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See page 11

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ISSUE **179**

■ Page 3

Of Veterans
And Losing
Faith



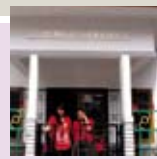
■ Page 4

Why Would
You Eat In A Dirty
Restaurant?



■ Page 6

Postcard
from Medan



INSIDE !!

Perak Tourism
News
Supplement

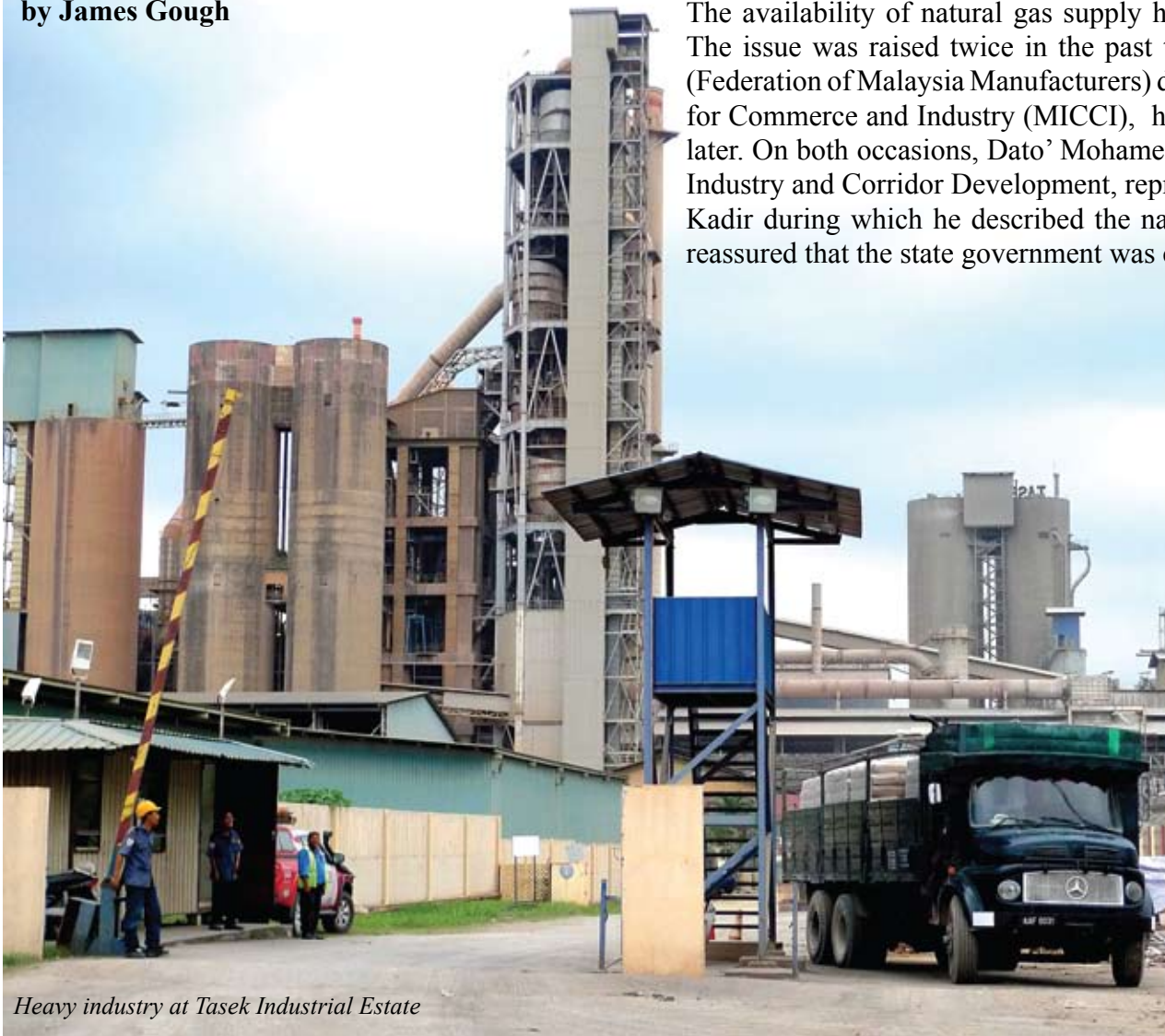


Gas for Growth — An Urgent Call for Kinta Valley

by James Gough

The availability of natural gas supply has been a hot topic in the Kinta Valley recently. The issue was raised twice in the past two months, the first in September at the FMM' (Federation of Malaysia Manufacturers) dinner while the Malaysian International Chambers for Commerce and Industry (MICCI), highlighted the same topic at its luncheon a month later. On both occasions, Dato' Mohamed Zahir Abdul Khalid, State Exco for Investment, Industry and Corridor Development, represented MB Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir during which he described the natural gas supply issue as a "perennial topic" but reassured that the state government was committed to making the "project a reality".

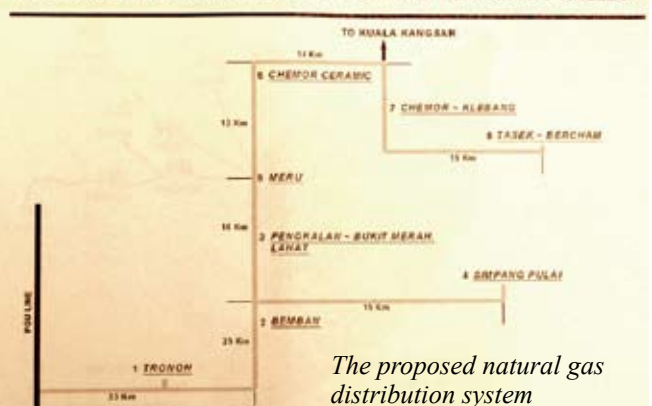
Continued on page 2



Heavy industry at Tasek Industrial Estate



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“Natural Gas Supply to Kinta valley will be my KPI” – Zahir



Ipo Echo met with Zahir a few weeks later to follow up on the subject. He intimated that the state government had already met the Minister of International Trade and Industry, Datuk Seri Mustapha Mohammed and Second Finance Minister, Dato’ Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadziah. Both had agreed in principle to provide the “shortfall fund” of RM40.9 million.

His subsequent meeting with the Minister at the Economic Planning Units, Datuk Seri Wahid Omar revealed that EPU similarly supported the proposal and indicated that the state could use the federal government’s ‘facilitation fund’ to get the project started. However, no indicator was given when the fund would be released. Nevertheless, Zahir acknowledged that natural gas was a positive factor for the state. He would lobby for the funding and had now made this topic his personal ‘Key Performance Index’ (KPI).



Dato’ Mohamed Zahir

manager, En Rosdy Abdullah is full of support for natural gas supply providing multiple reasons of its benefit. “Converting the plant machinery to natural gas is a one-time cost factor which can be recovered in a short time,” he told Ipo Echo. The factory started with 60 workers and one production line. It currently has two production lines and 200 workers. Rosdy forecasts that the savings derived from the conversion to gas will enable the factory to move into automation.

The reason for automation is due to the difficulty in getting labour. Skilled labour is difficult to get while unskilled labour, though available, is mobile and uncertain. The minimum wage while benefitting the worker does not correspond to improved productivity. Hence the introduction of natural gas provides industries more options to improve productivity, create a better working environment and hopefully, will attract workers.

And by extension, the Bemban Industrial Estate will attract more factories and create more job opportunities.

Revival of Industrial Estates

According to Gan, Perak has several industrial estates that are underutilised. He highlighted the Sri Iskandar High-Tech Park and the Pharmaceutical Park both at Sri Iskandar as well as the Ceramic Park at Chemor which was created around the availability of natural gas supply.

“These industrial parks are good for the state but they require gas to be cost competitive,” he reasoned. “Investors are on the look-out for locations with cheap energy source. If they do come one can expect the Kinta Valley to grow and be vibrant,” he added.

