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Perak Tourism News Supplement



Ipoh Craze for Coffee

by Susan Ho

A typical morning scene in the old days in Ipoh would see oldies in flip-flops, singlets or T-shirts, 'aunties' and 'uncles' huddled together, discussing the previous day's events, reading the paper, drinking their white coffee or 'Kopi O' and eating toasted bread with kaya in shabby coffee shops around town. Switch to 2014 and the scene is very different. Smart hip 'Cafes' are popping up like mushrooms, patronised by a much younger crowd, the hip trendies who are changing the face of Ipoh's coffee culture.

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Is Ipoh Turning Coffeeholic?

The shabby coffee shops are still around where 'Aunties and Uncles' still gather but the oldies too are being wooed or certainly led to fresh pastures by their children. With the proliferation of new cafes and new techniques in coffee brewing, the cloth drip bag in which Ipoh White Coffee was brewed is soon going to be seen only in museums.

Art of the Barista

In its stead, we see fancy coffee machines, serving up Cappuccinos, Lattes and any number of new-fangled names that creative copywriters dream up. And we now have specialists in the art of coffee. Some have actually been trained abroad where they earn the title of 'Barista' and some create marvellous works of foam art in the coffee. And Ipohites are willing to pay for the privilege of having their designer coffee in a trendy environment.

These uniquely designed cafes are usually filled with romantic vibes of soft music, exposed brick walls, simple furniture of wood, antiques, wall murals, menu written on walls in chalk and items that give a vintage feel. Or they can be minimalistic, colourful with interesting wall art. They are simple yet cosy for everyone to feel right at home. These Cafes are usually patronized by both young and old and are ideal for hanging out with old time buddies for a cup of coffee in a quiet environment. It is not surprising to see such places packed with people on a daily basis.

Different Extraction Methods

Some cafes use a capsule coffee machine, which is standardised, simple and fast to produce a cup of espresso. These machines brew espresso from espresso capsules, which is a single-use container of ground coffee with flavourings. The flat top of the capsule is pierced when it is inserted into the machine and compartment lever is lowered. When the machine is activated, it pumps high pressure hot water into the narrow end of the capsule. The brewed coffee then exits the capsule through rupture holes and flows through a funnel nozzle into the coffee cup.

Other cafes however use a semi auto espresso machine. It brews coffee by forcing boiling water through ground coffee and a filter to produce thick concentrated coffee called espresso. It doesn't have grinders, therefore baristas will have to grind their beans before brewing a cup of coffee. This device has a steam wand which is used to steam and froth liquids to include milk for beverages such as the latte and cappuccino. Baristas will have to adjust the fineness of the grind, the amount of pressure used to tamp the grinds and the pressure itself to vary the taste of the espresso. Some baristas pull espresso shots directly into a pre-heated cup or shot glass, to maintain a higher temperature of the espresso.

Producing great espresso is not easy. It requires patience, effort, understanding and skill. The keys to getting good espresso from a quality espresso machine include: using high quality, fresh coffee; correctly grinding the coffee with a high grade burr grinder; correctly packing the accurate amount of coffee into the basket; and extracting the coffee at the correct temperature. Keeping the equipment clean is a crucial part of ensuring consistency in process and product.

Latte Art

To give a cup of coffee more excitement and pizzazz, Latte Art has been introduced to cafes. So what exactly is this "latte art" that everyone is craving for? The barista prepares coffee by pouring steamed milk into a shot of espresso, giving it a pattern or design on the surface. They draw on the top layer of foam to create a pattern. Latte art is difficult to create consistently due to the demanding conditions required of both the espresso shot and milk. It takes a lot of practice to master. The common designs include a heart shape, a rosette or fern. Some advanced latte art techniques are that of the tulip, wave heart, swan, scorpion, cats, bear, etc.

Different Brews from Different Crews

On the menu, you will always find skilful baristas whipping up Cafe Latte, Cappuccino, Americano, Cafe Mocha, etc.

There are also different types of coffee. There are hand drip, syphon, ice drip, AeroPress, espresso, etc. Besides coffee, these cafes also offer some light bites such as waffles, bread, Danish, pies, cakes, pastries, desserts, etc.

Some cafes provide fresh roasted beans for their house blends. Some cafes however, use other sources such as Illy. If you are looking for something special, you could go to these places for their specialties. Ben & Lynette has Vietnam coffee, Burps & Giggles has double-shot espresso, Bread Espresso Dessert provides interesting coffee art, Harold's Bread serves caramel latte, JJ Cafe serves flavoured latte, Something's Brewing serves Australian blend coffee and Roquette Cafe serves hand-drip Ethiopian coffee.

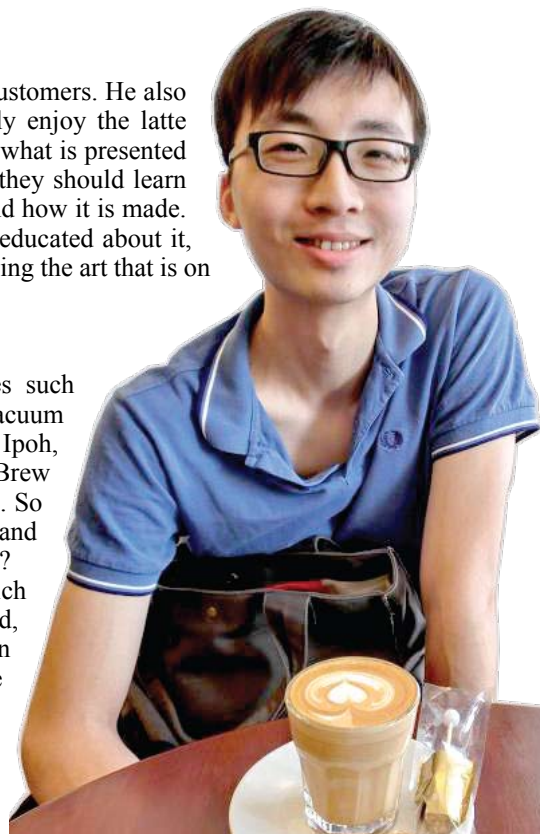
Alvin, a barista, thinks that the coffee culture is only having a kick start in Ipoh and the shops are still

trying to find a way to attract more customers. He also commented that most customers only enjoy the latte art because of its curiosity value and what is presented right in front of them. He feels that they should learn how to enjoy the drink and understand how it is made. He adds that people will have to be educated about it, than to just follow the trend of observing the art that is on the surface.

What's What in Coffee Culture

There are many brewing techniques such as AeroPress, Espresso, Ice Drip, Vacuum Pot, Hand Drip, Cold Brew, etc. In Ipoh, you can easily find Hand Drip, Cold Brew and Espresso coffee brewing at cafes. So what exactly are the differences of Hand Drip, Cold Brew and Espresso coffee?

Hand Drip is a method which involves pouring water over roasted, ground coffee beans contained in a filter. Water seeps through the ground coffee, absorbing its oils and essences; then passes through the bottom of the filter. The used coffee grounds are retained in the filter with the liquid dripping into a collecting vessel, which is the pot. Brewing with a paper filter produces clear, light-bodied coffee. It could also be called filtered coffee.



Alvin enjoying his cup of latte art



Burps & Giggles' classic motorcycle and decorations indoors



Business on a daily basis at The Roquette Cafe

Cold brew or cold press refers to the process of steeping coffee grounds in room temperature or cold water for an extended period. The cold-press process requires grinding. Coarse-ground beans are soaked in water for a prolonged period of time, usually 12 hours or more. The water is normally kept at room temperature, but chilled water can also be used. The grounds must be filtered out of the water after they have been steeped using a paper coffee filter, a fine metal sieve or a French press. The result is a coffee concentrate that is often diluted with water or milk, and can be served hot, over ice or blended with ice and other ingredients such as chocolate.

Here are only some of the cafes that are trending in Ipoh, but there is always more to come. Who could ever have too much coffee?

