

Vocational Skills Better for the Future?

By A. Jeyaraj, Ivana Qartika & Afiqah Rafael

Sixty-five per cent of children entering primary school will end up in jobs that do not yet exist, reveals the World Economic Forum. The result is a proliferation of new, non-traditional education options.

Yet too often, degrees are still thought of as lifelong stamps of professional competency and parents still push their children to acquire degrees.

We need new routes to success and hope. Parents need to know that more and more companies no longer require a degree, including tech giants like Apple, IBM and Google. “Increasingly,” Glassdoor reported, “there are many companies offering well-paying jobs to those with non-traditional education or a high-school diploma.”

Technological advancements will be increasing in the future and while parents may wish to have their offspring lead the innovations with high academic qualifications, what they are forgetting is that no matter what new inventions come into the world, they all require maintenance and servicing and vocational studies provide exactly that and these vocational skills will be in high demand in the future.

FULL STORY ON PAGES 2 & 6



A homely retreat like no other, Labu Kubong Homestay, located at Lubuk Merbau, Kuala Kangsar, promises a unique and memorable experience.

The beauty of its natural greenery has been acknowledged by many to be similar to the famous Kundasang Homestay in Sabah.

The lush paddy fields held against the backdrop of undulating hills of the nearby Bintang Range will make any harried city dweller forget their worries – for a while at least.

Located about 40km north of Ipoh and 5km from the Royal Town of Kuala Kangsar, Labu Kubong Homestay has the honour of being adjudged the best homestay in Perak and Malaysia in 2017.

Running on the theme “Jom Balik Kampung” (Let’s Return to Village), guests get to experience, firsthand, a typical Malay village lifestyle filled with traditional Malay culture and traditions.

A total of 20 homestays and four kampung stays are available for hire. They come complete with foster families with their smiles to welcome all and sundry.

A variety of activities are available for the discerning. They include traditional games, crafts, silat (martial art), making of bedak sejuk (rice face powder), kuih-muih (tittbits) and kelulut (stingless bees) honey and others.

Visitors get a ride on a motorised trolley which can take 10 people for a brief tour of the village. You will be able to see the village activities up close and take Instagram-worthy shots at every stop.

Another highlight not to be missed is lunch at the crystal-clear Chempias River. You get to dine on tables and chairs placed in the shallow flowing waters.

You are in for a treat if you drop by during fruit season. Local fruits like durian, mangosteen and rambutan are for the taking.

This is the gateway to paradise that you long for.

To find out more on the packages, call Miss Alin at +60 13 629 8534 or check out the following social media handles:

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Instagram: [Homestay Labu Kubong Official](https://www.instagram.com/homestaylabukubong)

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**Labu Kubong
Homestay**
–Paradise Lost



Technical and vocational education to be given importance

The government too is promoting and emphasising the importance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The perception that TVET is only for students who do not excel in their studies has completely changed today. TVET is relevant as it involves hands-on job training and provides knowledge and skills for employment. We need highly skilled workers.

It has often been noted that students and their parents regard TVET as an inferior educational pathway, 'dead-end' and for the academically challenged. However, young job seekers and workers consider TVET as a useful qualification for getting a good job.

Technical and vocational education must be given the same importance as mainstream education. Create more career pathways and more opportunities for TVET students to further improve themselves. We need both evergreen careers like doctors, academia and other professionals and a well-trained technical workforce to propel the country to developed status.

Free Vocational Training

Ipoh Echo visited a number of institutions that offer free vocational skills training courses for all Malaysians. The students pay incidental costs for food and transport. The staff in a number of institutions said that they have difficulty in recruiting students and they organise roadshows and give talks in school. Some of the courses are not conducted due to lack of students.

The workshops are well equipped and some of the machinery used are the same as those used in the relevant industries. The training given is based on the needs of the industries and students can quickly assimilate into the workforce. There is no problem of getting jobs after completion of courses or students can start their own business.

The certificates issued by the institutions are recognised by the government.

Perak Entrepreneur & Skills Development Centre (PESDC)

PESDC was set up in 1993 to provide a total learning solution for the industries and acts as a platform to facilitate the promotion of Technical and Management Skills for occupational competence. The centre has been approved by the Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF) under the Ministry of Human Resources as an Approved Training Provider.

PESDC provides six months to one-year training for PT3 and SPM students as well as for diploma graduates. It also conducts upgrading and re-skilling courses.

The courses provided are on Automation, Welding, Automotive, Polymer, Machining, Optics & Optoelectronics, Contemporary Broadband, Tooling Design and Safety and Health.

Visvanathan a/l Paranelloo, Manager, Admin & IT informed that the courses are offered free and hostel cost is subsidised and students have to provide their own transportation and pay for their food. About 200 students are attending courses.

Address: PESDC Training Complex, Jalan Johan 2/2, Kawasan Perindustrian Pengkalen 2, 31550 Pusing. Tel: 05 366 8869.



Institut Latihan Perindustrian Ipoh (ILP)

ILP offers full-time and part-time courses for students who have completed SPM. The courses are for two years and students can attend certificate or diploma courses.

The courses offered are Electrical Technology, Welding, Fabrication of Steel Structure, AutoCAD, Air-condition Servicing, Foundry Technology and Ceramic Technology.

The students are given a monthly allowance of RM100. They get free accommodation and lunch. The only thing the students pay for is Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which is a one-time payment.

Currently, there are about 500 students and there are two intakes. For January intake students should apply through Jabatan Tenaga Manusia (JTM) and for July intake, students should apply through UPU (Unit Pengambilan Universiti).

Companies send their workers to the institute to upgrade their skills. People with



working experience attend courses to get a certification.

Address: Kawasan Perindustrian Taman Meru, 30020 Jelapang. Tel: 05 527 7777.

Kolej Vokasional Lebu Cator (KVLC)

KVLC offers certificate and diploma courses in civil engineering, welding, business management and industrial machining. Students who have completed PT3 and SPM can apply for the courses.

Presently, there are about 500 students and they only pay a subscription to the Parents Teacher Association. There is hostel accommodation for 200 students and preference is given to students from the B40 group. Students pay a nominal sum of RM1 per day.

After completion about 70% of students join the job market, 20% continue further studies and 10% set up their own business.

Address: Kolej Vokasional Lebu Cator, 30450 Ipoh. Tel: 05 254 9151.

Kolej Vokasional Ipoh (KVI)

KVI was opened in 1973 and offers certificate and diploma courses in Construction Technology, Air Conditioning, Banking, Marketing and Computer System Network. Students who have completed PT3 and SPM can apply for certificate and diploma courses. Students are issued the Malaysian Skills Certificate (SKM) which is nationally recognised by the government.

Currently, 360 students are pursuing their studies here. Hostel accommodation is free, but students have to pay for their food.

Address: Persiaran Brash, 31400 Ipoh Tel: 05 547 7405.

Perak Human Capital Development Centre (PHCDC)

PHCDC provides courses in Automotive Technology and Automation at their centre in Meru Raya. Aziratul Famieza, Training & Development Executive, said that the centre was opened in 2017 and is not well known and they conduct roadshows to recruit students. Courses are conducted when they have an adequate number of students.

They admit students who are between 16 to 45 years. The courses last between 6 months and one year. Except for Automation Level 3, the other courses are free.

Address: PT228322, Bandar Meru Raya, Off Jalan Jelapang, 30029 Ipoh. Tel: 05 525 1472.

GIATMARA, Tambun

GIATMARA was set up in 1986 and has a centre in every parliamentary constituency and each centre offers different courses.

The centre in Tambun offers courses in Motorcycle Maintenance, Building Technology and Electrical Wiring. The courses are for a duration of six months to one year. PT3 and SPM students can apply.

About 20 motorcycles with logo MOBILEPRENEUR were parked along the corridor; these would be given to graduate students so that they can go to the site and do maintenance work. There are 40 students in the centre.

GIATMARA offers 66 courses in 24 centres in Perak.

Address: Lot 157835, Mile 7½ Jalan Tambun. Tel: 05 549 9582.



Dr Camille Koppen, who resides sporadically with her mother in Ipoh, is CEO and founder of Brightwings and teaches future skills to students (including at Oxford University) and global organisations.

"The rate at which companies are adopting AI (artificial intelligence) and automation technologies are accelerating, and technology is very much already making changes to how we work and the types of skills and roles that companies are now recruiting for. Most large global companies are already at least a few years into their journey of adopting AI – they are very much in the mindset that they need to innovate and continuously adapt in order to survive. We need to do the same for our children.

Continued on page 6

IT'S A MATTER OF PERCEPTION

The endless complaints about our electric train service and how interns are being misemployed have much to do with perception.

ETS – Never Punctual

My wife had to reschedule her appointment at Tuanku Mizan Armed Forces Hospital in Wangsa Maju, Kuala Lumpur, as her lingering viral fever did not seem to subside. After much posturing she was on the Electric Train Service (ETS) train, departing Ipoh Railway station at 8.30am on Monday, July 22. She did not suspect anything untoward to happen as past journeys between Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur had been smooth and uneventful. But unbeknownst to her, her trouble was just about to begin.

Somewhere after Serendah, the train came to a halt to make way for an oncoming train heading up north. After a half-hour delay, the train continued only to stop once again in the middle of nowhere. Passengers were puzzled, as no announcements were forthcoming over the public address system. The train remained stationary on the tracks for almost an hour before it finally moved on. The reason for the delay, apparently, was due to ongoing clearance works caused by a cargo train derailment earlier.

Meanwhile, my son got in touch with his acquaintance, Mohd Rani Hashim, CEO of KTM to complain about the hitch. He requested that the train drop his mother at the Sungei Buloh station so our daughter-in-law could pick her up there. He mentioned about the lack of communication on the train. Mohd Rani apologised and things were set in motion, as requested.

All said and done, the poor woman finally disembarked at the said station and was driven to the hospital in Wangsa Maju, post haste. She reached her destination at 1.45pm. The reception, forewarned of the delay, got her to see the specialist much later than was expected.

Her medical appointment may just be a simple missed opportunity but what about those who have a connecting flight to catch or more pressing matters to attend to?

The problem is not something new as the much-vaunted ETS has several close calls in the past. I recall a friend who was stranded in his coach for over two hours in between Tapah and Batu Gajah without rhyme or reason. The stranded passengers were eventually transferred to Ipoh by buses. There was neither a refund nor a formal apology from the operator, Keretapi Tanah Melayu. Everyone went home with an unpleasant experience to relate to friends and loved ones.

Commuters who use the electric train service frequently have a story to tell, perhaps only me. I made a promise to myself ages ago that until KTM gets it act together I will not jump on a train anywhere in the country. If only those responsible for the management of our trains take a leaf from the Japanese or Australians, things would not have been what they are today.

Why I single out the Japanese and Australians? Well, I have been on their trains and the efficiency is simply superb, especially when it comes to scheduling and communication. Their trains arrive at their destinations on the dot and delays are counted by the seconds not hours like it is here. Passengers are never left in limbo, as every communicable message is transmitted either over the public address system or electronically. That is efficiency for you. That is what First World mentality is about. We, unfortunately, are forever stuck in the Third World mode.