Critical Mass and Catalyst

One individual who has experienced the benefits of switching to natural gas is David Ho, Managing Director of Hovid. Two years ago Ho converted to natural gas at his factory, Carotech at Kampong Acheh, Lumut and realized a savings of over 50 per cent from his energy bill.

Ho described gas as “a basic necessity and part of the infrastructure for the state. Manufacturers who use a lot of energy can have big savings and this is an attraction”. Speaking with much passion, Ho explained that providing gas will bring economic growth to the ‘corridor from Ayer Tawar to Chemor’.

Prolonged economic growth especially in the Kinta Valley will create a critical mass that will create jobs and employment and become a catalyst to attract Investors and workers to the state. Every state needs a catalyst and the Kinta Valley can be to Perak what Klang Valley is to Selangor or Sri Iskandar to Johore.

“The growth of the Kinta valley will affect the whole of Perak. The longer we delay the introduction of gas, the more Ipoh will lose out from investment,” added Ho.

Overwhelming Support for Gas Supply

All those interviewed had positive support for gas supply except possibly for glove manufacturer MAPA located at Meru Industrial Estate. Its General Manager Lim Kim Hock’s only lament was that he would have to wait for Phase 2 before he got his supply and he had been “kept waiting for many years”. A check with a spokesman from UPEN also indicated a positive response describing “if the gas supply is firm it would leapfrog industrial development in the state”.

The overwhelming positive response was not just for its cost savings. Rosdy Abdullah stated that natural gas was clean and green and would reduce his maintenance time. As for Ho, he elaborated that once the gas pipeline was completed, the next beneficiaries would be the consumers and identified the hotels and shopping malls that used a lot of air-conditioning.

It is becoming apparent that the implementation of natural gas is an option we cannot ignore any longer. Gas is certainly an attraction for industry to invest and expand in Ipoh which would create better job opportunities. This in turn would encourage our children to come home to work and play and in doing so create that critical mass needed as the catalyst for more growth.

That being the case, delaying the introduction of natural gas will not be to our advantage.



David Ho



Dato’ Gan Tak Kong

History

According to FMM Perak Chairman, Dato’ Gan Tak Kong, of all the energy sources available, natural gas is the most cost-effective energy for industries. He added that although gas prices are reviewed every quarter, the switch to gas would provide savings to companies.

The request for natural gas was first made by Gan to the State Government and Gas Malaysia in 2004. The initial proposal envisioned a 150km pipeline stretching from Ayer Tawar to Chemor, estimated to cost RM160 million. The proposal would have been realized in 2006 but due to the shortage of natural gas, Gas Malaysia Berhad was forced to shelve the project.

The scenario changed with the establishment of Petronas Receiving Terminals at Malacca and Pengerang, enabling natural gas to be imported and supplied to more industries throughout the country. Since 2012, FMM together with the State Economic Planning Unit (UPEN) have held discussions with the Energy Commission and Gas Malaysia Berhad to make the Kinta Natural Distribution System a viable project.

Two Phases

The outcome of the discussion was to implement the project in two phases. Phase one of the pipeline will be from Ayer Tawar to Lahat, a distance of 85.822km costing RM102 million and benefiting 16 companies. The project duration is 24 months and a savings of RM40 million could be realized over a period of 3.5 years.

The capital contribution required for phase 1 is RM96 million which will be provided by Gas Malaysia Berhad and the industries. However, there is a shortfall of RM40.9 million from the contribution and this is where the government has been requested to assist.

The second phase of the project will continue from Lahat to Chemor where 35 customers have been identified.

Gas, Investors and Reinvestments

Should the supply of natural gas become a reality in Kinta Valley, potential investors will be attracted while existing industries will want to reinvest to expand their production lines.

Gan gave the example of Kamunting and Kamunting Raya Industrial Estate in Taiping where natural gas is available. Toyo Tyres has invested RM800 million while two glove manufacturers have pledged to invest RM1 billion to expand their existing production lines and possibly creating employment for 3000 local workers.

Similarly, in the Lahat area a multinational company has plans to reinvest RM50 million “if” natural gas is made available, while a glove manufacturer indicated it might want to revive its production operations.

Nihon Canpack Berhad provides services to canned-beverage drinks. Based in Bemban Industrial Estate, it has been requesting for natural gas since 2004. Its factory



Perak brand factories in the Kinta Valley. Natural gas is the most cost effective energy for industries.

IPOHecho

From the Editor's Desk
 by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

OF VETERANS AND LOSING FAITH

Malay Muslims should be more circumspect about ceremonies to honour fallen heroes than to submit selflessly to fatwas which are man-made.

If the 2009 Australian eavesdropping episode on its Asean neighbours is anything but deliberate then I stand by my conviction that their dithering is for a reason. Insofar as Malaysia is concerned, I feel it is not for reasons of security per se, but more to do with the prevailing political climate than following the two vociferous Bersih demonstrations clamouring for a free and independent election.

Despite the demand for an unconditional apology from Tony Abbott, the newly-minted Prime Minister of Australia, the response has been lukewarm, to say the least. I wonder why Tony has not brushed aside the Indonesian President's insistence with a mere, "I wasn't the Prime Minister then, Julia Gillard was" reply typical of how politicians in a quandary would have reacted.

Or resort to elegant silence, as a golden rule of thumb for someone in the pits. But in a Western society, of which Australia is one, such behaviour is deemed unethical and will earn the wrath of the nation and the international community.

My rambling is not aimed at placing Australia in the spotlight for its wrongdoings. Far from it, my allusion is merely an opener for a matter of lesser significance than what is ongoing in the Oceanic region. Politics, however, is not the issue here.

I respect the Aussies for one innate quality which we Malaysians find wanting. It has much to do with their attitude towards military veterans, especially their own. Australians, since the Second Boer War (1899 to 1902), have been fighting wars not in their backyards but on foreign soils.

The only time they were forced to do the inevitable was when Japanese planes bombed Darwin and their midget submarines sneaked into Sydney Harbour in an attempt to sink Allied warships at the onset of the Second World War in 1942. Otherwise, Australian troops were in harness for duties abroad all of the time.

An Australian infantry division was in Malaya propping the weak British defensive perimeter before the Japanese invasion in December 1941. They were here again during the Malayan Emergency (1948 to 1960) providing ground and air support for counter-insurgency operations. Their troops were recalled when President Sukarno of Indonesia decided to confront newly formed Malaysia, claiming it to be a British colonial stooge in 1962.

Those who died in these conflicts were being interred in a number of cemeteries located throughout the length and breadth of the country, including Sabah and Sarawak. And remembering their dearly departed has become an obsession with those who had served in the same outfits as the dead and the maimed.

These war-weary veterans and their families make annual pilgrimages to Taiping, Batu Gajah, Terendak, Sandakan, Labuan and Kuching to honour their kinsmen who had made the ultimate sacrifice, not for their country but the country that they had the misfortune to serve. Nothing can be more honourable than to remember these brave soldiers who died in the prime of their youth while fighting a war in a far-flung country whose affiliation they were never certain.

I had the privilege to attend one such service on Sunday, November 24 at the Esplanade in Penang. The Penang Veterans' Association organised the morning service dedicated

to fallen heroes of the Great War (1914 to 1918), Second World War (1939 to 1945), Malayan Emergency (1948 to 1960), Indonesian Confrontation (1962 to 1966) and the Re-Insurgency Period (1968 to 1990).

The association, under the presidency of Major Sivarajan KM Ramathan (Retired), has been doing so without fail for the last 12 years. Quite unexpectedly, I was honoured with the responsibility of laying a wreath on behalf of retired Royal Ranger Regiment officers and men. I was touched by the gesture, which I thought strange considering my abhorrence for officialdom.

Feelings aside, I was somewhat perplexed by the conspicuous absence of serving officers from Headquarters 2nd Infantry Division, which is stationed on the island. The state government and the Police were well represented and so were the High Commissions of Australia and New Zealand and the Nepalese Embassy, including the Thai Consulate-General in Penang.

If these foreign dignitaries could make an appearance I see no reason why the local army commander could not. He could at least send a senior officer to represent the division. After all, wasn't this an occasion to honour military personnel?

