestra conducted by Vladimir Spivakov in 2013.

Jack Foo

Community

Standardised Parking Charges

The application, "Park@Perak" is a parking payment alternative using smartphones. It can be downloaded from Play Store from January 1 and Apple Store from January 20.

It enables motorists to pay their parking fees without resorting to coupons thus saving time and energy.

Motorists, according to the Executive Councillor for Housing and Local Government, Public Transport, Non-Muslim Affairs and New Villages, Yong Choo Kiong, can continue to use the present parking coupons. However, they are encouraged to use the app, as it is convenient and user-friendly.

"We're in the process of standardising the parking rates throughout the state," said Choo Kiong to reporters during a media conference on Thursday, January 3.

"Parking fees, presently, differ with each district and council. Batu Gajah District Council charges 60 sen an hour, Manjung Municipal Council, 40 sen an hour while Ipoh City Council charges 60 sen an hour.

"Therefore, we need to standardise the fee to a uniform rate of 30 sen for half an hour, 60 sen for an hour and RM 4 for a day throughout the state," said Choo Kiong.

He added that the matter, once finalised, would be brought to the Executive Council Meeting for approval.

Luqman Hakim



Use Our Newspaper

Ipoh Echo has always been an advocate for English education. We are offering free distribution to schools to use our newspaper as teaching material for students, not only for English learning but also to educate the young generations on the happenings around Perak, covering travel, art and culture, personalities, workshops, health, community, sport, opinions, heritage and also history.

If you're keen, kindly contact us at **05 543 9726** or editorial@ipohecho.com.my

Connexion

By Joachim Ng

Earn in KL and Spend in Ipoh



The nation's Millennials (24-38 years old) have gleefully welcomed the dawn of 2019, while much older folks are probably slightly worried that they have aged one more notch. But unless you are a crazy rich Asian, your pocket will stay quite empty. Prices are high, except for luxury goods. Last month, one newspaper headlined a report that Kuala Lumpur is "the least expensive city to stay in Asia". If you read only the headline you could be misled, for the story talks about such untouchables as the Cartier Love Bracelet.

In fact, KL is an expensive city for middle-income ringgit earners. A useful measure of your spending power is the Big Mac Index 2018. The price of a Big Mac in Malaysia is listed as US\$2.10. To use the index, convert \$2.10 into ringgit. That's RM8.70. Assuming your monthly income is averagely RM100 per day, a Big Mac costs 8.7% of your salary. In Singapore, the price is US\$4.28. That's S\$5.80. For a Singaporean worker earning S\$100 average daily, a Big Mac costs only 5.80% of his salary. Most goods (with the notable exception of cars) are cheaper for him than for a ringgit earner in KL.

Let's cast our eyes farther — Australia. A Big Mac is US\$4.52. That's A\$6.20, meaning, an Australian worker taking home a daily A\$100 needs to spend 6.2% of his salary on the Big Mac for lunch. At 6.20, Australia is cheaper than Malaysia at 8.70. But what about Aussie cars? Aren't they priced like pink diamonds? Pink roses maybe, as a 1.8-litre sedan will be just A\$25,000. In Malaysia it will be at least RM125,000. Five times more!

What about the stuff for daily living? Displayed in the table below is a mini-selection with price comparison of same-quality items at supermarkets in Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, and Brisbane.

ITEM	KL	IPOH	BRISBANE
Bananas	5.30 per kg	4.20 per kg	3.90 per kg
Onions	4.00 per kg	2.90 per kg	1.50 per kg
Tomatoes	4.40 per kg	3.69 per kg	3.90 per kg
Papaya	5.50 per kg	3.90 per kg	3.99 per kg
Lemons	1.40 per kg	1.30 per kg	1.00 per kg
Pineapple	6.99 per kg	4.20 per kg	2.90 per kg

KL prices for all items are higher than Ipoh and Brisbane. Ipoh is cheaper than Brisbane in only two items. You could do a selection of 50 same-quality items across supermarkets in the three cities and the result would be much the same. KLites are well advised to make Ipoh their favourite destination for weekend lunch and shopping.

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Community

Young Adults Dilemma

There is a new monster on the loose – it's not Freddy Krueger, not the Boogieman, not even the monster under your bed; it's youth unemployment. In modern society, unemployment is the ghoul that lurks behind the shadow of your degree qualifications – one that precipitates quickly into nightmares in the minds of fresh graduates. This article serves to shine some light on this hard-pressing issue that is plaguing the young.

In an exclusive survey done by Ipoh Echo, we have discovered a shocking reality that needs your attention. You may have seen the report published by the Malaysian Insight about a young Engineering graduate who is working as a house cleaner to make ends meet; a position she never expected to be in – which is quite reasonable given that engineering school was probably not the easiest collegiate course around. However, to really understand the full scope of this, imagine the same scenario but in the context of millions of young graduates.

"It's horrible," said Hari Chandra, a 29-year-old sales engineer from Penang when asked about his experiences looking for a job straight out of University. "It's not exactly the field I was hoping for as I am inclined towards water treatment," remarked Chandra.

Prompted with the same question, Business Development Executive KK Wong has this to say about finding a job, "cheap labour". It's a blunt response, but rightfully so. In fact, it is revealed in an article by the Vulcan Post that, despite popular opinion, fresh graduates have the potential to earn more than an RM2500 salary. However, it is only so if you enter the right industries as many still do earn that amount – especially in other states far from the capital Kuala Lumpur. "Finding a job was tedious and mundane," said Tan Jun Lim, who got his job after recommendations from a relative.

Adversely, many Universities push the idea that the graduates they produce are always guaranteed a job once they leave the campus gates. According to Vivien, students often think life is indeed planned when they go to University, that earning a degree can guarantee a job – except nowadays everyone has a degree and it is as common as back-fence cats. During her internship as a student, she had to encounter not only unusual working hours from 11am to 9pm but she also had to endure working in a weathered warehouse, which was "dark" and seemed "unsafe". Furthermore, Chandra argues that the support structure from Universities is insufficient. He claims that there is no proper way or channel to get a job through the usage of their University's influence too. Understanding the issues at hand, he suggests that Universities should host walk-in interviews by firms whereby the interests are mutual; meaning that the corporation(s), the university and their students can reap the benefits gained from the interviews and

subsequently, from employment.

Adversely, fresh graduates often have many tools at their disposal when looking for a job. Many look online through the many portals available such as Jobstreet and Mau Kerja, or they may have had recommendations from friends or family. "Graduates are very selective when it comes to job searching during this period" states business support professional known only by his moniker, CS.