Something's Brewing
19 Jalan Medan Ipoh 1B/1,
Medan Ipoh Bistari
05-5415900

Coffee At 91 Ipoh
91 Jalan Raja Dihilir
Telephone: 012-5761687

Burps & Giggles
93 & 95 Jalan Sultan Yussuf
05-2426188

Espressolab
105 Jalan Canning Estate
05-5466648

Pâtisserie BoutiQue
103 Jalan Sultan Yusuff
05-2411385

Bread Espresso Dessert
3 Medan Istana 6,
Bandar Ipoh Raya
05-2411948

The Happy Eight Cafe
46 Market Street
05-2438388

The Roquette Cafe
101 Jalan Sultan Yusuff
05-2412616

Stan & Brew Roast Coffee
Block C, G-8, Soho Ipoh,
Jalan Sultan Iskandar Shah
05-2559722

The Village Cafe
6 Jalan Medan Ipoh 1D,
Medan Ipoh Bistari
010-2207721

Ben & Lynette
42 Lorong Cheah Cheang Lim
017-577 7776

JJ Lifestyle Cafe
116F Jalan Raja Permaisuri Bainun
05-241 2972

Harold's Bread
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Nature themed cafe with wooden furniture at The Happy Eight

From the Editor's Desk by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

THE HUMBLE KANGKONG

Will a one-off payment of between RM650 to RM300 enough to address the problem? It will, in all probability, create a temporary feel-good feeling that will dissipate over time...

Where in the world could a commonplace vegetable gain such notoriety (or fame) other than in Malaysia?

Kangkong (water spinach), long the vegetable of the poor masses, especially Malays in the kampongs and Chinese in the fenced-up new villages, has suddenly found a niche in popular culture. The song, "Lenggang Kangkong" is being hummed by Malaysians of all ages, my wife included. So what has a humble creeper to do with price hikes and Year 2014?

This staple food of the poor, the underprivileged and the undernourished comes in two varieties. The one found in ponds, paddy fields and marshy lands is the wild variety from which the more benign looking variety originates. Wild kangkong is distinguishable by its black stalks and roundish leaves while the "urban" variety by its green stalks and leaner leaves.

I don't know whether its nutritious value differs but, having eaten both, I find the wild one crunchier, tastier and more resilient to bug attacks. Back in my formative days growing up in the kampong, we identified the wild kangkong as 'kangkong sawah' and its urban cousin, 'kangkong cina', as it was grown by Chinese market-gardeners.

But that was the 50s and 60s when the country was embroiled in a Communist-inspired insurgency warfare, of which I was inadvertently drawn in at a later stage of my life.

As the plant is readily available in the paddy fields behind our sturdy attap-roofed house on stilts, plucking it was never a problem. That was why in the good old days, Malays in the kampongs had no difficulty sourcing for food, as there were plenty around their houses – fish in the ponds, coconuts from the nearby trees, chickens from the coops and, the all-consuming and humble kangkong, from the paddy fields.

It costs next to nothing to eat wild kangkong then and now. The urban variety, however, comes with a price. Today, a kilogramme of 'kangkong cina' costs anything between RM2 to RM3 at the wet and night markets in Ipoh. 'Kangkong belacan' a favourite dish in Chinese restaurants and Malay warungs can put you back by as much as RM10 to RM15 a plate. It is definitely not cheap by any gastronomical standards.

Well, nothing is cheap today. Not after the government's slashing of subsidies for sugar and petrol, and the increment of electricity tariffs. Soon highway tolls will also be hiked.



With a fast shrinking ringgit the end is well within sight, accelerated by the soon-to-be implemented Goods and Services Tax (GST) looming ominously in the horizon.

So for Prime Minister Najib to equate price hikes with the rise and fall of the price of kangkong is definitely in poor taste. This simplistic comparison has riled many Malaysians and it is little wonder why the song "Lenggang Kangkong" has garnered much interest of late.

Stung by growing criticism that the government was out of touch with the *rakyat's* problems, the Prime Minister announced, at the end of December 2013, that Putrajaya would undertake measures to reduce public sector expenditure beginning January 1. And that includes the 10 per cent reduction of entertainment allowances for ministers and senior civil servants. Measures considered as highly inadequate to placate public's dissatisfactions.

In an attempt to stop the groundswell of anger over rising costs the government will dish out cash to the rakyat beginning February 1. *Bantuan Rakyat Malaysia* (BR1M) will benefit nearly 8 million Malaysians who earn less than RM4000 a month. Will a one-off payment of between RM650 to RM300 enough to address the problem? Far from it. It will, in all probability, create a temporary feel-good feeling that will dissipate over time, as the stark reality is too huge a threat to evade.

I blame the administration's mismanagement and ill-conceived fiscal policies for our troubles. It is all about the 'robbing Paul to pay Peter' adage, as the similarity is so evident.

When you remove subsidies of sugar and petrol, prices of essentials will automatically rise. Is there a necessity to hike electricity tariffs when Tenaga Nasional Berhad made a profit in excess of RM1 billion last year? The gains should be shared by the *rakyat* rather than some cronies and some diehard supporters of the Establishment.

Price control, which the government is seriously considering, will only result in market distortions. And what about the artificially high ceiling price for rice? Is this not a simplistic way of buying support from rice farmers? In the end it is always the welfare of the privileged few that matters not the poor rakyat. This is a recipe for disaster.

On a related matter, I have observed that the traffic police in Ipoh have been on overdrive the weeks leading to Chinese New Year. They are found all over the city, especially along the busy Jalan Raja Nazrin Shah and Jalan Raja DiHilir. On reflection, I realise that the season for "giving" is in full swing. Can't blame them as price hikes affect everyone, the police included. Need I say more?

Se7en Finds Favour As Buyers Move In

Buyers of units in SE7EN @ Thompson are moving in as occupancy permits have been granted and interior design work completed. Amidst 'oohs' and 'aahs' as other owners examine the facilities in their respective apartments, one Dato' whose apartment is being decorated has this to say about his purchase.



"I purchased this apartment to downsize from my big bungalow which is way too large for myself and my wife, now that the children have all established themselves in different parts of the world. At this stage in my life, the whole ambience of SE7EN is perfect for us – in quiet and serene surroundings, with top notch security, very low density so that one is not confronted by too many neighbours and with the additional perk of membership at the Royal Perak Golf Club for golf and leisure activities, this is akin to paradise. Also at our age, the knowledge that all the top private hospitals are but 5 minutes away is very reassuring."

So for those who fancy rubbing shoulders with the elite and waking up to bird calls and the serenity of nature and still be at the shopping malls and supermarkets in mere minutes, hurry to SE7EN for viewing. 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.

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Only a few are left so don't procrastinate. SE7EN @ Thompson is the place for unparalleled carefree living in the heart of Ipoh.

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EYE HEALTH – THE LAZY EYE

Ipoh Echo's EYE HEALTH series continues with Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S.S. GILL talking to us about the Lazy Eye or Amblyopia.



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

The term lazy eye is frequently misused by the layman. A lazy eye, also called amblyopia is a condition that results in poor vision in an eye that did not develop normal vision in childhood.

To start with, the lazy eye does not focus on images clearly. These blur images are then sent to the vision centre in the brain and over time the brain gets used to seeing these blurry images from the lazy eye. Once this happens, the brain slowly ignores the blur images from the lazy eye, preferring the clearer images from the normally developing eye instead. Finally the visual pathways and the vision centre of the brain become fully mature in this blurry state of vision.

Amblyopia occurs in 2-4% of the population. In rare instances, it may also affect both eyes together. Once the brain development for vision is complete around the age of 8-9 years, it may mean a lifetime of poor vision in this lazy eye because the visual pathway is completed.

WHAT CAUSES LAZY EYE?

1. Refractive errors:

These include short sightedness (myopia), long sightedness (hypermetropia) and astigmatism. A child may be short sighted in one eye and long sighted in the other resulting in a condition called anisometropia where there is a difference created between the two eyes. The brain then gets confused with the two differing images and eventually chooses to ignore signals coming from one eye, hence the 'lazy eye'. So treating the refractive error is important the moment it is detected.

2. Squints or Strabismus:

A squint is when the eye alignment is not equal and does not look in the same direction. Therefore the eyes focus on different things at the same time. In this condition, the brain will ignore images from one eye in order to prevent double vision (diplopia).

3. Conditions blocking vision:

Any condition that prevents proper vision in an eye because it blocks light from entering in may cause eventual lazy eye. These conditions include cataracts, tumours in the eye or even droopy eyelids.

HOW IS AMBLYOPIA DETECTED?

Parents can begin by observing their children's vision and to bring them for a basic vision test during their pre-school years. This is good because it picks up lazy eyes at a treatable age in the child's life. A lazy eye may sound harmless but it has long term implications on the kinds of jobs that can be performed later in the adult years. So parents, look out for those lazy eyes!