The reason is obvious. It has to do with religious belief. Since the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, which led to the ouster of Shah Pahlavi and his decadent royal entourage by Ayatollah Khomeini, the country has been overwhelmed by religious fervour that is second to none. Today paying homage to a cenotaph is considered taboo as the action would, in the words of the learned clerics, cause one to lose faith in Islam or more succinctly, *hilang akidah*.

If I were to go strictly by this dictate I would have been a Christian, a Buddhist, a Hindu and a Taoist many times over, as I had stood in reverence to an obelisk, not once but several times in my lifetime. In spite of all this my faith in my religion has never once fluttered.

Malay Muslims should be more circumspect about ceremonies to honour fallen heroes than to submit selflessly to fatwas which are man-made. I rest my case.



EYE HEALTH – THYROID EYE DISEASE

Ipo Echo's EYE HEALTH series continues with Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S.S. GILL talking to us about Thyroid Eye Disease.



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

The Thyroid gland is an organ that is found in the front of the neck. Thyroid hormones are released by the thyroid gland into the bloodstream as "chemical messengers" which are essential for managing the metabolism in our bodies. As with most organs in the body, when the thyroid gland functions well, it goes unnoticed but when it starts producing too much or too little hormones, it causes a lot of problems to the body. The eyes get affected when the gland becomes hyperactive. When this happens, it is termed as either Thyroid Eye Disease or Thyroid Orbitopathy, Graves' Ophthalmopathy, Ophthalmic Graves' Disease or Thyroid Ophthalmopathy.

WHO GETS THYROID EYE DISEASE?

Thankfully this is not a very common condition. In every 100,000 people, approximately 15 women and 3 men are affected by Thyroid Eye Disease. Most of the time it affects the middle age group. There is a genetic link, making those in some families to be more predisposed to suffering from Thyroid Eye Disease.



WHAT HAPPENS TO THE EYES IN THYROID DISEASE?

In Thyroid Eye Disease, the eye muscles and fat that surrounds the eyeball gets inflamed (swollen). The two eyeballs may or may not be affected equally, giving rise to the following symptoms in the eyes:

- Eyes protrude or bulge out of its sockets – an appearance that the person is staring!
- Thyroid Eye disease is the most common cause of protruding eyes (proptosis).
- More of the cornea (transparent part of the eye) and the conjunctiva (white of the eye) get exposed because the eyelids may not fully close over the eyes well enough (eyelid retraction).
- The eyes may ache, with intermittent sharp pain when the cornea dries out especially when the person is concentrating on something for long as in reading.
- Some people get diplopia (double vision) because the eye muscles are unable to move properly due to the swelling of the eye muscles.
- Blurring vision in some patients.


This may happen along with other features such as irritability or nervousness (mood disturbances), preference for cold environments, increased sweating, insomnia (sleeping difficulty), palpitations (a rapid heartbeat), tremor of the hands, weight loss, frequent bowel movements, unexplained fatigue or weakness of muscle, difficulty in conception and irregular menstruation.

HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

If a doctor suspects that you may be having Thyroid Eye Disease, the following tests are usually done:

- Thyroid Function Test (blood test): This will measure hormone levels in your body which includes TSH (Thyroid Stimulating Hormone), T4 which is the principal thyroid hormone and another thyroid hormone T3, plus Thyroid Stimulating Immunoglobulin Test (TSI). The other blood test that may be done is the RAIU test (Radioactive Iodine Uptake) – which helps to evaluate the Thyroid gland and to find out the cause of increased production of thyroid hormones (hyperthyroidism).
- Thyroid Scan – to determine the shape and size of the thyroid gland and to pick up any thyroid nodules that may be benign or cancerous.
- MRI Scan of the Orbits – to determine the amount of proptosis (bulging forward of eyes) and the amount of inflammation of the eye muscles within the eyeball sockets.

More on Thyroid Eye Disease prognosis and treatment in the next issue.
For more information, call Gill Eye Specialist Centre at Hospital Fatimah (05-545 5582) or email gillyeyecentre@dr.com.








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Why would you eat in a dirty restaurant?



Do Malaysians really care about dirty restaurants or are they more interested in the taste of the food? We complain about dirty restaurants but some of us continue to patronise these places. Perhaps, Malaysians don't care about hygiene as long as they can eat the food they are used to.

If you sit beside the smelly monsoon drain, which is blocked with rubbish, you don't think about the drain and your proximity to it. You just want to be served quickly and savour the food.

The dirty rag which the waiter used to wipe a mess on the floor is then used to clean the table, and you think nothing of resting your hands and cutlery on the table. Very few of us request fresh cutlery, if the one we were given are encrusted with bits of hardened food. Others who find lipstick stains on the rim of the glass simply turn it around 180 degrees.

Diners who see a fly hovering over food, may find on closer scrutiny, that the fly has laid eggs – tiny clusters of pearly white lozenges, almost invisible to the naked eye. Have you ever wondered how many times the garnish adorning a dish has been used? You might wonder if the bread has been on parade in the bread basket.

I have seen rats scurrying up the curtain in a restaurant in Ipoh, but the patrons merely laughed at the “playful” rats, and carried on eating. Produce, like vegetables, is stored on the wet floor, next to the toilets but you shrug your shoulders and wait patiently for your meal. We have seen some hawker stalls in which dishwashing involves dunking dishes into a bowl of murky water, before being stacked up for re-use.

If the parts of a restaurant that you can see are dirty, what about the bits you cannot see? As a rough guide to the standards of hygiene, try and check the toilets. If the customer toilets are dirty, just imagine what the kitchens are like, where only members of staff are allowed.

Are government statistics available which tell us how many people fall ill through food poisoning every year, and in which establishments – school or staff canteens, stalls, restaurants or takeaways? How many people were admitted to hospital and how many died?

Out of all the cases of food poisoning, how many people actually file an official complaint? What was the outcome of the complaint? Is an apology sufficient? Should one be paid compensation as well? When does the Health Ministry get involved? Do the health inspectors ever perform surprise checks?

Does the Health Ministry inspect the premises following a complaint and verify that the restaurant kitchen is unhygienic, as was claimed? We know that bacteria are dangerous, but vindictive and spiteful people can spread rumours that are just as poisonous.

On 15 November, Ipohites were shocked to learn that their popular nasi kandar restaurant, Perniagaan Nasi Kandar Ayam Merah, on Jalan Yang Kalsom, famed for its “Nasi Ganja” had its operating licence revoked by the Ipoh City Council.

According to Mayor Roshidi Hashim, the joint raid was “part of a scheduled raid” and the operator “had scored insufficient points” and had been ordered to close for 14 days, by the health authorities. The raid was done at 5pm on Thursday November 14 and the order to shut immediately was issued then.

The allegations which prompted the closure were stated on Facebook by a woman, who called herself Ze Aida. She blogged that a nasi kandar outlet had put faeces in the food.



THINKING ALLOWED

by Mariam Mokhtar

On Friday November 15, an outraged manager of Perniagaan Nasi Kandar Ayam Merah, Mohd Nihmathullah Syed Mustaffa, convened a press conference and denied the allegations of faeces in the food. His business has been operating since 1955 and he challenged the media and the woman who started the furore to provide evidence instead of making defamatory remarks.

By Saturday November 16, Ze Aida had retracted her allegation and issued a public apology. The authorities had also inspected the premises and had no objections to the store re-opening. On Monday, November 17, the restaurant

was back in business to the delight of its customers, who said that they had not believed the allegations.

Why did Ze Aida start malicious rumours and begin three days of hell, for the ‘nasi ganja’ owner?

The manager, Mohd Nihmathullah should demand compensation from the authorities for acting in an unprofessional manner. Ze Aida’s allegation almost ruined his business and the livelihoods of the people he employs. The Health Ministry must learn to investigate allegations and not make knee-jerk reactions.

CHILD HEALTH

Dr Shan Narayanan

Consultant General Paediatrician, Hospital Fatimah

What Is a Newborn Baby's Job? (Part 2)

“Life is really simple but we insist on making it so complicated.”

