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My Say

'The Less Visible  
Chinese Poor'  
by Koon Yew Yin

# Ipoh Marble Targets World Market



• by A. Jeyaraj

The largest amount of limestone in Malaysia is found at Simpang Pulai in Kinta Valley and consists largely of calcite (calcium carbonate or dolomite). The colour is mainly white and even though it is tinged with a touch of grey, there is no effect on demand. Limestone is used in a wide range of industries such as to whiten paper, in paints and in many other products. Ipoh Echo surveyed a few of the companies making marble furniture and tiles.

*Continued on page 2*



**HEALY MAC'S IRISH BAR & RESTAURANT**

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## A white rectangular whirlpool bathtub with six jets, set in a wooden surround against a wall with a decorative tile border.



IPOH **echo**

• **From the Editor's Desk**  
By G. Sivapragasam

# MESSAGE TO THE COMMUNITY

*There are many things that we ourselves can do to improve the quality of our lives. What we need is a change of mind-set that goes beyond selfishness.*

Rules and regulations are essentially a code of conduct that members of the community have agreed to abide by to live in society.

Not a single day passes in this nation without one reading or hearing complaints about some act or omission by the government. Admittedly some of the grievances are not without cause or justification. However, the whingeing has touched a level where one is left with the impression that everything that is wrong in this country is the government's fault.

Moaning and groaning is a national preoccupation today. The loudest criticisms originate from members of the upper-middle class of our society who, substantively, are the elite of this nation.

While this elite group exercise little hesitancy in complaining about the sins of the government, their own social manners leave a lot to be desired. These very same people who are loud in their complaints against the government demonstrate little compunction in engaging in unsociable conduct without a care how their actions would affect their neighbours and members of society.

And more remarkably, our society, which takes umbrage at the smallest infraction by the government, shows astonishing tolerance to anti-social behaviour of their peers.

On Monday, April 7, the Star carried on its front page in graphic detail, our rivers filled with filth and garbage. It went on to suggest it contributed to the current water shortage in the Klang Valley, as polluted rivers resulted in less water being pumped into the treatment plants translating into less clean water available for distribution to households.

It estimated that 300,000 tonnes of garbage are dumped into rivers yearly. I believe that this is a very conservative estimate. It is just that we have been fortunate to live in a climate where heavy rainfall clears the rivers regularly. However, changing weather patterns with longer drier spells may result in our rivers turning into garbage corridors. Who is to be blamed for this? By no stretch of imagination can we place this at the door of the government.

Jalan Tun Dr Ismail (formerly Thompson Road) is a high-end residential area. Recently the area has witnessed a surge of new houses, some costing in excess of several millions. The residents, who must be very well off to live in this area, could reasonably be expected to demonstrate a certain level of civic consciousness. However, their behaviour speaks otherwise. Garbage is dumped by the roadside, the offenders taking care that it is away from their houses.

It would appear that their sense of quality of life does not extend beyond the perimeter of their residences with little thought that other residents may have different values.

Not too far away from this location is a cemetery. How the cemetery is maintained is a reflection of the mind-set of the community. For most of the year it is a secondary jungle, at best. Once a year descendants of those buried in the cemetery arrive in droves to pay respect to their ancestors. The cleaning method employed can only be described as slash and burn. The event ends with burnt vegetation, including trees and garbage left at the gravesite.



Is this how one honours ancestors? A couple of dollars from each descendant could transform this place, which is in the prime part of the City, into a great-looking park that would not only deliver dignity to the departed but be an attraction for Ipoh's residents and visitors.

There are many things that we ourselves can do to improve the quality of our lives. What we need is a change of mind-set that goes beyond selfishness. Rules and regulations are essentially a code of conduct that members of the community have agreed to abide by to live in society. Breach of this covenant is a betrayal of this societal code.

## Business

### 'Forest Secret' Slated for Expansion

Perak State Agricultural Development Corporation (SADC) aims to expand the market for its cosmetic product, *Forest Secret*, throughout South East Asia over the next few years.

The product is being well-received in Indonesia since its introduction there in June of last year. According to SADC Chief Executive Officer, Ahmad Rizal Abdul Rahman, orders for the beauty product have been placed until the end of this year. An annual turnover of between RM3 to RM4 million is expected from the Indonesian market.

"*Forest Secret* is available at 23 Guardian outlets and 13 pharmacies in Jakarta, Indonesia. We plan to expand to Bandung and Medan," said Ahmad Rizal to reporters during the opening of Malaysia's first *Forest Secret* outlet at Casuarina@Meru, Ipoh recently.

The opening ceremony was officiated by Menteri Besar Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir in the presence of Dato' Saarani Mohamad, the Executive Councillor for Rural Development, Plantation, Agriculture, Housing and Local Government Committee.

The product was sold locally but was stopped due to a rebranding exercise. It will be supplied to the Casuarina@Meru outlet on a regular basis thus creating some economic opportunities for those in the business. The corporation plans to enter the Singapore market next year.

Luqman



## EYE HEALTH

### HYPERTENSIVE RETINOPATHY

**Ipoh Echo's EYE HEALTH series continues with Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S.S. GILL talking to us about hypertension and the eyes.**

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 40% above the age of 25 years have hypertension. Globally, more than 1 billion people suffer from hypertension, also called high blood pressure.

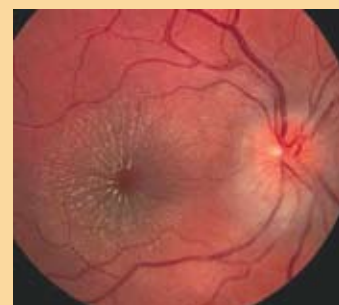
It is called hypertension because the force of the blood against the walls of the blood vessels (arteries) is high for a prolonged period resulting in it eventually causing health problems such as heart disease, kidney disease, hardening of the arteries, strokes and eye damage.



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

#### WHAT HAPPENS IN THE EYES?

The nerve tissue (retina) at the back of the eye that is responsible for sending information to the brain for interpretation gets affected. When there is uncontrolled hypertension, the blood vessels here start to thicken therefore making the blood vessels more narrow. This restricts the blood flow from reaching the nerve (retina) making it swollen and sometimes causing eye strokes (vessel occlusion) in the eye. In short, hypertension has effects on the eye and can cause vision problems. This is called *Hypertensive Retinopathy*. In the more severe and dangerous form, it is called *Malignant Hypertension*, where it can cause profound blurring vision or even sudden loss of vision.



#### SYMPTOMS OF HYPERTENSIVE RETINOPATHY

When eye symptoms occur, it generally means the hypertension is advanced and already in a late stage. The symptoms may include blurring vision, double vision, blood headaches or even sudden loss of vision.

#### HOW IS HYPERTENSIVE RETINOPATHY DIAGNOSED

In order to have a thorough nerve (retina) check, eye drops will be first applied in order to dilate the pupils. Then, using an instrument called an ophthalmoscope, light is passed into the eye in order to view the back of the eye. The eye examination is painless but may cause discomfort after the eye examination, due to glare if you have forgotten to bring a pair of sunglasses. In some centres, a retinal imaging device or fundus camera is available for nerve (retina) imaging.

#### WHAT ARE THE SIGNS LOOKED FOR IN THE EYE

*Hypertensive Retinopathy* may be evaluated on a scale of 1 to 4. On the lower end of the scale, *Hypertensive Retinopathy* may not have any symptoms. In the more severe stage of grade 4, the eyes have a swollen nerve (optic nerve) and serious profound vision problems. This stage is dangerous and indicates uncontrolled hypertension. People with grade 4 retinopathy have a high risk of general systemic complications.