3%
of children suffer from
amblyopia
(lazy-eye)

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

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Greentown 2, Greentown
Business Centre, 30450
Ipoh Perak Darul Ridzuan.
Tel: (605) 249 5936
Fax: (605) 255 2181
Email: editorial@ipohecho.com.my

EDITORIAL

Fathol Zaman Bukhari
G. Sivapragasam

REPORTER

James Gough

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Rosli Mansor Ahd Razali
Luqman Hakim Radzi

MARKETING & DISTRIBUTION MANAGER

Deanna Lim

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Plot 78, Lebuhraya
Kampong Jawa
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The Guardian of the Fireflies

For 49-year-old Khairul, who is affectionately dubbed 'The Guardian of the Fireflies of Kuala Sepetang', Visit Malaysia Year (VMY) 2014 could not have come at a better time. A keen nature lover and conservationist, Khairul did not imagine that his hobby would equip him to play a leading role in VMY.

Setting-off on a fishing trip for freshwater lobster (udang galah) one night, he came across colonies of fireflies (Pteroptyx tener) along the banks of the Sepetang River. He was captivated and from then on, he vowed that he would tell the whole world about these fireflies and do all that he could to protect their natural habitat. What started off as a chance discovery in 2008, has now become an exciting part of his life.

With a projected target of 28 million visitors for Visit Malaysia Year (VMY) in 2014, Khairul is keen to do his bit to promote Perak, specifically the area around Kuala Sepetang and Taiping. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation, Malaysia is in the top ten most visited countries in the world.

Looking back to that first trip, Khairul said: "I was concerned about the perils awaiting me. Catching lobsters could be dangerous. Snakes and crocodiles lie in wait beneath the trees."

He set-off when the difference between high and low tide was very small, and the weak current, allowed the river water to run clear. He said, "With these conditions, it is easy to spot the eyes of the lobsters, with a powerful torch."

Although the villagers had told him about the presence of fireflies, he had not yet seen them: "Seeing the fireflies for the first time was breathtaking. When the fireflies flashed, their lights reflected off the leaves, which were still wet after an earlier rainfall. It was beautiful."

Khairul has since started a series of structured programmes, to show visitors the fireflies and the mangrove forest. He also organises tours and activities for the Kuala Sepetang and Taiping area, catering to those with only a few hours to spare, and those who wish to stay for a few days.

He said, "I have my own team of tour guides, forestry rangers, boatmen and villagers to help me. I want to educate the public about the importance of the fireflies and the mangrove forest."

"The presence of the fireflies is indicative of a good environment, both in the water and in the woods. The Matang Mangrove forest provides natural pollution treatment, is a tsunami barrier, a food source, a nursery for fish and provides timber to make poles and charcoal."

"The Matang Mangrove Educational Park is a good starting point for visitors to learn about the mangrove forest, and has facilities such as a boardwalk, chalets, a campsite and a hall."

He criticised the attitude of some people towards the mangrove forest: "Sadly, most of them do not care. They treat the river as their dustbin. 'Effluent from nearby factories have previously threatened the fragile ecosystem of the mangrove forest, affecting the water quality and the life that the river systems support.'"

Aware of the dilemma faced by the community and their desire for development, he said, "States will want development, which means more factories and farms to generate more jobs. This will affect the natural habitat of the fireflies. 'The government have promised to make Sungai Sepetang a Forest Reserve and FireFly Park, but to date, nothing has happened.'"

Kuala Sepetang has a fascinating history. Khairul said, "Some people will know Kuala Sepetang by its old name, Port Weld. This area is rich in history. During the British era, the first railway was built to Taiping, in 1882. Before the Pangkor Agreement, nearby Matang was the administrative capital for this district."

"Kuala Sepetang is now a fishing village and has a large, blood cockle farm. The place is an important centre for ecotourism in Perak, with 2 hotels, 12 tourist boats, floating chalets and many seafood restaurants. Local specialties are mee udang, curry mee and fresh seafood. During the school and public holidays, both my mangrove tour and the planting of mangrove saplings are popular."

"There are other attractions like the charcoal factory, river cruises, fishing trips and the night- firefly tour. All our boats are licensed and equipped with life-jackets and rescue equipment."

Khairul looks forward to VMY 2014: "When I started, two years ago, I had 1000 visitors. Last year, I had 3500 visitors with tourists from Singapore, America, Europe, Japan, New Zealand and Australia. 'The local tourists are mainly university students. The rest are families or groups of people. They all love to learn new things and experience something new.'"

Aware that a few tourist operators have sullied the reputation of the industry, he was keen to stress the qualities of a good tourist operator: "Being honest, professional and inspirational."

Khairul knows that Kuala Sepetang can be successfully promoted during VMY: "First. It would be good if the Perak Tourism Board could coordinate with the Penang Tourist Board to inform the tourists, about Taiping and Kuala Sepetang. Penang



is only a short distance from these places."

Appealing to the authorities he said, "Second. We need help with infrastructure, such as a jetty in Kuala Sepetang." He added, "The Kuala Sepetang tourist industry is like a rough diamond. If the community were to have a hand in its development, the diamond will be polished and shine. There are plenty of opportunities for everyone to

share."

Footnote: Visitors interested in touring the area around Kuala Sepetang and Taiping are welcome to contact Khairul at www.kualasepetang.com.



THINKING
ALLOWED

by Mariam Mokhtar

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RPP RM29

CHILD HEALTH

Dr Shan Narayanan
Consultant General Paediatrician, Hospital Fatimah

The Premature Baby

A premature baby is a baby who is born before 37 weeks. They thus have less time to develop in the mother's womb in order to adapt to life outside the womb.

The gestation of the baby determines its severity of prematurity.

Generally, a baby born

1. between 34 and 37 weeks is a late premature baby
2. less than 32 weeks is very premature; and
3. less than 25 weeks is extremely premature.

The specific cause of premature delivery is not clear, however some factors may increase the risk of premature birth. The more common factors are as follows:

- Any medical condition affecting the mother's health significantly such as high blood pressure, diabetes mellitus.
- Multiple pregnancies (twins/triplets)
- A history of premature births.

When your baby arrives early, it's normal to feel scared and overwhelmed as well as joyful.

Thus it is important to have an understanding of the issues related to premature babies.

They tend to have more health problems. The more premature they are, the more tendencies to develop complications and have to stay longer in the hospital. They are treated in a specialised area in the hospital called *Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)*.

Health issues for Premies include:

Temperature control: Premature babies lose body heat very fast as they have a large surface area and do not have much fat stored. They are thus managed in an incubator or under a warmer.

Breathing: The lungs of a premature baby is immature and can result in breathing difficulties called *Respiratory Distress Syndrome*. This is more common in babies born before 35 weeks. These babies will need help in breathing, that is, assisted ventilation.

Infection: The immune system is immature thus they are prone to infections. They are treated with antibiotics.

Heart problems: The common heart problems are low blood pressure and *Patent Ductus Arteriosus* which is persistent opening between the Aorta and the pulmonary artery. If too much blood flows through this opening, the baby may have heart failure.

Brain problems: The more premature the baby, the higher the risk the baby bleeds into the brain called intraventricular haemorrhage. The more severe the bleed, the higher the chances for brain damage and accumulation of fluid in the brain (hydrocephalus).

They are also prone to hypoglycaemia, anemia, jaundice and if they are fed early, especially the very premature baby, may develop infection of the intestine called *Necrotising Enterocolitis*.

The **long term** health issues that may be faced by the premature babies are as follows:

- Cerebral palsy
- Vision problems
- Hearing problems
- Dental problems
- Learning difficulties
- Behaviour problems
- More likely to have chronic health issues such as asthma, feeding problems.

The premature babies often have two ages:

Chronological age is the age of the baby from the day of birth.

Adjusted age is the age of the baby based on his due date. The doctor/nurse use this age when they evaluate the baby's growth and development. So, if a baby is 8 months old, but was born 1½ months early, his adjusted age is 6½ months.

Most premature babies "catch up" to their peers, developmentally, in two to three years. After that, any differences in size or development are most likely due to individual differences, rather than to premature birth.