Interns Improperly Employed

The employment of interns, in both public and private sectors, was hotly debated recently. Youth and Sports Minister, Syed Saddiq, in a press statement on Wednesday, July 14, argued that students, undergoing industrial training (internship) with the government, should be paid an allowance. The quantum will be decided, inter alia.

The same requirement will be extended to the private sector too. The impression most tend to accept as true is interns do virtually nothing while on industrial training in government agencies other than running errands, making coffee and photocopying documents. In short, they do not do what they are being trained to do.

Ipoh Echo is a favourite destination for students majoring in Journalism and the English Language from institutions such as Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). We even received students from Sultan Idris Education University, Tanjong Malim, and lately from Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang.

They come with plenty of expectations wanting to put into practice what they have learned in their universities. The quality, I must admit, ranges from low to mediocre. There are the good ones but, frankly speaking, the bad far outstrips the good. Out of ten, only two make the grade.

When we first started we took as many as we could. The number varies each year depending on the availability of students. However, over the years we have gotten wise and have made selection a prerequisite.

It comes in the form of a simple written and oral test conducted during an interview. By doing so we managed to separate the wheat from the chaff, literally. Only the best is selected to undergo an internship for the designated period of time. This saves us the trouble of having to dismiss them mid-way through industrial training.

Yes, we pay them an allowance ranging in amount between RM300 and RM500. The question I, normally, pose is, why must employers pay when these students are undergoing training and the brief internship period is a continuation of their lecture room



From The Editor's Desk

By Fathol Zaman Bukhari



studies? Perhaps Minister Saddiq should take this into consideration before making his proposal a law.

The question as to whether the interns are being misemployed while on training is a matter of conjecture. They may be tasked to run errands, make coffee and spend a considerable amount of time at the Xerox machine to photocopy documents. This never happened in Ipoh Echo. Our interns are meaningfully employed. They do what the seasoned reporters do – chasing for news items on a daily basis. They are being supervised by a senior reporter and is answerable to the editor.

Perception has a way of influencing our thinking. The endless complaints

about electric train service and how interns are being misemployed have much to do with perception. No one, in the right frame of mind, will say that our train service is on par with Japan Railways Group or V/Line in Victoria, Australia. We have been conditioned to think negatively due to a bad experience.

EYE HEALTH – EYELID MYOKIMIA

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

Myokimia of the eyelid is a term for involuntary spasm or twitching of the eyelid. Twitching of the eyelids and eyelid spasms are quite common. It may occur in either upper or lower eyelid but most often in the lower one, although sometimes the upper eyelid may also be involved. This is an annoying problem when it happens.

Most eyelid twitches are MINOR and not dangerous. Thankfully, they also do not last for very long, although rarely, sometimes it may last for a few months. The good thing is that the eyelid spasm is often so subtle that people around us do not even notice that someone has an eyelid twitch. The MORE SERIOUS or problematic form of eyelid twitching is called blepharospasm or hemifacial spasm. These more serious forms of eyelid twitching occur less often. When it does occur, it may warrant further testing and investigation.

Some of the possible causes of eyelid twitching are as follows:

- Stress-induced
- Eye fatigue
- Caffeine intake
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Alcohol consumption
- General fatigue

Identifying the cause for the eyelid twitching helps us to handle the treatment. Often it is just a matter of setting something right. The more serious varieties of twitching, however, may be a part of a nerve condition and may need to be investigated.

STRESS:

Mankind is now living in possibly the most stressful era of time. We are often reminded that "life is not a bed of roses." The stresses of everyday life with regard to job stresses, health conditions and emotional issues are common problems that one may have to face. The stresses of life have often been identified as underlying causes for various health problems ranging from constipation, depression, hypertension, menstrual irregularities, decreased immunity and even precipitating heart attacks that may lead to death. We all react to stress differently. The response to stress may result in a major illness as mentioned above or just a simple annoying eyelid twitch. If the cause for the eyelid twitch has been identified as stress-induced, then concerted efforts should be taken to address it, the scope of which is beyond this article.

CAFFEINE:



Caffeine is a psychoactive stimulant drug. Caffeine was first discovered by a German chemist, Friedrich Ferdinand in 1819. Caffeine is found not only in coffee but also in some leaves, beans and fruits of some plants. Believe it or not, it can actually act as a natural pesticide that kills some insects that feed on the caffeine-containing plants. Caffeine is a stimulant that restores alertness and postpones drowsiness.

It enhances the effect of the stress we experience. Additionally, caffeine also increases blood pressure and so caffeine and stress do work synergistically in a negative sense. If you do have an annoying eyelid twitch, it would be worth a try cutting-back on caffeinated drinks such as coffee, tea, soft-drinks, and energy drinks. The problem often is that too many of us are in some sense "addicted" to caffeine and claim to not be able to function without that morning cup of coffee!

More on Eyelid Twitch in the next issue of the Ipoh Echo.

For more information, call Gill Eye Specialist Centre at Hospital Fatimah (05-5455582) or email gilleyecentre@dr.com



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Targets of Industrialists and State

The Orang Asli (OA) of Peninsular Malaysia and the indigenous people Sabah and Sarawak are the forgotten inhabitants of Malaysia. People, on the pretext of helping them, take advantage of them.

For centuries, they lived in isolation in the jungles but their communities along the jungle fringes faced constant persecution. It has been documented, in history books that in the 18th and 19th centuries, warring Malays invaded their villages to kidnap their women and children for slavery. This stopped when the British intervened.

During the Malayan Emergency, the OA helped track down communist insurgents and in 1954, the Aboriginal Peoples Act was passed to protect them and their lands. With the formation of Malaysia, a programme of integration and assimilation began in 1961. Unfortunately, the Act only covered certain ground rules, and the tendency was to regard the OA as wards of the state.

The Act failed to recognise the rights to their own land. With a failure to identify their rights, successive administrations helped to erode the OA culture, identity and way of life.

State authorities continue to treat the OA as an inconvenience, herding them into settlements, and ignoring their welfare. This gave rise to dissatisfaction about land possession, displacement, resettlement and even choice of crops for cultivation.

On protected forest/parkland, the state authorities dictate the activities which may be permitted. An NGO for OA, on condition of anonymity, said, "Hunting is forbidden, fishing is not allowed and cultivation of crops is subject to the park authorities scrutiny."

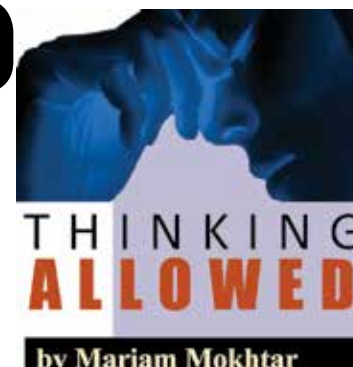
Recently, we read about a form of social engineering being practised in OA communities. Their definitive social structure is dismantled and conversions to Islam are encouraged. Many complained that their identity cards had "Islam" on them although they were not Muslims.

Following the latest expose of the mysterious OA deaths in Kelantan, it was alleged that birth control medication was given to OA mothers. The Ministry of Health has denied this. But how does one explain the scores of women who were given family planning and birth control medication, without them being told of the consequences?

The stand-off between the Temiars of northern Perak, and the state, in February, is a case in point.

The authorities are only concerned for the big-time players. They failed to consider the destruction of the environment and the cessation of the way of life of the Orang Asli.

The OA's way of life does not destroy the jungles. They hunt and fish only for their immediate needs. There is no waste, as they share their



hunting spoils with other families. They forage and, where possible, cultivate suitable crops. The pristine rivers were their source of water for drinking and washing.

The Perak MB said that jobs would be lost if logging were to cease. The annual cutting down of trees was done in accordance with the annual cut ration, authorised by the National Land Council.

What about the way of life of the OA? Once the loggers are allowed onto OA ancestral lands, trees will be felled.

The loss of trees will mean that animals will leave the area. Animals may live off certain fruits and plants. If these are destroyed, the animals will be deprived of a food source. When the animals move away, how will the OA survive?

Once the big trees have been felled, not just for timber, but for paper and the pulping industry, the vegetation will be cleared for the next big environmental calamity – oil palm cultivation.

Politicians have suggested that the OA start an industry weaving baskets and mats, but they forget that rattan grows in the jungle and not in oil palm plantations. The OA would have to travel miles into the interior to harvest the rattan to make rattan baskets.

How do the authorities expect the OA to market their products when there are no roads or bridges to their remote villages? The welfare of the OA is being overlooked because logging is more lucrative. Price of logging permits is never revealed. Why is this so?

The OA are not the only people being let down. No effort is made to stop sand mining in the seas off the coast of Perak. An estimated 190 million cubic metres of sand will be mined to build three artificial islands in Penang.

The state government should be mindful of the environmental degradation caused by sand mining. Mudflats and beach erosion will destroy turtle nesting areas, prawn and fish habitats.

Like the OA, the 9000 fishermen in Perak will have to say goodbye to their way of life and livelihood, because sand mining and logging are more profitable.

Community



Helping The Needy

The Perak Media Sports Club donated RM3636 to Titian Abadi Islamic Old Folks Home on Thursday, July 11. During the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, an amount of RM1 from their buffet pax was donated to the charity.

Club president, Rosli Mansor, handed over the money to the home administrator, Zurina Alias, during a simple ceremony held at the home in Taman Kinta Perdana, Lahat, recently. The home has 18 residents.

"I wish to thank the Impiana Hotel for its timely assistance. Hopefully, more corporate bodies would come forward to assist the poor and the needy," said Rosli to Ipoh Echo.

"We're pleased to assist in whatever way possible to help these old folks," he added.

Present at the ceremony was Impiana Hotel General Manager, Gerard Sta Maria and the Director of Sales and Marketing, Normah Ahmad.

Zurina was grateful for the contribution. "The money will be used for the home's operational needs," she told those present.

"The Social Welfare Department provides an annual stipend of RM30,000 for the home. The sum, however, is not enough," she said.

Readers keen to help can contact Zurina at **017 551 9570** for details.

Property



A Social Responsibility

By Rosli Mansor

Realising the importance of a clean environment, Palazzo Development, a subsidiary of Team Keris Berhad, took the initiative to beautify vacant lands at Taman Ipoh Impian via its corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme recently.

Present at the event were 500 people, comprising residents, staff and representatives from the government agencies.

The programme, said Anuar Abu Hassan, Director of Team Keris Berhad, was a collaboration with Ipoh City Council, Perak Drainage and Irrigation Department and Tenaga Nasional Berhad. The cleaning work included beautifying and improving the flow of Sungai Pinji.

"We hope it'll benefit the community because our objective is to conserve and create an environment that's suitable for outdoor activities," he told reporters during a media briefing at the site recently.

Residents and staff cleaned the area around the river which was made an illegal dumpsite by irresponsible parties. LED lights were then installed to light-up the area. It can now be used by the community before it is handed back to the state government.

"Hopefully, this will improve environmental awareness and care for facilities provided for by the local council," he said.

Some 120 trees were planted along Sungai Pinji at Taman Ipoh Impian, as a part of the CSR programme.