When asked about what advice they would give to fresh graduates looking for a job, one interviewee asserted that they shouldn't be too eager when looking for jobs; and they should leverage with their skills and knowledge. Furthermore, graduates should pursue a job that suits themselves and be patient – that the time will come, eventually. Another suggested that they should just get a job regardless of what it is, then grow from there to whatever they prefer as the experience can be beneficial in the future. Being confident is also something highlighted by other interviewees.

"Your degree or diploma is just a stepping stone for your interviews. Attitude does matter. The world doesn't owe you. So be humble and like Steve Jobs said, stay hungry and stay foolish," added Wong.

Interestingly, all interviewees maintain that their current occupations were not their dream jobs either. Some remarked that it wasn't exactly the field they were hoping to be in, another stated that their dream job is still far from reach while the others said they didn't even have one, to begin with. Moreover, some are still figuring out what their dream job is.

All in all, the topic of unemployment is one that is not talked about often in our daily conversations. However, it is a major problem that is lurking behind the shadows of young and enthusiastic graduates – and more attention and awareness should be given to it. Despite this, unemployment is just a small piece of the puzzle in what could be seen now as a "Young Adults Dilemma" shared collectively by both the youngsters of Ipoh and the country, as a whole.

Jack Foo

Editor:

Any fresh graduate in the fields of marketing, advertising, looking for an exciting and challenging career may call us at Ipoh Echo with full resume for an interview. Also, those with an excellent command of English and wishes to write may also do so. Write to us at editorial@ipohcho.com.my.

101-Year-Old's Birthday Celebration



The Home for the Aged in Simee held a birthday party for two of its most senior residents on Saturday, December 29, 2018. The two were Kuan Lek, 101, and Mary Chin, 96. The party was held in conjunction with the home's annual Christmas lunch.

According to Vincent Lee, chairman of the Board of Management, the event signaled the beginning of the home's year-long donation drive for 2019. An appropriate theme has been coined to make it more appealing – "Smiling Faces".

"Donation is not just about giving. It's about making a difference," said Vincent.

Home for the Aged Simee is a non-profit organisation registered with the state welfare department. It provides shelter to homeless and abandoned elderly folks, irrespective of race or religion. The home depends entirely on public donations for its maintenance, expenses and daily needs. Presently it accommodates 46 residents, the oldest being the two mentioned above.

Block A and Block B were built in 1998 and 2002, respectively. An overhead bridge connecting the two buildings was completed in 2009. The two blocks need repairs due to wear and tear. Cost is estimated at RM1 million.

The home seeks donations from well-meaning Perakeans to help the elderly residents live in dignity during their twilight years.

Cheques or Money Orders should be made payable to: 'Home for the Aged (CWS) Simee'. Direct payments can be made to Public Bank Bhd account **3104221914**; please fax the remittance slip to 05 545 2449 or email kgsimeehome@gmail.com. Donations above RM100 will be given a tax-exemption receipt.

For further details, contact the home at **05 547 3252**.

Rubbish Forest Trail in Buntong

Ipoh Echo travelled into the depths of Buntong to observe a series of heritage ruins and we found ourselves in Jalan Spooner, whereby a nasty sight caught our attention; an entire stretch of road had rubbish strewn all over the place. Who did this? And why are the authorities not acting upon the matter? This is a serious issue and it really questions whether Ipoh is really "Bersih, Hijau dan Maju".

Jack Foo



Community

PSPA Festive Extravaganza @ Ipoh Car Free Day

Kudos to the performing arts community and NGOs of Ipoh who came out in full force for PSPA Festive Extravaganza @ Ipoh's 2018 final Car Free Day on December 23. They danced, sang and shared the joy of the holiday season with all who came! Thirty eight groups came in beautiful costumes with decorated booths, sharing food, drinks and just holiday cheer in answer to the call of organising chairperson Yip Siew Yeen and president of Perak Society of Performing Arts Datin Rosalina for a celebration of community and holiday spirit!

Perak Society of Performing Arts (PSPA) is grateful for the immense support of MBI's Encik Zulqarnain Bin Mohd and his officers of Special Project En Zulkefli bin Osman, Puan Noral Sanial Bt Mohd Som, Encik Suhaimi Ramli for amenities for the event. The new Director Tuan Haji Zainal bin Abdul Hamid was also at PSPA Festive Extravaganza to receive special guests. Sponsors generously donated hampers and gifts including hotel stays, food vouchers and theme-park tickets for the two competitions – Best Costumes and the Best Decorated Booths. As one walked down the bustling Jalan Raja DiHilir, one could hear the tinkling from festively decorated bicycles and trishaws by Cycledios. Among the colourful booths music and singing resonated and audience stopped to enjoy the PSPA Singers, the Sound Garage, line dancers, street dancers, ballet and musical theatre performers, belly dancers, Malay selendang dancers and latin dancers. There were sounds of ukuleles, brass and violins. There were games and sports to join in, 'congkak' to play and even a chance to tie 'tengkolok'.

The singers from PORT were rendering beloved Chinese and Malay melodies for all to enjoy. The judges, Pak Peter, Datuk Haji Ozdman, Sylvia Wong and Encik Zulirwan Nazri sped quickly through the street to make their final choices and decided with difficulty among the lovely costumes. To top it all, the public were thrilled to have Tan Kar Hing at PSPA Festive Extravaganza arch, joined by Jenny Choy and councillor Deric Lee, despite their hectic schedules.

The morning festivities finished with the parade flagged off by Jenny Choy and



Howard Lee and led by Lost World of Tambun closely followed by all performing arts groups and participants of the costume competitions. There was Au Young the clown and his son on stilts, the dancing snowman, Santa giving out sweets and goodie bags from sponsors, santarinas, performers dressed in animal costumes and mascots.

Believe it or not there were even Walking Christmas trees and lovely Malaysian traditional costumes from beautiful Indian sarees, Malay classical attires, Chinese cheongsams, princesses' costumes and even a goat. This happy morning concluded with awesome street dancing from D'Artiz Studio and a finale from Lost World of Tambun. Competition prizes for best Festive Booth Display went to Lembaga Muzium Negeri Perak, closely followed by People of Remarkable Talent (PORT) and Third to Perak Women for Women (PWW). Our best Festive Costume Junior first prize went to Qaseh Imanniesya Rozman dressed as a Christmas tree with Presents for shoes. And the adult champ was Ms Chong Boon Geok, who dressed herself with decadent parts of the Chinese culture with a festive twist.