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

MUSINGS ON FOOD & WELLNESS

By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

Pics by Ginla Chew



SeeFoon wanders down Kuala Kangsar Road



The long stretch of Kuala Kangsar Road is unfamiliar territory for me with its block after block of shophouses and a myriad sundry businesses. It takes a person of my foodie friend Ginla Chew's energetic exploration to ferret out the latest in good eats along this stretch. And ferret out she did. This time in a newly opened restaurant called (wait for it) Ipoman.

Only opened in August last year, the restaurant is an offshoot of one of Ipoh's familiar favourites, the Mah Poh restaurant in Ipoh Garden. Apparently a relative of the proprietors of the original Mah Poh, proud proprietor of the new Ipoman, Mdm. C.W. Lian (otherwise fondly called Wan Tseh) was quick to point out that the signature dishes for which the original Mah Poh is famous, such as their crispy fried Pig's Trotter are also available here in Ipoman but pre-ordering is essential. However, she was keen to showcase her specialties at Ipoman which are a departure from its ancestor shop in Ipoh Garden.

We were a group of seven that night and the first dish to arrive was a steaming tureen of **Curry Fish Head**, cut up pieces of very fresh and meaty fish head simmering in a curry broth teeming with brinjals, ladies fingers, and towpok or fried bean curd – **RM28** and up depending on numbers.

Next was another soupy item, this time a curry **Tongfun** (bean thread vermicelli) with prawns. The prawns were quite large and generously portioned with the curry sauce creamy and mild. It would have been more fragrant if not for the penchant here in restaurants to use evaporated milk for creaminess instead of the traditional *santan* (coconut milk) in the mistaken belief that *santan* because of its saturated fat content, was bad for you. I personally don't subscribe to this as coconut oil is now gaining a resurgence in popularity with new studies showing that it has some very health giving properties. And think about the added flavour that coconut milk brings to a dish. I immediately made a mental note to order this dish in advance and ask for coconut milk to be used instead of this bland compromise. However, having said my piece, I have to admit that the dish was extremely tasty despite the use of evaporated milk. **RM35** and up.

Then came one of my favourites, **fallopian tubes sauteed** with sambal, dried prawns and chillies – heavenly – **RM22**. **Steamed fish slivers** were next on the menu, ocean fresh *Sek Pan* or Garupa steamed and topped with soya and scallions. Very fresh and

firm – **RM28**.

Dry-fried brinjals with red chillies, spring onions and dried shrimps followed, soft but not soggy, and not too oily, a measure of skill with the delicate eggplant – **RM12**. Deep-fried **Lemon Grass Chicken** with honey was a tad too sweet for my taste but others at our table were very pleased with it – **RM20**. **Gailan or long stemmed Chinese broccoli** with sweet rice wine, wolfberries or Goji berries, cloud ear fungus or *Wanyu* and ginger slivers was utterly fragrant and delectable – **RM14**; as was their **homemade Tofu** with mushrooms, carrots and peapods – **RM12**.

We finally finished the meal with a **Woh Pang**, lotus paste wrapped in a pancake and deep fried.

Now I'm not usually a big fan of desserts especially Chinese ones but this I have

to admit was special and I ended up eating three slices which is indicative of how good it was – **RM10**.

One specialty of the house which I didn't get to try and which sounded mouth-wateringly yummy is the *Ham Yu Tao Fa Lam Tau Fu Tong*. Quite a mouthful to pronounce which means salted fish head in a broth cooked with pork belly and tofu. This has to be ordered a day in advance. For me that's on the menu for my next visit.



Ipoman

60-62 Laluan Tawas Damai

Anjung Tawas Impiana 30010 Ipoh

Tel: Wan Tseh: 012 506 1714

GPS: E 101 6' 46.8 N 4 39' 46.4

Business Hours: Daily 11.30am-3pm & 5.30pm-10pm

Closed Mondays every fortnight.



BRT — The Gentle Path to Wellness (Part 2)

SeeFoon Chan-Koppen continues her exploration of Bioresonance Therapy (BRT) with a report on her own personal experience after the first round of 10 sessions.

I have used BRT or Bioresonance Therapy on quite a few occasions before, having had to travel to Singapore and further afield to find therapists who have and use these machines. Imagine my delight when I discovered Oasis of Hope right here on the second floor of the same building as Ipoh Echo.

For me the principle of bioresonance makes sense. Leading scientists have discovered that every living and nonliving thing has its own resonant frequency. Every organ of the body has its own individual resonant frequency, much like the note of a tuning fork. All bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi also have their own frequencies.

When an organ, such as the lung, which usually resonates at a frequency of 72 cycles per second (also known as **herz**) develops an infection, then the frequency will change, usually dropping a few hertz. By producing the same frequency as a healthy lung using a frequency generator, then we can help the lung to recuperate its normal functioning. The body heals and rebalances itself when it is connected to healthy frequencies. This is the principle of BIORESONANCE.

If we take a crystal wine glass as an example, which has its own resonant frequency around 500 hertz and we produce a sound at the same frequency, stand the glass in front of a speaker, then the glass will absorb this frequency and break. This is the phenomenon of RESONANCE.

In the same way, microbes also have their own resonant frequencies – if we can match these frequencies then the microbes will absorb this energy and burst. I have actually seen this happening in a video with frequencies killing a parasite.

My first treatment was actually a 'check-up' of sorts. The wonderful part of each session is that you get to lie on a recliner seat and they put a flat mat-like electrode on your back and one or two either on your chest and/or your stomach. These electrodes are lightly padded and not in the least bit invasive, with no tingling sensations involved. Then your energy level is measured by holding onto two metal rods. During this first session my energy level was a low 34, with the optimum being 100.

The rest of this first session was a soporific idyll as I drifted off into a deep sleep. When I awoke after two hours, I was led through the list of what has been registered by the machine. And it was a lengthy one!

I was told that I was allergic to about 24 food items out of a list of 64 and there are still more than 100 items like preservatives, molds, fungi, colourants, insect bites, dust mites, etc., which remain to be checked in the next cycle. And they found degenerated cells in just about every single one of my internal organs!

Discovering that I am allergic to common food items like milk, butter, corn, oats, rice, beans, pork, turkey and a host of other everyday foods was an eye opener for me. I know that I am particularly sensitive to MSG or monosodium glutamate, that flavour enhancer that is the mainstay of most restaurants and stalls so I asked if there



was anything that can be done to alleviate the swelling of my calves and ankles that invariably follow my ingestion of MSG – which as a food writer is one ingredient I find difficult to avoid despite my constant pleading with the restaurants concerned.

The answer was a resounding yes and I was reassured that all the food items that I'm found to be allergic to can be all ameliorated with BRT. Thank goodness for BRT I thought. No needles, no drugs, no antihistamines.

The process is a slow and patient one though. After 10 sessions, I definitely noticed that my MSG allergy has been reduced. I don't swell up as often and as much as I used to. An added bonus (and I have to credit BRT because I haven't added anything new to my supplement regime) is the fact that my fasting blood sugar has come down. Despite my eating the occasional high-carb meal.

The aim of my treatment regime was to increase my body's tolerance to MSG and to stimulate self healing in the body. So far, it appears to be working.

Next issue: More on the results of my 10 sessions of BRT.

50% OFF for Comprehensive Check Package worth RM180 valid till May 31, 2014. Call 012 510 2555 (Mr CM Wong) or 05 241 5122 and mention Ipoh Echo.

Greentown Business Centre at: A-2-01A Second Floor, Wisma MFCB, 1 Persiaran Greentown 2, Greentown Business Centre, 30450 Ipoh. Tel: +605 2415 122.

URL: www.bioresonancetherapy.com.sg

Email: contactus@bioresonancetherapy.com.my

Community

Perak Qiong Hai Green Ride



The Hainanese community Perak Qiong Hai Association's 'Suki Green Pedal Fellowship Ride' on the early morning of December 29, 2013, was solely a fun ride. There were no winners or prizes; only fresh air and fellowship.

The ride was the start of the Association's 60th anniversary celebrations which will take place on May 5. Over 60 members together with their family and friends took part in the ride. A majority of the riders were senior committee members which included its Chairman Ho Koon Kan.

The ride started at Bukit Kinding and wound its way to Chemor and back, covering a distance of 18km. The route is a popular off-road circuit which cuts through scenic vegetable farms and oil palm estates.

It was a leisurely ride which allowed for group photo shoots along the way and to take in the beauty of the valley and even a sip of cool coconut water at the halfway point.