SeeFoon is Seduced by STG

Pics by YuGin Foo & STG



'Died and gone to heaven' Durian Cake



Picture a beautifully renovated bungalow, resplendent in its own ample garden, generous parking, stepping up into a posh reception foyer and well laid out tables in comfortable spacing and you feel like you have stepped back in time.

Into the halcyon days of leisurely tea parties, dainty sandwiches, scones with strawberry jam and cream and the low murmur of muted

conversation. And it's all here at **STG, a restored bungalow built in 1937**, in the days when opulence was the norm. And opulent it is today.

Aside from the dainty high tea served all day, STG boasts a surprisingly extensive menu with offerings to tempt every palate. Ranging from Western to Asian with an irresistible choice of sweet temptations that even someone like me, who is not too fond of all things sweet, was seduced into having not only one or two spoonfuls but actually almost finishing whole portions!

Let me begin with their **Chicken Rice**. Having just completed my review on

various outlets in Ipoh on this very same item, I was delighted to discover that their Chef de Cuisine used to work in Singapore at the Mandarin Hotel in Orchard Rd where I was addicted to their chicken rice. Now here he is in Ipoh! And his chicken rice is superlative, with all the sauces which I consider '*de rigueur*'; the chilli sauce, tangy with a hint of garlic; the ginger sauce, thick and fragrant and the dark black soya sauce which is a must. And let's not forget the bowl of soup which was umami and chock full of cabbage; **RM24**.

Try also their **Char Kway Teow with duck eggs**, which was generous in their big prawns and arrived full of 'wok hei'; **RM24**. Another dish worthy of mention is their **soft shell crab with pasta**; the soft shell crab crisp and crunchy, topping al dente spaghetti tossed with salted egg yolk. Yummilicious . . . **RM38**. Also do try their **Sicilian Scallop Pasta**, with slow-fried garlic and Serrano peppers; the large US scallops pan-fried to perfection, the Serrano peppers which are very mild and fried garlic lending not only their flavour but also providing a crunch with the pasta; **RM36**.



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Vocational Skills Better for the Future? . . . Continued from Page 2



“To equip our children for the careers of the future, the best areas to focus on are STEM education (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), social and emotional skills (e.g., advanced communication, continuous learning, leadership) and creativity. Those are the skills that will be most in demand. Furthermore, when looking at career paths, you need to look at the trends – certain types of jobs, even those which were once viewed as being highly-skilled jobs, are at high risk of automation in the near future (for example, roles such as insurance underwriters, accountants, paralegals).”

Our Perspective

Most of the craftsmen who do repair works in our houses learned the trade by being an apprentice to a skilled worker. We should offer short-term courses for welders, plumbers, electricians, technicians, landscape artists and carpenters so

that they can do their jobs professionally. Practising craftsmen should be retrained to become professional in their job. The tradesmen should be trained to enable them to carry out repair works in houses and become self-employed. We can also train goldsmiths, cobblers, tailors and other skills where people work with their hands. We need handymen who can carry out small repairs in our houses professionally. They are in short supply and difficult to find these days.

It was noticed that many of the instructors do not speak English and instructions are in Malay. The students should be taught Basic English including Conversational English. The manuals of the equipment and machinery they work with are in English and the craftsmen who operate them should know English to read and understand the operating procedures, especially safety features.

With Industrial Revolution 4.0 approaching fast we should produce workers who are qualified to face it.

Success Stories

Nurul Ain Ainurizam, 23, is an ex-vocational school student of Sekolah Menengah Teknik Ipoh, Persiaran Brash. Her parents encouraged her to pursue her studies in the vocational field and were the first ones to introduce her to it. They were the ones who told her about the vocational school or “technic school” as she calls it.

“It was great,” she added and continued to speak about the freedom she gained from living inside a hostel. “My school encouraged us to be very proactive in involving ourselves with co-curricular activities. Everyone was allowed to join everything as there were no restrictions. Thus, by the end of the school year, we all had many different certificates”.



Nurul Ain Ainurizam

She also included how it was compulsory for the students who took commerce to take up Chemistry, and Physics. “Although it was difficult, I had a ball,” Ain commented. “My school was filled with different kinds of engineering students who studied mechanical, electrical and civil engineering. It was a great feeling looking at the amount of potential that my school had to offer to society. I felt very proud to be a vocational school student. I still am.”

Ain currently works as a sales representative for Movie Animation and Park Studios (MAPS). In school, she took accountancy and the overall knowledge gained in vocational school has benefited her current career and in her everyday life. She had experience doing her internship in Perak Water Board. She also runs an online business selling foods such as spaghetti, kebabs and ice-cream. “It is easy for me to handle the transactions and

what not as I know how to handle money skillfully.”

Muhammad Danial, 22, who achieved 8As for his Lower Secondary Evaluation (PMR) said he initially rejected the idea of entering a vocational school because of the perception that it is only for students with low academic performance. His perception has changed upon studying mechatronics in Kangar Vocational School, he said, “the courses are very comprehensive, vocational schools (or colleges) will pay a sum of money to send their students to other industries for practicals if they lack in machinery.” He added, “there are many courses available, from business management to cosmetology.”

When asked what are the probability of employment for a vocational college graduate, he replied, “the chances of being employed are high in my personal opinion, my coursemates and I didn’t have trouble finding a placement for our internship.” He mentioned that his father, Harith Rahman, a Slim River Vocational High School teacher, suggested that he pursue his studies in Kangar because he saw the potential of studying there. “My father is a vocational college alumnus and now an educator there, he knows what’s better for me,” explained Danial who is currently undergoing his internship at an industry near Jalan Kuala Kangsar.

Another Sekolah Menengah Teknik Ipoh Persiaran Brash alumnus is Nurul Nadia Binti Zaharon. Nadia said her school provided the students with sufficient knowledge for her university undertakings. “I wasn’t encouraged by anyone I knew to pursue engineering. I took the opportunity myself in doing research about the school and the courses they offered. I set my mind to believe that women were just as powerful as men in pursuing a career in the engineering field” mentioned the civil engineering student. “I can solve any problem relating to my fundamental knowledge and previous practices in the engineering field such as the construction of bridges. I have experience in the construction process of bridges in Sungai Raja, Kampung Kepayang, Simpang Pulau from its preliminary works,” she explained. She has proficiency in using multiple software to solve and design buildings. She now studies Civil Engineering in UTHM.

So for parents out there facing tough decisions for their children’s future, consider vocational training.



Muhammad Danial



Nurul Nadia

Community

A Healthy Lifestyle

By Ivana Qartika

A health cum family day was held at Ave Maria Convent on Sunday, June 30. It was organised by the Ave Maria Convent Alumni Association (AMCAA) Ipoh. The guest of honour was Deputy Health Minister, Dr Lee Boon Chye. The venues were at Chin Pek Soo Hall and the Mother Pauline Hall of the school.

The programme included health talks, health screening and a women and children’s corner. The health talks were conducted by skilled medical practitioners from Raja Permaisuri Bainun Hospital and the Perak Community Specialist Hospital. The blood donation booth gained the attention of Dr Lee himself.

“It’s important for people to know about their health. There are those who spend their whole life accumulating wealth but forget about their health. It’s good that event such as this is organised. I’m glad to see a good turn out at the all the different booths,” he told reporters.

Sofi, 40, a working mother, said that the hands-on activities helped increase her child’s creativity. It allowed her child to make new friends and brought her family closer.

President of AMCAA, Madam Moy Ooi Thye, said she was inspired to organise the event after noticing most people were too focused on their career that they neglected their health, and the unhappiness she felt in seeing her close friends suffering from heart attacks due to late diagnosis.

Datin Irene Lee, Chairman of AMC and Advisor of AMCAA said that the event should be continued since it is beneficial to the people.

Over the years, AAMCA had organised stress management programs, full-day workshops, education fairs, orchestras, and concerts. Their main objectives are raising funds for needy students and charity organisation.



SeeFoon is Seduced by STG . . . Continued from Page 5

The list of goodies is endless and host Alvin Wan, co-founder and director was the perfect host, insisting I sample as many items as possible. As space is limited, I will list here the dishes I found delectable and worth returning again and again for.

I had to return for a second tasting as I saw **French Escargot** on the menu. For those who don't know the French term, these are snails and are a very rare offering in Ipoh. So I immediately pounced on these as I haven't had these in a long time. Baked with butter and garlic and parsley in their shells, the escargots here were delicious . . . not dry or chewy but just right. Dip bread into the garlic butter to mop up the sauce makes for a superb appetiser, **RM24**.

Their **Wagyu Beef Burger** is a Big Mac, but what a difference! Two juicy patties of chopped wagyu beef, cooked medium-rare, spilling over with cheese, lettuce, tomatoes and held by a sesame bun. No additional saucing was needed as I bit into the well-seasoned pattie feeling I was in burger heaven; **RM38**.

I can recommend their **Rosemary Lamb Rack**, Australian thick-cut chops served with roasted potatoes which were very tasty. Do specify your degree of done-ness though, as they may tend to cook them too well done for local tastes; **RM78**.

They have fish, steaks, chicken and lamb galore in many guises and styles but time and space limit me. Try their **Pan Fried Seabass fillet** with a Herb Cream Sauce, **RM28**, or their **Tea Smoked Chicken** with a tea infusion with honey, a dish that is perfect for children, **RM25**.

And I haven't even talked about their teas and their desserts with especially one pièce de résistance, their incredible 'Durian' special, a look-alike confection of cream, cheese and the Malaysian obsession, durian. The taste is one of what I call the "died and gone to heaven" variety, creamy, fragrant and out of this world. The small one can feed probably four small eaters, **RM25**. And one can order the big **8-inch** one for **RM280** which will likely feed 8 to 10 or more people.

Patissier Zimone Foong is a wizard at her job. She, as Pastry Leader of her team, whips up the most delectable temptations like the **Salted Egg Cream Cheesecake**, **RM16** per slice, or the **San Sebastian Cheesecake** and a host of other delicacies which you can order to take home. Or host a tea party on their premises for any occasion. Just call her (number below).

And now we come to the teas. STG is the acronym for Sabah Tea Garden, a homegrown tea plantation, producing and packaging a large variety of teas for both the home and export markets. Their tea menu is extensive ranging from the **organic Borneo Rainforest**, **RM16** per pot; their regular **Sabah Tea**, **RM12**; their naturally fragranced teas like the **Lavender Sabah Tea**, **RM15**; **French Rose Oolong** (beautifully uplifting); their **Golden Osmanthus** (soothing), **RM15**, are all worth trying. Also, try their **Passion Fruit Iced Tea**. Fragrant tart and sweet, **RM10**.

STG will from now onwards be my go-to place for a leisurely meal, a sip or two of wine and perhaps if I am tempted, a dessert or two to share. They now sell wine in mini



Salted Egg Yolk Cheesecake

bottles like wine from **Chile the Luis Felip Edward sauvignon blanc**, and the red wine **Carmenere**. **RM24 per bottle** which is probably around one and a half glasses each.

STG has other locations in Ipoh. They have one in Old Town and they also run the **Little Elephant** opposite Pantai Hospital. As they work from a central kitchen, the desserts will be the same for sure but the a la minute dishes may vary depending on the chef who's cooking so I cannot vouch for the others. They also have one outlet in Taiping and one in Kuala Lumpur.

