

A Tower Too Tall



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Will we now respect the environment?



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Here's Wishing for a Brighter 2015

By Fathol Zaman Bukhari



Year 2014 has been a tumultuous year for Malaysians, as the country suffered one calamity after another. Topping the list was Malaysian Airlines Flight MH 370 which went missing along with its 239 passengers and crew on March 8, 2014. Before the dust could even settle, another of the carrier's Boeing 777 was shot down over Ukraine. Some 298 innocent lives were lost. The people behind the downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight MH 17 on July 17, 2014 have yet to be identified.

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Lingering fear of price hikes exacerbated by GST, limited job opportunities and poor remuneration packages

As Malaysians were readying themselves for the onslaught of the year-end monsoon season, tragedy once again struck the nation. It was another airline disaster, the third in a row. This time it was an Airbus belonging to the world's foremost low-cost carrier whose owner, Tony Fernandes, had proudly proclaimed that his airline's safety record was "impeccable".

AirAsia Flight QZ8501 went off the radar screen while on its way to Singapore from Surabaya, Indonesia on the morning of Sunday, December 28, 2014. All 162 passengers and crew on board the aircraft were killed when it crashed into the Java Sea following an attempt by the pilot to overcome bad weather in its path.

The loss of the three aircraft is being tagged as the nation's worst tragedy of 2014. We, as a nation, will take a long time to recover from these setbacks. Within a space of 10 months we had lost three state-of-the-art passenger planes and a total of 699 innocent lives. Although the majority of the casualties were foreigners and not Malaysians, the fact that the planes were Malaysian-owned speaks volume of our capability, professionalism and preparedness.

While the search for the missing Airbus was going on in the choppy Java Sea, the nation's worst flooding in recorded history took centre stage. No states were spared, not even Perak whose leaders had once proclaimed that flooding was a thing of the past when Temenggor Dam began operating in 1976.

Over 50,000 people were evacuated as flood waters inundated towns, villages and settlements bordering rivers. In Perak some 5000 victims were moved to relief centres while rescue efforts were underway. At Kampong Gajah, a child was swept away by the rising water on New Year's eve. This was the only known casualty in the state. Overall, 21 deaths were recorded in the two weeks of carnage beginning on December 15, 2014 till January 3, 2015.

Although leaders are fond of blaming God for the deluge, this time around they cannot pin the blame squarely on the Almighty, as they are equally complicit. Massive deforestation is the primary cause. Years of unfettered clearing of timber-rich jungles, especially in Belum, Lojing and Cameron Highlands, has exposed the populace to this calamity.

Yet in spite of this being an annual occurrence, little has been done to mitigate flooding like what is done in the developed regions of the world. We never seem to learn from our mistakes. This "tidak apa" attitude will get us into greater trouble in future.

The above events are not aimed at exposing the faults and misdeeds of our "venerated" leaders. They are merely a preamble to our cover on Year 2015.

In dealing with the subject matter the views of a cross-section of Ipohites are taken as a plausible way to gauge their hopes and aspirations for the New Year. Hopefully, the input these selected few proffered, will provide an interesting insight into the thinking of Ipohites in general.



Dr Lee Mun Wai

The Professionals

This scribe sat down with three professionals over a cuppa recently to record their take on 2014 and their hopes for 2015.

Marketing manager Audrey Lourdes, 34, lawyer Kenny Lai, 38, and eye surgeon Dr Lee Mun Wai, 40, all felt the effects of inflation, particularly after each round of petrol price hike. For Kenny, the financial implication was the greatest as he had started a family, bought a house and had it renovated. "Property prices keep soaring and owning a house today is difficult," said Audrey.

Kenny added, "Unfortunately, for most of us, our pay remains the same despite the inflation."

He was of the opinion that Budget 2015 is of no help to middle-income earners. "We don't get much relief and incentives. Ironically, we're the ones who pay the most taxes."

As for Dr Lee, who is in private practice, the thing that concerns him the most is the impending GST and its impact. He intimated, "Medical practitioners have been in limbo as till now, there are no clear guidelines on how we will be affected and how much our costs will escalate."

Both Audrey and Kenny felt that 2014 could have been better, although they are not complaining. On the other hand, Dr Lee seemed to have had one busy year, with speaking engagements around the country, as well as internationally. "I attended

numerous conferences to get myself updated on the rapidly changing world of medicine. In fact, I just returned from India for an eye conference, where I also ran a teaching course and conducted live surgery during the conference," he revealed.

While Ipoh seemed more vibrant compared to a year or two ago, Audrey lamented that the standard of cleanliness is still lacking. She said, "It boils down to the people's attitude when it comes to keeping the city clean."



Zainuddin Hassan



Khairul Al-Azhar



Murad Pandak Aman

Ipoh's growth is debatable. While Dr Lee, having returned to Ipoh five years ago after more than two decades abroad, welcomed the sprout of designer cafes that cater to the Western palate, Kenny felt that the city could improve further if the airport is better utilised by commercial airlines. All three hoped for a cleaner, greener, better and safer Ipoh. "I'd like things to be more affordable," Audrey interjected.

The more politically savvy Kenny, however, would like to see an inclusive society where citizens are not identified by race or religion, and particularly for a government that works for the *rakyat*.