In the Chinese calendar 60 years is the accomplishment of one complete cycle of all the elements of life. The association's green ride is a fitting and forward start towards an auspicious celebration coming soon.

JAG



Dementia Centre Celebrates New Year

The Dementia Care Centre, Perak ushered in the new year with lunch for their staff and clients. It was a joyous occasion where the folks mingled together and enjoyed the variety of delicious food. Dr Esther Ebenezer, Chairman of the society, was present and chatted with the clients who were entertained with games to make them feel at home.

The Dementia Care Centre is the only one in Perak that caters

to people with dementia. It is open five days a week, from 9am till 3pm. The clients can come at different hours of the morning. When they arrive they will be taken for a walk around the garden. After this it will be games time where they can play bingo, dominoes or snakes and ladders. For those who wish to read, newspapers are available. Transport is provided for those who are ambulatory.

The centre is conducting a research to explore the caregiver's burden. For further information call 05 241 1691.

AJ



News



M Boutique Hotel Opening Ceremony

M Boutique Hotel was officially launched recently. Located at Hala Datuk 5, The M Boutique Hotel by Ariva Hotels and Serviced Apartments unveiled 93 rooms in a unique setting. The overall design of the hotel is eclectic, inspired by Malaysia's colonial past, depicting the evolution of this genre through the use of contemporary art and furniture design blended with the more classic feel of shop-house architecture and the building's industrial exterior.

The hotel rooms are equipped with complimentary WiFi connectivity, individually controlled air-conditioning, in-room digital safe, LCD TV with satellite channels, bathroom with rain shower, mini bar, security key card access, radio alarm with iPod/iPhone dock, elevator, laundry service/dry cleaning, gymnasium, meeting facilities, restaurant, lifestyle shop, private car park and coffee & tea making facilities.

M Boutique Hotel contains various room categories consisting of 20 Superior, 30 Deluxe, 30 Premier and 9 Suites including 3 Family Suites with different bed configurations. Prices range from RM180 up per night.

Inside the hotel, guests can enjoy the signature Old Town White Coffee Café showcasing the best of Malaysia's diverse cuisine. Soon to open will be the Myth Eatery & Bar featuring contemporary fare using only the freshest ingredients from local sustainable sources.

"Ipoh is a remarkable destination with incredible experiences – rich in culture and also a vibrant dining, retail and entertainment scene. With M Boutique Hotel by ARIVA, our intention is to make all that Ipoh has to offer easily and effortlessly accessible to our guests," said Ronald Loges, Vice President, ARIVA Hotels & Serviced Apartments. "The hotel with its unique and quirky design will soon become the preferred destination to stay in Ipoh," said Jean-Claude Erne, Executive Director, ARIVA Hotels & Serviced Apartments.

Kalai



Educating Forward with ASIA Metropolitan International School (amētis)

A life long Love

Consider what these situations have in common: ordering food from a menu, following road directions or filling out a form?

Answer: All the situations involve reading in one form or another.

Reading is one of the most important practical tools that has to be developed from an early age. Being able to access information through the printed word is an absolute necessity for personal growth and satisfaction. As children initiate a lifelong relationship with the printed word, they become adults who are confident readers, whether for knowledge, business or pleasure.

What can we do to encourage the reading habit?

Start Young

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." — Dr. Seuss

Spend time talking; telling stories and singing with children from the time they are infants. Guide your child by pointing to the pictures, and say the names of the various objects. By associating words to pictures and real-life objects, the child learns the value of language.

Read aloud

Like singing, the sound, rhythm and melody of words helps in the development of language acquisition, listening skills and prepares children for the written word. Be expressive and exaggerate - change your voice, tone, pace and volume to fit the story. These will make the story more interesting and memorable to a child. Even when children are able to read by themselves, you can still continue reading aloud stories as this stretches their imagination and motivates them to improve their reading skills.

Routine matters

"Children are made readers on the laps of their parents." — Emilie Buchwald

Try to read with your child daily at a regularly scheduled time. Choose a comfortable place to read together. This helps in creating a special feeling at reading time. Let your child select the books to read - your child may favour one book and insists you read that night after night! Although it may be boring for you (WARNING: when you try to skip parts, they WILL know!), keep in mind that the story may interest your child or meet an emotional need within them. Done regularly, routines will become habits and your child will be more inclined to read even when you are busy.

Talk about it

When reading a story, talk about it to the child. Discuss the pictures and the main ideas. Get your child to predict what might happen next before turning the pages. Ask them to consider what they might do if they were in the position of a character in the story.

Be a reading role model

Set an example by reading yourself. Take your child to the bookstores or libraries and encourage him to borrow books. Let the child see you reading books, newspapers or magazines, in any form. "Let us read, and let us dance; these two amusements will never do any harm to the world."

— Voltaire

ASIA Metropolitan International School (amētis), in line with its philosophy of 'Educating Forward' provides a holistic learning environment, with a great emphasis on mastering the English Language. Learners are prepared to have the advantage of confidently coping with information, communication and digital technology; preparing them to succeed in a global setting.

Enrolment is now open for primary, secondary and A-Levels. Please call 05-2905888 or 019-3883349 for enquiries, or visit us on www.ametis.edu.my.

amētis is conducting a workshop for parents on 'Reading with your child' as follows:

Date: Saturday, February 22, 2014

Time: 9am to 12.30pm

Venue: ASIA Metropolitan International School (amētis), 24, Lebuhr Perumahan Klebang 1, IGB Industrial Park, off Jalan Kuala Kangsar, 30010 Ipoh, Perak.

Admission is free but places are limited. Please call to reserve a place for the workshop.

Parents may bring along their children, as there will be activities for the children.

Young Perak

Panto by Learners

Learners at Asia Metropolitan International School (AMETIS) performed in the school's first pantomime recently. The play was an adaptation of the Arabian Night's classic, Aladdin. For most it was their first time on stage and in front of an audience which consisted of parents, relatives, friends and guests from two children's homes – the Praise and Joyful Homes.

At AMETIS, the learners explore theatre, dance, speech, performance art, and 'roles' in everyday life from a global perspective. The staging of Aladdin in the form of a pantomime was no different.

Amy Crisp, the language and performing arts teacher, wrote the script. Taking into consideration the age range, language skills and abilities of the learners, the lines and parts were specially written to bring out the best in each learner. After the play, the learners and staff entertained the audience singing Christmas songs while playing the ukulele, which the children had been learning over the last few months as part of their music curriculum.

Principal Agalya Balaguru, in her welcoming speech, remarked that there were lessons to be learned from Aladdin. She reminded the children of the two moral messages. One is that it is best to be yourself. The other is about being grateful and showing gratitude. Aladdin, though awarded with a final wish due to his kindness, frees the genies in return for what they have done for him. "Wouldn't it be nice if every one of us showed gratitude for the gifts and blessings we received?" asked Agalya.

The Christmas panto was more than just a play. It was an opportunity for the learners to reach out to their counterparts by hosting guests from the Praise and Joyful Homes. Two Santas made an appearance and handed out goody bags and ang pows to the children. The parents, staff and 'friends' of AMETIS sponsored the supper, presents and cash gifts.

AMETIS has a grand performing arts centre made up of an 800-capacity hall with a stage fully equipped with sound, lighting and projectors, three auditoriums, a music room, changing and waiting rooms. The panto was performed at the school's Aquamarine Auditorium.

Arul



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Malaysia Wins International Challenge Shield

St John Ambulance of Australia organised the International Cadet Camp (ICC) from January 2 to 11 in Sydney, Australia. The venue of this camp was the Tops Conference Centre, Stanwell Park, Sydney. About 450 St John Ambulance officers and cadets from 11 countries, namely, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Wales, England, Sri Lanka, Solomon Islands, Singapore, Hong Kong and South Africa, took part and Malaysia was represented by 10 students, aged 16 to 18 from SMJK Ave Maria Convent, Ipoh and a 15 year-old boy from SMK Tuanku Abdul Rahman Putra, Selangor.

During the official opening ceremony, delegates were treated to a taste of Australian indigenous culture with a performance and traditional welcome from the local aboriginal community.