Prompt diagnosis of *Hypertensive Retinopathy* is important in order to avoid visual and systemic morbidity such as heart disease, strokes and renal disease. If you suffer from hypertension, it is advisable to get your eyes checked at least once a year before eye symptoms appear.

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



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# Karpal Singh: Noble and Able Defender of the Defenceless

Karpal Singh, who died with his aide, in an horrific car crash near Gua Tempurung in the early hours of Thursday April 17, will always be remembered for his pursuit of justice, his principles, his values and his strong work ethic.

He was tireless in his capacity for work, and in defending the poor and those who had no one to turn to in their hour of need. During the wake held at his home, it was revealed that he worked pro bono when defending several people.

He has been commended for his "defence of the little man" and is also known as a "friend to the oppressed and the marginalised". On the wall of his office hangs a plaque, given to him by a grateful client, with the words, "Noble and able defender of the defenceless". During an interview with CNN Talk Asia, in 2002, Karpal said the words were a source of inspiration to him and a comfort, when he entered his office.

The 74-year-old MP and lawyer, who insisted that he was more a lawyer than a politician, was not afraid of speaking his mind or expressing his values. It did not matter if people agreed with him, as long as they knew his opinion. This is a trait which few Malaysian politicians possess. This forthright attitude showed that Karpal was a man of conviction and also that he lived by his principles.

In one interview, he said, "I am religious, but I'm not one to go to the temple every week. I believe that the principles by which you live is a measure of your faith."

Known for his dislike of greedy people and those who sought public honorifics, he said that DAP leaders should not accept state awards whilst they were serving the public and he stressed that the DAP should practise the one-man-one-seat policy in the selection of candidates for the general elections.

Karpal would censure anyone, even those in his own party. In December 2011, he admonished the Perak DAP secretary then, Nga Kor Ming, for making racial slurs against the Perak Menteri Besar Zambry Abdul Kadir. Karpal said that Nga was "ill-advised" and that "the statement ought not to have crossed Nga's mind, let alone been voiced".

He said, "Any derogatory remark directed at any community or race has serious implications and consequences" and he said that the DAP was a multi-racial party and reminded its leaders that remarks which slighted any person or race, should not be made.

Karpal proved that education could improve one's lot in life. Despite becoming a well-respected and famous lawyer, Karpal never forgot his roots or his desire to help the poor. The son of a watchman and part-time herdsman Ram Singh, Karpal attended St Xavier's Institution in Penang before reading law at the University of Malaya, in Singapore. He names Mahatma Gandhi and John F. Kennedy as having most influence over him and he praises Tunku Abdul Rahman for his tireless efforts to promote racial unity.

Like the Tunku, who took several years to finish his law degree at Cambridge, Karpal took seven years to graduate, because by his own admission, he was "playful" and did not attend lectures. When his professor finally forced him



**THINKING  
ALLOWED**

by Mariam Mokhtar

to take his studies seriously, Karpal said, "I couldn't play the fool anymore and I passed my exams accordingly!"

Again, like the Tunku, Karpal yearned for a multiracial Malaysia in which everyone had equal opportunities and his vision was to forge a better place

for every Malaysian, regardless of race, religion and social standing.

He once said, "It is important for every citizen in the country to know, that no one is above the law..." These words make up part of the rich legacy which he left Malaysians.

Paralysed from the waist down in an accident outside his house in 2005, Karpal refused to give up, but continued with his work.

He said, "The accident was a terrible blow. You are like a prisoner within yourself. Even when I was detained in Kamunting under the ISA, I could still walk about. With nerve damage one is in pain all the time and I don't want to take painkillers because I would become dependent on them."

"You cannot keep looking back and thinking, what if this had not happened, as you will then sink deeper into depression. You have to look forward, and that I will do."

Karpal was once asked when he would retire. He said, "A good lawyer dies in the saddle. A lawyer has to keep going. I have to go on, physically and mentally."

Prophetically, Karpal died on his way to Penang, to defend a client.

## CHILD HEALTH

**Dr Shan Narayanan**  
Consultant General Paediatrician, Hospital Fatimah

## Genetics

The articles on Down Syndrome and Haemophilia spurred a lot of interest. This has given me the motivation to write more about birth defects.

Any abnormality of structure, function or body metabolism present at birth are classified as birth defects. Some are obvious at birth, others become apparent as the child grows.

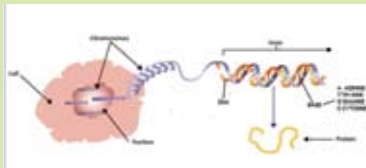
These defects can be caused by genetic, environment or unknown factors. Many a time it is a combination of genetic and environmental factors and thus called multifactorial.

M. Gregor Mendel is known as the father of Genetics which can be confusing for the uninitiated. Thus the first two articles will focus on the basics of genetics, namely, the various terminologies.

## Genetics, Heredity, Trait

Genetics is the branch of biology that deals with heredity and variation in organism. Heredity is the transmission of characteristics, that is, traits from parents to offsprings. Trait is a feature or quality in a person. We have different combination of traits that makes us unique. These traits are inherited from our parents. There are physical traits, behavioural traits and predisposition to medical condition.

Physical traits are hair colour, eye colour, height, etc. Behavioural traits are the way one acts and Predisposition to medical condition refers to the increased risk of getting a certain type of disease, like the inherited trait of Haemophilia (Ipoh Echo 1-15 April 2014) which is an example of such a disease.



Structure of DNA genes and chromosome

## Cells, Chromosomes, DNA, Genes, Proteins

A cell is the smallest structural and functional unit of a living organism. It consists of cytoplasm (fluid that fills the cell) and a nucleus. The hereditary material, is in the nucleus.

We are made up of millions of cells. Each organism has a unique number of chromosomes, a thread like structure found in the nucleus of most living things. It looks like a ball of wool consisting of DNA or Deoxyribonucleic acid. Human beings have 46 chromosomes in the nucleus in pairs, with 22 non sex chromosome (autosome) and 1 pair of sex chromosome that decides the sex of the baby.

**DNA is Deoxyribonucleic acid.** It is in a double helix form within the chromosome. It consists of a string of nitrogen atoms containing nucleobases called Guanine, Adenine, Thymine and Cytosine – in short G,A,T,C. Adenine always pairs with Thymine (AT) and Cytosine always pairs with Guanine (CG). One strand of DNA contains numerous genes

Stretches of DNA are called **Genes**. They are the instruction manual (blueprint) for our body. They provide the direction for building all protein that makes our body function.

Proteins make our body function. Every cell in the body contains many different proteins. These proteins work together to make the cell function. These proteins are like different parts of a car engine. The parts look different and they do separate jobs to make the engine run

Putting the different elements of the above together and using the ear as an example: The cells in the inner ear support hearing and not the beating of the heart, yet the cells in the inner ear knows it is function. That is because the inner ear cells contain chromosomes which contain Deoxyribonucleic acid or DNA.

DNA contains letters: E.g., TGATTAATAAGCTCATCGAGATT

These letters make words: E.g., TGA TTAATG AAG CTC ATC GAG ATT

The words make sentences called genes: E.g., <TGA TTA ATG AAG> <CTC ATC GAG ATT>

Thus the genes in this cell produces proteins that enable it to support hearing.