Professionally, Dr Lee hoped that people's perception about the standard of eye care in Ipoh will change as the expertise available here is top notch, comparable with the best in the world.

The Middle-income Earners

Those were the views of professionals who had made a mark for themselves in the city. But what about those who are either self-employed or are eking out an honest living to feed their families? A chance encounter with three middle-aged Malay gentlemen at 'Sabar Menanti', a popular eatery near Stadium Perak, set the ball rolling.

Khairul Al-Azhar, 40, a small-time contractor from Meru is worried sick about the impending GST fearing it would have an impact on his livelihood. Khairul feels his contracting jobs will be affected with the escalating cost of building materials. "My clients are already complaining now what more when GST is imposed," he lamented.

The existence of a huge pool of unemployed graduates is a cause for concern for Murad Pandak Aman, 45, a factory supervisor from Manjoi. "I hope more job opportunities are created so these youths can gain employment. This responsibility should be shared equally by the government and the private sector," he stressed.

Fuel price hike seems to be a popular issue with many and Zainuddin Hassan, 44, a civil servant from Batu Gajah was no exception. "Although the price of fuel has gone down the prices of goods and services haven't. I find this disturbing," he protested.

The Twenty-something

Common grouses prevalent among professionals, wage-earners and the self-employed have much to do with the direction the country is heading, fuel prices and GST. The feelings, hopes and hang-ups of the twenty-something, on the other hand, are different. Theirs have much to do with limited job prospects, poor pay and making ends meet in a very competitive environment.

I spoke to two such individuals and felt so sorry for them. But what am I to do, as that is the general situation in the country.

Ismail Saad, 23, is a wedding photographer and works at a photo studio in Bandar Baru Tambun. He is a diploma holder and makes about RM1500 a month. "It's barely enough to survive on. After paying my car installment and house rent, I have little left to spend. I feel I am being underpaid for my expertise," he declared.

Kumar, 24, works as a waiter at one of the city's prominent social clubs. A bachelor, he lives with his parents in Silibin. "I've a degree in hotel and catering but have yet to do what I am trained for. Nonetheless, I am happy to have a job unlike many of my friends," he exclaimed. Kumar makes about RM1400 a month. But he is not complaining.



Ismail Saad

Conclusion

In conclusion, the hopes and aspirations of these eight individuals, who represent a cross-section of Ipohites, are almost identical. All have a lingering fear of price hikes which will be exacerbated by the upcoming GST, limited job opportunities and, above all, poor remuneration packages.

The political undercurrent pervading in the country, social inequality, relationship between races, religious bigotry and the widening gap between the rich and the poor are some of my major worries. If and unless these problems are addressed holistically, the results may be more catastrophic than the tragedies of MH 370, MH 17 and AirAsia Flight QZ8501 combined.

The emergence of the Eminent 25 is like a breath of fresh air. But will this group of Malay intellectuals, led by Dato' Noor Faridah Ariffin, a lawyer and former diplomat, make an impact on the social landscape? I hope they will. And that is my one and only wish for 2015.



Kenny Lai

• From the Editor's Desk
By Fathol Zaman Bukhari

A TOWER TOO TALL

What the telco did not anticipate was the resolve of the residents to take the fight up to the highest level should their demand for dismantling the tower be ignored

It is far too easy to succumb to greed as is evidenced by the actions of a telecommunication company (telco) and a very willing landowner. One party has the money and the need while the other has the space. In a very competitive market where an oversight may cost millions, anything and everything is possible so long as the tiding is good.

Things are beginning to heat up in the telecommunication industry as competition is accelerating at a very furious pace. The main players are of course Celcom, Maxis and Digi, and the fight will soon spill out in the open fuelled by the long-awaited opening of the Asean Economic Community this year. Our home-grown telcos will have to fight it out with the best in the region. The prize for the picking is the 600 million-odd customers available within Asean.

So it is not at all surprising that one over-zealous company decided to tempt fate by making an offer too good to refuse. The bait is of course a long-term rental of space for the privilege of having its communication tower erected within the landowner's compound. The landowner is none other than Majlis Agama Islam Perak (MAIP) whose premise in Jalan Lasam, Ipoh is the object of this simmering controversy.

Jalan Lasam, by all accounts, is an upscale neighbourhood within a striking distance of downtown Ipoh. It is a single stretch of road which accommodates over 40 houses, mostly bungalows built in the 1980s. Those who have made Jalan Lasam their home are mainly retirees and government pensioners who had invested a fortune to be where they are. Therefore, it is only expected of them to defend their turf should a stranger appear unannounced. And the inevitable happened.

Work on the controversial tower began in July last year. Residents' fear and anger were aroused when they realised that the facility was being built without their knowledge and consultation. Approval for the construction of such towers rests with Ipoh City Council and it was apparent that the council had not taken the residents' interest into account when they gave the owner, DiGi Telecommunications Sdn Bhd or simply Digi,



the approval. Or was a green light given in the first place?

According to a source from within the telecommunication industry, the cost of constructing a tower of such specification is about RM1 million – RM500,000 for equipment and the balance RM500,000 for infrastructure. Rental of space is anything between RM3000 to RM5000 a month, depending on the location. Jalan Lasam being a strategic area, its significance is never in doubt.