STG has come a long way from their early days. I was taken there once and the food was so appalling that I made my mind up to never go there again until very recently when I was totally surprised at the total turn around in their culinary presentations. **Bravo STG!** May you go from strength to strength.

STG

2 Jalan Taman Kinta, Chateau Garden, 30250 Ipoh.

Tel: 05 255 0116 or 05 255 0188

Zimone Foong Pastry Chef to order pastries: 012 519 8116

F & B Manager: Kenny Lam 012 3920116

Business hours: 11am-11pm 24/7

Community

Pinji Fest 2019

By Chris Teh

The third Pinji Fest, held at Taman Pinggir Sungai Pasir Pinji on Saturday, July 13, has definitely made Pasir Pinji as a destination of choice for tourists and non-locals.

Guests of honour at the launch were Executive Councillor for Youth and Sports Development Howard Lee Chuan How who is also the state assemblyman for Pasir Pinji, Member of Parliament for Ipoh Timor Wong Kah Woh and Dewan Rakyat Deputy Speaker Nga Kor Ming.

Pinji Fest made its debut in 2015 and the second was in 2016. It was held up for two years in 2017 and 2018 due to the 14th General Election.

"Pinji Fest's objective is to encourage interaction between youths and their families. We want to instil positive familial values in the younger generation, which sadly, is beginning to diminish," said Howard Lee to Ipoh Echo.

According to Lee, the four aspects of Pinji Fest which are culture, history, art and food will be referred to for Pasir Pinji's development as one of Ipoh's tourism destinations.

"People may inevitably disagree on certain opinions but these aspects are elements that have bonded people together for decades. There are many hidden gems that Pasir Pinji has to offer, which is why through this event, hopefully, we're able to share them with the whole Ipoh while improving the infrastructures in Pasir Pinji," Lee added.

Being a collaboration with Pusat Aspirasi Anak Perak (PASAK), an organisation aiming to empower youths and revolutionise e-sports, the event was attended by over 3,000 individuals from all over the city.

Pokemon Go, in which Pinji Fest is the second featured event by the government for the popular mobile game, players were seen taking part in lure festivals and Beca Go, a mini-tour around Pasir Pinji via trishaw riding.

Ipohite Alvin Lee, 30, who resides in Pasir Pinji said, "I enjoyed the Pokemon Go programme. It's a good opportunity to rediscover more of the history and landmarks here."

Being an avid Pokemon Go player himself, Lee felt surprised that the game made its way into Pinji Fest.

"I am glad the game is starting to gain traction with our local government since the release of PVP (player-versus-player) battles. It'd be such a letdown if a global phenomenon like Pokemon Go does not get to live up to its name in Malaysia, let alone Ipoh," Lee added.

The "My Pasir Pinji" themed colouring and drawing contest operated by Chuah Colour Studios was also one of the highlights of Pinji Fest.

"Participants of the drawing section ranged from age 13 to 18, while colouring contestants ranged from age 4 to 12, thus we limited materials only for colouring section," explained Suat Meay, facility manager for PASAK to Ipoh Echo.

She added, "We're interested in knowing how creative contestants can go, so we



allowed participants to freely explore their own perception of Pasir Pinji in the future."

Suat Meay conveyed her gratitude to Sakura Malaysia and Sin Mun Fatt Book Store for their sponsorship of materials for the contest.

Hopefully, future Pinji Fest will continue to bring surprises to the community.

Our Focus – Intangible but Influential Cornelia Tan

What do you focus on each day?

Many of the things needing our attention are seen. But your focus, the act of putting your attention on something, this part is unseen.

When you overly focus on things seen such as material wealth and success, you starve your soul. Your soul — the feeling, thinking, decision-making part of you — needs food, a different kind of food:

- Love
- Kindness
- Happiness
- Joyfulness

They are all unseen but tangible. This is soul food.

So focus your thoughts on things unseen but lasting and fulfilling:

Love: It is always kind, always gentle, always thinks good about others. Love is patient, love never gives up but perseveres, always hopes, always endures. True love will never fail you.

So feed yourself on love. As you do to others, so they will do unto you.

Joy: It gives you strength in life. When your heart is weary and heavy laden, hold a joyful thought in your mind, such as the innocent laughter of a newborn baby. Joy will gladden your heart and lighten your mood and lift your burden. Who can resist a joyful smile?

So take joy for inner refreshment.

Hope: Is what keeps us going. Hope is all about the things that we look forward too (like the end of a working day) and work towards. Hope is about something unseen that brings each individual a reward. What are you focusing your hopes on?

So take a hope check now. Make sure that it is positive and attainable.

Reflections for inner change

How do you define love?

Do you express that definition in your daily interactions with your spouse, colleagues and friends? (Remember our definition of love here for comparison. Love is: patient, kind, long-suffering, does not count the wrongs suffered, always thinks and believes for the best in others and in circumstances. Love is a very positive value to have.)

What are 3 simple things that bring you joy?

Think on them as good thoughts as you go through the day. You'll see yourself smiling more often. The more good, happy thoughts you focus on, the happier you will find yourself.

What do you hope for?

What do you put your hope and trust in?

Is it money? That can devalue. **Is it a person?** Our life is very fleeting.

What is it that will last forever? It is love. The love of one person can touch millions of lives and leave a legacy that endures. Just like Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa of Calcutta. They are gone, but they leave behind a rich legacy of lives touched.

We respond to love and need love, a love that is pure, gentle and sincere. So wrap yourselves in love. Remember, love is patient, so wrap yourselves in patience. When you are annoyed, remember, love does not count the wrongs suffered and wrap yourselves in that. You will find that you will change inwardly and outwardly as you do so. Your life will become more positive and you will be a positive influence on people all around you.

Love conquers all things! Let us put our focus on love and joy this week.

Finally: Whatever is good, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good report, think on those. It doesn't matter what mood or situation you are in. If you focus on positive thoughts in the midst of a storm, you will find yourself an overcomer.



In Dire Straits

By Rosli Mansor

Infant Mohd Adam Mikhail Muzamer, 8 months, had surgery performed when he was three days old. The child suffers from hydrocephalus, a condition where cerebral fluid builds up in the head causing it to swell.

His mother, Aida Nadia Khairul Rizal, 23, said doctors confirmed her son's condition when he was still in the womb. "I was hoping it's all a bad dream." She was told that her son had only a few hours to live after birth.

"It's difficult to describe my feelings. I was hoping for God's blessing. Adam's movements reinforced my hopes and made me believe he'd be alright," she told Ipoh Echo when met at her house in Taman Menglembu Impiana.

He was born with a normal weight of 3.66kg while the swelling on his head was 400g.

Adam was treated at the General Hospital, Ipoh. Surgery was performed to remove the excess fluid. However, a minor bump on the left side of his head is getting bigger by the day. Doctors are now monitoring the swelling and will operate if necessary.

Aida hopes her son would come through.

"He is a good boy who seldom cries. He needs a stroller to move about. My husband can't afford such a luxury. He earns very little as a carpenter."

Readers keen to help can contact Aida Nadia via her mobile number: **013 798 5864**.

Community Is Culling the Solution?

By Ivana Qartika

Stray dogs and cats are a common problem in Ipoh. However, it has become an even bigger concern in Menglembu, as the strays have moved into the housing estates.

Their proliferation is traceable to a few factors. The two major causes are the lackadaisical attitude of government agencies and of dog owners who abandoned their one-time pets. Of all places, why Menglembu?

Menglembu is on the western fringe of Ipoh and was once noted for its groundnut farms. Chinese form the majority here with a sprinkling of Indians and Malays, although they do not make much impact, demographically.

Malays generally are averse to dogs for reason of religion, as the animal is considered unclean when it salivates or when it is wet. That explains why stray dogs are uncommon in Manjoi and Taman Perpaduan, a predominantly Malay enclave.

They may have good intentions but people who feed dogs and cats are actually doing more harm than good. They feed the animals but do little else in terms of their health and keeping their numbers under control. Stray dogs pose a bigger threat, as an infected dog can spread diseases like rabies. There were a couple of reported cases in Taiping recently.

Ipoh City Council is responsible for keeping a tab on strays but of late has come under fire for the way it disposes of the poor animals. Non-governmental organisations, such as Noah's Ark and certain individuals, are more humane in their efforts. They are genuinely committed to caring for strays. They capture, neuter and release them.

However, the downside is, once these animals are released they are free to roam in a totally different area than previously. So the problem is not overcome but rather transferred.

Now back to Menglembu. Based on observation by this scribe, the number of stray dogs has increased many times of late. The problem will not dissipate unless something substantive is done.

Culling these animals remains the only viable option but it comes at a cost. It is a Catch-22 situation and only Ipoh City Council and the public has the answer.

Health and Tea

By Afifah Rafael

Legend of Tea, an Ipoh-based tea company, held an exhibition as part of the inaugural Oriental Festival at Ipoh Parade shopping mall from July 16 to 21.

Among the highlights were tea tasting and sharing sessions, self-compressed puer (fermented) tea and calligraphy demonstrations.

The objective was to promote tea culture to the public. Tea preparation in Chinese culture is to demonstrate respect for the elderly, to offer a formal apology or to convey gratitude, especially during weddings.

"Tea sharing is designed to bring families together in one table, that's why we hosted the tea sharing session," said Legend of Tea marketing manager, Chin Min. Besides tea sharing, guests are able to compress puer tea into tea biscuits by themselves, using a traditional method.

Guests were impressed by Ong Chia Koon's 24ft x 32ft calligraphy demonstration. It took him less than five minutes to complete a huge canvas with his sizeable brush. His artwork was based on Tang Poetry (poetry written in the time of China's Tang dynasty).

Ong Chia Koon collaborated with Legend of Tea in producing their special edition tea line. Chia's artwork was expressed on the tea packaging itself. When asked what is the significance of integrating tea and calligraphy, the renowned calligrapher replied, "Both tea and calligraphy are considered as art, hence they complement each other."

The artistic collaboration was the inspiration behind this year's theme, *yi jiang yi jia, du chu xin yun*, which means a combination of the ingenuity of tea-making and the uniqueness of calligraphy art.

Chin Min aspires to promote a healthier lifestyle with her company's tea products. "A healthy life begins with tea," she posited.



Community

Grants for Female Entrepreneurs

By Mei Kuan

A shout out to all Perak female entrepreneurs and aspiring ones, the state government is offering grants amounting up to RM20,000 via Sisters in Business (SIB). In collaboration with Axiata Young Talent Programme, it was launched by Wong May Ing, the Executive Councillor for Women and Family Development, Character Development and Social Welfare on Tuesday, July 23.

SIB is a first-of-its-kind microfinance initiative complete with mentoring along the way to equip beneficiaries with entrepreneurial knowledge such as basic bookkeeping and business management skills. A catalyst to improve Perak women's socioeconomic status, the scheme does not involve any interest, charge or collateral in order to prevent financial pressure.

According to Wong, a total of RM200,000 has been allocated and by the end of August, at least 10 beneficiaries will be selected, to start with. SIB provides financing for one and a half years for ladies who wish to start their own business or expand an existing one.

"It can be any type of business, for instance, those by social entrepreneurs. We prioritise innovative and creative ones," Wong explained.