Next issue: Structure of DNA genes and chromosome.

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

## Announcements

Announcements must be sent by fax: 05-255 2181; or email: [announcements@ipohecho.com.my](mailto:announcements@ipohecho.com.my), by the 9<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> 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.

**Colouring Competition for Children** organised by Y's Men's Club Ipoh, Thursday, May 1 at YMCA Ipoh, 211 Jalan Musa Aziz, Ipoh. Closing date for submission of entries on Wednesday, April 30. For details call Charanjit Kaur 016 553 8443 or K. Letchimanan 012 538 1939.

**Perak Academy's Perak Lectures Series. Topic: "Malaysia – A Shared Nation?" by Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir.** Friday, May 8 commencing 8pm at Syuen Hotel, Ipoh. For details and reservations call Perak Academy 05 547 8949 or Wai Kheng 016 551 8172 or Email: [contact@perakacademy.com](mailto:contact@perakacademy.com).

**Children's Nature Camp by Malaysian Nature Society (Perak Branch), June 7 and 8** at Taman Herba, Papan. Activities include jungle-trekking, bird watching, water ecology, learning about nature and recycling activities. Open to children between the ages of 9 to 12. Application closes on May 26. For details call Lee Yuat Wah 017 577 5641 or Email: [leeyuatwah@yahoo.com](mailto:leeyuatwah@yahoo.com).

**Coconut Products for Dementia.** UniKL Royal College of Medicine, Perak is collaborating with the Dementia Society Perak in conducting research to explore the beneficial effect of coconut products on people with dementia. Anyone with elderly friends or relatives having "major memory problems" or diagnosed to have "dementia" and wishes to take coconut products to improve their memory, please contact the Dementia Daycare Centre at 05 241 1691. Those who are interested to take part in the research will have the opportunity to get blood tests, ECG and coconut products absolutely FREE.



## MUSINGS ON FOOD



By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

Pics by Ginla Chew

# SeeFoon declares Ipoh to be the 'Tai Chau' capital of the world!

I am aware that some of my readers out there occasionally mutter about my writing about the same type of food over and over again especially when it comes to dishes from the typical Tai Chau or 'Big Fry' restaurants.

What most people overlook is that aside from the famous dishes like our *Nga Choy Kai*, our Curry Mee, our Salted Chicken, our famous biscuits for which people from near and far come in droves to sample and buy home, Ipoh has a plethora of small and large *Tai Chau* restaurants dotted all over our sprawling city and its suburbs. These are the real hidden gems of Ipoh.

However, every food establishment have their signature dishes, each one vying

for recognition with different nuances in ingredients, taste and creativity. Some dishes make the grade and some miss by a mile. This column is about the dishes that make it and to keep in mind when ordering.

This week's column is to present two of these in the same area of Seri Botani, about a mile or so away from one another. The first one, Ho Ki was recommended by Ginla Chew my reliable foodie sidekick, which apparently is a favourite haunt of Dato' Dr Rama and his wife Mala. They were with us that evening together with a group of my other foodie friends.

### Ho Ki

Situated on a corner, set back from the main road leading off Jalan Bandar Seri Botani, just after Shen Jai School on the left, **Restaurant Ho Ki** is a large airy restaurant open 24/7 with a friendly proprietress Amy Ong who came and made the recommendations.

As usual we had an overload of dishes and I shall list here not all of the 11 items that we had but the ones that stood out for me. The deep fried pork belly slices or *Tsau Fa Lam* was delicious, crisp and well coated in a mildly sweet and sour sauce – **RM15**. **Sautéed Cabbage** with bacon bits and topped with almond slivers lending texture was unusual and tasty – **RM12**.

The fish was a live **Tilapia cooked in a claypot** with their homemade yellow rice

wine, a departure from the norm, the fish fresh and without a hint of muddiness, the wine lending hints of sweetness to the dish – **RM30**. The **homemade Tofu in a pumpkin sauce** was smooth and mild – perfect for those who prefer a bland taste – **RM10**.

What they call **Penang 3 types** arrived on a hotplate, prawns, squid, scallops and ladies fingers sizzling away in an Asam Pedas sauce – tangy, spicy

and guaranteed to wake up the taste buds with just the right amount of seasoning – **RM25**. The **Yee Meen** or fried dried noodles came in a soupy sauce, with mixed seafood pieces and greens, the noodles still slightly chewy (the Chinese version of al dente) and the sauce an umami complement – **RM4.50 per portion**.

A specialty of the house here is their **Poon Choy** or the one dish meal. I did not have the opportunity to try this but have promised myself a return visit. At **RM288** combination of 13 items for 10 people and an additional **RM100 with abalone added**, this is a dish that needs to be ordered in advance.

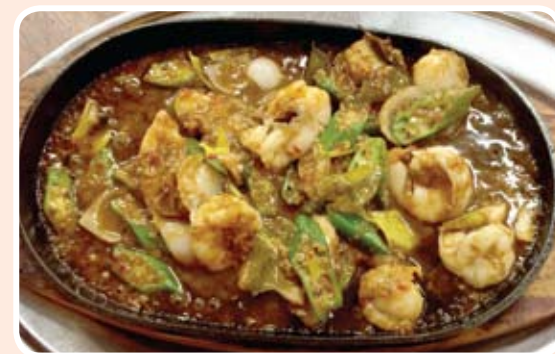
### Restoran Ho Ki

12 Jalan Lapangan Siber 5

Bandar Cyber.

GPS: N 04° 32.739' E 101° 06.702'

Tel: 05 313 1636 or Amy Ong 012 515 0710



### Restoran LML

In the same area, using Shen Jai School as the landmark, take the first right turn just after the school, continue about one kilometre past a row of shophouses and just before the housing estate on the corner on the left is **LML**. The night we were there it was fortunately very cool and we sat outside on the street, with Datin Lynette Tan playing hostess.

Lynette was singing the praises for this *Tai Chau* restaurant saying that her mother-in-law who can be quite picky in her food preferences, absolutely adores this place and promptly ordered all her favourites which I am about to share with you my dear readers.

The first dish on the table was the **Fried Bitter Gourd with Salted Egg**. This dish literally flew off the plate, as we tucked in, marvelling at the lightness and crispiness of the batter. Now most of us there that evening including Puan Sri Datuk Sandra Lee have eaten at some of the best restaurants in the world and we all unanimously agreed that this was better than any tempura batter that we have ever tasted, ANYWHERE. When questioned, the proprietress May who was a very helpful and friendly soul, confessed that the recipe was a closely guarded secret and that she can only buy it from a former chef of hers who is taking the recipe to the grave. So I plan to go and eat more of this as soon as possible – **RM13**. To borrow a phrase from a food writer in Singapore, this

is one dish I would say "Die, Die, Must Try".

The **Fried Pig's Trotter** was tender, juicy and almost too big a portion for the six of us – **RM46**.

### Steamed Clams

were big, steamed in white rice wine topped with scallions and coriander – **RM16**. A claypot of **Kangkong** (convolvulus) arrived and while it looked bland and boring in the pot, on tasting it, my tastebuds were aroused, well-blended flavours mildly spicy and surprise surprise, had generous chunks of fried pork lardons (*Chu Yau Tsa*) in it. This small touch lifted it from the ordinary to the sublime – **RM11**.