But what the telco did not anticipate was the resolve of the residents to take the fight up to the highest level should their demand for the dismantling of the tower be ignored. That they did, and a stop-work order was issued by Ipoh City Council in November 2014. The one-month notice expired on Saturday, December 20, 2014 but a month's extension was granted following an appeal by Digi and MAIP.

The irony of it all is the attitude of the landowner who has allowed greed to get the better of itself. The issues of health and safety become secondary where money is concerned. It does not matter that the effects of electromagnetic waves would impact the owner himself. The maxim that money will cloud the mind holds true.

Maxis and Celcom build their own towers too but these towers are hidden from prying eyes. They are cleverly blended with the surroundings in the shape of trees and poles so they are not easily identified. But when you have the tower decked in your company's colours and standing out like a sore thumb, don't expect people to ignore.

Although it has been scientifically proven that the aftereffects of electromagnetic waves from telco towers are minimal vis-à-vis electric pylons and television and radio towers, perception is entrenched.

The stop-work order by Ipoh City Council is, therefore, justified. For once the council is getting its priorities right. Hopefully, it will remain that way, as pleasing ratepayers is part and parcel of the council's responsibility.

In The Name of My Father's Estate

Episode 37 • by Peter Lee

Since Connie (Lee Sr's second wife and Co-Administrator) agreed to sell her, as well as her children's, entitlement in her husband's three family companies to her husband's first family, both she and John (Lee Sr's eldest son and Co-Administrator) meet up at Dave's (lawyer) and the Company Secretary's office to collect the documents, such as the Sale and Purchase Agreement, Share Transfer Forms and Companies resolutions, for both sides of the families to sign. After one week, both John and Connie meet up again in Dave's office. Before Connie returned the Share Transfer Forms and Sale & Purchase Agreement, she said, "Dave, I have signed all these documents for the transfer of shares. So are you ready with your cheques of \$250,000 for myself and \$111,111 for each of my three children, from our entitlement to my husband's portion of his joint bank account with his first wife, Mrs Patricia Lee in ZNA Bank, Singapore. I believe this was the deal in exchange for the signed documents to be returned to you today."

In response, Dave said, "Yes, the release of payment for you and your children is ready. Since your children are minors, the cheques for them are written in favour of your name." Connie replied, "That's not a problem." She then turned to John and asked, "Have all the board of directors in three of these companies signed the resolutions consenting to this purchase of shares from me?" John responded with a "Yes" and showed Connie the proof. He further said to Connie, "My family has authorised me to sign on the Sale and Purchase Agreement. As for the Share Transfer Forms, the Administrators of the estate would have to sign on the Transferor's part. In other words, you have to sign together with me and my sister, Michelle, on the transferor's part as the Administrators so that the shares can be transferred to my family's side."

After Connie signed, John said, "I will sign these documents today and hand it to Dave for safekeeping. I have also asked Michelle to come later in the day to sign the Share Transfer Forms. As you know, we can only have all these shares transferred once the Letter Of Administration (L.A.) is obtained." Connie then asked Dave, "Can we expedite this matter?" In response, Dave said, "I will do my best." John looked at Connie and asked, "Do you still remember that while we were negotiating for the release of money from the ZNA Bank account in Singapore and our family's consensus in purchasing your family's shares, we also discussed about the three properties which are jointly owned by my father and mother?" "Yes" was Connie's response. John continued and said, "Okay, can you renounce your entitlement to father's share and release these properties back to my mother?" Connie then replied, "I remember we talked about it and that's when your sister Michelle assaulted me. What I don't remember saying is renouncing my rights to your father's entitlement." With some embarrassment, John said, "Connie, I think we better discuss this in a separate location as I don't want to take up Dave's time." In reply, Connie said, "That's fine by me. So, where is the venue and time?" "Let's decide on our way out," John replied.

To be continued...

Peter Lee is an Associate Estate Planning Practitioner (Wills & Trust) with Rockwills International Group. He is also an Islamic Estate Planner providing Wills & Trust services for Muslims. He can be reached at: 012-5078825/ 05-2554853 or excelsccms@gmail.com. Website: <http://www.wills-trust.com.my>. His Book "To Delay is Human but to Will is Divine" (96 pages, RM28) is available at his office: 108 (2nd Floor), Jalan Raja Ekram, 30450 Ipoh; Rashi Mini Market (019-510 6284), 37 Jalan Perajurit, Ipoh Garden East; Ipoh Echo and at all major bookstores.



EYE HEALTH – Eyelid Infections

In our continuing series on Eye Health, Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S.S. GILL talks to us about infections involving the eyelids.



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

In the previous issue, Dr Gill spoke about a common non-infected eyelid swelling called Chalazion. In this issue, he speaks about infections involving the eyelids.

Commonly there are two main infections that commonly involve the eyelids. They are:

1. Sty
2. Blepharitis.

A STYE is an **infection of the hair follicle of an eye lash**. It is also called *hordeolum*. It presents as a small painful bump on the outside (external hordeolum) or on the inside (internal hordeolum) of the eyelid. It basically **looks like a pimple on the eyelid** (called "ketumbit" in Bahasa Malaysia).

A sty is not harmful to vision but does cause a discomfort to the eye. It can occur at any age but most often affects infants and children. It is most often caused by bacteria called staphylococcus which is found in high concentrations within the nose and therefore is easily transferred to the eyelids by unwashed fingers!