Application is now open until **August 23** with the following eligibility criteria:

1. Female Malaysian citizen
2. A resident of Perak State for at least five (5) years
3. Between the age of 18 to 55
4. Owner of an SSM-registered business OR a high-potential business plan
5. Monthly household income below RM5000.

Once chosen, applicants must attend all the seminars and meetings arranged by SIB, be committed to managing business full time, register business with SSM (Companies Commission of Malaysia) and create a new bank account.

Eligible women can apply via **Sisters in Business Facebook page** and a phone interview by the SIB committee will ensue.

For more details, interested readers can call **019 9072601** or email contact_SIBOfficial@gmail.com



Connexion

By Joachim Ng

A pendatang gene in everyone



If Lenggong Valley were set in Europe, it would host a million visitors yearly. But it's in Perak, 50 km northeast of Kuala Kangsar. Have you heard of Perak Man, the oldest netizen of Lenggong? Well, maybe not. It was his misfortune to have settled down in the wrong state.

Perak tourism hasn't developed the knack of harvesting silver dollars from ancient bones. Perak Man, who lived 10,000 years ago, was the ancestor of an Orang Asli tribe. His own ancestors were the first Sapiens (we humans) to step foot in Malaysia more than 30,000 years ago after a multi-generational trek along the coastlines of western, southern and southeastern Asia.



Today, one skeleton remains. If it were in Europe, this skeleton would be receiving lines of visitors every hour of the day. Perak Man is vitally important for our education, for he takes us on a time travel back to pre-history. He was a model of eco-living, teaching his descendants to make clothing from tree barks, waist belt from rattan, and longhouse-roofing from leaves. Their diet was wholly organic and comprised jungle plants, wild animals, and fish caught in Sungei Perak. They also grew crops in a pesticide-free manner.

Of great significance is the migration gene they bestowed on us. Check the links and you will find that the lineages of all humans go back to a lake district in East Africa. Once out of this lake district, the pattern of migration kept developing as migrant bands spawned new migrants every 500 years. Eventually Malaysia was occupied.

But why do humans migrate? In all human brains, there exists a migration switch. Our primeval hunter-gatherer ancestors turned on this switch for one main reason: conflict avoidance. When a population reaches maximum carrying capacity for any location, conflict will ignite because of fierce competition for resources. That's when the migration switch gets turned on.

With continuous migration to uninhabited territories, humanity managed to survive and prosper for 300,000 years. By 3000 BCE hunter-gatherer tribes had occupied most regions of the world. Migrations since then have intensified as civilised communities took the high road or the high seas to escape poverty in dense regions. Countries such as Malaysia continue to experience layers of inflowing migrants or pendatang.

Multi-ethnicity and its accompanying multi-culturalism and multi-religiosity — this is the global reality and we have to develop wholly inclusive strategies that leave out no citizen group. In this we are failing, as we have tragically marginalised the Orang Asli. We badly need a fresh kind of politics.

Bundle – The New Craze

By Ivana Qartika

Seasonal outfits are great but what is even better are clothes that stand the test of time. The trend today is to source for long-lasting clothing that does not cost a bomb or burn a hole in your pocket.

Youth nowadays spend a lot to look good and fresh. They do not mind spending on skin, nail care, facial care and hair grooming. The domain of the oldies has now spread to all ages. Acquiring good clothing, however, remains a priority. But where to get quality clothing at a fraction of the cost? It is problematic if one is unsure where to begin.

Well, look no further. "Bundle", a metaphor meaning a collection of used clothing of varying sizes, colours and quality, all stacked in one bundle, is the in thing today. These stacks of old clothing are sold not in designer shops or outlets but at some back lane stalls and shop lots. One needs to ask around or go on a hunt to locate them.

Like a ripe durian, the contents of a bundle are never predictable. If one is lucky one may find some hidden 'treasures' in them. Luck plays a part in determining your fate.

Bundles have become a hit among youngsters in Ipoh. When asked the reasons behind his search, Muhammad Faris, 18, said it was affordable and is hassle-free. He needs not to look through the racks for fitting wear. They are available in the bundle.

"I like the excitement. You never know what you'd find," he said. Muhammad and his friends do their bundle hunting at the makeshift stalls in Memory Lane Ipoh or at a certain Musashi stall in Tambun. "They may not be the trendiest but for the amount spent no one is complaining," he remarked.

Mr Musashi's manager, Siti Fadhillah Shamsuddin, 25, said the clothes on sale are sourced mainly from Japan and America and are in fairly good condition. It is the same with other traders in the city. "We've six outlets in Perak," she added.



They receive around a hundred customers each week ranging in age from 20 to 30 years old. Most of them are males. Surprisingly, a large number of customers look for winter clothing to go abroad. Their stocks are replenished almost weekly, depending on the demand. "So far business has been brisk," said Siti.

Family Bundle, an outlet in Silibin earns between RM2000 to RM3000 a week. Their customers are mainly youngsters who shop for fun. Their clothes are priced between RM5 to

RM50 per piece, depending on the brand.

Faziyatun Nurain, 30, MF Mart Bundle's manager, said her clients are attracted to jeans, pants, shirts and jackets. The shop, opened in 2017, is a favourite with individuals and families. Their busiest period will be when fresh stocks arrive. The most sought-after items are T-shirts costing between RM5 to RM15. A pair of faded jeans fetch between RM5 to RM60.

All three shops are clean and orderly, based on this scribe's observation. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses. For discerning buyers, it is the affordability that matters. Customer satisfaction comes a close second.

The earliest bundle sellers in the country began their business in the 1970s. It was largely attributed to the Mandailing, a pioneering race from Sumatra. The present bundle traders are a mixed lot.

And there is also a newer breed of traders who dabble in old clothes. They are mostly members of non-governmental organizations who sell these used items for a song during festivities or at public gatherings.

Proceeds from such sales go to charities of their choice. An example of a well-known charity bundle shop is in IOI City Mall's Bargain Basement in Putrajaya.

Community

Adventures That Give Back

By Mei Kuan

The soft launch of the Phoenix Initiative by Nomad Adventure at Earth Camp, Gopeng, saw the unveiling of a revolutionary green waste disposal machine that uses pyrolysis to turn plastic, paper, organic waste and household rubbish into ash which can be used as fertilizer or made into bricks and pavers.

Held on Saturday, July 13, the machine named Eco-Waste Asher was invented in Malaysia and Nomad's unit is the third installation in Peninsular Malaysia. Generating its own power via solar panels, this remarkable technology is self-sustainable with no external energy needed and complies fully to international EPA standards.

The initiative was established to deal with the rubbish problem of the villagers around Gopeng where Nomad Adventure has been operating since 2003, with an aim towards creating the first "Zero Waste Kampung" in Malaysia right here in Gopeng.

According to Chan Yuen-Li, Founder & Director of Nomad Adventure, the Eco Waste Asher would be used to definitively deal with the household waste for its camp and the surrounding villages. It would also be the focus for the environmental education programmes that Nomad Adventure is already running. With the help and sponsorship of partners, it aims to clear up some illegal dumpsites around the area.

"One of the main pressing issues is that there is no rubbish collection in rural areas, it is different from us city folks. The conventional way of dealing with rubbish is to either put in a landfill or burn it. The amazing thing about Asher is it doesn't use any power at all to treat the rubbish. It uses pyrolysis which is basically heat without oxygen created by a magnetic process. It has a capacity of processing two tons of rubbish in 24 hours," the Ipoh girl explained.

To start with, Nomad Adventure would go out to collect the rubbish from villages and educate the villagers along the way in the hope of encouraging residents to get used to the sustainable habit. With an estimated investment of RM350,000, the machine is for use by the public.

"I am dedicating the machine to my mother, Ong Su-ming who is celebrating her 80th birthday this year. The whole environmental initiative is in her honour as she has been my role model in community activism," she added.

Present were 73-year-old Roland C.S. Tee, inventor of Eco-Waste Asher; Abdul Wahab, Chulik Village Head; Professor Dr Ahmad Ismail, President of Malaysian Nature Society, Jamie Loh, CEO of Children's Environmental Heritage Foundation and Pang Swee Lei, Executive Director of Pamarai Sdn Bhd. The official launch will be held in September.

Established since 1994, Nomad Adventure is a team of professional people who are in the business of providing extraordinary adventure experiences with an international clientele. With many first ascents to her name and setting up the first climbing gym in the country, Yuen-Li was responsible for introducing thousands of Malaysians to the sport of rock climbing. As an enthusiastic kayaker, she also made the first descent of a number of whitewater rivers, including Kampar River. In 1998, Yuen-Li captained Toyota Team 2020 in the world's toughest race, the Eco Challenge in Morocco and became the first Asian team to complete the race.

To find out more, visit www.nomadadventure.com or call 03 7958 5152.



Residents making use of the Eco-Waste Asher



(L-R) Pang, Roland, Su-ming and Yuen-Li

Nostalgia

"Schooling Doesn't Assure Employment, but Skill Does"

By Ian Anderson

So said Amit Kalantri, author, magician and mentalist, recently, and just about 100 years ago the Ipoh Town Council had exactly the same thoughts when they applied for federal funding to build a trade school. Characteristically, the request was turned down due to lack of funds. It would have been the first such establishment in Malaya. Then, in 1923, KL pulled a fast one on Ipoh by releasing funds for their own trade school. Ipoh reapplied and was told to wait until the benefits of the KL school had been assessed. The editor of Ipoh's own newspaper, The Times of Malaya was not impressed and made that quite clear in his editorial.

Eventually, on June 2, 1930, The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser reported,

"IPOH TRADE SCHOOL OPENED – Malay Students."

The article reported that the newly-built school had been ready for some time but could not open as there was a shortage of staff. It added that Mr H.A. Jeff, District Engineer FMS, had now been seconded to the Education Department as Principal.

The initial intake was 25 young men, of which 23 were Malays, with one Chinese and one Indian. The Chief Instructor was transferred from the Federated Malay States Railways Central Workshops and his assistant from the Kuala Lumpur Trade School. The new school was situated directly opposite Anderson School and close to the District Hospital.

The students' first task was to assist in the final construction of the school building and installing machinery. Practical training took place on heavy Lorries from "Albion



The Trade School Workshop 1949



Ipoh Trade School 1930 (1)

Motors" from Scotland and England's "John Thornycroft and Company" operational vehicles from the Public Works Department, Ipoh.

Each student received \$10 per month as a scholarship. Tuition, overalls and shoes were provided free once per year. Initially, accommodation and food were provided in a nearby shophouse, by a contract, at \$8 per head per month. Eventually, part of the first Anderson

School Hostel, established in 1921, was allocated to the trade school, despite it already being quite crowded.

Thereafter, 25 students enrolled each year, the school operating a three-year syllabus. Final year students gained experience by undertaking work for other government departments, such as repairing hospital ambulances. At first, this work was completed free of charge but when charges were brought in, the Education Department earned \$7500 per year from the boys' labour.

From 1939 to 1941, the school also supported the British Military vehicles in Perak, but in December 1941 the Japanese invasion reached Perak and the school was closed. Subsequently, all equipment being removed by the Japanese. The school was reopened after the Japanese surrender, renamed the "Junior Technical (Trade) School", and introduced extra training in electrical engineering, bricklaying and carpentry in addition to its previous syllabus.