In the International Cadet Championship, Malaysia was represented by Thong Wen Dee, Lee Yen Lim, Chong Poh Sim and Lim Wen Yi from SMJK Ave Maria Convent, Ipoh. The Malaysian competitors kept their cool and showed mettle of steel when they won five out of the six categories contested. In another two categories, they beat all the other countries and emerged first. In the Presentation category, Lee Yen Lim delivered a ten-minute presentation about Malaysia to an audience of mixed ages. She awed the adjudicators with her smooth delivery. As for Chong Poh Sim, she was asked to perform an on camera interview for a local news station in which they discussed about St John and the role that she is playing in the Bushfire Recovery Centre. The adjudicators were impressed with her confidence and knowledge to all questions posed.

For the Camp Concert, the theme was "Your Custom and Culture". Contingents had to present their background and culture and Malaysia definitely lived up to its tag of a melting pot with diverse customs and cultures. The Malaysian delegation performed a Malaysia dance in colourful costumes. It was no surprise they were announced the winner as they received a standing ovation from the audience after their performance.

During the closing ceremony, Malaysia was announced the winner of the 2014 ICC International Challenge Shield based on their performance throughout the 10-day camp and also from all the marks accumulated from all the competitions contested.



Education

Ipoh's Oldest Graduates



It has been proven again and again that age is no barrier to learning. The desire to acquire and improve oneself academically is contingent upon one's commitment and perseverance. At the recent convocation ceremony of graduates from the Malaysian Open University (Perak), two very senior citizens earned their bachelor degrees majoring in Islamic Studies and Islamic Management.

Kamaruddin Uda Menuun, 83, a former staff of the state Islamic Affairs Department, was beaming with joy when met during a high tea organised for them by the university at a leading hotel in Ipoh recently.

"I don't have much difficulty in studying and following the weekend classes, as they were structured for working and matured students like me," he told Ipoh Echo. "My major handicap, however, was my poor knowledge of computers. But the university staff, fellow students and my family members did plenty to overcome this setback."

The octogenarian obtained a CGPA score of 2.4; sufficiently good for someone of his age. The other oldie was Thamrin Abd Shukor, 70, a former teacher. Thamrin too majored in Islamic Studies and Islamic Management scoring a CGPA of 3.15.

"The achievements of these two veterans should be an example for others to emulate," said guest of honour, Dato' Rusnah Kassim, the Executive Councillor for Women's Affairs, Welfare and National Integration. "No matter what, never be hampered by age. If there's a will there'll always be a way."

The duo could well be Ipoh's oldest graduates to date.

Luqman

Health

with SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

“Debunk the Myths” — World Cancer Day

A truly global event taking place every year on 4 February, World Cancer Day unites the world's population in the fight against cancer. It aims to save millions of preventable deaths each year by raising awareness and education about the disease, pressing governments and individuals across the world to take action. Building on the success of last year's campaign, World Cancer Day 2014 will focus on reducing stigma and dispel myths about cancer, under the tagline “**Debunk the myths**”. Greater awareness and education about cancer can lead to positive change at an individual, community and policy level and across the continuum of cancer care. It will also serve to send the message out that being diagnosed with cancer is not a death sentence and that cancer is treatable.

Towards this end, the Malaysian Gynecological Cancer Society (MGCS) and KPJ ISH (Ipoh Specialist Hospital) have organised a health awareness campaign, mainly regarding obesity, diabetes, hypertension and abnormal blood cholesterol levels (dyslipidemia). At the same time, with regards to the linked risks of having certain cancers in these patients, the campaign will serve to promote cancer awareness among those living in Ipoh and educate them on the risk factors, screening methods and management of cancers.

This will therefore be a **2-pronged** approach. **First** – creating awareness and educating people on the dangers of obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and all other associated problems, and **secondly** – triggering the awareness and dispelling the myths related to cancer as well.

Obesity, diabetes and hypertension are three of the most common curses of the modern world and form the major causes of deaths in patients all over the world. In Malaysia, problems with the cardiovascular system and the lungs are the top two killers in all hospitals.

Not only are these diseases dangerous in their own right, studies have also shown that this **triad of problems** also cause **higher risks of having certain cancers** such as: cancers of the **breasts, ovaries, endometrium (the lining of uterus) and colorectal cancer**. Cancers as a whole are the number 4 leading cause of death in Malaysia.

A whole slew of activities have been scheduled for this Cancer Awareness Programme, spearheaded by three energetic oncologists at KPJ ISH Ipoh who have been working hard behind the scenes to put the programme together. The trio, led by Dr Lum Wan Wei the resident Radiologist and Oncologist who has been with KPJ



L-R: Dr Nawaz Hussain, Dr Lum Wan Wei and Dr Zamzida Yusoff

ISH since 2006; Dr Nawaz Hussain B. Mohamed Amir, who joined KPJ in April 2013 as a Resident Consultant Orthopaedic surgeon whose niche and clinical focus is bone and soft tissue tumour; and Dr Zamzida Yusoff who is an Obstetrics & Gynaecology specialist with a special niche and clinical focus in Gynae-Oncology and Palliative Care. Dr Zamzida is no stranger to Ipoh having worked as an O&G Specialist in Hospital Ipoh between 2003 to 2006 and subsequently from 2009 to 2012, she was a Consultant Gynae-Oncologist for Hospital Ipoh and Perak state. In addition to being a Sessional Consultant at KPJ Ipoh since early 2013, she was also a Senior O&G Lecturer at UniKL RCMP.

“We’re putting this programme together to not only create public awareness about Cancer but

that KPJ ISH has a complete team of specialist consultants with the expertise and knowledge to manage most cancers that are presented to us. We are able to work as a team and we strive to give the best care possible to all our cancer patients,” said Dr Lum.

The World Cancer Day Awareness programme will start off with a **free public health screening programme** at Mydin Hypermarket in Meru Raya on **February 7 to 9**, where KPJ ISH consultants supported by nurses, dieticians and hospital chefs will be giving health consultations and tips to members of the public. A carnival like atmosphere is anticipated as cooking demonstrations will be showcased by ISH chefs twice a day, with dietary advice and consultations provided by ISH dieticians while games and quizzes on healthy lifestyle and cancer awareness will keep the public engaged and informed.

An exhibition and **Health Trade Fair** for the public from **9am-5pm** is planned on Saturday **February 15** in the **KPJ ISH parking lot and lobby**. This will be a one-stop centre where all relevant health care players can highlight their products and services to the public and where the public in turn can obtain all the information they need in one place. There will also be a **lunch talk for doctors** at Dewan Anugerah on the 5th floor on the same day followed by a public forum on **Common Cancers in Malaysia** from **2.30-5pm** also at the same venue.

Poignant moments are in store as cancer survivors and their families share their stories at the close of the day (5-5.30pm). To honour their fighting spirit and having overcome their disease, KPJ ISH will be distributing gifts and mementoes to five cancer survivors and their families.

Members of the public may get more information from:

Dr Zamzida Yusoff; Tel: 05 240 8777 Ext 8504 or PR department: 05 240 8777 email: erma@ish.kpjhealth.com.my.

Mindfulness Yoga

I have practiced Yoga on and off throughout my life and when I moved to Ipoh, I thought I would do the same and set about looking for a yoga class to join. My research took me to a few places where to my horror, I found myself attempting to get into contortions that only an acrobat can perform! Adding to my sense of inadequacy was the fact that all the other ladies in the class (my ego salve was to say that they were all much younger and therefore more flexible than me) were following the teacher with consummate ease, giving me no choice but to beat a sharp retreat and never to set foot in a yoga class in Ipoh again.

Now help is at hand for creaky bodies like mine in this bright new year as a new Yoga studio has opened up in Ipoh Garden East. Called Mindfulness Yoga, the studio is founded by Yeshe Dolma, an Ipoh girl who has returned to her roots after studying and working in Singapore. A committed Buddhist, Yeshe is passionate about her vocation, having given up a lucrative career in Singapore to become a Yoga teacher.

“My philosophy is to bring about the healing and therapeutic effects of yoga for the healing of our body, mind and spirit as well as to help create personal transformation in our lives. Therefore, my approach is to offer students an environment and practices which nurtures, nourishes, induces relaxation, helps relieve stress and at the same time

helps in the development of spiritual qualities like love, understanding, peace, joy, equanimity, etc. We will slowly and gradually learn to soften the barriers that separate us from other human beings, the animal kingdom, the plant and mineral kingdom.”