When the eyelash follicles get infected with the bacteria, it swells up and becomes filled with pus. The eyelash follicle then looks like it has a pimple on the eyelid that becomes red and painful.

SYMPTOMS:

- Painful swollen and red eyelid
- Droopiness of the affected eyelid
- A more localised swelling with pus collection as time goes by
- Tearing or watering of the eye, and increased sensitivity to light occasionally
- Later, crusting on the eyelashes if the sty ruptures and pus is expelled out.



CAUSES OF A STYE

Pretty much everyone has the potential to develop a sty without any outside contamination since it is most often caused by bacteria from the nose. This bacteria is transferred easily to the eye especially when you rub first your nose, then your eye.

However, people with certain chronic conditions like diabetes mellitus, chronic skin conditions (seborrhoea) and chronic illnesses that reduce immunity are more prone to developing styes than the general population.

TREATMENT:

Most sty's heal on their own within a few days. Warm compresses applied for 10 to 15 minutes, 3 to 4 times a day, helps to relieve the pain and may help 'ripen' the sty very much like a pimple. The sty eventually usually ruptures to drain the pus collection and finally heals. Remember never to 'pop' a sty like a pimple; but always allow it to rupture on its own. The internal type of sty (that appears inside the eyelid) may sometimes not heal and therefore require drainage of the pus by an eye doctor. For such cases, an antibiotic eye ointment is commonly prescribed along with perhaps an oral antibiotic depending on the severity. If you suspect you have a sty that keeps on worsening, seek medical attention.

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

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Will we now respect the environment?

The floods are an annual occurrence, so if we are taken unawares, we need only blame ourselves for lacking preparation. Some people have blamed the heavier than normal rainfall for the disaster, but many people claim that this is simply a feeble excuse for negligence and lack of preparedness. Experience has shown that specific areas are prone to flooding, and this year, the worst affected areas were Kampung Gajah, Lenggong, Kerian, Bota, Parit, Kuala Kangsar and Sungai Siput.

By the night of Saturday, December 27, 2014, the number of people who had been evacuated to flood relief centres totalled 6,914. By dawn of Sunday, December 28, 2014, the National Security Council said that around 1,968 families had been placed into 56 shelters and the total had reached 7,513 people. By the early morning of Monday, December 29, 2014, when the floodwaters had subsided, the number of displaced people had fallen to 5,728 people.

A number of factors contribute to the devastation caused by the flood waters but man's activities have precipitated the damage. We destroyed our environment, in the pursuit of profit. We log our jungles indiscriminately and the people who are supposed to monitor and enforce the timber quotas are the ones who are alleged to be in the pay of timber merchants.

The canopy of trees in the jungle, acts like a huge umbrella, during heavy rain. The leaves and roots of the trees absorb much of this moisture. The rotting vegetation on the jungle floor also absorbs some of the water run-off.

The vast variety of tropical jungle trees are cut and replaced with a monoculture, such as planting hundreds of thousands of acres of oil palm trees. The oil palm does not act like a sponge, as the jungle trees would. There is no canopy, unlike the jungle trees and the space between each palm tree is large. Rain falls directly onto the soil, and the rivers cannot cope with the excessive amount of water from the surface run-off.

Civil servants also allege, that when they are asked to appraise a development project, they may turn it down, because it is unsuitable, perhaps, because it involves building on known flood plains or on hillsides. Then, the cronies, who have powerful friends in government, apply pressure, from the top, to gain approval for the project. Thus we have building on slopes, or wet plains, or construction which involves the destruction of mangrove swamps.



**THINKING
ALLOWED**

by Mariam Mokhtar

Do these irresponsible people, who urge uncontrolled development, realise that the mangrove swamps act as a buffer against rising waters and high winds? Do people who denude the forest and destroy hill slopes

realise that without roots to hold the soil together, the unrestrained flow of water down the hillsides causes mudslides which result in the destruction of life and vegetation?

The complaints of villagers, who live near the riverbanks and tidal estuaries, about legal and illegal development, have fallen on deaf ears. Some politicians with close links to businessmen, are directly responsible for the destruction of the environment. Are they around to help the flood victims? Do we dredge our rivers, to prevent silting which creates bottlenecks at certain points along the river?

Look at Ipoh. Certain parts of town are heavily built-up but developers forget to increase the size of drains thus preventing the rain-water from flowing to the rivers fast enough. House-owners also have a tendency to pave their gardens, thus preventing rainwater from being absorbed into the soil.

The authorities are quick to blame the flooding on "climate change", but they neglect their duty to clear the drains, and prevent blockages by clearing the vegetation which grows in and around the drains. They are equally lackadaisical about clearing branches, dead animals and rubbish from culverts and monsoon drains.

How good are our flood warning systems? Our communities are affected and our farmers' livelihoods are destroyed, when farmland is under water. Our houses smell of mud and slime after the waters have receded. Will we do more to respect the environment, or are we resigned to be punished, whenever it rains heavily?

Nosh News



By Emily Lowe

Bar.Racuda's
DIY Barbecue

A new concept in dining has been introduced in Ipoh by Bar.Racuda Restaurant & Bar. The do-It-yourself BBQ dinner will see diners enjoying their barbeque amidst a lighted garden setting without the hassle of preparing the grill themselves.