Today, the school has gone, but the wheel has turned full circle and the authorities are once again keen on skill training. Why do we never learn from our past!

Personality

By Chris Teh

Ipoh Girl Dives In



Being a full-time athlete is a career that can be fraught with difficulties, but for renowned Olympian diving athlete Leong Mun Yee, her goals spurred her on. Born and bred in Ipoh, 34-year-old Leong, who is currently residing in Bukit Jalil, received her early education in Marian Convent Primary Girls School located along Jalan Raja DiHilir before moving to Bukit Jalil Sports School in Kuala Lumpur when she was 11.

"I was originally swimming with my brother. After my parents brought me to the diving tryouts when I was 10, I got the passion to stay in diving," she mentioned, citing her parents as an inspiration to her diving career. "The 1998 Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur was my debut in a major competition but the most memorable experience was the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney because that was the first-ever Olympic competition I had participated in."

Shaking off the myth that diving is an easy sport, Leong revealed that the training schedule for diving requires comparably longer duration than any other form of sport.

"We have morning and evening training sessions totalling up to around eight hours daily. It is not only diving into the pool from a maximum height of 10m, but we also have gym and dryland training beforehand, therefore it is quite challenging to be a diver indeed," she revealed.

"Hardships are inevitably present in an athletic career, but to me, I would say that the most trying times would be dealing with injuries," Leong stated, mentioning that she had previously sustained injuries on her wrist and ligaments.

There are six types of diving groups, categorised by numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 which respectively represent forward, backward, reverse, inward, twist and handstand.

"Divers must be familiar with all styles. In competitions, male divers have to perform all six categories, while female divers need only choose five out of the six," Leong clarified. "In the Olympics, there are four events for male divers and four events for female divers; eight events in total. It needs to be noted that the four events are the same for both genders, which are 3-metre springboard diving, 10-metre platform diving, 3-metre synchronised diving and 10-metre synchronised diving."

Alluding to the fact that her team qualified for the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo after partner Pandelega Rinong won a silver medal at the World Aquatics Championships in Gwangju, Korea recently, Leong hopes that training will resume in China in August if all goes well.

"We're still uncertain about a lot of details but hopefully, we will manage to stay in form until the 2020 Olympics," Leong highlighted, revealing to Ipoh Echo that the 2020 Olympics will indeed be her swan-song in sports.

"I'm currently pursuing my master's degree in corporate communication at Universiti Putra Malaysia and I own a small business in Bukit Jalil, so I will venture on that path in the future," she explained on her retirement plan from competitive diving, hinting at the possibility of marriage in the future.

"I'm thankful to my family for their unending support and everyone who motivated me forward in my career. I was able to be where I am today because of them," she expressed gratefully.

In town on a break from training, Leong stated that she missed Ipoh very much because of her parents, the food and the environment.

"It is at times challenging to be far from home. My parents are here, which is why I stayed longer this round to spend more quality time with them," she mentioned. "Also, I miss Ipoh for the fact that it is a food paradise and I definitely love the environment here."

Being in sports for more than 20 years, Leong, who has won countless medals from Southeast Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, FINA Diving World Series and FINA Diving Grand Prix, stressed the importance of discipline and having goals to upcoming athletes.

"It's not only for diving itself. Whichever sport one pursues, there must be a goal set to be completed in a self-given time frame. Give your best efforts, work hard and never give up easily, no matter how tough it might get. This is how you improve yourself," she advised.

Leong can be followed on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter for updates on her training and lifestyle.

HAPPENINGS

Ipoh Echo **IS** the **ONE** and **ONLY** medium to reach Ipohites and Perakeans for your Announcements or your Ads.

Only pay RM30 for chargeable events/seminars announcements. You get 3 media avenues for the price of one: • Print (circulation 100,000) • Website (over 1 million hits per month – verifiable) • Facebook (Free public events are published FREE)

Announcements must be sent by fax: **05 543 9411**; or email: **announcements@ipohecho.com.my**, by the 9th or 23rd of every month in order to meet deadlines. Announcements by phone will not be entertained. Ipoh Echo reserves the right to verify any announcement before it is published.

COMMUNITY

EVANGELIZATION CONCERT "YES WE CAN". AUGUST 4 (Sunday), 2pm-4.30pm at SMJK Sam Tet Ipoh. 'Friends of Jesus' Passover', an international group of Catholic overseas Chinese, will hold an EVConcert in songs, testimony, talk and prayers, in Mandarin, English and Cantonese. The concert is free and open to non-Muslims only. For more information, contact: Maria **012 454 6098** or James **016 553 8307**.

PERTUBUHAN SRI DAYANANDA SARASWATI, IPOH. MAHABHARATA epic-themed FOOD & FUN FAIR. AUGUST 10 (Saturday) from 9am to 3pm at Ceylon Association of Perak (Rayan Cultural Hall), 18 Jalan Tun Perak, 30200 Ipoh. A Charity Fundraiser to support charitable causes and teachings of good values as prescribed by Sanatana Dharma. There will be many exciting Mahabharata games, competitions & contests for everyone, especially for children to discover our epic superheroes. Coupons are on sale at RM10 per booklet. Sponsorship and donations are most welcome. For details, contact **016 532 1087** or **012 683 1173**.

MAHABHARATA CARNIVAL FOOD & FUN FAIR. AUGUST 10, 9am-3pm at Ceylon Association of Perak. A Shri Dayanandaa Saraswati Society charity fundraiser to support the efforts to learn the three cardinal virtues: self-restraint, charity and compassion for all life. There will be games, a costume competition, songs & dances, best-decorated booth contest and many more. For contest forms and enquiries, contact **016 532 1087** or **012 683 1173**.

CHARITY FOOD FAIR BY THREE NGOS, AUGUST 18 (Sunday), 8am-2pm at Tow Boh Keong Temple hall. By Kiwanis Club of Bandaraya Ipoh, Persatuan Kebajikan Dialysis Neesum Ipoh and Kiko Food Bank. Bring your own recyclable bag as it is a polystyrene-

free event. Calling for more stall operators. Sponsorship and donation are also welcome. Fair coupons are on sale at RM10 per booklet. For details contact **05 546 8386**.

BEFRIENDERS IPOH. TRAINING FOR NEW HOTLINE VOLUNTEERS, SEPTEMBER 7-8, 9am-5pm at No. 8, Jalan Sybil Kartigasu, Fairpark, Ipoh. Befrienders Ipoh is a voluntary hotline for the distressed and suicidal. They offer free and confidential emotional support through befriending. This training is open to the public. Call **012 534 0063** to register. Facebook: Befrienders Ipoh-Page.

PERAK WOMEN FOR WOMEN. WOMEN IN LOVE – A NIGHT AT THE OPERA. SEPTEMBER 21 (Saturday), 7pm at Ballroom, Syeun Hotel Ipoh. Charity dinner with a musical programme: Cantonese opera, a UNESCO World Intangible Heritage, excerpts performed by KSK Art Crew, performance by PWW & Friends Choir. Introducing Kana. For more information, contact: **012 521 2480** or **012 288 6888**.

HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMME ON MENTAL HEALTH will be conducted at the Ipoh Adventist Community Services Center. This programme has helped many to optimize their brains and has equipped others to help loved ones recover from mental health illness, with proven results. It runs for 2 hours, every Saturday afternoon for 8 weeks, from July through August. For further details, WhatsApp us at **016 400 0271**.

NEDLEY DEPRESSION & ANXIETY RECOVERY PROGRAM™ will be run by the Ipoh Adventist Community Services to equip those who are struggling with anxiety disorder or depression, or those desiring to assist loved ones with mental health disorders. This programme can help improve EQ and help students achieve peak mental performance. For further info, WhatsApp **016 595 0829** or **016 400 0271**.

FREE REALITY-BASED STREET DEFENSE WORKSHOP. Organised by Urban Street Defense's Centre for all NGOs and Women's Groups in Ipoh. Workshop covers what to do when you are attacked, defend against various real life attack scenarios and more. Call **016 538 4562** to book a FREE session. Booking confirmation on a first come, first served basis.

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.

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

Tenby Receives an Award

Tenby International School, Ipoh has achieved another milestone in its success story as it received a 5-star rating for the Standard Kualiti Institusi Pendidikan Swasta, SKIPS (Quality Standards for Private Educational Institute) 2018 awarded by the Ministry of Education Malaysia. Tenby Schools Ipoh is the only private international and national school in Perak to hold the highly regarded 5-star rating.

Tenby was established in 1960 and has steadily grown not only academically with IGCSE and A-Level successes, but also in terms of its development of 21st-century citizens of the world.

The Campus Principal of Tenby Schools Ipoh, Mr Richard Davidson received the award on behalf of the school from the Ketua Sektor Pendidikan Swasta & Pendidikan Khas Jabatan Pelajaran Negeri Perak, Puan Eni Zanifah Mohd Jaber in a simple ceremony held at the school.

The SKIPS rating is the ministry's benchmark to ensure private and international schools in Malaysia provide quality education and outstanding services to the community. This 5-star rating is the highest award and granted only to schools with excellent results in the required criteria such as teaching and learning, curriculum, teachers' development, examinations, school environment and many others.

Mr Davidson thanked the staff, students and parents for their support in ensuring the school maintains the highest of standards; delivering amazing learning and affirming its position as a school of choice in the region for both the national and international curricula.

"This is a wonderful achievement for our school and demonstrates what can be achieved when you focus on student's learning, on students getting better, and on developing a community that cares," said Mr Davidson.



Michaelians Got Talent!



By Mei Kuan

The biennial Michaelian Talente 2019 unfolded at the school hall of SMK St Michael (SMI) on Sunday, July 14 highlighting students' myriad of talents and diversity of culture via a festival of song, dance and music.

"It has always been our intention to cultivate critical thinking skills among our students which will stay with them throughout their lives. They become more self-motivated and self-disciplined with perseverance and leadership skills," stated Principal Sit Wai Yin.

"My heartfelt appreciation to Tan Sri Lee Oi Hian, Chairman of the Board of Governors, Adrian Tsen Keng Yam, President of Old Michaelians' Association, Joseph Michael Lee, Chairman of the Parent-Teacher Association and David Foo, Chairman of the SMI Alumni of Klang Valley for their continued financial and moral support," he added.

The competitive event was aimed to build the confidence of young Michaelians and serve as a showcase to display their creativity. Plus it contributed to raising funds for the renowned mission school.

Chosen by the audience, the champions of the respective category were Ian Ooi (individual singing), Tap-Tap (group singing) and Esprit De Corps (group instrumental performance – open talents). Ian walked away with RM300 while the two teams were awarded RM500 each.

Heritage

Shorthand – Heritage or Outdated Skill?

By Ian Anderson

In the good old days, little girls always wanted to be film stars and little boys, train drivers (the steam-driven ones of course). But we do not always get what we want in life and often we have to take second best. For little girls that probably meant being the secretary to some important business tycoon. Sadly, to achieve that you had to learn shorthand, the most common version being that invented and developed by Englishman Sir Isaac Pitman in 1837. In the early days, Ipoh's Tutorial Institute in Station Road was exactly the right place to do just that.