More goodies were yet to come. The **Nyonya Steamed Fish Head** that evening was a Garupa head, cut in chunks and cooked in a mildly spiced sauce, redolent of the typical *Nyonya* herbs – **RM60**. The 3-cup chicken or **Sam Pui Kai** which is chicken pieces braised in 3 cups of *dao pan tseong* or fermented bean paste, Chinese rice wine and a mixture of Thai basil leaves and bay leaves was flavourful, the basil flavour coming through quite strongly, the rice wine lending its sweetness to the dish – **RM18**.

As we were only six people we couldn't do justice to the tempting possibilities that this restaurant has on offer. I promised myself that I would go back to sample more of the dishes from this restaurant as apparently anything they produce is delectable.



### Restoran LML

58 Laluan Lapangan Siber 1,

Panorama Lapangan Perdana.

GPS: N 04° 33.1' E 101° 6.425'

Tel: 05 311 0958 or May 016 262 9996

Business Hours: noon-11pm. Open 24/7.



## News

## Developing Lands Below Transmission Lines

The proposal to develop lands below transmission lines is aimed at improving the economy of Perak, besides strengthening the working relationship between Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) and Perak State Agricultural Development Corporation (SADC).

This was the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between SADC and TNB which was signed at the SADC office in Ipoh recently. The MoU was signed by SADC Chief Executive Officer, Haji Ahmad Rizal Abd Rahman and Datuk Rozimi Remeli from TNB.

Ahmad Rizal told Ipoh Echo that plans are underway to grow cash crops on these lands. The areas identified are in the districts of Manjung, Perak Tengah and Kinta. "By developing these lands we can maximise land usage, increase productivity and create job opportunities, especially among single mothers and teenagers who are interested in agriculture."

Present at the signing ceremony were the Executive Councillor for Rural Development, Plantation, Agriculture, Housing and Local Government, Dato' Saarani Mohamad and the State Financial Officer, Dato' Mohd Ghazali Jalal.

Datuk Rozimi thanked the Perak state government for coming up with the idea. "It'll benefit the state by creating economic opportunities for the *rakyat* while at the same time ensuring the security of TNB's transmission towers and lines."

**Luqman**



## Human Values Public Speaking Competition



The Sathya Sai Baba Centres of Perak Darul Ridzuan organised the 2nd Annual Human Values Public Speaking Competition between students in tertiary institutions in Perak recently. Eight Speakers from 4 tertiary institutions participated in the Finals held at Olympia College Ipoh.

Adjudicated by the Perak Toast Masters Club, the objectives of this annual competition are:

- To enhance goodwill and understanding among youths of different racial and religious backgrounds and compliment the government's efforts to encourage the use of the English Language in our tertiary institutions.
- To expose the youths, the future leaders of this country, to the knowledge and practice of Universal Human Values, in their daily life, thereby boosting their personal and emotional well-being.
- To help the youths in the development of the soft skills of diplomacy, public speaking and social etiquette which is so vital for effective Parliamentary Debates, International Relations and Domestic harmony.
- To encourage tertiary students understand how the objectives of Malaysia's Rukun Negara, viz. Unity, Justice, Peace and Progress can be achieved by the practice of Human Values by all levels of Malaysian Society.

**The four tertiary institutions that participated this year were:**

1. SM Anderson Ipoh, Sixth Form
2. SM Methodist (ACS) Ipoh, Sixth Form
3. Institute Pendidikan Guru Kampus Ipoh, Perak (IPG Kampus Ipoh)
4. Universiti Tengku Abdul Rahman Kampus Kampar (UTAR Kampar).

The eight speakers were judged on eight different prepared speech topics and a common impromptu speech topic.

The Overall Winner was: Eugene Wong Chen Wei – IPG Kampus Ipoh with Overall 1st Runner-up: Eugene Lee Zhe Rui

Overall 2nd Runner-up: Leo Leong Yong Bin – UTAR Kampar

Winner of Sathya Sai Human Values Public Speaking Competition Challenge Trophy 2014: Institute Pendidikan Guru Kampus Ipoh (IPG Kampus Ipoh).

## Kadir Jasin on Missing Flight MH370

Former Group Editor of the New Straits Times Press (NSTP), Datuk A. Kadir Jasin theorised that the missing MAS flight MH370 with 239 passengers and crew on board had no intention of landing in Beijing. "The fact that the plane had made an unauthorised turn and headed to an unknown destination in the south Indian Ocean speaks for itself."

Datuk Kadir Jasin was the guest speaker at Institut Darul Ridzuan's (IDR) Intellectual Discourse held at the banquet hall of the Perak State Secretariat Building,



Ipoh recently. Interestingly, the topic of the discourse was, "Mangsa Ke-240 MH370 – Media" (Media the 240th victim of MH370). It could not have been more appropriate as the subject for discussion was on the media, meaning local media, and to dissect the subject matter was none other than a man well-versed in the intricacies of Malaysian media, be it print or electronic.

Although the medium of instruction was in the national language, Kadir did well to articulate his points based on ten questions posed to him regarding MH370 by IDR. However, he was literally missing the forest for the trees as he took pains to explain why the plane went missing rather than addressing the subject on media being the 240th victim of the tragedy.

The 300-odd audience, consisting mainly of government officials, members of non-governmental organisations and media representatives from the local news bureaus, were more interested in knowing what was not in public domain – the untold stories of MH370 and whether the government was withholding information, as is widely believed.

It took none other than the scribe from Ipoh Echo to point out this glaring discrepancy in delivery. Kadir made amends by alluding to the many draconian laws such as the Printing Presses and Publications Act and the Sedition Act put in place by the government to ensure that the country's news agencies remain compliant and submissive.

"These laws are enacted for a reason," he said. In the aftermath of MH370 Kadir felt that there was a need to relax the laws and to provide space for the local media to progress. "I feel that's the only wise thing to do," he reasoned.

Coming from someone who was once a spokesman for the ruling coalition and a close associate of former long-serving Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, his acknowledgement was his saving grace. The uncompromising few felt relieved that the seasoned journalist and blogger, who won the coveted 'Tokoh Wartawan Negara 2011' award, had finally said his piece although it was too little too late.

**FZB**



## News

## AP Children's Convention

Fifteen students from Fukuoka, Japan, participants of the Asian-Pacific Children's Convention (APCC), met up with their host families at the Ipoh City Council building in Ipoh recently.

APCC is a collaborative programme of the city councils of Ipoh and Fukuoka, with the objective of strengthening ties of the two councils. According to Ipoh Council Secretary, Dato' Hj Abdul Rahim bin Md Ariff, the students, aged from 10 to 18 years, would stay with their foster families for five days and would have the opportunity to learn about the local culture.

Rahim said these students would get to check out Ipoh and visit two selected schools, for a chance to experience the Malaysian school environment. "This is our second programme; last year, we sent a group of Ipoh students to Fukuoka," he added after officiating at the opening of the programme.

According to one of the participants, Moi Yamazaki, 18, said she wanted to try the delicious food of Ipoh. "Before coming to Ipoh, I did a little research on the city as well as on Malaysia. Besides the food, I also wish to learn about the history of Malaysia." Expressing sadness over the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, she hoped that the plane would be found soon.

Another participant, Chichiro Mikuriya, 10, was very happy to have safely arrived in Malaysia and being warmly welcomed by people here. "This is my first time in Malaysia. I am excited to see the development of your country and can't wait to learn about the culture here," she exclaimed.