– Confucius

Babies lead a simple life. They eat, sleep and fill the nappy. Their life is thus pretty straight forward. However, their parents get very worried over these matters. The worry is out of their love for their baby.

In the last article, we looked at feeding. The best feed for the baby is breast milk. Some mothers, for various reasons (health, work or out of own choice) are not able to breastfeed partly or completely. They opt for formula feeding. In such situations, mums need to learn how to prepare the milk and sterilize the bottles to ensure babies do not develop infections.

Working mothers, who are breastfeeding, can express their milk and store it. Breast milk must always be stored in a sterilized container. If you use a pump, always sterilize it before and after use. In general, the milk can be stored as follows:

- in the fridge for up to five days at 4°C or lower
- for two weeks in the ice compartment of a fridge
- for up to six months in a freezer.

Most newborns sleep for 16 to 20 hours a day. The sleep is intermittent with the need to feed outweighing the need to sleep and hence they sleep for 2 to 4 hours at a time. Breastfed babies get hungry more frequently than bottle-fed babies and may need to be nursed every 2 hours.

Their biological clock at this stage is not yet established. Many newborns tend to sleep all day and are awake at night. This is extremely tiring for the parents/caregivers. Thus it is not surprising if parents/caregivers lose their cool under these circumstances. Support and turns taken in caring for the newborn is important but not always available.

Every baby is different as to when he or she will sleep through the night. In general, by 2 months of age, most babies are sleeping 6 to 8 hours through the night.

It is recommended that babies are placed on their **backs** to sleep and not on their stomachs. Babies who sleep on their stomachs tend to have a greater tendency towards blocking their breathing. There is a chance they may suffocate on softer bedding, as well. Once the babies are fed, they sleep, then they poop and pee to complete their job!

The urine is usually pale yellow in colour. In the first week, as the feeding is establishing, the baby passes urine only 3 to 4 times per day. After this, both breast and bottle fed babies should pass 6 to 8 times in a day.

The initial stool passed by a newborn is called *meconium*. It has a thick, black and sticky consistency. The colour changes as the baby is fed. Breastfed babies have yellowish watery stools with some “seeds”. Formula fed babies have firmer stools which may be yellow to green in colour.

Stooling patterns vary from baby to baby. It is normal for babies to grunt and grimace when they stool. Breastfed babies pass more frequent stools; it may be 6 to 8 times per day. They tend to stool as they feed. Formula fed babies may stool 1 to 3 times per day.

Traditionally, fathers like well-fed and clean babies leaving the hard work to mothers. This practice is changing with younger dads getting involved in the hands-on care of the newborn – a credit to gender equality!



Meconium



Breastfed babies' stool

For more information, call Dr Shan's clinic at Hospital Fatimah 05-546 1345 or email shanica02@gmail.com.

MUSINGS ON FOOD



By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

Pics by Ginla Chew

SeeFoon goes from North to South in her Foodie quest

The one lament I have about being introduced to 'Tai Chau' (literally translated to mean 'big fry') restaurants is that the dishes in each are, as the Americans would put it... 'same old, same old'. Meaning that they all serve the same dishes and have similar items on their menus. The only variations are in the preparation styles and the skill of the 'wok' person in the kitchen and the flavours he/she coaxes out of the food. And that is what separates the wheat from the chafe. And what brings in the customers like myself and my foodie friends.

For eat we must and daily. And while our eager group will check out any small nook and corner with any new opening bringing one or two of our curious ones to check it out, on the whole, we end up returning to some perennial favourites or adopting some new ones that we discover. While some of these may have been operating for years, like **Lo Tian Seafood Restaurant** which is in the north of Ipoh close to Jelapang, serving folks from Silibin, First Garden and Taman Rishah, some others like **Restoran Likarli** are relatively new, catering to up-and-coming communities like the burgeoning one in Seri Botani in the south, close to the Simpang Pulai toll.

In this review, I shall cover both outlets in one go as the menu items are similar and I will highlight only those items that impressed me.

Restoran Likarli

This is a two-shoplot restaurant with well spaced out tables and one side fully air conditioned. The service is brisk and friendly and they are happy to make recommendations.



One of their specialties here that they recommend to everyone is their **Mun Cheong chicken**, a 90-day old (most market chickens are slaughtered at around 40-45 days) bird of the *Wu So Kai* or 'whiskered' chicken variety. This is steamed and served with a ginger/scallion paste. As the chicken has had sufficient time to grow, the meat is more hearty and voluptuous without descending into stringy toughness which some old birds are prone to do. At an average size of 3kg and above, the serving is huge and it's advisable to request for half portions if the group is smaller.

The homemade **pumpkin tofu** served with *tung fun* or bean thread noodles and garlic had a velvety texture and was scrumptious, as were the green peppers and black beans, the peppers still crisp on the bite with the black beans lending its smoky saltiness to the dish.

Venison Kway Teow or flat rice noodles was delicious, the venison well seasoned and tender, imbuing its gamey flavour to the bland white noodles and raising it to culinary heights. Similarly, the salted egg yolk added to the batter of the **fried sotong** or fresh squid, lifted this ubiquitous denizen of the depths to another dimension.

Lo Tian Seafood Restaurant

This is another one of my foodie friend, Ginla Chew's peripatetic finds and considering that it's so close to where I live I will be eternally grateful. Apparently, this is a coffee shop that has been open for quite some time specialising in **river fish and white pomfret** which is always available. As white pomfret is one of my favourite fish, I shall certainly consider making it my local 'canteen'.

The night we went, we had the **wild river fish head** which came in a claypot and was absolutely mouth-watering fresh and certainly a dish I would recommend. Next came the **soft shell crabs** fried with salted egg yolk-crispy and umami morsels that just melt in the mouth.

The **Dong Por Yoke** or **pork belly braised** in dark soya sauce was wobblingly delectable albeit a tad too sweet for my palate. However, the next dish of **Ikan Bilis Szechuan style** made up for it with its sizzling spiciness tempered by the tofu

Salt Baked Kampung Chicken was average with the smokiness overpowering the subtle flavouring but the **wonton noodles** fried with chunks of roasted pork was tasty and excellent value at RM10. As was the **Tom Yam Fried Rice**. For a finishing touch we had **fried Umeji mushrooms and pea pods** or 'mange tout' embellished with crispy bits of dried sotong or squid. One dish that we didn't get to try was their **Hot Plate Har Gao** or dumplings on a hot plate which I promised to return to sample on another day.

All in all, Lo Tian with its very friendly lady proprietor Choong Poh Foong, is one place I shall frequent.



Merry Christmas

24th Dec 2013 Christmas Eve Buffet
RM 59.90 nett (7pm to 10pm)
** with roasted turkey*

25th Christmas Day
Set Lunch & Set Dinner
RM 49.90 nett

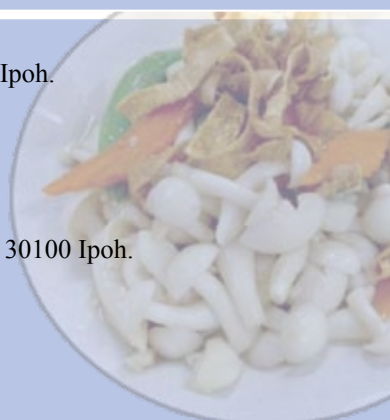
SYMPHONY SUITES
www.symphonysuites.com.my
 No. 41, Lapangan Symphony Business Park,
 Jalan Lapangan Symphony, 31350, Ipoh Perak.
 TEL: +605 312 2288 FAX: +605 312 2233

Restoran Likarli

44 Jalan Lapangan Siber 10, Bandar Cyber, 31350 Ipoh.
 Tel: 016 529 0298
 Business Hours: noon-2.30pm; 5.30-10.30pm
 GPS: N 04° 32.528' E 101° 06.543'

Restoran Lo Tian Seafood Restaurant

11, Jalan Raja Perempuan Mazwin, Taman Rishah, 30100 Ipoh.
 Tel: 05 528 3575
 Madam Choong: 012 556 6557
 Business Hours: 5pm-midnight
 Closed every fortnight Wednesdays
 GPS: N 04° 36.6' E 101° 03.32'



Postcard from Medan

by Djoko Nademhopi

Beginning with this issue of Ipoh Echo we will run a story on Medan. "Postcard from Medan" is written by Djoko Nademhopi, a Medan-based contributor. The article is to generate interest in Medan and areas within North Sumatra in conjunction with Flying Fox Airways' introductory Ipoh-Medan flights beginning on Friday, December 13.