The Ipoh Tutorial Institute (ITI) started in the S.P. De Silva Building (at No. 43 Station Road, Ipoh) with a long frontage in Belfield Street (next to HSBC). The building was completed in 1904, but it was not until the early 1950's that the Institute moved into the upper floors. Several subjects were available. Particularly strong in the English language, the classes also specialised in Commercial subjects like bookkeeping, basic commercial accounting and Pitman shorthand. External courses from the London Institute of Marketing were also available from here. The Institute was owned and operated by a soft-spoken Indian gentleman by the name of Mr Kurup and his wife also taught there.

Running in parallel with the original Institute were additional premises in Gurdwara Road, Ipoh. The Straits Times Classifieds published the following on 29 January 1955:

"EXTENSION OF IPOH TUTORIAL INSTITUTE at Gurdwara Road, Ipoh has a few vacancies in Standard One. Children from 6 years to 8 years. For admission apply to the Principal, Ipoh Tutorial Institute, No. 43 Station Road, Ipoh before the 10th February, 1955."

At the time, the ground floor at Station Road was occupied by commercial premises. There was an auctioneer along the Belfield Street frontage run by I. Packi. The front part of his hall was occupied by David, his nephew and they were dealing in sports goods. There was a secondhand bookshop alongside the entrance, with its rickety staircase to the Institute. An old gentleman who practised as a Commissioner



The De Silva Building 1958



Can you spot Ruth?

of Oaths, sharing a small cranny in the bookshop.

Ruth Iversen (daughter of the famous Danish architect) shared her experiences with us:

"I went to the Commercial Class of the Ipoh Tutorial Institute in the 1950s. It was on the first floor of the De Silva building in Station Road/Belfield Street. Here I tried to learn Pitman's shorthand. You will see the only European pupil on the photo – that's me! My teachers were Messrs. Hong Thye and Chai Lok."

The question is, "With all the digital tools available today, does anyone still use Shorthand?" A professional journalist answers: "Everyone can interview someone using a smartphone, but you can't use them in court or for Inquests. If you have to write in long-hand, you're going to miss an awful lot of information. Shorthand still has its place in the digital world."

Believe it or not, you can still take Pitman's Shorthand courses online today. After 182 years that's serious heritage to be proud of!

We are indebted to Ruth Iversen, Ken Chan, Charlie Choong, Kami Suria and S.Y. Lee to their inputs to this article.

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Arts and Culture

Mesmerising Abhinaya

Greentown Indian Cultural Society (GICS) once again was the proud organiser of “Abhinaya” – a Classical Dance Presentation (Bharathanatyam) by Natya Choodamani, Nirtya Kala Bharathi Dr Shri G. Ratheesh Babu and his team from Bhilai, Madhyapradesh, India.

This programme was held on July 19 at the Auditorium Kebudayaan dan Kesenian Negara Perak. The three dancers accompanying Dr Ratheesh Babu were Shri Deepesh Hoskere, Shweta Nayak and Ruchi Krishna. They thrilled and mesmerised the audience, who turned out in full force filling the auditorium.

Dr Ratheesh is ranked no 1 in the world for Bharathanatyam for his Abhinayam (expressions) performance. Dr Ratheesh and his team are all world-renowned and have had performances in various parts of the world.

According to its President Mr Subain Singam, GISC has till to-date successfully organised over 57 events of both local and international calibre and all the events are held free of charge to all dance lovers here in Ipoh.

This wonderful event was organised in collaboration with the High Commission of India, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose Indian Cultural Centre Kuala Lumpur, Majlis Kebudayaan Negeri and Jabatan Kebudayaan & Keseniaan Negara, Perak.



Sally The Musical

By Rosli Mansor

Ard Omar’s musical, staged at the Perak Department of Culture and Arts auditorium, was well received by theatre goers.

“Sally” a musical play was performed for three consecutive nights from July 5 to 7. The play is a depiction of the iconic Malay actress cum singer, Saloma Ismail, wife of actor cum singer cum composer extraordinaire, P. Ramlee.

The role of P. Ramlee was helmed by the talented actor Azharudin Ramli popularly known as Arja Lee. A cameo appearance by P. Ramlee’s granddaughter, Miss Najua, was a much-awaited highlight.

The two-hour adaptation of Saloma’s eventful life beginning from the Japanese Occupation up to her time spent as the spouse of P. Ramlee was well enacted.

Director and writer, Ard Omar said Sally is a contemporary musical showcasing Saloma’s passion for singing and her love interests, namely hubby P. Ramlee and her sister Mariani.

“The play is about the greatness of a woman named Saloma. The trials and tribulations she underwent in wanting to remain true to her calling,” said Omar to Ipoh Echo.

Show producer, Yusop Najmi Othman, said Sally is part of an effort by the Perak Cultural Association to promote theatre plays in the state.

“We plan to stage more plays in the future. Public response has been very encouraging,” said Yusop who is also the Deputy President of the Perak Cultural Council.

My Say

By Jerry Francis



Royal Ipoh Club Coming of Age

The Royal Ipoh Club, that 'doyenne' of clubs, has come of age, diverting from its more than a century-old tradition as a men's club.

Women can now be admitted as "ordinary members", which had been previously reserved for gentlemen who have attained 18 years of age.

This is provided under a recent review of the club's constitution and by-laws, where various amendments were made and approved by the Perak Registrar of Societies.

Since 1895, single women were accepted as "lady members" with no voting rights, and therefore have no say in the running of the club. They pay half of the entrance fee and half the monthly subscription of the ordinary members.

Now, it is possible for women to be elected into the club's management committee.

However, it is not for at least another few years before a woman can become vice-president or president of the club. As a candidate for vice-president and president needs to serve not less than two terms as a committee member to be qualified.

Currently, there are about 50 lady members. How these lady members will be absorbed as ordinary members is not yet clear.

Under the amendment, there are now only two categories of membership, voting members and non-voting members.

The voting members are Ordinary Members and Life Members, while the non-voting members are Associate Members, Honorary Members, Visiting Members, Sports Members, Provisional Members and Term Members.

The ordinary membership is open to Malaysians and non-Malaysians who have attained 21 years of age. However, any candidate who has been accepted as a member will be placed as "Provisional Member" for six months before being further interviewed by the Management Committee for elevation to Ordinary Members.



Among other amendments is the provision for the formation of a Disciplinary Board to look into complaints. It will consist of a chairman and five members, who will be appointed at the Annual General Meeting.

Welcome to the 21st century, Royal Ipoh Club!

NOSH NEWS

By Afifah Rafael

Drinks at 50 Sen

From a tricycle to a permanent stall, Kedah-born Ibrahim has been selling fresh fruit juices for only 50 sen a glass. Kedah-born Ibrahim, who moved to Ulu Kinta with his cousin in the early 1970s, has been selling fresh juice and fruits for a living ever since.

Ibrahim and his wife, Hasnah, set up a stall in front of the Teacher Training Institute, Ulu Kinta in 1983 and have been there ever since.

Among the juices available are watermelon, chrysanthemum, sour plum (*asam boi*), amberella (*kedondong*) and pennywort (*pegaga*).

The most popular drinks are *pegaga* and *asam boi*. People are fond of *pegaga* juice for its health benefits, mainly for treating skin conditions, said Hasnah.

"We initially sold the juices at 30 sen a glass and then increased it to 50 sen. It's remained at 50 sen since," Hasnah added.

When asked why they have not raised the price to be on par with other stalls, she replied, "Because he (Ibrahim) buys the fruits in bulk. We get a good discount."

Besides fresh juices, they also sell *cendol* (dessert) and fresh fruits such as mango, dragon fruit, pomelo, watermelon and papaya. Hashim, 46, from Tambun said, "I love their *cendol pulut*, it's the best I've tasted here."

The stall is often patronised by policemen, motorcyclists and students. Their business is thriving, especially during weekends and public holidays. The drinks and fruits are usually sold out by 5pm.



Simpang Pulai Chapati

Famed for its chapati (flatbread), Simpang Pulai's Kedai Kopi Sechewen has been a crowd-puller since its establishment in 1999. On Google Maps the nondescript *warong* (coffee stall) is identified simply as Chapati Simpang Pulai.

Besides chapati, the stall also sells favourites such as fried *kway teow*, fried rice and *nasi lemak*. Their signature drink is the thick and milky coffee known as 'kopi sechewen'. The bottom half of the cup is filled with condensed milk while the top is a concentrated layer of coffee. The concoction is what patrons seek after a tedious day in the office.

Siti Zubaidah, who has taken over the family business from her parents, said the chapati goes well with either beef or sardine curry. "Both are a hit with our customers," she told Ipoh Echo.

"I've maintained our family recipe since starting this business 20 years ago. The dough is made from selected flour (atta) sourced in Ipoh". She added, "Our chapati will be sold out by midnight".

The flatbread is sold at RM1 apiece while the curry is priced at RM2 a plate. The price is comparatively cheap.

Actress Zarina Zainuddin is a regular. "She'll stop by for some chapati whenever she passes by Simpang Pulai," said Zubaidah.

Housewife Normawati said, "I like the chapati because of its softness, unlike the others I've tried."

Teacher Hanim, 48, from Taman Botani loved the meat curry. "It smells and tastes so good and goes well with chapati."

The stall is rather obscure, as it is located immediately after the junction to Cameron Highlands along the Ipoh-Simpang Pulai highway (GPS: 4.528697, 101.130567). It operates daily between 5.30pm and midnight except on Mondays.



LETTERS

We reprint some of our reader's comments from our online paper. Go to <http://www.ipophecho.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.

Low-grade Graduates

Based on the global higher education ranking system, six of our 20 public universities are graded while the other 14 failed to get recognition. They are Universiti Malaya (70), Universiti Putra Malaysia (159), UKM (160), USM (165), UTM (217) and Universiti Utara (591-600).

What then is the standard of the remaining 14 public universities that have failed to get recognition in the global higher education ranking system?

The unranked universities include International Islamic Universiti, UM Kelantan, UM Pahang, UM Perlis, UM Sabah, UM Sarawak, UM Terengganu, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Universiti Pertahanan, Islamic Science Universiti, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Universiti Teknikal Melaka, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn and Universiti Teknologi MARA.

Besides the 20 public universities, there are many private institutions. In fact, there are more university places than students. To get more students to make money, they have to lower the entry standards. As a result, both public and private universities are producing a lot of low-grade graduates.

According to the Ministry of Education's publication, Quick Facts 2018, we have a tertiary student enrolment of 538,555 as of Dec 31, 2017. The top six ranked universities account for about 180,000 students meaning that over 350,000 students are enrolled and will be graduating from the 14 public universities. Besides these future graduates from public universities, there will be another few hundred thousand from private universities.

Not well known is that there are 165,000 students alone in the exclusively Malay/Bumiputera Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM).

Data on public universities shows that the majority were set up after 1990. If we assume a total of 100,000 graduates produced annually since the NEP's end, this could mean that our higher education system has produced more than 3 million graduates with possibly 2.5 million from the Malay community; and perhaps one million from UiTM.

This output of higher degree certificated manpower during such a short time is not only a staggering achievement. It is possibly unprecedented in the world.