Help PSPA bring performing arts to the community, like PSPA on Facebook to be informed of events and celebrate performing arts.

WHICH ROADS IN IPOH HAVE POTHOLES?

Bercham (near L&L Food Court)	Jalan Labrooy
Jalan Kampar and Jalan Lahat	Taman Merdeka
Tasek IGB	Pengkalan near TF
Ipoh Garden East	Bandar Seri Botani
Tambun	Meru Raya
Klebang	Buntong roundabout
Menglembu	Lebuh Bercham Timur
Lahat	Taman Botani to Station 18
Ampang Baru	via Lapangan Perdana
Simpang Pulai	Greentown mainroad
Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah (Raja Perempuan Secondary School hostel)	Near Uplands (residential area)
Garband Malam road	SM Raja Perempuan
Stadium	Taman Rapat Perdana
Fairpark	Lorong Pasir Puteh
Jalan Tun Dr Ismail	Silibin
Jalan Kampar	

One Pothole Too Many



Lebuh Meru Raya, the main road near Sekolah Kebangsaan Meru, is in dire straits. The numerous potholes are causing residents and road-users much anxiety.

The arterial road is being used by commercial vehicles vying for space with locals who use it to send their kids to school. A recent visit by our reporter confirms this fear.

Incidentally, most of the roads around Meru Raya suffer the same fate. There are just too many potholes and fresh cracks are appearing on the surfaces. The situation is precarious, to say the least.

Shahril Sharib, 37, a resident of Meru Raya has put up with the inconvenience far too long. The condition worsens when it rains, as the holes are filled with water. Detecting the holes becomes problematic.

"The authorities have yet to act, in spite of our frequent complaints. A fatal accident is waiting to happen," he lamented.

Luqman Hakim



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Community

New Year at the Crazy Rich Club



A kick-off cocktail hour on the evening of Monday, December 31 welcomed in the highly anticipated Meru Valley Resort's New Year's Eve Party. The resort rang in the new year with the theme "Crazy Rich Club", a spin-off following the excitement around the international box office hit, "Crazy Rich Asians". Dressed in fancy-shmancy attire, the guests toasted to adventure, life experience and grand opportunity for 2019.

The evening featured hip upbeat music by buskers. The clubhouse lobby was decorated in accordance with the theme in which the most opulent swag of it all in the Crazy Rich Club was a Rolls Royce on display for photo opportunities.

Guests were served with plethora of tempting eastern and western delights together with twenty-five varieties of divine desserts. Priced from RM180 per person, the New



Year Eve dinner tickets were fully subscribed within a week of sales.

The dinner was further amplified with a 4-piece live band by De Fusion, local standup comedians featuring Rizal Fauzi and Julian Looi, dance performances by My Dance Sport, flashy lucky draws and games.

Three lucky winners of the day packed their bags to jet off for a fully paid trip to Bangkok and Penang. When the clock struck midnight, a breathtaking display of fireworks lit the sky. Guests danced the night away as the deejay played a mixture of retro and contemporary music.

The exhilarating moment was indeed a "crazy rich" way to say adieu to 2018 and welcome 2019.

54,000 Enjoy Bright White Christmas at Bandar Baru Sri Klebang

Master planned town Bandar Baru Sri Klebang, Ipoh, is celebrating a successful 2018 thanks to a host of incredible light-filled events, which resulted in thousands of visitors to the community gardens, named LABpark.

Organised by property developer Kinta Properties, brightly lit festive events and family activities celebrated Chinese New Year, Hari Raya, Deepavali and Christmas that captivated crowds of residents and visitors.

For the third year in a row, the developer's dazzling Christmas lights were a huge hit, with more than 54,000 people turning up to witness enchanting night scenes.

The dazzling park featured light and art styled shipping containers set in a glowing park with a giant Christmas tree that wowed visitors.

Children got to experience the magic of a wintery Christmas first-hand, dancing in foam snow, getting up close to Father Christmas and listening to live festive music.

Every night crowds explored the maze of shimmering tunnels, igloo flower lamps, infinity lights and glow-in-the-dark paints.

Other activities included fireworks, live drone footage, Christmas carols, zumba and Latin dance performances.

Kinta Properties Executive Director Edwin Tan said: "Thank you to everyone who helped make these events happen and to everyone who visited us from near and far. LABpark events have attracted nearly 200,000 people to the town.

"It has been wonderful to see so many smiling faces sharing special moments with friends and families. We are looking forward to organising lots more events and new family home launches to get 2019 off to a great start."

The lights are now off and the developer is already planning an open house for Chinese New Year on Sunday February 10.



Precious Little Space

This is nothing new. The scene is repeated all over Ipoh, especially in areas frequented by people. And the culprits are owners of eateries who jostle for space in order to – in economics parlance – maximise profits.

Whatever little space available is fair game. They will lay tables and chairs to mark their territory and presto, they have a larger space to operate.

It doesn't matter if they encroach into parking lots, adding on to the traffic nightmare and creating a din in the neighbourhood. It's business as usual.

Here is one fine example in Greentown. We need not be specific, and there are many more. Perhaps it's time Ipoh City Council takes a serious view of the goings-on.

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Community

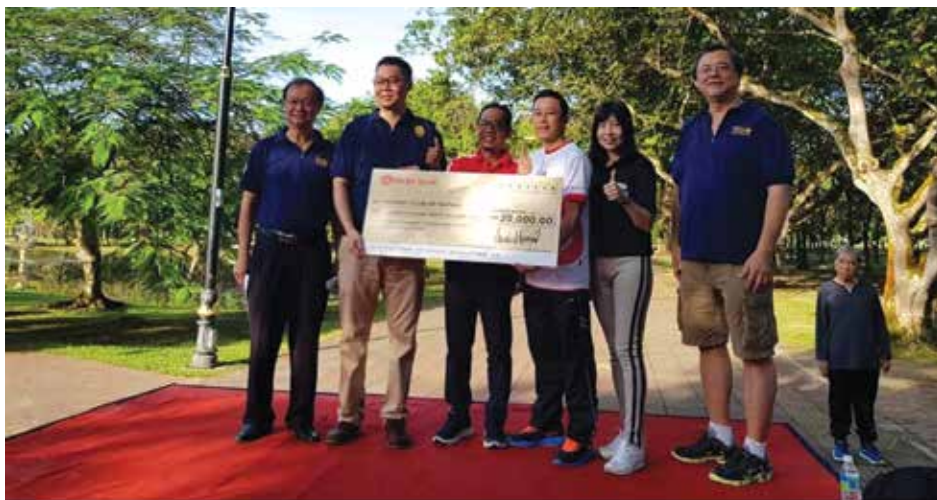
Helping the Homeless

Staff of D Aman Residences Sdn Bhd distributed daily necessities to the homeless as part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme. This was done recently in the following areas: Old Town, Medan Kidd, Urban Transformation Centre, The Store, Medan Selera Taman Kanak Kanak, railway station and Jalan Yang Kalsom. Led by CEO Ong Teng Boon, the team gave away dry goods, blankets, toiletries, mosquito repellents, water and pre-loved clothing. The programme was aimed at helping the needy besides instilling positive values in the staff.