Luqman



## Orthopaedic Health

Dr Suresh Siva  
Orthopaedic Surgeon

## Shoulder Pain

Lately I have been seeing many patients in my clinic with shoulder pain. Usually it creeps up on them and is rather insidious in nature but occasionally the pain is sudden and comes on after a bout of activity or heavy lifting. Occasionally the shoulder pain is due to problems in the neck!

## Most shoulder problems fall into four major categories:

- Tendon inflammation (bursitis or tendinitis) or tendon tear
- Instability
- Arthritis
- Fracture (broken bone)

Other much less common causes of shoulder pain are tumors, infection, and nerve-related problems.

## Bursitis

This is caused by overuse of the shoulder resulting in inflammation and swelling of the tissue between the shoulder muscle and the bone or acromion. Sometimes a bone spur causes this. The result is a condition known as subacromial bursitis. Many daily activities, such as combing your hair or getting dressed may become difficult.

## Tendinitis

A tendon is a cord that connects muscle to bone. Most tendinitis is a result of a wearing down of the tendon that occurs slowly over time, much like the wearing process on the sole of a shoe. Sometimes the tendon tears due to sudden injury or overuse and wear and tear.

## Impingement

Shoulder impingement occurs when the top of the shoulder blade (acromion) puts pressure on the underlying soft tissues when the arm is lifted. As the arm is lifted, the acromion rubs, or "impinges" on the underlying muscles. This can lead to bursitis and tendinitis, causing pain and limiting movement. Over time, severe impingement can even lead to a muscle tear.

## Instability

Shoulder instability occurs when the head of the upper arm bone is forced out of the shoulder socket (dislocation). This can happen as a result of a sudden injury or from overuse.

Shoulder dislocations can be partial, with the ball of the upper arm coming just partially out of the socket. This is called a subluxation. A complete dislocation means the ball comes all the way out of the socket.

Once the ligaments, tendons, and muscles around the shoulder become loose or torn, dislocations can occur repeatedly. Recurring dislocations, which may be partial or complete, cause pain and unsteadiness when you raise your arm or move it away from your body. Repeated episodes of subluxations or dislocations lead to an increased risk of developing arthritis in the joint.

## Arthritis

Shoulder pain can also result from arthritis. There are many types of arthritis. The most common type of arthritis in the shoulder is osteoarthritis, also known as "wear and tear" arthritis. Symptoms, such as swelling, pain, and stiffness, typically begin during middle age. Osteoarthritis develops slowly and the pain it causes worsens over time. Osteoarthritis may be related to sports or work injuries and chronic wear and tear. Often people will avoid shoulder movements in an attempt to lessen arthritis pain. This sometimes leads to a tightening or stiffening of the soft tissue parts of the joint, resulting in a painful restriction of motion.

## Fracture

Fractures are broken bones. Shoulder fractures commonly involve the clavicle (collarbone), humerus (upper arm bone), and scapula (shoulder blade). Fractures often cause severe pain, swelling and bruising around the shoulder.

If you are suffering from any of the above-mentioned shoulder conditions you should seek attention from your orthopaedic surgeon. Your doctor may prescribe medication to reduce inflammation and pain. You may also benefit from specialized physiotherapy and exercises. Your surgeon may also recommend injections or surgery to relieve the shoulder problem.

**For more information, call Siva Orthopaedic Clinic at Hospital Fatimah 05 548 6380 or email: [info@sivaclinic.com](mailto:info@sivaclinic.com).**



## Inter-Departmental Poetry Competition

The Hilir Perak District Education Office emerged top at the recent poetry competition among government agencies in Perak, beating Teachers Training Institute Ipoh Campus in the final round. The champion received a cash prize of RM1000 and a certificate while the runner-up received RM700.

Hisham Abd Aziz, Deputy Director of the Department for Culture and Arts, Perak (JKKN), said that the competition was organised to preserve the nation's culture and arts and to foster good relationship between staff and officials of government departments in the state. "Such events also inculcate the love for arts and literature in the younger



generation. In view of the overwhelming response received, this will be made an annual event," he said.

Rozita Omar, from the Teachers Training Institute Ipoh Campus, was declared Best Poet at the competition which was held at the auditorium of the Department of Culture and Arts Perak here in Ipoh. The closing ceremony was officiated by state assemblyman for Manong, Mohamad Kamil Shafie.

Luqman

## Thumbs Up



While Japan has its Cherry Blossom (Sakura) trees, Ipoh has the beautiful Trumpet or Tacoma tree (*Tabebuia rosea*) that blooms profusely in pink and white

VWSL

## Thumbs Down



Trees and signposts serve as supports for 'free' advertising

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## Community

## Songkran Festival

■ by Rosli Mansor

The opportunity to participate in the Songkran Festival at Kampung Tasek in Pengkalan Hulu, Perak, was exciting indeed. Songkran has been celebrated by the local Siamese community in this part of Perak since 38 years ago.

Held at the Kampung Tasek community hall, Songkran, which is popularly known as a water war, is a traditional celebration of the Thai New Year that has been passed down from generation to generation. It normally falls on April 13 or 14. The date, coincidentally, is in the middle of the hottest month in Thailand.

The word “Songkran” originates from Sanskrit, which is interpreted as a departure or transition, marking the advent of a new year. Based on the Siamese lunar calendar, it falls on the fifth month and on the 15th day of the full moon.

Interestingly, Songkran was initially a festival of the Hindu Brahmins in India. It was then observed in Suwannabhumi (Thailand) in early AD before it was embraced by the Hindu-Buddhist communities in Laos and Cambodia.

According to tradition, Songkran is celebrated by the younger generation, including children, to seek forgiveness and blessings from the elders, such as parents, grandparents, monks and teachers.

As a mark of forgiveness, the elders are showered with clean, fragrant water on their hands, feet, and, subsequently, all over their body. However, the young would first have to ask for permission before doing so. During the washing, the elderly folks would pray for happiness in the younger generation, including their children and grandchildren. After that, the elders change into new and clean clothes.



Although Songkran festival is not religious, the Thais take this celebration as an opportunity to accumulate heavenly points. They would usually hold a bathing ritual for the statue of Buddha and Buddhist monks. The public would visit the temple in the morning, where the men would clean up the wat (Thai temple) as a symbol of a fresh beginning.

To further enliven the Songkran Festival at Kampung Tasek, various activities were organised, including a Songkran beauty contest, football, and the ‘klong jau’ dance performance. According to Wong Yook Lian, 53, a local of Thai descent, the tradition of drenching the elders is becoming less popular because of the cold. “Children are the ones who have the most fun during Songkran, where they get to play with water, and apply powder on others,” she said.

Seven teenage girls competed for the coveted Miss Songkran title. The winner was chosen based on beauty, costume, and catwalk. Miss Songkran would then be paraded around the village in a decorated vehicle together with the rest of the participants thus marking the end of the festival. Due to changing times, the celebration of Songkran now includes the singing of upbeat Thai songs by young performers who dance energetically to the tunes on stage. Notwithstanding that, the universal values of Songkran such as gratefulness and appreciation are to be emulated as a foundation of shaping a well-mannered Malaysian community.

Pengkalan Hulu District Council president, Mohd Syukri Azaari, hoped that the annual event could be included in the national tourism calendar just like the way it is listed in the tourism calendar of Perak.