At Bar.Racuda Restaurant & Bar, those who come by for DIY BBQ dinner will be served with a charcoal barbecue grill ready for cooking, oil and four types of sauces; namely, mayonnaise, black pepper sauce, Thousand Island and light soy sauce. Diners could request for tomato and chilli sauces without additional charge.

To allow more patrons to enjoy the concept, Bar.Racuda Restaurant & Bar does not impose a minimum order. On the menu to select from include servings of meat such as chicken, lamb, beef, duck and fish. Other items to choose from are seafood. Non-grill items are vegetables, soups and rice. Prices start from a pocket-friendly RM5 per serving.

Said bar manager Inderjit Singh, "Our BBQ dinner is available every evening from 6pm onwards. Alternatively, diners can also opt for set dinner or order from our à la carte menu. Our garden can accommodate up to 30 people at a time. We welcome walk-in diners."

Bar.Racuda Restaurant & Bar opened its doors for business in August 2013. It is located at No. 131, Jalan Sultan Abdul Jalil, Greentown, 30450 Ipoh, Perak. For more information or reservation, call 05 255 1311.



Dr Saravana.K

Consultant Physician,
Gastroenterologist & Hepatologist

Digestive Health

Colon Polyps

Colonic polyp is a small clump of cells that forms on the lining of the colon. Most polyps are harmless but over time, some can develop into colon cancer, which is often fatal when found in its later stages.

Anyone can develop colon polyps. You're at higher risk if:

- **Age.** Most people with colon polyps are 50 or older.
- **Inflammatory intestinal conditions**, such as ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.
- **Family history.** You're more likely to develop colon polyps or cancer if you have a parent, sibling or child with them. If many family members have them, your risk is even greater. In some people, this connection isn't hereditary.
- **Tobacco and alcohol use.**
- **Obesity and lack of exercise.**

It's important to have regular screening tests, such as colonoscopy, because polyps found in the early stages can usually be removed safely and completely. The earlier polyps are removed, the less likely it is that they will become malignant.

You should be screened regularly for polyps if:

- You're age 50 or older.
- You have risk factors, such as a family history of colon cancer. Some high-risk individuals should begin regular screening much earlier than age 50.

The best prevention for colon cancer is regular screening for polyps.

Screening methods include:

Colonoscopy, the most sensitive test for colorectal polyps and cancer. If polyps are found, your doctor may remove them immediately or take tissue samples (biopsies) for analysis. It's important to fully prepare your colon before colonoscopy. If stool remains in the colon and obstructs your doctor's view of the colon wall, you will likely need a follow-up colonoscopy sooner than the guidelines specify.

Your doctor is likely to remove all polyps discovered during a bowel examination. The options for removal include:

- **Removal during screening.** Most polyps can be removed with biopsy forceps or a wire loop that snares the polyp. This may be aided by injecting a liquid under a polyp to lift it off the wall for removal.
- **Minimally invasive surgery.** Polyps that are too large or that can't be reached safely during screening are usually removed using minimally invasive surgery.

A doctor who specializes in analyzing tissue samples (pathologist) usually must examine polyp tissue under a microscope to determine whether it's potentially cancerous. If you have had an adenomatous polyp or a serrated polyp, you are at increased risk of colon cancer. You'll need follow-up screenings colonoscopy for polyps and the time interval would depend on the tissue type, size and number of polyps which were removed.

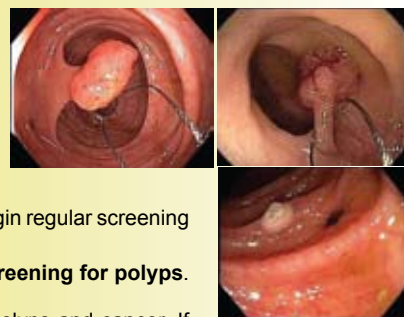
Colon polyps often cause no symptoms. You might not know you have a polyp until your doctor finds it during an examination of your bowel.

But some people with colon polyps experience: rectal bleeding; change in stool colour; change in bowel habits; pain, nausea or vomiting; or iron deficiency anemia.

Prevention

You can greatly reduce your risk of colon polyps and colorectal cancer by having regular screenings. Certain lifestyle changes also can help: eat fruits, vegetables and whole grains; reduce your fat intake; limit alcohol consumption; don't use tobacco; and stay physically active and maintain a healthy body weight.

For more information call Saravana.K Gastroenterologist and Liver Specialist Clinic at Hospital Fatimah (05 548 7181) or email gastrosara@gmail.com.



MUSINGS ON FOOD

By **SeeFoon Chan-Koppen**
seefoon@ipohecho.com.my



SeeFoon Finds New Bragging Rights for Ipoh as Culinary Haven

Ipoh just found something else to brag about. Already touted as a culinary haven, the newly-opened **Yuk Sou Hin** is raising the bar for Chinese fine dining and will soon have other restaurants pulling up their socks.

Ever since I moved to Ipoh, after having had my palate spoiled by superlative Cantonese Dim Sum in Hong Kong, I have been searching for that definitive taste, the translucent paper thin 'skin' on a *Har Gao* or the *Chiew Chao Fun Gor*, where the 'skin' is not like thick cardboard, and the finer touches, sometimes indescribable: that quintessential Cantonese touch of 'Tsing' or 'Xian' in Mandarin which in English can only be described as clear, fresh, and umami. This last quality is often used to describe the most refined taste in Chinese food.