Mei Kuan



Taiping Community Fitness Park for Seniors



Cheque presentation: From left Joseph Lau, President Ken Teh (Taiping Rotary Club), Tuan Haji Borhan (Setiausaha Majlis Perbandaran Taiping), Eric Chia (OCBC Bank Taiping), Sim Siew Khuan (OCBC) and Yeap Thean Eng (Project Chairman)

The Taiping community, particularly its senior citizens, will get to enjoy the benefits of their very first Community Fitness Park at the Lake Gardens by the end of February.

Thanks to a RM20,000 contribution by OCBC Bank (Malaysia) Bhd (OCBC Bank) through a collaboration with the Rotary Club of Taiping and supported by the local council Majlis Perbandaran Taiping.

Speaking at the soft launching ceremony recently to mark the commencement of work, Rotary Club of Taiping President Ken Teh Kean Seong said the park will be especially useful to the elderly who regularly frequent the Taiping Lake Gardens.

The 520 sq ft park will be the first of its kind here and will feature a range of exercise equipment suited to virtually every part of the body. This is really a part of our ongoing effort to promote a higher level of fitness among the people of the area," he said.

The equipment to be made available will include a power-up bike, body-twist machine, double-torso swing station, push-up body stretch machine, double-flexi walk machine and triple-up-down pull machine.

At the event today, members of Rotary Club and staff of the OCBC Taiping branch were on hand to set the stage for things to come by participating in group Tai Chi and Zumba sessions, with several children joining in the fun as well.

President Ken Teh said the initiative would not have been possible without the partnership with OCBC Bank.

"We are grateful for the partnership with OCBC Bank. On top of their financial contribution of RM20,000. OCBC Bank staff were on hand for today's soft launch ceremony to demonstrate their support of the project for the long haul. We are truly thankful for the successful partnership and are looking forward to the completion of the park before the Lunar New Year," he said.

According to OCBC Bank Taiping branch Senior Manager Mr Lim Chee Siang, the bank continues to strive to be more involved in the localities in which it operates and to become even more engaged in the community, going beyond simply providing superior banking products and services to meeting the social needs of the people as well.

"As a member of the Taiping community for 77 years now, since 1941, we are pleased to be part of this community park initiative that will be used for generations to come. OCBC Bank's CSR efforts revolve around the community – so this initiative is very much a part of our ongoing effort to improve the lot of the family and elderly as well," he said.

Yeap Thean Eng

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My Say

By Jerry Francis



Giant Statues Towering Over The Beach



On the high walls of the temple's complex are towering statues looking out to the Straits of Melaka towards the popular fishing spot of Pulau Sembilan, which can be seen on the horizon.

And, walking amidst those giant statues gives the feeling of being in a filming location of an epic Chinese mythological movie.

If you have been to the Tua Pek Kong Temple in Pasir Panjang Laut, just south of Lumut, you would no doubt agree that it is a sight to behold.

There are not just a handful of statues but 98 of them, some of which are as tall as 15m. While the shortest is over 2m.

These statues, mostly white, are of various Chinese deities and mythological and zodiac characters. Among them are Kuan Yin (Goddess of Mercy), Ma Zu (Queen of Heaven), Jiu Tian Zuan Nu (Mysterious Lady of the Ninth Heaven), Jin Tong (Golden Boy), Wen Guan and Wu Guan (Gods of Academic and Martial Arts), Yu Nun (Jade Maiden) and Si Da Jin Gang (the Four Guardians of the Gates).

All were shipped in from China and erected on the walls of the temple's complex and as well as inside among the beautifully landscaped gardens of fish and tortoise ponds.

Thus, the temple complex, which houses both the Tua Pek Kong Temple and Kuan Yin Temple, is attracting devotees and tourists from all over the country and abroad. It is easily accessible by road from Teluk Intan and Lumut.

The temple has transformed from just a small shrine on the beach to a major tourist attraction in Perak.

It is a testimony of how projects implemented and maintained by the private sector are improving from year to year to boost tourism, while those of the public sector are deteriorating due to lack of activities and poor maintenance.

In spite of its being surrounded by Malay villages and with only three Chinese families living in the area, the temple has been able to carry out its religious activities harmoniously.

According to local residents, Tua Pek Kong Temple has been in existence in the area for over a century. It had been moved from its original site on the beach to further inland.

The temple is said to have made numerous miraculous predictions and as a result became well-known. Hence over the years, more and more devotees began to flock in and donated to the expansion of the temple.

It celebrates the birthday of Tua Pek Kong with a grand dinner on the 29th day of the seventh month of the Lunar calendar every year.

However, one might be puzzled as to how the Tua Pek Kong deity came to be worshipped together with Kuan Yin, Goddess of Mercy.

It all began in 1993 when a monk saw a statue of Kuan Yin being washed ashore and an inner voice urged him to pick it up. Subsequently, a small temple was built for the statue on the beach in honour of the Goddess.

The statue was soon stolen and was returned as predicted through a Tua Pek Kong's medium.

In less than two weeks, it was again stolen. Shortly after that a female devotee returned the statue to the temple and it has since remained within the Tua Pek Kong Temple.

WHEELCHAIR ANYONE?

The Society for the Wellbeing of Malaysian Citizens (Persatuan Kesejahteraan Rakyat Malaysia) is giving away wheelchairs to deserving Malaysians upon request.

Submit your application to the society's office located at Persiaran Seri Perdana Precinct 10, Putrajaya.

Call Pn Nur Shaqhiroh bt Hussin or Cik Mastura Umar Baki at 03 8861 7557 for details.