## My Say

By Koon Yew Yin

## The Less Visible Chinese Poor

Perkasa and other Malay right-wing organizations are always complaining about how the Chinese have taken over the country’s economy. They use this simplistic observation to frighten Malays to unite under a ‘ketuanan Melayu’ and ‘ketuanan Islam’ banner against so-called Chinese domination of the economy.

But how much of truth is there in this allegation? In earlier analysis, I pointed out that owing to the NEP, the Malays have made tremendous strides since the 1970s in the economic sphere. For example they control Bank Negara and all the major banks (except for Public Bank); all the GLCs; Petronas; as well as comprise the majority in the top professional and best paying occupations in the private sector. They, in fact, control what can be called “the commanding heights” of the economy.

What about the Chinese? Firstly, we should realise that not all Chinese are successful in business. In fact, only a tiny minority of Chinese belong to the class of super-rich billionaires – perhaps no more than a hundred or even less throughout the country. There is a fairly large Chinese middle class though so that generally Chinese are on the average more well off compared to non-Chinese in terms of average household income.

But let’s also not forget that income inequality is also highest among the Chinese. What this means is that much of Chinese wealth is concentrated in the hands of the Chinese super-rich and that we have a very large number of Chinese who either fall well below the urban poverty line or are only slightly above the poverty line. Unfortunately there are few recent studies on the Chinese poor. The government’s statistical department ignores the presence of this group and the academics in the public and private universities have avoided studying them.

Although I am not an academic and have not studied the group of Chinese poor, let me share these observations accumulated through the scholarship programme that I have run for the last five years during which I have received at least one or two applications every week – mostly from the children of poor Chinese. I offer scholarships to help the poor because I was from a poor family before and I know how difficult it is to be poor.

- The Chinese poor mainly come from Chinese school backgrounds.
- Many are dropouts and work as unskilled or semi-skilled labour in poorly paid

agricultural or urban jobs with little potential for upward mobility.

- Chinese poor also come from self-employed backgrounds with businesses such as hawking, food stalls, etc., unable to succeed or grow because of competition and other factors.
- They are most vulnerable when they are unable to work due to ill health or old age as they do not have access to EPF savings or a government pension safety net.
- Because they are poor, they are unable to provide the proper environment for their children to do well in their studies. This often leads to the reproduction of poverty in the family rather than socio-economic advancement for the younger generation.
- One of the biggest handicaps of the Chinese poor and their children is their inability to communicate effectively in other languages than their own dialect. This can be seen in the broken English or Bahasa Malaysia letters written to me.
- The Chinese poor are almost completely excluded from all government schemes providing skills training, income generation or educational and housing support.

Chinese poor suffer from exploitation in several ways. Firstly, they are exploited by their employers especially in the small and medium-scale enterprises and workshops where they work in dirty jobs for little pay. Secondly they are exploited by moneylenders who many have to turn to in view of their frequent need for cash advances to meet emergencies, etc. Finally they are exploited by the government which fails to provide them and their children with equal opportunities and regards them as “pendatang”.

Many of the Chinese poor have been citizens of the country for more than one generation – in some cases, several generations. They have lived and contributed their blood and sweat to the country’s development far longer than many newly-arrived “pendatang” from Indonesia and other Muslim countries.

Malaysia is the only homeland they know but the government continues to treat them as if they are second class citizens. Is it surprising that they are not loyal to the MCA and the Barisan Nasional when they are treated worse than newly-arrived immigrants! Is it surprising that the attitude of the Chinese poor towards the government is so different from that of the Chinese super rich!



## Young Perak

# Sultan Azlan Shah Gold Medal

Muhd Izzat Zakwan Mohd Zahari from SMK Sultan Yussuf, Batu Gajah was awarded the Sultan Azlan Shah Royal Gold Medal. When met by the media, he expressed surprise and happiness at being selected to receive the prestigious award.

Speaking after the award-giving ceremony at the school recently, he said, "Besides paying attention in class, I communicate regularly with my teachers, to increase my knowledge as I believe knowledge comes from teachers."

The fourth of seven siblings, Muhd Izzat began his Form One at the school in 2006 and completed his Form Six in 2012. He then continued his tertiary education at Universiti Perguruan Sultan Idris (UPSI), Tg Malim. "I am currently pursuing a degree in sports medicine at UPSI and hope to make it my career one day," he added.

The Regent of Perak, Raja Dr Nazrin Shah and his consort, Raja Puan Besar of Perak Tuanku Zara Salim attended the ceremony. Also present were Perak Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir, State Secretary, Dato' Abdul Puhat Mat Nayan, Perak State



Education Department Deputy Director, Mohd Idris Ramli and the school's principal, Saidi Ngah Abd. Said.

Raja Nazrin Shah presented a total of 153 awards to top performers of the school.

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## LETTERS

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## Take Pride in Your Work

Complaints to Ipoh City Council seem to fall on deaf ears. Whatever complaints or queries that are sent to the council merely receive an acknowledgment stamp and that is as far as it gets. No reply, no action.

People who complain are often viewed as troublesome and as fault finders. Complain too much and soon an officer from the council will pay you a visit, perhaps to issue a compound in your private dwelling.

It is a fact that dengue is endemic to Ipoh for some time already. After a few cases, some with fatalities, a group of Who's Who of Ipoh would come out of the woodwork declaring all their good intentions. "We'll eradicate the menace and educate the public," they chorused.

Not long ago Jerry Francis wrote that Mayor Dato' Harun Rawi had declared 40 localities within the city as dengue hot spots. Making a declaration will not solve the problem.

There is a certain similarity about speeches made by those new in office. They make plans and then tell the public. Do they ever realise that their predecessors were

unable to solve the problem in spite of so many promises?

A recent trip to Chateau Garden revealed that Selasar Chateau and Jalan Voon Thean Soo are infested with mosquitoes. This is due to stagnant water caused by blocked drains.

Despite some scathing comments on the Internet against the council, it looks like apathy has set in. Council officials and workers should take pride in their work. They must realise that their salaries are being paid for by taxpayers' money.

Nathan Subramaniam Eliatamby



## Health

By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

# Urogynaecologist pleads for earlier pregnancies in women

A disturbing trend of falling sperm counts in men and women choosing to have children later in life owing to career considerations has resulted in rising infertility in couples. This was revealed by Fatimah Hospital's new consultant Urogynaecologist and infertility expert, Dr Lai Poon Seet when interviewed by Ipoh Echo recently.

He looks a youthful 30-something and yet on chatting with Dr Lai and hearing him explain that he completed his residency and housemanship in various hospitals in the UK and Dublin where he received his first medical degree, spent 5 years as a Senior lecturer and clinical specialist at HUKM, and finally 15 years in private practice in Kepong, recently two years in Australia updating himself on Urogynaecology, with quick mental arithmetic, I realised that his looks belie his age and that this was a mature and seasoned specialist sitting in front of me. And he speaks with experience and authority.

"Studies have shown that sperm counts in men have fallen by 50 per cent every 5-10 years owing to environmental factors. Known environmental pollution such as BPA or Bisphenol-A, a chemical building block that is used primarily to make polycarbonate plastic and epoxy resins commonly found in reusable food and drink containers and many other products; and the other is pesticides in food," he said.

"Adding to the problem is that the older the eggs are in a woman, the lesser the chances of conceiving. In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) has very poor results past the age of 36 and most IVF centres have very poor take home baby rates after the age of 40. Hence I always make the case for women to start having families as early as possible, preferably straight after marriage" he stressed emphatically.