Medan – a City of Surprises

importance of heritage and there is an attempt by both the public and private sector to preserve colonial buildings like the General Post Office. The old town hall has been incorporated into the architecture of the Grand Aston Hotel.

While there is grime – don't expect Singapore clean - there is little crime. But having said that there has been a recent spate of bag snatching. However, Medan Police Chief Snr Comdr Nico Afinta said that Medan is still a safe place for tourists.

Like in any big city one has to take commonsense precautions with one's property. Shootings, bag snatching and muggings are relatively rare; much depends on the area – generally it is a safe city.

The new airport at Kuala Namu is about 1.5 hours by taxi to Medan and 37 minutes by train according to the operator. The train station is right by the airport and it costs IDR80,000 (RM22) to Medan. It takes you right into the heart of downtown Medan opposite the spanking new Centre Point Mall and Kariba Hotel.

Taxis cost anything from IDR130,000 (RM36) to IDR200,000 (RM55) depending on your haggling skill. Taking a taxi brings you right to your destination and can take four passengers (if you do not have too much luggage) it can be cheaper than the train. (The current exchange rate: RM270 to IDR1,000,000).

Taxis in Medan are both metered and non-metered. The Executive (white) and Blue Bird taxis are metered. The boarding fare is IDR20,000 (RM5.50) for the first 10km. They are generally very clean and the drivers very polite. Avoid non-metered taxis.

There must be at least one hundred hotels in Medan, from posh establishments like JW Marriot, Grand Aston, Santika Dyandra, to cheaper ones like Grand Swiss-Bel, Grand Angkasa, Tiara, Danau Toba International and budget hotels. With the recent spate of power cuts it is best to avoid the budget hotels, which probably do not have generators.

There is no shortage of choice when it comes to food. Because of Indonesia's ethnic diversity you can get Sundanese, Padang, Aceh, Minang, Batak, Betawi and even Malay cuisine (if you look hard enough, the Malays are a very small minority in Medan and I think in Indonesia, as a whole). Each region has its own unique flavour and it will take more than a weekend to try them all.

Street food is plentiful from bakso, to ayam penyet to soto to nasi uduk, mie aceh and more. They are cheap and tasty if you don't mind mingling with the locals. There are also Chinese restaurants but also Chinese hawker food if you don't want to spend too much. I can think of only one Indian resto (restaurants – Indonesians are prone to shorten words). And if the chilies have got to your guts by the third day take bandrake tea and you will be right as rain again.

The electrical outlets are different from Malaysia's so bring your attachments if you want to charge up your phone or use your tablet.

Medan is an experience rather than a sterile showpiece. Soak up the atmosphere and get into the local culture if you want a good time. The people are friendly and helpful and may even show you places not in the guidebook if you ask them. As long as you are good at haggling you won't get scalped too much; the rule of thumb is to half or one third the opening price depending on what you buy and where. The mall shops normally have fixed prices.

In the next postcard we will look at some places of interest. Meanwhile for tourist information contact:

North Sumatera Tourist Office
Jln Ahmad Yani 107
Tel: +62 061 452 8436.
Opens from 8am to 4pm



People often ask me what Medan is like. The general perception is that it is grimy and boring with nothing to do. Well it's not like that.

I was on the plane home when I met three Malaysians who just had a golfing holiday in Medan. Not knowing what 'a hole in one' is or vice versa, I could not engage in golf talk. Anyway, I asked how it went. "Fantastic!" they chorused. Why all the way to play golf? The greens fees are cheap and the caddies are something else, they told me. Apparently, the caddies here are females. There must be more to golf than hitting a white ball and chasing after it in Medan. There are at least three golf courses around the city.

Medan is like that, full of surprises. It's not just a hustling bustling city where the roads are forever macat (jammed) and nowhere to go. Medan has a lot to offer if you look for it.

It used to be a staging point for Danau Toba and Nias which is one of the best surfing spots in the world but these days tourists are increasingly spending more time in Medan.

Depending on what your interests are, there are museums, mosques, cathedrals, heritage buildings, restaurants and street life – plenty of street culture.

There are even art galleries whether you are a serious collector or just want a pretty picture to hang on your wall. Of course the art scene is not as vibrant as in Bali, Yogya or Jakarta but Medan is by no means a cultural desert.

The word "Medan" means a field, a padang. In this case a battlefield where the Acehnese fought the Deli Malays from late 16th century to the early 17th century. It's quite peaceful these days; the only 'fights' are political as each party gears up for the presidential election next year.

From a backwater Medan has grown to be the third largest city (population 2.1 million) in Indonesia. The wealth is conspicuous as more and more high rises pop up all over the place and shopping complexes are chock-a-block. The mansions here are tourist attractions – huge and ornate monstrosities with Grecian columns and Florentine embellishments.

But it's not just skyscrapers and brand new mansions, Medanese also realise the

Community

Closing of The Year of Faith

Perak's Deanery which is made up of twelve parishes in the state congregated on the grounds of OMPH Church Ipoh Garden to celebrate the Closing of the Year of Faith on Sunday November 24, the last Sunday of the catholic calendar before advent, the Christmas season.

Bishop Sebastian Francis concelebrated the mass together with priests and 5000 parishioners from the twelve parishes. During the celebration 230 children received their first Holy Communion.

The Closing of the Year of Faith which was celebrated globally was started on October 11, 2012. It is a call to Catholics to study and reflect on the documents of Vatican II and the catechism so that they may deepen their knowledge of the faith.

Bishop Francis in his homily announced that the year of faith for his diocese was a success as the number of catechumens being baptized had doubled compared to previous years.

Francis, read the message from the Pope which said that "upon entering the door of faith take the next step into The Light of Faith which is capable of illuminating every aspect of human existence." He added that the theme for 2014 is "Discipleship: Called, Chosen, Sent".

The parishioners, consisting of Chinese, Indians, Orang Asli and East Malaysians, made up the congregation and the mass was conducted in four languages. The offertory was led by the different ethnic groups who were dressed in their own cultural attire.

Interestingly, with all the different ethnic groups and languages, Bishop Francis added another language, sign language, when he led the congregation in prayer.

JAG



News

MBI's Tree Cutting Exercise

Ipoh City Council has been cutting trees around Ipoh for the last two weeks and Ipoh Echo readers have been calling in to complain. They wanted to know why mature trees were being removed. One call was from an excited caller reporting that MBI was removing "all the remaining Casuarina trees" in front of SM St Michael's.

A check with MBI's Landscape Director, Encik Meor Abdullah Zaidi, revealed that "the root system of the SMI Casuarina trees were not healthy and could be in danger of being uprooted in the event of a heavy storm".

He gave an example of the heavy 5-minute storm in March this year which uprooted two Casuarina trees in front of the school that luckily had landed onto Ipoh Padang. Meor added that the SMI trees would be replaced but "would be replanted inside of Ipoh Padang along the perimeter fencing".

Similarly, SM St Michael's PTA President, Joseph Michael Lee, thanked Mayor Roshidi and MBI "for their prompt decision and action for removing the unhealthy trees as the safety of their students can never be compromised".

Regarding the tree-cutting exercise, Meor explained that MBI had initiated this exercise since September as part of their pre-emptive measure "to reduce the load of trees when a heavy storm breezes through Ipoh" and thus avoiding any uprooted and falling tree incidents during the year-end rainy season. The exercise included trimming of trees and if their root system was not healthy, the tree would be removed.