Books

Marriage and Mutton Curry

Be prepared to be bathed in a warm, gentle satire of slices of Malaysian life. Like the nation itself, this book is a melange of daily experience which may perhaps hold a mirror to other Southeast Asian communities; much of human experience being universal. A spoiler, however: this book is not merely warm and gentle.

Specifically, events portrayed are set mainly within the author's Jaffna Tamil community in Malaysia late in the last century and the present one – a world seen through the various lenses of finance, the Japanese Occupation, work and family life, plus views from westerners.

With satirical humour underpinning the whole, Asian obsessions with status (work and matrimony, chiefly) and – of course – food, are free to take centre stage in the slow-burning milieu of daily life. Once everyday life is established in the first half, events begin to escalate significantly thereafter.

Protagonists range across boundaries of gender and race, effectively burying the received wisdom that authors should stick to what they think they know. Fiction is imaginative work. Dr Shan doesn't elevate or relegate any ethnic group especially, though stories such as Victoria and Her Kimono feature typical taunts – fond and otherwise – heard, presumably, within his own community. When we read of its 'rice-bowl Christians' being scolded for not relishing their own culture, we may believe we have caught a glimpse of an author who would come to straddle yet another culture, via his studies at Oxford. We may be wrong.

There's some neat wordplay in this collection, especially in Naming Names. The author clearly takes a mischievous delight in that most readily-available of resources.

As viewed by westerners, with their funny mis-readings of life in Malaysia, realities of status are treated with quiet humour. Between Asians, status always plays a defining role; Shan's civil service career has proven good grist for his mill.

The life trajectories of characters here are squarely honed to practicalities: family and careers. Deep feelings gain scant attention; everyone knows that necessity will always take precedence. Abrupt modes of speech lead to repressed (or depressed) feeling

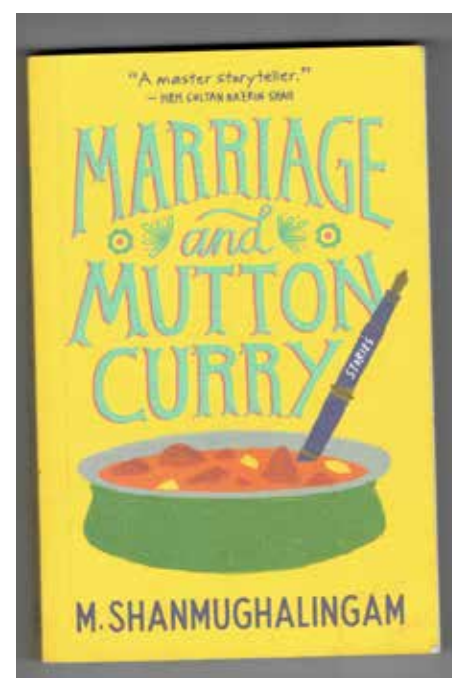
Author: Dato' Dr M. Shanmughalingam

faculties and vice versa, in perpetuation.

Likewise, the author doesn't dwell overlong on detailed descriptions, nor use many adjectives. The subtleties of family life – feelings in particular – are implied through the unifying Malaysian medium of food. Mere mention of specific dishes (chutneys, appam) brings us into the sensory experience, and his characters take clear comfort and pleasure in Ipoh coffee, kaya and other everyday joys. Food's central role in Malaysian life is well rooted here.

Marriage and Mutton Curry is a fond view of modern Malaysia, its title constantly reminding us just how relations are cooking: the marriage of ingredients in the slow cooker of daily life, if you'll pardon the extended metaphor.

Publisher: Epigram, Singapore.



Lawrence Pettener

[Based on a review of this book in Star2, October 7, 2018.]

Sharpened Word – 'Marriage and Mutton Curry'. January 26 (Saturday), 2pm-5pm at 22 Hale Street, 22-24 Jalan Tun Sambanthan, Ipoh. Entrance by donation. For details and updates visit www.facebook.com/sharpenedword.kinta.

Ordinary Women, Extraordinary Lives

Collectively launched by citizens through a butterfly-effect creation in November, the 332-page book titled, "Ordinary Women, Extraordinary Lives. (OWEL) Everyday Stories of Inspirational Women" honours the lives of women who have shaped us and celebrates their strength and unconditional, unshaken love.

The OWEL's launch press release describes it as: "the gripping anthology of 29 untold stories and a poem are written by 30 women and men who collectively, paint a picture of what life was like for most women spanning across the 19th, 20th and 21st century in Malaysia. Through these accounts, it is hoped that more people will have a deeper appreciation of the lives of ordinary women beyond their common duties of being mother and homemaker."

"From courageous housewives battling poverty and patriarchy to career women juggling multiple extra-family responsibilities, this book is a testament to the fortitude and humility of these everyday heroines," it adds.

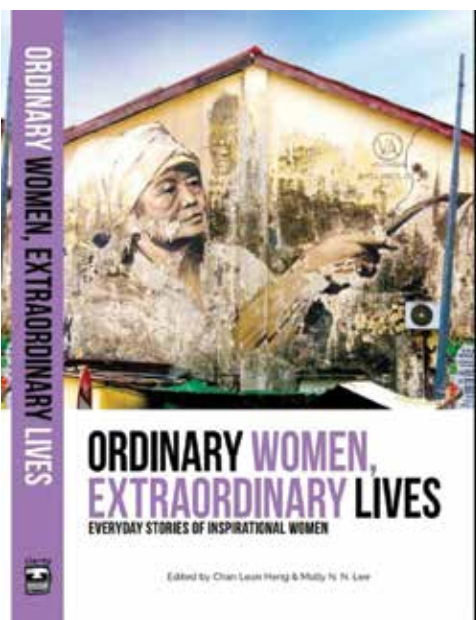
A not-for-profit initiative of ordinary citizens, the book is a labour of love and conviction without any funding support.

Retailing at RM45 (paperback) at bookstores, readers can get it at the price of RM30 (early bird discount) when ordered directly from Chan Lean Heng and Molly N.N. Lee, editors of the book, by calling 012 987 3130 or email owel.malaysia@gmail.com. Price does not include shipping while payment can be done before or upon delivery.

Plus, one can opt to sponsor copies to over 2450 school libraries, related institutions and welfare homes or orphanages in Malaysia to open up the hearts and minds, especially of the younger generation. Priced at RM30 per copy, your sponsorship will be tastefully stamped in the book.