Now **Yuk Sou Hin** has arrived on the first floor of the newly-opened Weil Hotel where Master Chef Chung Ho Shi dishes up delectable Cantonese fare that will hold its own anywhere in Hong Kong. Hong Kong born and bred Chef Chung honed his skills in top restaurants before moving to Singapore where he worked for leading hotel and restaurant chains. With 38 years of experience behind him Chef Chung is bringing to Ipoh new standards of Cantonese culinary excellence, hitherto found only in the bigger cities of Hong Kong and Singapore.

Sitting in one of their many private rooms, each named after a tea, the ambiance was gently opulent, with discrete and efficient service and none of the usual clatter and noise that is typical of our usual Ipoh Chinese restaurants. Nor is the noise level high on the



outside in the main dining area.

"A good start" I thought as the first dishes were brought in while nibbling on the 'Old Godfather' (a new name volunteered by Executive Chef Eric Soong) sauce on the table, an umami crumbly sauce made with dried scallops and fine anchovies, not unlike an

XO sauce, slightly tangy without searing overtones.

Tea is one of their specialties here with 12 different types of premium tea on offer. Each tea is served with its own set of tea cups and serving paraphernalia and with great aplomb.

We sat down to the first of the many Dim Sum dishes, which owing to the lack of space, I shall only describe a few. Their **Char Siew Pao or Baked Crispy Honey Barbecued Pork Bun** was unusual. Slightly crispy on the outside, the bun itself was soft and fluffy, the pork filling sweet and delectable; in effect, steamed then baked for the crust – RM7 for 3 pieces.

This was followed by the **Siew Mai with Fish Roe** which arrived on skewers, again an unusual presentation and a twist on the traditional delicacy, steamed then pan fried. Delectable at RM9 for 4 pieces.

Har Gao or prawn dumplings did not disappoint. The skin translucent, paper thin and the prawns inside, ocean fresh, springy and umami – RM9 for 4 pieces.

We then had an unusual soup, a feast for the eyes as well as palate.

This was the **Pumpkin and Spinach Soup** dotted with pieces of scallop, prawn, crab and bamboo pith served in a swirl of the traditional yin-yang symbol, the green of the spinach contrasting dramatically with the orange of the pumpkin and the combination of the mild bitterness of the former offset by the sweetness of the latter – RM13 per portion.

The pièce de résistance here has to be their **Signature Smoked Duck with Lychee Wood**. This is one of the best smoked duck I have had in a very long time. The skin was honey glazed and crispy, the meat succulent and I who have never enjoyed breast meat, always preferring the extremities of all poultry, found the breast meat to be tender and juicy. A faint lingering aroma of the lychee wood around the skin and dipped into the not-too-sweet sauce, created a heavenly foodie moment for me – RM49 (half) and RM98 (whole).

Many other delectables are on offer but owing to space constraints, I will have to encourage the reader to try it for themselves, but deserving special mention for those who have a sweet tooth, their **Golden Egg Yolk Custard Bun** is worth risking a burnt tongue – the bun, cotton wool soft with the egg yolk custard, oozy and creamy. Definitely worth investing in a few more calories – RM7 for 3 pieces.

Another unusual dessert the **Chilled Lemongrass and Sour Plum Jelly** containing chunks of Aloe Vera was refreshing and cooling to the system – RM10; while the **Chilled Mango Puree with Pomelo and Sago** had a velvety mouth feel contrasted by the morsels of pomelo and sago – RM12.



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Business

Thong Fook Group Unveils Luxurious WEIL Hotel

Thong Fook Group wholly-owned WEIL Resources has opened its first flagship hotel in Malaysia. The WEIL Hotel is set in the heart of Ipoh, a transit hub where local and international tourists, business travellers as well as families travelling up north, east-west and down south through Ipoh as well as where interstate city travellers convene.

With its strategic location, the WEIL Hotel affords its guests a truly connected lifestyle. Mr Liew Yu-Wei, Executive Director, WEIL Resources Sdn Bhd said, "The Thong Fook Group has been in Malaysia since 1945 via the groundnut Pagoda brand. Over the years, we have grown and diversified our business in the plastics manufacturing and precision plastic moulding industries into other industries with interests particularly in the fast-moving consumer goods, wellness and now, the hospitality industry. The unveiling of WEIL Hotel is a showcase of our foray into the hospitality industry."

"With the opening of WEIL Hotel, we have further extended our footprint in Perak, Malaysia and Asia. We bring about a new concept to the hospitality industry where we blend quality hotel services with premium amenities. We foresee WEIL Hotel will bring about a change in the business, socio-economic and lifestyle landscape in Ipoh in particular and to the state of Perak in general."

The WEIL Hotel consists of 313 units of rooms and suites. Travellers will also enjoy specially handpicked and designed bedding, room furnishings and fittings that offer exquisite comfort to the discerning travellers and immerse themselves in a luxurious home away from home experience.