Meor gave the example of the tree root system of several large trees in Greentown. Although their tree root system was healthy the ground could not support the tree and "they had to be cut down".

JAG

Ridding Streets of Vagrants



Some 43 drifters were rounded up during an operation to rid the streets of Ipoh of vagrants on the night of Wednesday, November 20. Of the number, ten were tested positive for drug abuse.

The operation was mounted by Ipoh City Council Enforcement Division and aided by personnel from the Ipoh Police District, Immigration Department, National Registration Department, National Anti-Drug Agency and the State Welfare Department. In all, over a hundred personnel were involved.

Leading the joint-team was Dato' Rusnah Kassim, the Executive Councillor for Women's Development, Family, Welfare and National Integration. They combed the streets, back lanes and areas of the city which are havens for vagrants, the destitute, homeless beggars and drug addicts.

The drifters are mostly found in and around the wet market where Super Kinta is. Here, activities of illegal parking attendants are rife. Their other favourite haunts are Jalan Dato Tahwil Azhar where the night market (Gerbang Malam) is located, Jalan Mustapha Al-Bakri, Jalan Theatre and the Kinta Height flats.

"Some of them make as much as RM150 a day collecting illegal parking fees from motorists. It's a form of extortion, as motorists who don't pay up may have their cars scratched," said Rusnah to reporters who were covering the operation.

Part of the state government's rehabilitation programme is to relocate these destitutes so they do not become a public menace. "The homeless will be sent to welfare homes while the able bodied will be sent to Mersing, Johor for skill training," Rusnah added.

The operation ended at around 1.30 the following morning. It will be continued from time to time depending on the need.

RM

Mayor Bids Farewell

Ipoh City Council honoured media representatives with a dinner on Friday, November 22. The event, held at newly opened Symphony Suites along Jalan Gopeng, Ipoh, was attended by over 200 reporters, photographers and staff of news agencies in Ipoh.

It was a fitting occasion for all as the dinner was also to honour the mayor, Dato' Roshidi Hashim, who will retire on January 2, 2014 after having helmed the Ipoh City Council for over five years.

Colour and pomp were deliberately added by the organisers led by the Council's Public Relations Officer, Mohd Shahrizal, who insisted that attendees turn up in their most glamorous outfits to match the occasion.

The Academy Award lookalike event was accentuated with a pre-dinner red carpet welcome complete with a brief interview session at the foyer of the hotel.

Fathol Zaman Bukhari of Ipoh Echo spoke on behalf of the media representatives, as a prelude to the welcoming speech by the mayor. Roshidi was visibly moved by the overwhelming response, as most of the reporters were well acquainted with this affable man. He recounted his experiences helming the Council during his tenure as mayor and how the media had played a pivotal role in relaying his messages to Ipohites.

"I am truly indebted to you all," he said. "For without you where would I be?" It struck a chord with the audience who gave the mayor a rousing applause for his honesty.

The dinner ended at almost midnight after prizes and gifts were given away.

Ed



Annual Coronation Gala Dinner

The annual Coronation Gala Dinner, one of the most glittering and glamorous functions organised by the Perak Turf Club (PTC) in conjunction with the Coronation Cup race meeting, was held at the Grand Ballroom of Syuen Hotel on Friday, November 22.

It was held in honour of HRH Sultan Azlan Shah, on the occasion of the 28th anniversary celebration of his installation as the Sultan of Perak.

Some one thousand invited guests, from the diplomatic service, high court judges, heads of government departments, business entrepreneurs, and those from the racing fraternity, such as officials, owners and jockeys from Malaysia and abroad attended the dinner.

Chairman of Perak Turf Club, Tan Sri V. Jeyaratnam, in his speech, reminded guests of the Club's tradition of donating for the betterment of the needy and the impoverished in Perak. "We're quick to respond to national and world disasters and will donate generously as it's part of our corporate social responsibility."

Guests were entertained by a series of performances during the dinner. Wowing them were Malaysia's very own Anita Mui who belted out popular Cantonese numbers from the 1980s, Bollywood talents Mast Millennium Dancers and top amateur Latin dance couple from Russia, Alexander Andreichev and Kristina Nikitorova, who kept the audience spell-bound.

Emily

Advertorial

A Quality Lifestyle in the Heart of Ipoh

Fancy rubbing shoulders with the elite in Ipoh? Waking up to bird calls and the serenity of nature and still be at the shopping malls and supermarkets in mere minutes? Walking or jogging to the Polo Ground, going for a dip at the Royal Perak Golf Club and finishing off with a game of golf later in the day? Then, SE7EN @ Tun Dr Ismail is the residential address for you.

For those who are looking for something exclusive, SE7EN will be setting a new benchmark for luxurious living in Ipoh. With just 37 exclusive units in a low density 5-storey building on 1.55 acres of freehold land, SE7EN offers unparalleled quality living in the heart of Ipoh.

Each unit is painstakingly designed to ensure comfort and privacy. A fully-equipped designer kitchen with the assurance of German precision in their TEKA appliances, provides you with the option to cook up a storm. Other quality fittings include Daikin air-conditioners for full air-conditioned comfort, Hansgrohe bathroom fixtures and Hager light switches.

A choice of 1,400-3,500 sq. feet units all with 12-foot high ceilings await the discerning few while security keycard access and 24-hour security service will afford peace of mind to SE7EN's residents.

While recreational facilities may appear to be limited, SE7EN offers an irresistible

package that includes individual transferable membership at the **Royal Perak Golf Club** for every purchase of a unit. This membership not only gains you entry to one of the most prestigious golf clubs in Perak but with its international affiliations to the Royal Selangor Golf Club in Kuala Lumpur, the Singapore Island Country Club and the Royal Hong Kong Golf Club, access to recognition and acceptance is but a flash of your card away when you travel.

With the Sultan Azlan Shah International Airport a 5-minute drive away and daily flights to Singapore offering you a world of connectivity, SE7EN is ideally situated for a quality lifestyle. And in the unfortunate event of a health emergency, private hospitals like Perak Community Specialist Hospital, KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital, Pantai Hospital Ipoh and Hospital Fatimah are mere minutes away to cater to your healthcare needs.

SE7EN is ideal for those considering settling in Malaysia under Tourism Malaysia's Malaysia My Second Home Programme.



Community

The Start of An Illegal Rubbish Dump



MBI cleared an illegal rubbish dump at Jalan Chow Kai, Canning Garden and posted an antilitter signboard. Very soon, a resident dumped garden waste immediately under the warning signboard.

Later a whole couch appeared beside the signboard which started the cycle again with a new illegal rubbish dump!

The start of an illegal rubbish dump

Upcoming Event

National Horse Show

The National Horse Show (NHS) is in town again this month and will be held on the grounds of the Perak Turf Club Equestrian Centre at Jalan Kelab Golf, Ipoh adjacent to the Perak Turf Club from December 5 to 8. +

The four-day NHS event of equestrian sports will feature sports and farrier (person who shoes horses) competitions, exhibitions, carriage and pony rides as well as various fun programmes and activities for children. A trade expo (with individual booths) and local hawker food fair will also be available.

The main activity throughout the four-day event will be the equestrian sports competitions. These include show jumping, dressage (where the horse and rider are expected to perform from memory a series of predetermined movements) and derby events such as the cross country where participants will lead their horse through an obstacle course which includes water features.

According to Perak Turf Club General Manager Soo Lai Kwok, equestrian sports is a recognized Olympic event. As such this NHS is a government-sponsored event funded by the Totalisator Board of Malaysia and the Ministry of Finance.

The annual National Horse Show is organised in turn by the Turf Clubs of Penang, Selangor and Perak to encourage young Malaysians to participate in equestrian sports.

It is the biggest equestrian event on the equestrian sports calendar and draws competitors from all over Malaysia and abroad. The Singapore Turf Club and Bukit Kiara Equestrian Resort are participants in this year's event. A total of 200 participants including officials will be participating this year.