For further information please visit www.facebook.com/owel.my

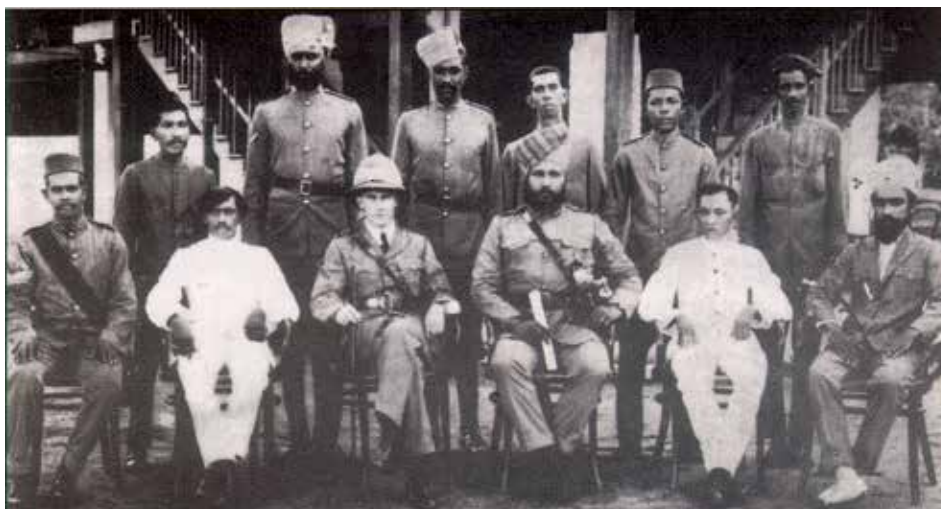
Mei Kuan



Nostalgia

By Ian Anderson

Sikhs and the Perak Police Force



In 1872, Larut was administered by the Orang Kaya Mentri of Larut, Dato' Ngah Ibrahim, a rival of Raja Abdullah. His administration had suffered from rivalry between the Ghee Hin and Hai San Chinese Secret Societies who, from 1861, had been fighting over choice mining lands. This period (1861 to 1874) is known as the Larut Wars. The situation got so bad that, even with his own army of 200 armed Malays, he could not maintain control of his territory. Consequently in 1873, he asked Captain Speedy, Superintendent of Penang Police, to come to Perak and establish a professional police force.

Speedy resigned from Penang that year and enlisted 110 retired British Indian Army Sepoys (soldiers) from Calcutta and brought them direct to Larut. The majority were Sikhs. Immediately they started to restore order in the area, but in January 1874 the Perak Engagement Treaty was signed between Sir Andrew Clarke and Raja Abdullah. Raja Abdullah became Sultan of Perak, the Mentri lost his independence, Speedy's Sepoys were discharged and Speedy was appointed Assistant British Resident.

In his new role Speedy re-enlisted selected volunteers from his original force, again mainly Sikhs, and formed what was effectively the first Perak police force, known as "The Resident's Guards. This was a tough, professional, armed force, which soon earned credibility as they enforced law and order in Larut. In 1874 they numbered 25 Sikhs as the Residency Guard and around 160 Punjabi, Malay and Chinese police.

By 1877 the force had developed into what had become known as the "Perak Armed Police", commanded by Captain Swinburn, with a Residents Guard of 200 Sikhs from Speed's original Force and 500 others, mostly Malays. Gradually, the administrative and military duties separated which led the formation, in 1884, of a specialist armed force, "The First Battalion Perak Sikhs" which in turn led to the formation, in 1896, of the "Malay States Guides", formed by Sikhs from across the newly agreed Federation. Those of the Perak Sikhs who were not absorbed into the new regiment became the Sultan of Perak's bodyguard, while many other Sikhs remained in the police stations, just as they do today.

Adapted from www.ipohworld.org

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LETTERS

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

How I Lost Money in Planting Orchids

My purpose of writing this lesson is to help investors. Investors must examine all the factors that can affect the bottom line before they invest. Remember all business ventures have risk.

Although I came from a poor family, I was quite clever to get a Government scholarship to study civil engineering in KL Technical College in 1953 which is currently known as UTM. After four years, I graduated with a diploma which was not recognised as an Engineer. I had to work and study for another three years to become a Chartered Civil Engineer UK.

Among all the business ventures, my most successful were the founding of Mudajaya, Gamuda and IJM Corporation Bhd which has a market cap of about RM 12 billion. Fortunately, I only had one business failure that is planting orchids.

Although I came from a poor family, I always like flowers and music without which life can be very monotonous and boring. When I started working as an engineer in 1957 for the government my salary was only RM760 per month. Yet, every month I would buy one Vanda orchid plant as shown below for enjoyment and investment. The Vanda orchid plant can produce one or two small plants after two or three years. After three years, the small plant will grow to produce flowers which is similar with the parent plant.

However, I can cross breed by putting the pollens from one plant onto the stigma of another plant. After about one year a fruit is formed and its seeds can be grown to produce plants and flowers after another three years. But all the flowers are not the same as the parents, some are beautiful and some are not.

About 50 years ago, the Thais could produce flowers as beautiful as the parent plant by tissue culture. To cut the story short, I would not describe the technical details of tissue



culture.

The Thais started selling flowering size white dendrobium plants at RM3 each. Each plant could produce five sprays of flowers per year and every three years each plant could grow to become two plants. Wah! What a lucrative business?

You can see these dendrobium plants below from my garden.

If I bought one plant at RM3 and each plant produced five sprays which could be sold at RM1 per spray. Moreover, each plant could become two plants after three years. It is impossible to find another more profitable business investment.

I immediately bought a piece of land of about two acres and constructed all the infrastructures such as water pumps, auto spray of fertilisers and fungicides, etc. I registered a company called Dendrops Sdn Bhd.

I imported about 500 dendrobium plants from Bangkok and employed about 10 workers. Yes, I could produce a lot of flowers. The biggest buyers of white dendrobiums were the Japanese. Unfortunately, I could not find air cargo space to export my orchids. At that time there were only one daily flight from KL to Tokyo and all the cargo space were completely booked by the computer-chip companies. My one box of 1000 sprays of flowers would cost only RM1000. But one box of computer chips of the equivalent size would cost a few hundreds thousand ringgit. The only reason I lost money is because I could not find cargo space to send my products.

Lesson: I had the necessary capital, I had the know how to produce and I knew which was the best export market. But I did not know the necessity of transport of my products.