Her classes are gentle, incorporating breathing into every move and mindfulness into every twist and turn. No acrobatics or contortions here, no competitiveness; only the process of listening to one's body as you ease yourself into a posture to the degree that the body will allow.

Having taken one of Yeshe's classes, I can certainly vouch for the gentleness of the class. I felt totally relaxed, refreshed and energised after the one and a half hours, unlike going to a gym where I'd be drained and fatigued and

aching in all my muscles and joints. This is a class I can recommend for those with joint or mobility problems, and for those looking for a less strenuous form of exercise.

Yeshe is qualified as an instructor with Master Mani Sekaran of Yoga Franchise and endorsed by Malaysian Association of Yoga Instructors (MAYI).

Currently classes are held on Wednesday nights 7pm to 8pm and Thursday mornings 9am to 10am. More classes are being scheduled according to demand. One hour class is RM50 for 4 lessons, 1½ hours is RM60 for 4 lessons. Private classes are available at RM100 for 1 hour and RM150 for 1½ hours for each session.

For more information, contact: **Mindfulness Yoga Studio, 64A Lalan Perajurit 1, Ipoh Garden East, 31400 Ipoh. Yeshe: 012 500 5540.**

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.

YMCA of Ipoh Toastmasters Club Annual International Speech and Table Topic Contest, Wednesday **February 12**, 7.45pm at the YMCA Ipoh first floor. Speech contests are an important part of Toastmasters education programme. They provide an opportunity for Toastmasters to gain speaking experience, as well as a chance for other Toastmasters and Guests to learn by observing proficient speakers. The public is welcome. Contact: Pak Peter **019 574 3572** or CG Huan **012 558 1012**.

Book Sale and Free Coffee, Sunday **February 16** (11am-1pm); Tuesday **February 18** (12pm-6.30pm) & Saturday **February 22** (9.30am-noon). Venue: St John's Community Help Service, 1st Kindergarten Room, St John's church, Jalan St John Ipoh. Used books for RM5 and below. Available books, educational, children story books, novels, christian, periodicals, magazines, encyclopedias. Proceeds to St John's Community Help Service. Email: stjohnschsipoh@gmail.com.

St John Ambulance Perak Community Service visiting old folks home, disabled children and orphanages. They are organising a campaign collecting clothes, story books, toys, utensils, etc. If you have anything which is not used in your home you are welcome to donate to St John Ambulance office, Jalan Raja Musa Aziz, Ipoh. All items should be sent in by the end of March and will be distributed to the needed homes during the visit. For further enquires, contact Manin Singh at **012 550 4002**.



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12 Feb 8

My Say

By Jerry Francis



Another Fiasco at the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport

I thought that after the fiasco involving Asialink Cargo Express – an airline cargo operation that failed to take off from the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport in 2010, the Transport Ministry and the Department of Civil Aviation would have learned from it. I was wrong as the officials appeared to have short memories.

The introduction of the direct cargo flight to Singapore was to have taken off on June 16, 2010, but was directed at the last minute to postpone indefinitely and has since been called off. What a pity, had the airline been allowed to operate it would provide the much needed air cargo facilities to the manufacturers in Perak.

Similarly the locally formed airline, Flying Fox, was scheduled to take off on its maiden flight to Medan from the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport last December 13, but was called off 48 hours before the inaugural flight.

The reason for the postponement according to a spokesman from the Ministry of Transport was that the runway was being upgraded and the flight had been postponed for safety reasons. It was also claimed that sinkholes had occurred in the vicinity of the airport.

To my knowledge only two sinkholes had occurred. One at the outside parking space in 2009, and the other along the “Echo” taxiway in 2011. Both are believed to have been caused by pre-war underground trenches.

There may be no reason to doubt the Ministry of Transport’s statement. However, the question being asked was why in both cases the directive to postpone came at the final stages of preparations?

After so much time and effort were put to obtain the approvals, both airlines failed to take off from the airport. No wonder the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport has remained under-utilised and became the most talked about airport in the country. The decisions also dashed the high hopes given to investors and probably even killed their enthusiasm to bring investments to the state.

I sympathise with both Asialink Cargo Express and Flying Fox. In the case of Flying Fox, it had incurred great losses in its promotion drive and refund of tickets sold. Even some VIPs appeared to have been taken for ‘a ride’ when Flying Fox confidently launched its Ipoh-Medan flight with great fanfare.

All this could have been avoided if the negotiators were fully aware of the regulations governing air cargo and the situation at the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport.

Were not all the details of Flying Fox proposals – including their objectives and type of aircraft to be used, tabled at the negotiations? If so, why did problems, such as those given by the relevant authorities only arise after approval was given?

Certainly the relevant authorities must have known that the runway could not accommodate larger aircraft such as the Boeing 737-400 despite a recent extension.

Although an additional 200m had been added to the 1800-metre runway, the situation has not changed. The extension cannot be utilised as the “LAPI” (aircraft approaching lights) had not been relocated on both ends of the runway. On the other hand, if they are relocated, aircraft approaching the airport would be flying just above the roofs of some of the houses.

Don’t the relevant authorities realise that an airport can only be fully utilised if its runway is capable of handling all types of aircraft safely, and is not just a cosmetically beautiful terminal? If the recent RM42 million upgrading of the airport cannot improve the situation, then why do we keep on spending more taxpayers’ money on the airport?

At its height in 2003, the airport handled about 116,000 passengers and 500 metric tonnes of cargo with 1572 aircraft movements. And Boeing 737s had been landing and taking off regularly. Since Malaysian Airline System (MAS) stopped flying into Ipoh, followed by Air Asia which terminated its Senai-Ipoh route citing the airport’s runway as unsuitable, the movement of passengers and handling of air cargo had dropped drastically.

As it would be very costly to raise the status of the airport, we need to seriously look into whether there is a need for an international airport in Perak or be just contented with a feeder airport.

A final decision on this is therefore very much desired so that there will be no more mistakes made or more money spent unnecessarily. The issue must not be prolonged as it will affect investments in the city, and Perak as a whole.



Upcoming Event

A Double Celebration



In conjunction with the Chinese Lantern Festival and Valentine's Day, a group of non-governmental organisations have banded together to organise a one-of-a-kind Chinese New Year celebration on Monday, February 14.

Jointly sponsored by City Motors Group of Companies and Kinta Riverfront Hotels and Suites, it will feature a fire dragon performance. This variation is native to Hong Kong and will be performed here for the very first time by the Ipoh Chinese Chin Woo Athletic Association.

Other programmes on the cards include the 24-season drum performance, variety shows, cultural dance, lion dance and the traditional throwing of oranges into the river. Shen Jai High School will organise the release of Kung Ming lanterns.

A donation drive will be initiated before the event. Organising Chairman, Dato' Dr Foo Wan Kien announced at a media conference recently that he would top up the fund by donating an amount matching the amount received. The twin celebration will be held at the riverbanks opposite Kinta Riverfront Hotel and Suites on Monday, February 14 beginning 7pm.

Those wishing to participate in the activities can contact Mr Woo Ping at 05 241 3222 or 016 523 6150 for details.

Angain

Syeun Jewelry Opens Its Doors

A lion dance routine marked the opening of Syeun Jewelry located at the shopping arcade of Syuen Hotel, Ipoh. The ceremony was graced by Datin Janet Yeoh, owner Ms Pearl Yan and scores of well-wishers.

The shop sells natural gemstones, which are handmade and individually crafted with very refined finishing. Crafted in Malaysia, Hong Kong and Thailand, only one piece of each design is on sale.

Buyers can custom-make their orders according to their preference. As a promotional gimmick, the store is offering discounts of between 10 to 20 per cent on selected gemstones.

The evening ended with a talk on "Birthstones and Basic Knowledge on Gems" by Thai gem specialist, Mr Surachart Panjathammawit.

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Overcoming Depression

Following the success of its debut sale in Kuala Lumpur in September of last year held in conjunction with the Malaysiaku celebrations, *The Depressed Cake Shop* came to Ipoh on Sunday, January 12. Its objective was to raise awareness and generate discussion on mental health issues.

The concept, originally from the United Kingdom, was brought to Malaysia by Datin Sabrinah Morad, who found the cause relevant to herself, having been brought up in a household affected by depression.

Ipoh was an obvious choice as the venue for the second edition because of its reputation as a food haven and its world renowned mental institution in Tanjung Rambutan.