Besides the pony and carriage rides, one of the fun activities this year will be the Man vs Horse Race. It is a 100-metre dash with the man given a handicap of 30 metres in front of the horse. According to Soo, there will be athlete sprinters taking part and should be a hilarious spectacle.



Another interesting equestrian activity this year is the rides for the disabled. Special saddles and harnesses will allow the disabled to sit atop a big horse which will provide a sense of achievement and confidence and be one of the main highlights for them.

The event will start on Thursday December 5 with the competitions. The official opening will be on Friday 6 December at 9.30am. Being the school holidays the weekends are anticipated to be busy. Entrance to the show and parking is all free, hence Ipohites are encouraged to visit the activities.

JAG

LETTERS

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

Why do clever investors make big money mistakes?

Statistics show that most equity investors, including professionals, cannot beat the stock index. Studies have also shown that more than 80 per cent of day traders lose money mainly due to transaction costs as they select shares based on hot tips. There are several reasons for their poor performance but the most frequent mistake is 'loss aversion'. This is a psychological obstacle which has been consistently affecting their performance, especially in view of the ups and downs that is the normal behaviour of the stock market.

Loss Aversion

Some investors may object to the implication that loss aversion is a bad thing. After all, it is a very natural behaviour. They might justifiably point out that the tendency to weigh losses more heavily than gains is a net positive attitude. After all, investors who care too much about possible gains and too little about potential losses, run a great risk that can threaten their portfolios. It may appear better to care more about the share price falling than hoping for it to climb higher.

True enough, loss aversion can be helpful and is part of a conservative strategy. But an over sensitivity to loss can also have negative consequences. One of the most obvious and most important areas in which loss aversion skews judgment is in selling too early and missing the additional profit if you dare to hold it longer. Very often even clever investors who are well versed in stock selection cannot overcome this psychological fear.

What is tricky about this concept of loss aversion is that it can often lead us in the opposite direction- to hold on to a losing investment for longer than we should. I asked one of my friends why he sold a particular stock instead of selling his other holdings that he bought at higher prices? He said that he did not want to recognise the losses but preferred to lock in the profit. This is the most common mistake committed by investors because they do not want to admit their mistake of picking the wrong stock. Moreover, the profit from the sale could easily cover the losses.

Studies have shown that on average, it is easier for well managed companies to continue their good performance than for bad companies to improve their poor position. That is why we should not sell good shares too early and retain the bad shares.

How to select shares?

It is easy to master all the basic fundamental principles in stock selection. The most important criterion, in my opinion is that the stock must be 'Undervalued and with good profit growth prospect'. I will not buy a stock which does not have this quality. In other words – buy on solid evidence of value and good profit growth - not on the basis of speculation or hot tips!

After you have bought some stocks that you think can perform well, you will have to decide when and which stock to sell. Often many investors make the mistake of selling the good ones to lock in profit early but retain those that are not performing because of their aversion to taking losses on these. Some regret their action later and may even jump back into the market to buy the same stock that they had just sold but at a higher price. Most of them do not jump back into the market for the stock and they can only watch the stock go higher and higher.

Why invest in public listed shares?

Statistics show that our Malaysian Stock Index has an average annual growth rate of about 10% which is more than most other forms of investment. You can make more than 10% if you buy really undervalued stocks with good profit growth prospect.

There is a classic saying 'you can still buy the winning horse after the race in the stock market'. It means that you can still buy shares of really good companies after they have announced their good results.

Moreover, profit from share investment is tax free in Malaysia. You do not have to deal with people which are the most difficult from my experience, as you can never satisfy everybody. You do not have to consult anybody if you want to buy, sell or hold. Another advantage is that there is no bad debt, all cash deal.

When to sell?

After having said all that about selling too early due to the loss aversion phenomenon, we must not forget that no share can keep climbing up and up indefinitely for whatever reasons. In other words, we must not be too greedy and wait for the bubble to burst. Hence the time to sell is when the reasons you bought the share – undervalued and good profit growth prospect – are no longer there or valid. Sometimes you have to sell to raise cash to buy another stock which is better.

Koon Yew Yin

Casuarina Trees

I like to draw your attention to the casuarina trees beside the Ipoh Padang that were brought down last weekend. The PTA of St Michael's Institution wrote to the Mayor, Dato' Roshidi and copied Councillor David Lai our concerns regarding the health of the trees. We requested the city's authorities verify the health of the trees and to take appropriate action to prevent any tragedy that may arise from an unhealthy tree. Earlier this year a number of trees were blown over and it was fortunate that they fell onto the Padang and not towards our school or the mosque next door.

It is sad that these majestic Casuarinas, that had defined the image of Ipoh Padang and St Michael's Institution, had to be brought down but we fully support the action taken by the city's authorities as the safety of our children can never be compromised. I thank the Mayor and Councillor David Lai for their prompt decision and action.

I hope that the city's authorities will immediately replant the perimeter of the Padang with trees again but to do so within the Padang and not at the same spot where the Casuarinas were removed.

Joseph Michael Lee
PTA President
SM St Michael's Institution

Sinhalese Bar – A Relic of a Bygone Era

I refer to "Ipoh's Nightlife Renaissance" (Ipoh Echo Issue 175) where a number of the city's night joints which offers drinks, live music and fun for the younger generation were mentioned.

However, not being a young man anymore, I walked into this bar located in Old Town. One might wonder whether this is the Wild East! The swinging saloon doors of a Western movie, take you to a dingy bar that has not changed since it was opened in 1931.

In the bar are various kinds of liquor stacked on the racks of the glass cabinet. On the wall is a Victorian pendulum clock, a sculpture of a deer skull and a faded photo of the founder, untouched since 1931. The surroundings exude much of the decadent colonial charms of yore.

It is a well known fact that the oldest restaurant in Ipoh is the F.M.S. Bar, which was founded in 1906 by a Hainanese. It was the most celebrated watering-hole of European planters and miners and their wannabes then.

With the migration of white-collar Ceylonese to Ipoh in the late 1800s, it prompted an enterprising Sinhalese businessman to start a similar bar in Treacher Street (Jalan Bijih Timah). After the Japanese Occupation the joint was managed by his sons and they called it, "The Sinhalese Bar", being the only one of its kind in the country.

Like the F.M.S. Bar, which was a favourite with British planters and miners, the Sinhalese Bar became a popular spot for the Ceylonese, Tamils, Malayalees and Sikhs.

These days you can find all kinds of people patronising the Sinhalese Bar. Gulping mugs of beer and relaxing in the cool comfort of the bar, one is reminded of what it must have been like in an era gone by.

S. Sundralingam

Dream Centre (Ipoh)
Welcome 欢迎

Christmas Celebration

圣诞庆典

Sunday
22 Dec 2013 | 10am to 12noon

Venue 地点: YMCA IPOH, Main Hall, Ground Floor
No. 211, Jalan Raja Musa Aziz (Anderson Road),
30300 Ipoh, Perak.

Email 电邮: dreamcentre.ipoh@dumc.my

Join us to celebrate a great time of praise and worship, food, fun and fellowship.
诚邀您一起来参加, 让我们以敬拜赞美, 美食与你分享圣诞的喜悦与盼望。

Our Next Celebration In 2014:
Sunday, 12 Jan 2014

Arts & Cultural

From Vienna To Broadway

The PSPA Singers made their debut with a repertoire of arias in their musical presentation entitled "Voices from Vienna to Broadway" at Tandoor Grill Restaurant in Ipoh recently. Along with three prominent singers from Thailand, Sirikhwan Buathong (soprano), Thanis Sonkloe (baritone) and Salith Dechsangworn (tenor), the singers gave a rousing performance, not only through their vocal prowess but also facial expressions.

Led by music director Marianne Poh, who is herself a soprano, the show had an interesting programme, with the first half consisting of Mozart's well-known operas, Don Giovanni and Cosi Fan Tutte, and the second half, a selection of evergreen musicals from *The Sound of Music* to *Miss Saigon* and *Les Miserables*.