On the basis of paper qualifications, Malaysia may have the most degree holders per capita in Asia if not the world.

Managing the country is like managing thousands of commercial businesses, companies and conglomerates. What can we expect when Malaysia is managed by thousands of low-grade graduates?

Why Malaysia is still not a developed nation?

In 1970 when the new economic policy (NEP) was introduced, our GDP per capita was about the same as Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea. Currently, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea are 4, 3 and 2.5 times our GDP per capita, respectively. They are already classified as fully developed nations.

While we were once the biggest producer of tin, rubber and palm oil in the world. Moreover, we have petroleum as a bonus.

In 2012 I wrote and published my book namely "Malaysia: Road Map to achieving Vision 2020 and I have given Nga Kor Ming 100 copies for distribution.

The fastest way to Vision 2020 is to practise meritocracy.

I wish to suggest that the Pakatan Government practises meritocracy in the selection of students to enter public universities so that we can produce higher grade graduates. I would also like to suggest that the Government practises meritocracy in the selection of employees for promotion so that our civil service can manage our country more efficiently.

Besides the above elaborated from his article, I have also received Dr Lim Teck Ghee's permission to extract the following from his article "Now everybody has a degree" which was published in the latest Sun Daily.

Quote "It is an achievement which politicians and policy makers intent on continuing the New Economic Policy ad infinitum do not seem to be aware of. Or if they are, it appears to be one that they do not want to discuss or make widely known.

This crisis raises questions about the course of higher education that our political leaders and education bureaucracy will find difficult to answer. However, it is one which needs to be addressed sooner rather than later.

The public sector higher education crisis is multidimensional and goes well beyond the concerns over plagiarism and other corrupt practices.

It includes aspects related to quality of education, unemployability, absence of meritocracy, lack of academic freedom, low teaching and research standards, staff demoralisation, governance shortcomings, alleged promotions based on political connections, increased incidence of outsourced work and cheque book academia.

Perhaps the most worrying aspect is that the higher education production train cannot be held back or stopped. It will continue to produce larger numbers of graduates in the coming years. One estimate is that the number of post-secondary students will double from 1.2 million to 2.5 million in the short period from 2012 and 2025, with the majority expected to come from the B40 category.

How can the economy and society meet the expectations of the millions of students, mainly Malays – many deferring employment opportunities and having to use up family savings or borrowing from PTPTN to finance their way to earning qualifications ill suited to meet the demands of a bloated civil service and a saturated employment market – is a ticking time bomb.

The nation needs a Royal Commission of Inquiry to address this subject immediately. The RCI's terms of reference will have to be the reforms needed over the spectrum of the nation's post-secondary educational system, including the universities, to rescue it from the impending train wreck." Unquote.

Koon Yew Yin

A Well-argued Piece

I wish to refer to your editorial titled, "Religion Is Everything" in Ipoh Echo Issue 308 dated July 16 to 31. '

What goes around comes around. Well done! You managed to surgically unravel some defying realities why Islam is the *raison d'être* for the nation's lack of progress and constructive development.

The foundation laid is too deep. It would take a mammoth political and courageous will to undo, let alone to discuss it sanely. As long as religion is the primary reason for political survival, it would remain an impossible dream.

The only hope, perhaps, is for the future generations to be better informed on the purity, beauty and virtues of Islam.

Having said that, only the Malays, through sheer number, can resolve this problem. If allowed to fester, the Malays would be the ones to lose, as it is an exercise in futility. My fear is the impact Islamic State (IS) returnees would have on the people.

A very well argued and dissected piece, I must say. Hopefully, it will get the coverage it truly deserves followed by some constructive feedback, of course.

Thanks so much for sharing your thoughts, Sir.

Nazrul Abdullah

Instil Good Values at a Tender Age

In a growing global challenging and competitive world, there shouldn't be a deficit deposit of young leaders. It is high time for the nation to build a strong team of young leaders to be pillars who are going to shape the future society both politically, socially and economically.

What determines success is the adoption of good values by someone or a race until it becomes a way of life for a race. By instilling good values at a tender age they will practise it and make it in their way of life. It will be absorbed as part and parcel of life.

Good values system will mould future leaders with strong personalities in the aspect of integrity inclusive excellence, volunteerism, responsibility, competitiveness and community spirit.

A meritocratic culture must be taught at an early stage.

The shaping of the mindsets and in the calculation of values among the youths must be nurtured and guided towards all strata of society at the right age.

Today's youth generation is addicted to the internet and social media. Parental caring and societies guidance is very essential in youth building. If a proper path is paved and directed I am sure Malaysia will have a first-class mentality population in the near future.

Values are standards or ideals with which we evaluate actions, people and things. Honesty, justice, peace, generosity, loyalty, integrity, respect, responsibility, leadership,

"Edith of Malaya"

This year marks 71 years of the death of Sybil Kathigasu, which fell on June 12. Sybil and her husband, Dr A.C. Kathigasu were peacefully running their clinic at No. 141 Brewster Road, Ipoh. But in 1942 when the Japanese troops arrived in Ipoh, the couple and their family had fled to a nearby small town, Papan.

At Papan, they operated a clinic, where they provided medical services, information and refuge to resistance fighters during World War 2 until their capture in 1943.

Sybil was held captive and tortured by the Japanese soldiers during the second world war for aiding resistance soldiers who fought against the Japanese occupation of Malaya. Despite being severely beaten, tortured and forced to witness her daughter being strapped by rope and dangled from a tree above burning charcoal by torturers. Even at this point, Sybil refused to utter anything about what she knew concerning the campaign against the Japanese.

At the time of liberation, Sybil was in solitary confinement in Batu Gajah, crippled with pain as her constant companion. She was sent to the United Kingdom for further medical attention. In 1947, Sybil Kathigasu was awarded the George Medal, the highest honour bestowed by the British Crown on civilians for bravery.

Time magazine, in 1948 had also referred to her as the "Edith of Malaya" after Edith Cavell, a British nurse who was executed by firing squad for aiding the escape of Allied soldiers during World War 2.

Subsequently, I would like to call upon the Education Minister, Dr Maszlee Malik, to consult history experts for their views and feedback to include our own 'Florence Nightingale' in our Malaysian history syllabus in schools.

Acknowledging Sybil in the syllabus renders a good message to students that credit is given where it's due in Malaysia and that all races helped build the nation. It also marks a milestone for women as they were largely sidelined in historical accounts on the country's struggle for independence.

S. Sundralingam

caring, commitment, compassion, cooperation, dedication and appreciation are the core values.

In order to achieve the above noble acts of character building, school and home environment must be conducive and parents and societies must be an exemplary role model.

R. James Ratnam

Business

By Mei Kuan

Building of the Future is Here



(L-R) Kym Looe, Toichi Ishiyama, Dato' Lim Si Boon, Sarly Adle Sarkum

The new Honda 3S Centre by Ban Hoe Seng (Auto) in Bandar Baru Sri Klebang is the first gold-rated GBI (Green Building Index) car showroom in Malaysia offering sales, services and spare parts (3S).

Ban Hoe Seng (Auto) took the initiative to be the first dealership in Malaysia to extend this green technology undertaking into the showroom and service centre.

Established with an investment of RM15 million, the new Honda 3S Centre was specially designed with environmentally friendly features that make use of natural resources efficiently, which will help in waste minimisation, energy-saving and reduce water usage.

The shining example of sustainability features, among others, 60% natural daylight use through its large glass openings and skylights; zonal energy-efficient light-emitting diode (LED) lighting with motion sensors to enable power savings and usage reduction; natural ventilation through stack and cross ventilation in the workshop area and 100% potable offset for landscape and water closet (WC) flushing. Plus, the expected rainwater harvested annually is equivalent to 49% of total potable water demand of the Honda 3S Centre.

"Being one of the longest established authorised Honda dealers in Malaysia (more than 62 years), we are proud to still be leading the way with this record-breaking gold-



Guests of honour touring the new centre

rated building. This is not a one-time investment. This is a centre for the long run, which benefits us all now," explained Dato' Lim Si Boon, Chairman of Ban Hoe Seng (Auto).

"As one of the oldest Honda dealerships in Malaysia, Ban Hoe Seng (Auto) continues to impress us with their challenging spirit and successes. In Honda, we are committed to reducing the environmental footprint. We believe this new environmentally friendly 3S Centre will enable customers in Ipoh to experience great services in an even more conducive environment," enthused Toichi Ishiyama, Managing Director & CEO of Honda Malaysia.

"In terms of sales performance by regional and state, in the period of January to June 2019, Northern region has registered more than 7800 sales units, of which 30% or close to 2400 units were recorded in Perak. The Northern region was the third highest sales contributor and has contributed 18% to Honda Malaysia total sales. In Perak, the City is the most sought-after model with 34%, followed by HR-V at 24% and CR-V at 13%," the amiable Ishiyama added.

Present were Sarly Adle Sarkum, President & COO of Honda Malaysia and Kym Looe, Director of Ban Hoe Seng (Auto).

Built on a 2-acre land with the latest facilities and amenities, the 41,000 sq ft building has comfortable customer lounges, complimentary Wi-Fi services, safe kid's corner, free-flow food and beverages, Muslim prayer room, parking for disabled persons and 19 service bays that are able to accommodate up to 60 cars per day.

Equally admirable were the details spotted during the grand opening on Tuesday, July 23, which saw the use of biodegradable balloons, eco-food and drinks utensils as well as natural twine in place of plastic ribbon. To add to the fun, invited guests and team members were aptly dressed up in hints of green and gold.

For more, contact Ban Hoe Seng (Auto) Honda 3S Centre at **05 292 7333** or visit the space at **2 Jalan Sri Klebang A/13, Bandar Baru Sri Klebang, 31200, Chemor.**

Sport

Ipoh to be a Sports City



Ipoh will soon be known as a Sports City where state, national or even international-level sports will be held.

Howard Lee Chuan How, Executive Councillor for Youth and Sports Development, stated that the Super Bodybuilding and Physique Championship also known as Mr Perak 2019, has been a part of the sports programme since the 1960s.

"Mr Perak 2019 is the first to get the state government's backing. Hopefully, it'll motivate bodybuilders to participate and be a tourist event in the future," said Howard.

The championship was divided into 16 categories. Some 200 participants vied for a

spot on Saturday, July 13 at Lost World of Tambun.

Present at the event was Sazali Samad, renowned Malaysian bodybuilder who has won several international bodybuilding titles. His presence was a timely moral booster for the competitors.

Freddy Yam, president of Perak Bodybuilding Association, mentioned that the championship was meant to lobby for the right to host Mr Malaysia in 2021. He hoped women would be able to participate by then.

The Malaysia Open International Woodball Championship was held at Taman D.R. Seenivasagam Park from Saturday, July 27 till Thursday, August 1.

Abdul Raad Dimin, president of Perak Woodball Association, said that it was the first time such an event was organised by his association. Over a hundred participants from China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Singapore, Pakistan, Japan and Hong Kong took part.

He lamented that the game was not popular with Perakeans due to poor publicity and the non-availability of woodball courts.

"We hope our problem will be adequately addressed and gets the support it deserves from the state government."



Luqman Hakim