Koon Yew Yin

The Tragic Case of the Century-old MGS Rain Tree

Some six months ago, the Methodist Girls' School's iconic century-old rain tree suffered grave and irreparable damage when there was an attempt to illegally fell the tree, to make way for the construction of a multi-purpose hall.

This brought about public outcry and swift intervention by our local MP and the local authority who issued a stop-work order and cordoned off the tree.

Subsequently, all efforts in the form of letters and petitions to reach out to members of the school board and Methodist Education Council for dialogue were unsuccessful. A meeting was eventually set up by our local MP (Wong Kah Woh) in late October 2018 to help break the impasse and work towards resolution.

At the meeting, chairman of the school board (Dr Ting Cheh Sing) and the architect (Ar. Ding Poi Kooi) revealed their proposal to have the tree relocated. They were adamant that re-drawing of building plans to accommodate the tree was out of the question.

In working towards a compromise and in the presence of Wong as well as Clr Wong Kar Keat and Clr Steven Wong, we the alumni were prepared to accept relocation of the tree to a different site at the school field so that a win-win situation would be achieved; the school could carry on with its building plans unchanged and the tree could be preserved. We were assured that the board had engaged qualified professional(s) to ensure the relocation was feasible and who had assured that there was "90% chance of survival" for the tree post-relocation. We requested for a detailed assessment and proposal from the Board's arborist to be submitted for our perusal, which was then duly agreed.

However, contrary to the agreement aforesaid, barely two weeks later, namely, around 3 pm on Friday, November 9, 2018, to our shock and horror, Dr Ting Cheh Sing was reported to be on site actively instructing and overseeing the relocation of the tree!

Our alumnus and Clr Steven Tiw rushed there and on arrival discovered that a backhoe had been brought in and had trenched around the base of the tree; some roots of the tree had been damaged by the backhoe whilst labourers were in the midst of crudely chain sawing other roots. We were told that they (the workers) were instructed to cut off the roots at 1.5m from the base of the trunk, in readiness for it to be hoisted by a crane the following day and moved to a freshly dug hole at another part of the school field.

Dr Ting, when confronted, was unable to produce any form of written approval from Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh (MBI) (which he claimed to be in possession of) and promptly left the site. When reminded that he was to furnish his arborist's report for our perusal, he denied such agreement and insisted he had the approval to relocate the tree, under supervision of his arborist (no arborist was present). A quick telephone call to Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh by Clr Steven Tiw established that indeed no approval had been granted. MBI then sent personnel from its enforcement team and once again cordoned off the tree.

The tree since then has been left unattended – damaged, partly-sawn roots and all.

Just as before, subsequent written communication to the school board and Methodist Education Council to seek answers and emergency care for the tree were unanswered.

We have since engaged an arborist to assess the case of the tree, and the key findings were:

1. Topping the canopy and cutting of the roots had not been done in accordance with accepted guidelines.
2. The damage inflicted onto a once healthy century-old tree is irreparable, and any further attempts to relocate the tree would leave the tree with low chance of survival.
3. Tree relocation exercise according to acceptable guidelines, should have been incorporated at planning stage, as preparation and trenching in stages requires a time frame of up to a year, under close supervision of a certified arborist.
4. The proposed receptor site is unsuitable.
5. Immediate measures to treat and preserve the tree is recommended.

This tragic case of the MGS rain tree raises pertinent points that we hope that the media would help highlight to aid our cause:

1. MBI issued two letters to warn of consequences, and yet the school board and Methodist Education Council chose to ignore them. How could this brazen behaviour of ignoring the authorities and flouting the law (twice!) be condoned?
2. As an educational institution, where lies the morals and accountability in exercising such poor behaviour that is unlawful in nature and could result in fine of thousands of ringgit?
3. In keeping silent and totally ignoring the pleas and letters to them, is the Methodist

My Expectations for 2019

2019 marks a 10-year anniversary of collecting garbage at the front gate.

This policy has given rise to uncontrolled garbage and many illegal dump sites. Echo has published numerous articles and letters regarding rubbish in Ipoh, often blaming residents in Ipoh.

What they have forgotten is that this was not the case before collection of garbage at front gate was implemented 10 years ago. I hope the policy will reverse this year. This is my expectation for 2019 for the following reasons:

There was a change in government twice in Perak. Almost all state excos are new with a new Menteri Besar. The Mayor of Ipoh has also changed a few times since the policy was implemented. The policy was not implemented by current excos and the Mayor, thus, there is no reason why the policy can't be reversed.

The reason for implementing such a policy was to follow the example in advanced countries. However, after 10 years, we know it doesn't work in Malaysia. In Malaysia, nobody wants their front gate to have garbage. "Bad Feng Shui" for some Chinese, but other races also dislike garbage at their front gate. Those who don't mind also risk their front gate becoming an illegal dump site. If any road has a vacant house. Then that house's front gate becomes an illegal dump site. If there is none, people will drive to an illegal dump site elsewhere to throw their rubbish. To them it is okay if the government insists on collecting garbage at the front gate, as long as it is NOT their front gate.

When the government implemented the policy, they claimed that it was for the welfare of the garbage collector, to make their life easier with no need to drive into the back lane. Those who oppose would be attacked by cyber troopers and labelled inconsiderate to garbage collectors. Ten years down the road, I doubt if the life of garbage collectors have become any easier with never ending 'gotong-royong' every other month, if not every other week.

Wrong KPI. The KPI should be cleanliness of Ipoh. Not how efficient they collect the garbage. Yes, it is more efficient to collect rubbish from the front gate. Yes, it is more efficient to group the rubbish so that the lorry is not required to stop so many times. But does Ipoh look clean? If you drive along Persiaran Shatin, especially the portion between SK Kampung Pasir Puteh, you will see every exit of back lanes, which is at the main road, have illegal rubbish dump sites. Shouldn't that rubbish, if uncollected, remain at the back lane? KPI should include reduction in complaints received, or number of articles, letters regarding rubbish received.

Increase enforcement by encouraging people to report on those who throw into illegal dumping sites, does not work.

Requesting the developer to do more would increase costs and such costs would be passed back to the consumer.

Why not just revert back to the old policy, which worked previously. And it is zero cost to the housing developer and would not increase the price of houses. A simple reversing of policy would make the problem evaporate, if implemented carefully, with minimum cost.

Garbage collectors will no longer be required to attend gotong-royong that frequently, thus, it benefits garbage collectors also.

Peter Chen

Council showing that they are unfazed by the board's brazen acts of breaching the law and the orders of MBI?