Dr Lai naturally performs the usual Ob/Gyn procedures of deliveries, prenatal and antenatal care. However it is in talking about his main specialty of Urogynaecology, that he becomes animated. This is a subspecialty offering women with problems of stress incontinence and uterovaginal prolapse with minimally invasive surgery through the vaginal route. Stress incontinence is leakage of urine with cough, exercise or even walking as opposed to other forms of urinary incontinence, which are not helped by surgery.

**“Studies have shown that sperm counts in men have fallen by 50 per cent every 5-10 years owing to environmental factors.”**

"In women, the urethra is shorter and the sphincter gets weakened by childbirth and the aging process, often leading to incontinence or a weak bladder. I believe in first prescribing non-surgical solutions and will usually recommend Kegel exercises for strengthening the pelvic floor.

However, women need to understand that progress can only be seen after doing the exercises diligently for six months and will continue to improve over time."

"Women stress incontinence, can now be treated with minimally invasive procedure called the Transvaginal Transobturator Sling (TVT-O). Women with associated prolapsed uterus, bladder, rectal or small bowel prolapse can undergo vaginal hysterectomy and pelvic floor repair which can be performed under Regional Anesthesia and very suitable for the elderly. Urogynecological surgeries are now minimally invasive surgery done through a vaginal approach. With the option of Regional Anesthesia, the usual risks associated with General Anesthesia is reduced therefore recovery time is much shorter with less pain and reduced complications associated with abdominal surgery."

Why did he pick OBGYN as a field of study? "The reward of bringing life into the world is ineffable. Also growing up in a family of women with my mother and sisters, have inculcated in me a love and understanding of women and to hear a warm 'thank you' after a successful procedure is music to my ears."

With those words echoing in my ears as I left Dr Lai's clinic, I know that should I ever need an Urogynaecologist, he's my man.





## Opinion

## Karpal Singh (1940-2014) – Observations from Main Street

For a long time, the membership of the Democratic Action Party (DAP) was drawn largely from the urban working class, which was mainly Chinese, although the party's principles were always democratic and non-racial. Karpal Singh, a Punjabi, stood amongst them as the educated man. He learned gritty street wisdom from these people whose survival instincts more than made up for the fact that many of them did not have much by way of formal education.

Amongst them, he became a dominant and dominating figure. Already revered for many years as the Tiger of Jelutong, he once said in reference to himself that "Singh is King". Although some said he had thus insulted the royalty by calling himself King, they could not have been serious. Even if they were serious, they could not be taken seriously. Malaysians knew exactly what Karpal meant, just as they know that Elvis Presley and Pele were also King. The citizens of this country did not see arrogance in Karpal. Instead, they saw courage. They trusted him because temptation was never part of his name.

Some people say that the King had the brains of a lawyer but not that of a politician. That is probably untrue, as he was an enormously successful politician, just as he was as a lawyer. More accurately, we might say that he was not, by nature, a deal-making politician. Seemingly, his legal training had hard-wired in him a preference for principles-driven and fact-based decision making.

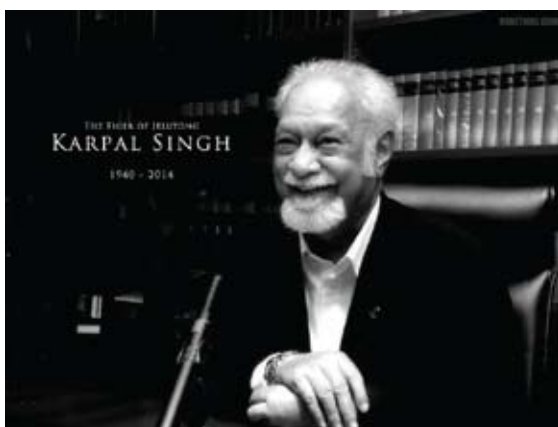
Strong in his conviction that the people would stand by him, his firm adherence to principles had on occasions stopped the party from making decisions based on pragmatism or innovation. This frustrated younger colleagues who thought that they had recently invented new and clever ways of doing things political in the face of incomplete information.

The same tiger that would leap a ravine in pursuit of principles would refuse to enter deep dark caves in which lodes of political capital were thought to exist. Instead, he stood in front of the metaphorical cave and stopped the party from entering it until he was satisfied that it understood what was in there and where it would all lead to.

It is probably true that the party lost some opportunities because the 'Singh was King'. It is also probably true that the party was also saved from some nasty and potentially fatal bites by metaphorical snakes that lurked in such caves. Not much of all this was planned. It was only because the Tiger was not someone whom the rest in the party would lightly take on. Meanwhile, denied the shelter of a cave, more than a few lightweights buckled and the Judases showed their true colours, as the winds howled and the rains lashed.

On hindsight, such situations allowed the party to sieve through who was real and who was not before it embarked on major initiatives. On more than a few occasions, taking his views into consideration, helped to hold the party together and kept it on what up to now, looks like the correct path.

He was not a wily strategist. He left the fancy footwork and the artful jabs to others. To him, he would not fight if he had no case but if he had a case, he would cast an intimidating shadow on his opponent. Principles were the objectives that he fought for and his method of politics was also predicated on principles. By result, he was known for consistency and courage. These were assets in terms of electoral appeal but sometimes



a liability in managing tensions within the Pakatan Rakyat coalition.

Within the party, he had much disdain for those whom he thought were trying to seek their own ascendancy in too short a time by playing politics within the party. It did not strike him as ironic that he should expect politicians to behave like diligent lawyers in a well-run law firm. He probably thought that people should pay their dues, as they moved up on the respect they earned from senior colleagues, and they should know that he was a senior partner. A purr for someone whom he liked, a growl for another who irritated him. Beyond that, except in dealings with one or two persons whom he regarded as his peers, one swipe of his paw or the threat of that would often settle matters in short order within the party.

Against political opponents outside the party, he was prepared to engage them ferociously into the ropes. Any weaving and ducking would have a forward momentum. There would be no undignified feigning or retreat. If he had to go to jail, as he did once, so be it.

For more than half a century, the DAP has played an important role in fostering competitive politics in this country, thus keeping alive the spirit of democracy, which implied a non-racial approach to politics. In the 21st century, this ultimately has to be the correct path for Malaysia. For many years, Karpal Singh's presence was perhaps the best argument that the DAP was not and would never be a Chinese party despite the efforts of its political opponents to label it as such. Today, the array of multi-ethnic talent in the party gives it its best hopes yet of being accepted as a truly non-racial party.

Honouring the memory of Karpal Singh requires the DAP to stay on the correct path. For the DAP to make a difference, it must stand vigilant against arrogance. That A-word springs from overestimation of one's strengths and underestimation of one's weaknesses. It must also stand vigilant against temptation. That T-word lurks in the cleavage between opportunities and threats. Karpal Singh became a successful lawyer without acing law school because he understood people and worked hard at the law. He became a successful politician because the world of politics needed him more than he needed them. He did not chase political opportunities and glory. He staked out his position and opportunities came to him. He lived courageously and offered himself in service of others.

"Over my dead body" were his famous words in one particularly well known situation. In many situations in future, may these words remind all who choose a career in politics that the politics of silence will be rejected and the politics of conviction is what this country needs. He died with an appeal against his conviction for sedition still pending. That conviction does not mar Karpal Singh's record as a human being or as a citizen of Malaysia. It is a stark reminder to all of us that the work of nation-building is very much still a work-in-progress.