The first half began with a solo presentation, kicked off by Marianna Poh's rendition of *L'amour est un oiseau rebelle* (Love is a rebellious bird) from the 1875 opera *Carmen* by Georges Bizet. Then, Thai baritone, Thanis Sonkloe, took to the stage with Mozart's *Deh, vieni alla finestra* from the opera, Don Giovanni.

The second part of the first half was arias from Mozart's Don Giovanni. First was *Giovinette*, which was a scene at the wedding party for Zerlina and Masetto. This was followed by *La ci darem la mano* where Don Giovanni, the philandering Count, tried to seduce his housemaid, Zerlina. The last aria, *Eh via, buffone* wrapped up the second part.

In the third part, *Cosi fan tutte*, two sisters, one blonde, and the other a brunette, discussed the men of their choice. It ended with the women sending their men to the army.

The second half of the presentation was on musicals through the ages from light to the serious, beginning with *The Sound of Music* from 1959. The selection of songs included *Edelweiss*, *My Favourite Things* and *Do-Re-Mi*.

Tracks from *Miss Saigon* were *Sun and Moon* and *Last Night of the World* while those from *Les Miserables* included *I Dreamed a Dream* and *One Day More*.

The audience asked for an encore and to their delight was awarded with not one but two additional pieces; local hit *Belaian Jiwa* and African hymn *Siyahamba*.

Emily



Business

Casuarina Is Back



Casuarina, one of Ipoh's pioneer business-class hotel brands, is back, this time in the new township of Bandar Meru Raya.

Its management recently unveiled its best kept secret to members of the press – their convention centre, the first in Ipoh. This large, pillarless hall, now named Meru Raya Convention Centre (MRCC) has a theatre-style seating capacity of 2500 people or 150 to 170 round tables.

Casuarina@Meru also has an indoor exhibition area that can accommodate at least twenty booths of the standard size of 3ft x 3ft.

Strategically located in the heart of Bandar Meru Raya and just within walking distance from Terminal Amanjaya and Mydin Hypermarket, this 12-storey boutique, premier business-class hotel has a total of 150 guest rooms and suites, all tastefully crafted with an impeccable modern contemporary concept.

The hotel offers five room categories from Standard at a promotional rate of RM168 to Designer at RM488 per night. Promotional rates are valid from now until January 29, 2014. With the aim of making guests feel at home away from home, patrons can expect comfort in addition to a choice of a 24-hour coffee house, patisserie and club lounge.

Owned by Perak State Government's Perak Corporation Bhd, the hotel also offers a business centre equipped with private workstation, internet, teleconferencing, fax and courier facilities, in addition to secretarial support service.

Emily

Book Review

Young Emotion – Memories from an Old Free

Student days Words cannot describe the beauty of its carefree days. It is a personal treasure that everyone has; one that comes alive again when you meet an old friend or when you visit your home town. Memories of how things were then, the pranks, the games, the loves...

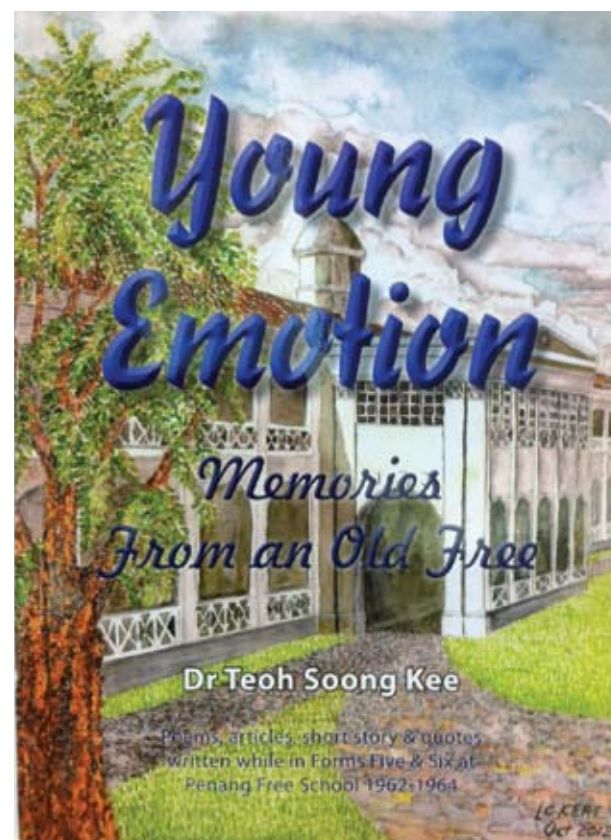
Young Emotion, authored by Ipoh-based obstetrician and gynecologist Dr Teoh Soong Kee, is a collection of treasured memories from his days as a teenager in Penang. It was during his secondary years at the prestigious Penang Free School where his love for writing began.

Young Emotion contains snapshots in poems and short stories, of student day-memories which engages the older reader to reminisce of similar happy days, while opening up to the younger reader a glimpse of life in the 'good old days'. Not just

refreshingly lucid, *Young Emotion* is raw and rich with the passion of a witty yet eloquent youth, who from humble beginnings, journeyed through student days with caring friends and inspiring teachers who helped shaped his life. Through the pages of *Young Emotion*, you will not only be transported back to your happy days as a youth, but inspire you to consider living the rest of your life with passion and purpose.

Young Emotion (117 pages) is available at Dr Teoh's clinic at Ipoh Specialist Hospital (call Tracy 05 255 1406) or at St Peter's church (call Jenny 05 546 0444) at a minimum donation of RM15 per copy. All proceeds will benefit the Penang Free School student fund.

Wern Sze Gill



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RPP RM29

Announcements

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

National Horse Show Malaysia 2013, December 5 to 8, 7.30am to 7pm at Perak Turf Club Ipoh. A fun-filled weekend of equestrian competitions, carnival and expo. Admission is free.

ISPCA Charity Food Fair, Sunday December 8, 10am to 2pm at Festival Walk.

Concert of Hope with Bells and Bows – a classical music and Christmas carols extravaganza featuring 'Belles & Beaus', **December 15, 8pm** at Canning Garden Methodist Church Hall, Ipoh. Proceeds from the concert will go towards the Lighthouse Hope Society "Soup Kitchen". Entrance by donation: RM500, RM100, RM50 & RM30. Contact: **05 546 2023, 05 545 5582, 012 523 6558** or **012 508 8818**.

School of Magic Dance Drama & 2013 Year-End Countdown Party organised by d'Artiz Streetdance Studio, Tuesday **December 31, 8.30pm** till late night at MH Hotel Grand Ballroom, Ipoh.

YMCA of Ipoh Toastmasters Club meets every 2nd & 4th Wednesday at 7.45pm. Contacts: Pak Peter **019 574 3572**, Cheah Tong Kim **017 487 3980** or Nur Aida Ahmad Nazeri **013 363 9490**.



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SPORT

Coronation Cup Race 2014

Representatives from 43 charity and non-governmental organisations received cheques from the Perak Turf Club following the completion of the Coronation Cup Race on Sunday, November 24, the fourth day of the Ipoh meet.

Amounting to a total of RM197,000, the biggest beneficiary was Persatuan Pemulihan Sultan Azlan Shah with RM10,000. Others included Perak Society for the Promotion of Mental Health, Noah's Ark and Vision Home. The donations were part of the Club's tradition of reaching out to the poor and the needy in Perak.

Besides financially assisting charitable and non-governmental organisations in Perak, the Club also responds to disasters at home and abroad. It too lends a helping hand to deserving individuals who walk or write in to the Club.

The Coronation Cup Race was passionately cheered on by hundreds of avid horse-racing fans. It was won by horse No. 7, Taichi Master, ridden by Jose de Souza and trained by Richard Victor Lines. Taichi Master is owned by Tivic Stable.

The Coronation Cup is the most prestigious annual classic race for Class 1 Malaysian thoroughbreds. It carries the Club's largest purse of RM700,000 along



with a golden challenge trophy.

Run over a long course of 1600 metres, it is open to horses aged three and older. The race was inaugurated in 1985 to commemorate the installation of HRH Sultan Azlan Shah as the Sultan of Perak.

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