Other facilities include Rooftop Infinity Pool with amazing views of Ipoh's landscape with the backdrop of Ipoh's idyllic town and the iconic limestone hills, gymnasium and spa (targeted to open early 2015) as well as a wide variety of dining outlets. Guests can choose from a variety of gastronomic delights which include TIFFIN an All-Day Dining Restaurant that serves a wide range of both local and International cuisine, Yuk Sou Hin Chinese Restaurant serving contemporary Cantonese cuisine, Tea Lounge with a wide selection of teas, snacks and English tea-time delights and The Deck, a rooftop gastro bar with spectacular views of the city.



"That's why we are calling WEIL Hotel, a bespoke hotel (defined as 'made-to-order'). We aim to be the preferred hotel in Ipoh, not just by our fittings and furnishings but also our people. We have put emphasis in the decor to deliver sophistication, warmth and comfort, while implementing training programmes to continuously develop our employees to become exemplary service professionals," added Liew.

For reservations, please call +605-208 2228 or visit www.weilhotel.com.

News

Opportunities for the Jobless

Pusat Kerjaya Amanjaya (PeKA) has been tasked to create more opportunities and openings for the jobless in Perak. Executive Councillor for Consumer Affairs, Human Resources and Civil Society Dato' Samsudin Abu Hassan said that the centre should have a strategic plan to effectively achieve its goal.

According to him, Perak Menteri Besar Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir had proposed that a unit be set up to be headed by Institut Darul Ridzuan (IDR), to ensure that PeKA would continue to grow and meet the current needs of Perakeans. The MB had called upon PeKA to be more proactive in publicising job opportunities to Perakeans in order to meet the demands of industry players in the state.

Samsudin spoke to the media after accompanying Zambry at the official opening of the PeKA office at Terminal Amanjaya in Bandar Meru Raya recently. Present at the function were the chief executives of IDR, Dr Mazalan Khamis, and MB Inc, Dato' Aminuddin Hashim.

"Most job seekers are SPM leavers, followed by diploma and degree holders. Over the years, the number of SPM leavers who didn't continue with their tertiary education grows, as such we must expose them to opportunities that are available," said Samsudin.

"PeKA needs to collaborate with training centres to meet the demands of the job market. Since PeKA's establishment in 2011, it has successfully created 33,000 job opportunities for those who are registered with the centre," he added.

Luqman



Money for Perak Schools



A sum of almost RM3 million was disbursed to 232 schools in Perak for the payment of utility bills and miscellaneous expenses. A simple cheque-presentation ceremony to formalise the payment was held at the Banquet Hall of the State Secretary Building.

Executive Councillor for Health, Local Government, Consumer Affairs, Environment, Transportation and Non-Muslim Affairs, Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon handed over cheques to representatives of the schools.

Dr Mah said that the annual allocation was an initiative by the state government in collaboration with the state education department to ensure that schools in the state are not being overlooked in their quest to produce first-class human capital for the country.

"Since 2010, the state government has allocated RM1 million to Chinese and Tamil vernacular primary schools, while another RM2 million was allocated to mission and national-type secondary schools since 2011. Beginning next year, allocation for utilities would be increased from RM2000 to RM5000."

Speaking to the press after the cheque presentation ceremony, Dr Mah stressed that the initiative was indicative of the state government's seriousness in ensuring fairness to all schools, public and private. Dr Mah announced the proposed name change for this annual allocation so that the monies could be utilised for other school-related needs and not for payment of utilities alone.

Present at the function were Speaker Dato' Seri S.K. Devamany, special adviser on Indian affairs to Perak Menteri Besar, Dato' V. Elango and Perak State Education Department Head of Information Management (ICT), Mohamad Fadzli Tarmiji.

Luqman

Ear, Nose & Throat Care

By Dr Rekha Balachandran



The Bloody Nose

One of the most alarming things to happen to anyone is a nosebleed. Although frightening, they are fairly common occurrences. They can occur on either one or both sides of the nose and can often be substantial in amount. The nose is full of many tiny blood vessels, which can cause a lot of bleeding even with a minor injury, such as when picking or blowing the nose.

Sleeping or working in air-conditioned rooms can also cause bleeding when the dry cool air tends to suck the moisture out of the lining of the nose. When it becomes dry, the secretions of the nose become crusty, and picking at them will cause bleeding. Bleeding can also be caused by an infection like the flu, as when the nasal lining becomes inflamed or cracked, it's more likely to bleed.

Once there is an area of bleeding, any change in surrounding temperature, such as going from indoors to a hot sunny area can cause the injured blood vessels to swell and for bleeding to recur.

What's the difference between a garden-variety nosebleed and something that requires medical attention? A typical nosebleed should stop after 15 minutes of applying pressure to the nose. It is important to pinch the front of the nose in-between two fingers and lean forward while breathing through the mouth. If there is still bleeding, it's time to consult a doctor. If these nosebleeds keep recurring, a work-up from an ENT doctor would be beneficial.

An ENT doctor will usually do an endoscopic assessment of the nasal cavity to look for the source of bleeding and its underlying cause. Bleeding can be stopped with the application of a chemical or thermal cautery. If the bleeding is profuse (as it can be especially for those with high blood pressure) a temporary nasal pack needs to be inserted to control the bleeding until the blood pressure is brought under control with medication.

For adults with recurrent bleeding it is important to rule out the possibility of a growth in the nose. Nose cancer or *Nasopharyngeal carcinoma* (NPC) is a common cancer here in Malaysia and may present with recurrent nosebleeds.