The people of Malaysia are now in mourning, as we grieve the passing of Karpal Singh. Our hearts go out to his wife and children and their families. Amidst the grief, there is a dignified calm all around us. See how the sun shines on us even as we say goodbye to him.

**Harold Kong**

*(The writer is not a member of any political party. He resides in Ipoh and can be contacted at [haroldkong.sophia@gmail.com](mailto:haroldkong.sophia@gmail.com))*

## Education

## Remembrance Day at SMJK Yuk Choy



Remembrance Day was held by the Perak Chinese Assembly Hall, Board of Directors of SMJK Yuk Choy, Parents and Teachers Association of SMJK Yuk Choy, Ipoh as a form of respect to all Chinese who perished during the World War 2. It is a demonstration of patriotism and love shown by the Chinese community for nation building.

The Perak Chinese Assembly Hall which was represented by Mr Chai Voi Keong, Board of Directors of SMJK Yuk Choy, Ipoh represented by Mr Kwan Foh Kwai and Parents and Teachers Association of SMJK Yuk Choy, Ipoh by Mr Chong Min Hin placed a flower wreath at the monument which was erected back in 1949. The teachers and students of SMJK Yuk Choy, Ipoh were also present to pay their respects.

## Rotary's Secondary Schools Scholarship Awards 2013/2014

In 1971, the Rotary Club of Ipoh set up the Secondary Schools Scholarship Fund for secondary schools in Kinta District, Perak, to participate by entrusting a sum of money to this Fund which would be matched on a Ringgit for Ringgit basis by the Club. The interest received from the combined sum would be given back every year in the form of scholarships to needy students of participating schools.

As of December 31, 2013, a total of RM52,250 was contributed by 12 schools in Ipoh which was equally matched by the Rotary Club of Ipoh. Further sums were also contributed by the Club as unmatched funds to boost up the capital sum.

From the bank interest received together with the additional sum contributed by the Club to cover the shortfall of interest received, a total of RM13,600 will be presented this year to needy students from 12 participating schools. The schools themselves select their deserving students based on their scholastic ability and financial needs.

The Pengarah, Jabatan Pendidikan Perak presented the awards recently at SMJK Ave Maria Convent.





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Exp. Completion Date: Q1 2015  
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## Arts & Culture

# IFAS's First Talk

By Lim Hui Teng



The Ipoh Fine Arts Society (IFAS), a society with the vision to play a crucial role in the enrichment of Indian Fine Arts, hosted their first talk entitled, 'The Inaugural IFAS Talk' at the YMCA Ipoh recently. Essentially, the prime focus of IFAS's talk was to inculcate an understanding of the grandeur and vision of Indian Performing Arts to Malaysians.

In attendance was Guru Shankar Kandasamy (pic right), a renowned and established Bharatanatyam dancer in Malaysia, who's currently pursuing his PhD in Indian Fine Arts in India together with Malika Ravishankar and Dharmen Krishnan. Like Shankar, Malika and Dharmen are accomplished artists where Malika is a professional teacher of the Temples of Fine Arts in Kuala Lumpur and a highly acclaimed artist of all India radio. Dharmen on the other hand was born with an exceptional skill in playing the *Mridangam* which is a double-sided drum usually found in India.



*Rasika*, meaning the appreciation of Indian Classical Art was the inaugural talk that evening. The first half of the talk began with Shankar sharing his vast knowledge of Indian classical music where he explained the technicalities in an eloquent yet passionate manner accompanied by the soulful demonstration presented by Malika and Dharmen. The trio's beautiful performances instantly charmed and kept the audience under their spell. In between performances, Shankar said, "In India, the musical arts tend to be divergent. We aren't just ordinary performers but true artists who are spiritually in tune with the music." He also said that music is the best form of yoga to reach God. The first half of the talk reached its finale after a dedication of Malika's favourite piece to the audience.

The second half featured a talk solely on the Bharatanatyam dance. Similarly, Shankar's explanation was detailed. He described the significance of the lotus-flower hand gestures and relates the gestures along with a poetic story in praise of Lord Shiva. Shankar's showcase of the Bharatanatyam was mind blowing, elaborated through a combination of fluid body movements and a series of animated expressions as he dominated the stage which once again captivated the audience.

A question and answer session ensued at the close of the evening.

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## ibis Styles Ipoh – No challenge for the physically challenged

By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

It was like a breath of spring, walking into the *ibis Styles* in Ipoh. Not only were the colours in the lobby bright and dazzling but the double height ceiling added to the lightness of the ambience, a cheerful and happy place that strives to take care of every comfort and every detail for the weary traveller; at prices that will not burn a hole in one's pocket.

And for the physically challenged guest, *ibis Styles Ipoh* has left no stone unturned and no detail too minor to furnish two disabled-friendly rooms to cater for their special needs.

From the moment the car arrives at the front lobby up the gradually sloping ramp, a wheelchair ramp is provided for a wheelchair to be pushed into the lobby and reception area. While the sight of the long flight of stairs to the mezzanine floor may appear daunting to the physically challenged, easy accessibility is provided by two fast arriving lifts that will take you to every floor of the hotel.

There are no steps to climb, no obstacle courses to negotiate to reach the special-needs rooms where extra wide doors, both into the room and the bathroom, allow for easy wheelchair access. An emergency button right next to the bed connected directly to the security room which is manned 24 hours a day is an elbow length away from the pillow with extra comfort touch of bolster and a boon for aching joints. The bed itself is a masterpiece in design, the 'IBIS Sweet Beds', with an added mattress topping to ensure a good night's sleep. The soft down duvet further complements the invitation to snuggle in and take a nap or settle in for the night.

Bathroom touches include a foldable bath chair, grab bars for both the shower area and the WC. An emergency pull is available should there be a need. A wonderfully thoughtful option is the adjoining companion room which is accessible both from the corridor as well as from the special needs room.

Other amenities which are standard for all rooms and suites include an international wall plug to save having to bring different adapters for different countries with built-in USB and HDMI slots, an in-room safe which is designed to accommodate a 15-inch laptop and one's valuables, an iron and ironing board as well as a fridge. The wifi is also



complimentary.

Other guests are naturally equally well served at *ibis Styles Ipoh* where a range of rooms cater to different requirements. The courtyard rooms feature an outdoor courtyard area with chairs and table and a sun umbrella for a relaxing lounge outside. While the top floor Deluxe Suite features a separate sitting and dining room, a walk-in closet and extra guest bathroom. The standard room across the hallway can be incorporated into a private family suite with an external door that secures the privacy of the two areas.

Speaking to the charming Ms Charanita Gill, General Manager for *ibis Styles Ipoh*, I asked if providing for the physically challenged was a standard practice at *ibis Styles Ipoh* and she said, "We like to provide for all our guests and the physically challenged guests in particular have a tough time as it is. Therefore, *ibis Styles Ipoh* has gone to great lengths to design the whole hotel's accessibility around the needs of the physically challenged. We also have disabled-friendly toilets in the public areas of the hotel."

Not only is *ibis Styles Ipoh* the first international hotel chain to open in Ipoh, but this is the first disabled-friendly hotel to cater to the physically challenged. Kudos to *ibis Styles Ipoh*. May more hotels follow suit.

Rates at *ibis Styles Ipoh* start from MYR160+.

For more information on the hotel, please call +605 240 6888 or visit [www.ibisstyles.com](http://www.ibisstyles.com).

**Jerome Wong**

Director of Sales

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