4. A century-old tree is a rarity that is protected under the law, and in prosecuting according to the rule of law in this case may set an example or act as deterrent in the interest of the public.
5. In the new era of Malaysia Baru, transparency and accountability is the way forward, and it would be a shame to allow this case to go the way of the many wrongs that were swept under the carpet and forgotten, only to be repeated again (which was exactly the case, where a second unlawful act (attempted re-location) was committed to cover the first unlawful act (attempted felling).

At this juncture, it is understood that the school board is still adamant in having the tree relocated despite the condition that it has been reduced to due to repeated abuse.

Linda Hanim Mustaffa
(The Alumni of Methodist Girls' School Ipoh)



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HAPPENINGS

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ARTS & CULTURE

SHARPENED WORD – ‘MARRIAGE AND MUTTON CURRY’. JANUARY 26 (Saturday), 2pm-5pm at 22 Hale Street, 22-24 Jalan Tun Sambanthan, Ipoh. Entrance by donation. For details and updates visit www.facebook.com/sharpenedword.kinta.

CHILDREN MUSIC & FINANCIAL EDUCATION WORKSHOPS by Jsic Music & Little Tauke on JANUARY 19 to 20 at Methodist Girls' Primary School (MGPS). A charity event in aid of MGPS PIBG fund for needy students. Featuring Emiko Kaneko, early childhood music specialist from Fukuo-ka, Japan. Each session limited to 30 participants. Seat reservation or enquiries: **011 2611 9568**.

COMMUNITY

SEMINAR: TRANSFORMING YOURSELF FOR YOUR FUTURE. FEBRUARY 9, 2pm-3.30pm at YMCA Ipoh. In this seminar, learn tips on how to transform yourself. Registration is limited to the first 20 people. Free admission and open to young working adults. Register online: <http://bit.ly/dmfree2> or contact Debugging Minds at **013 734 5008**.

KPJ IPOH SPECIALIST HOSPITAL ANTENATAL CLASSES. JANUARY 19, MARCH 16, MAY 18 (Mandarin), JULY 20, SEPTEMBER 21, NOVEMBER 16 (Mandarin), 1pm-5pm at 5th Floor, Dewan Anugerah, KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital. Goodies for participants. Contact Customer Service at **05 240 8777 ext. 8111** for enquiries.

ALPHA @ CGMC (For Non-Muslims only). FEBRUARY 24 to MAY 26, 2019 (every Sunday), 1pm-3pm at Canning Garden Methodist Church, 23 Jalan Keliling, Canning Garden, 31400 Ipoh. An opportunity to explore the meaning of life and faith through a series of talks in an open and friendly setting. Starts with lunch. For further information, call **05 546 2023** or email: cgmcpoh@gmail.com.

FREE YOGA CLASSES. Wednesdays 7pm-8.15pm: meditation & talk on Vethathiri Philosophy by Dr R.M. Muthiah (Asst. Prof. in Yoga for Human Excellence); Fridays 6pm-7pm: Vethathiri simplified holistic exercises in Tamil & English; 7.15pm-8.15pm: Vethathiri Simplified holistic exercises in English; Saturdays 4.30pm-6pm: Hatha Yoga classes for children (7-15 years old) with Mr Yoganathan Periyasamy. At **R.M. YOGA & MEDITATION CENTRE, 68 Jalan Tun Abdul Razak, 30100 Ipoh**. For further enquiry, contact Ms Yoges Muthiah **016 544 6855** or Dr Muthiah **012 591 4493**. Preferably via WhatsApp.

Kechara Earth Project. LET'S RECYCLE FOR GREENER EARTH. EVERY 4TH SUNDAY of the month, 9.30am-11.30am in front of Ipoh Garden Post Office, Jalan Dato Lau Pak Khuan, Ipoh Garden, 31400 Ipoh. Carton boxes, paper, metal/aluminium, electronic equipment, plastics, light bulbs, batteries and used clothes. Funds are channeled towards Kechara Food Bank that serves the urban poor and underprivileged community in Ipoh. For more details, contact: **016 532 8309**

(Mr So) or **012 522 3200** (Ms Yee Mun).

EDUCATION

UTP ANNUAL CAREER FAIR 2019. JANUARY 29 & 30, 2019, from 9am onwards at Chancellor Complex, Universiti Teknologi Petronas, 32610 Seri Iskandar, Perak. The major objective of TEC is to provide exposure of corporate companies to students. Students will be able to submit their resume and attend walk-in interviews. Open to the public of all ages. For more information, go to website: tec.utp.edu.my; Facebook: [tec.utp](https://www.facebook.com/tec.utp); Instagram: [@tec.utp](https://www.instagram.com/tec.utp); Twitter: [@tec.utp](https://twitter.com/tec.utp).

SUNWAY COLLEGE IPOH WEEKEND COUNSELLING SESSION. Calling all SPM, STPM, O-Level & UEC school leavers. Come and learn more about various Diploma programmes ranging from Business, Information System, Entrepreneurship, Graphic design and Interior design. A pathway to own your dual degree with our Foundation in Arts programme. Fast track to earn your Professional Accounting Qualifications (CAT/ACCA) with us, ACCA Platinum Approved Learning Partner. We are open every day from Monday to Friday (8.30am-5.30pm) and every Saturday (10am-4pm). Alternatively you can email: infoipoh@sunway.edu.my or Whatsapp us at **019 368 1096**.

MEDICAL

PERAK MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS' SOCIETY will be organising a Mentor-Mentee programme for graduate doctors awaiting houseman posting on JANUARY 20 (Sunday), 11am at KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital (Bilik Cemerlang, Level 2). All graduate doctors are invited while practising doctors can participate as mentors. Enquiries: Dr Yee Meng Kheong **017 578 4530** or Dr Amarjeet Kaur **012 522 6662**.

FORUM ON "ESCAPE OBESITY" by Continuous Learning and Sharing Society Kinta. JANUARY 19, 12pm to 5pm at the YMCA main hall. There will be free Body Mass Index (BMI) tests with door gifts for participants. Glucose check will be performed for those who are in the danger BMI zone. Tests done by Greentown Ministry of Health Clinic. Enquiries: **016 563 9609**.

IMPORTANT

REPORT BULLYING. All schools in Malaysia have an Anti-bullying Guideline. Anti-bullying hotline: Talian Aduan Disiplin **1800-88-4774** or email adudisiplin@moe.gov.my. You can also call **15999 Childline** to report bullying.