With the help of friends, namely Susan Gill, Maria Lee and Wan Jan Li, the team sought out bakers to donate grey cakes for the sale.

It received overwhelming support from well-wishers especially Datin Julie Song, celebrated chef and restaurateur of Indulgence Living and Burps & Giggles, who not only hosted the charity sale at Burps & Giggles but also baked cakes and cookies specifically for the occasion.

Some of the side events held on that day were the "Most Creative Depressed Cake" and "Paint a Sad Face" contests.

A total sum of RM23,397 was raised from the one-day sale, contest entry fees, sale from Kristy Collection's fashion accessories, and cash donations from well-wishers.

Proceeds were channelled to the *Perak Palliative Care Society* (PPCS) and *Ipoh Befrienders*, two non-governmental organisations that work closely with those affected with depression and other mental health issues.

"Depression is an illness that can be treated. However, we must first remove the stigma attached to it so sufferers can talk freely about the illness without feeling embarrassed. This will encourage them to seek medical assistance," said Datin Sabrinah.

Symptoms of depression are varied. It ranges from constantly feeling misunderstood to self-doubt, anxiety, extreme sadness, hopelessness and despair. Most withdraw themselves from family and friends, as a result.

Emily



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.

Public's Input and Feedback are Essential

I rang to wish a friend in Penang "Happy New Year" and got an earful about how ridiculous it was to have to spend as much again as the bus fare from Penang to Ipoh just to get into Ipoh city centre from the sparkling new bus terminal.

He is not the only one. Complaints have come from all quarters about the new Amanjaya Bus Terminal. Because it is sited where it is, bus users, who are not rich – that's why they use the bus – have to pay extra to get to or from the new terminal.

I remember writing to the Ipoh Echo about the problems the bus station will cause travellers when Ngar Koh Ming proudly announced that the PR government had made a deal with some businessmen to build the station. I criticised Ngar for putting a completed deal to the public instead of getting public feedback before proceeding.

As a sop to the public he announced a competition for naming the bus hub. This is of no comfort to the travelling public who have to be out of pocket because of the PR Government's error. Those who have to use the hub will remember this every time they use it.

The bus terminal fiasco could have been avoided if the PR government had been prepared to get public feedback instead of adopting an arrogant "we know best" attitude.

Meanwhile not to be outdone, the BN Government, which came to power on February 6, 2009, decided to expand the runway of the Ipoh airport. The idea was good as this would enable bigger planes to land, which would put a little life into the moribund airport.

Taking advantage of this, a new company "Flying Fox Airways" was set up to provide a direct link between Medan and Ipoh. Everything seemed to be going well, I was told that 80% of the tickets for the first six months of the operation had been sold.

The Ipoh Echo even did a write-up on Medan to help create some interest.

A week before the inaugural flight the public was informed that all flights were cancelled until further notice. Now why would Flying Fox cancel its flights if they have been 80% booked up for the first six months, unless Flying Fox was telling tall tales and the response from the public was not enough. Apparently, the cancellation was due to "technical reasons" which had nothing to do with the airline.

I wonder if the "technical reasons" have to do with the runway which had only been upgraded recently. If this were the case, then there are questions the BN government has to answer:

Has the company (which got the job) any track record in runway construction? Or is its experience limited to construction?

Was it an open tender?

Was there any inspection by a competent authority after the extension was done and before the handover, and has the company been paid?

Who takes responsibility for this foul up and who will rectify it? When will it be rectified so that the airport can be used for big aircraft as was intended?

Who pays for the rectification – not the poor *rakyat*, I hope.

Of the two, the bus terminal is a more serious matter, as it is going to affect travellers for as long as they travel by interstate bus. The public is paying for the previous state government's blunder. In this competition of incompetency, it is the *rakyat* who suffers.

Governments should learn that the days of "we know best" are over. They must allow public input (especially in matters like the bus hub) and trust the public to be objective. The majority of the *rakyat* are not party political, they do not owe any allegiance to one party or another. All they want is a transparent, honest and competent government.

Yin Ee Kiong

Business

A Good Time to Invest

“There’s no better time to invest in property in Ipoh than now in view of the rising cost of development. And to celebrate the official launch of TINTower, buyers from now till February 14 will enjoy a guaranteed return of 7 per cent per annum for three years on the purchase price, instead of 5.5 per cent,” said Dato’ Poo Tak Kiau, Managing Director of Amber Synergy Sdn Bhd, during the launch of his company’s signature development project in Falim on Friday, January 17.

Over the past 18 months, projects by the developer’s group of companies have seen an appreciation in value from at least 10 per cent up to 60 per cent.

TINTower, the second phase of the RM500 million integrated mixed development project in Falim known as TINCity, is a block of building with two wings known as Oxford and Cambridge, named so because Falim House, the heritage mansion just a stone’s throw away, had produced a dozen graduates from these two Ivy League universities.

As the first ever SoVo (Small Office Versatile Office) in Ipoh South, the 26-floor TINTower, which is scheduled for completion by end 2017, will have 538 units of suites ranging in size from 765 sq. ft. to 1587 sq. ft. It will be equipped with a 4-tier security system to ensure the safety of its residents.

Catering to city as well as resort living, TINTower will offer a range of facilities on its 7th floor, such as an infinity pool, gymnasium, sauna, mini theatre, BBQ area and a function garden.

Built on 25 acres of freehold land, TINCity is located between Ipoh town centre and Menglembu. It takes approximately 3 minutes to drive to the town centre, 5 minutes

to Ipoh Railway Station and 7 minutes to Greentown Business Centre. Schools and other public amenities are located nearby.

The first phase of TINCity, comprising of 61 units of 3 and 4-storey commercial shop lots, will be ready by July 2014. The new 1 km long, 132 ft alternative parallel access road that cuts across TINCity will also be ready by then. The road will ease the traffic at Jalan Lahat, which currently has an average traffic volume of over 3000 vehicles per hour during peak periods.

The next phase of development of TINCity would be the hypermarket. The iconic Falim House, a point of contention with many heritage buffs, will be refurbished and converted into a likeable boutique hotel forthwith.

During the launch of TINTower, three charitable organisations, namely the Perak Palliative Care Society, Perak Association for Intellectually Disabled and Yayasan Sultan Idris Shah, received donations of RM10,000 and RM20,000 from the developer.

Meanwhile, visitors had the opportunity to win prizes worth a total of RM20,000 through lucky draws and a “Count the ping pong balls” contest.

In conjunction with the launch, Amber Synergy Sdn Bhd organised Cantonese opera performances for five nights at its TINCity project site. Internationally renowned opera troupe from Hong Kong, the Jing Yan Chinese Opera Troupe, performed to appreciative crowds.

TINCity show gallery in Falim is open for viewing daily from 10am to 6pm. For enquiries, call **05 282 7888**.

Emily



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Developer Contact No: 01984 8111 201/0809111 | Advertising Panel No: 11584 9111 201/0809111
Sales Office: 91110111 01110111 | Building Plan Approval No: CSC 4039/ALB/1819/0111 & CSC 4037/ALB/1819/0111
Land Encumbrance: Nil | Expected Date of Completion: December 2015 | Tenure of Land: Freehold
Building Plan Approval: Taka Sarawak Ipoh
All figures mentioned in the above specifications are subject to the approved plans and are subject to variations, modifications and substitutions as recommended by the Developer's Architect or Engineer or relevant approving authorities.

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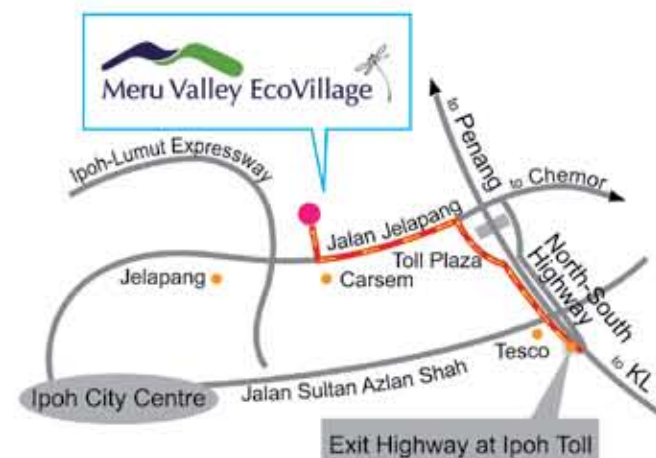
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