Nosebleeds can also commonly occur in the following situations:

- Young children with nasal allergies or nose picking habits
- Pregnancy due to the associated hormonal changes
- People who regularly take aspirin and blood thinning medication, such as warfarin
- People with bleeding disorders.

If you or your child has frequent nosebleeds, there are some measures you can take to minimise the occurrence of these events.

- Avoid picking your nose and blowing your nose hard when it's blocked due to a cold or allergies.
- The use of a home humidifier can make a difference, especially in the air-conditioned bedroom.
- The use of saline or salt water spray in your nose can help to moisturise the nose and get out small dry bits of crust instead of picking the nose. Lubricating the inside of the nose by applying petroleum jelly gently with a cotton bud or finger also achieves the same purpose.

After a nosebleed, a "crust" will form inside your nose. Although it is unpleasant, it is part of the healing process and removing it will cause bleeding to recur.

Rekha ENT Specialist Clinic

Suite 509, Level 5, Pantai Hospital Ipoh. Tel: **05 540 5408**.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RekhaENTClinic



News

Seasoned Chefs at Weil Hotel



You know that the quality of food in an establishment has to be good when there are well seasoned professionals at the helm, professionals who have moved up the ranks in leading international hotels and restaurant chains and who have had ample opportunity to hone their culinary skills in diverse circumstances and environments.

Introducing Executive Chef Eric Soong Chee Chew (pic, right), a true-blue Ipohite who has come home to roost and is now sharing his culinary skills with fellow Ipohites in the newly-opened Weil Hotel. Currently managing five outlets namely, Tiffin's All Day Dining, Yuk Sau Hin, Tea Lounge, Deck Gastro Pub, Delicatessen and The Bakery, banquet facilities with Ballroom seating up to 800 and the Conference Centre for up to 600, Eric will be having more on his plate with four more restaurants opening in phase 2.

As part of the pre-opening team since August last year, Eric has been busy purchasing operating equipment, setting up the dry store, the Food Safety Management System, the market list system, the sourcing of food ingredients, writing and planning menus for the outlets, banqueting and custom-made menus.

A veteran of 17 years working his way up in the kitchens, after graduating from Syuen College, Malaysia, with a Diploma in Hotel Management and a Diploma from Professional Management Development Program (The Educational Foundation of The National Restaurant Association), Eric's last posting before joining Weil Hotel was as Executive Chef in Shangri-La Qingdao, China, a 695-room hotel where he managed five food and beverage outlets and 11 kitchens.

Along the way in his illustrious career, Eric has won innumerable awards including being voted 10 weeks in a row for Pai Thai, best top ten restaurant in Dubai; Gold Medal in beef live cooking during Emirates Salon Culinaire 2005; Bronze Medal in venison live cooking Emirates Salon Culinaire 2005; 2010 Restaurant Awards for Fook Lam Moon – Top 10 Cantonese Restaurants in Beijing by *Lifestyle Newspaper* and 2010 Best Restaurant Award Recommend Cantonese Restaurant by *Time Out Chinese*.

In the Weil Hotel, with Tiffin's All Day Dining, Eric's focus is on quality comfort food where Ipohites can dine in cool comfort with their favourite local dishes such as, *Har Meen*, *Char Kway Teow* or *Nasi Goreng*; or grab a club sandwich made with freshly baked Ciabatta. For The Deck Gastro Pub on the pool floor, Eric has planned for serving *Small Plates* which are small bites from a wide selection.

Currently the talk-of-the-town dining venue is their Yuk Sou Hin Chinese restaurant where the food quality and service has raised the bar for Ipoh. Helmed by Master Chef-Chinese Cuisine Chung Ho Shi, Hong Kong born and raised, and now has Singaporean roots, Chef Chung brings with him 38 impressive years of experience, having worked with 15 restaurants both in international hotels as well as restaurant chains including as Executive Chef-Shanghai Region, for Crystal Jade Culinary Concepts Holding which is well known for their culinary excellence.

Together this culinary team of Eric Chew and Chef Chung, will see Yuk Sou Hin giving stiff competition to some of Ipoh's well established Chinese restaurants. Quality of food aside, there is the additional incentive of beautifully appointed private rooms (some of which may be joined to form a private room for six tables), superlative service, and this scribe's favourite complaint: clean toilets!

SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

Kinta River Banks Not Maintained



I was shocked to see the condition of the Kinta River banks on either side of Jalan Iskandar Shah (Hugh Low Street) bridge. The river banks are not being maintained in the city centre. It is an eye sore. There are viewing platforms on either side of the river with railings beneath the bridge but it is not safe to go there because of the tall grass. One has to see the place to assess the condition, words cannot describe in detail.

In the fifties I was living in Lahat Lane and people staying in DID/PWD quarters and residents from the Malay kampong across Sungai Pari used the banks of Kinta River as their main thoroughfare to go to town up to Kallumalai Temple along Jalan Raja Musa Aziz (Anderson Road). The banks were well maintained and people used it day and night.

However, the banks of Sungai Pari are well maintained. The contractor cuts grass every two weeks. It is safe to walk on the bunds, except for the cow dung scattered all over the place which is a health hazard.

Ipoh came into existence because of Kinta River which divides the town into two. We should be ashamed of ourselves for not maintaining the river banks at least in the city centre. It is not enough to maintain the banks only along the short stretch of Kinta River Walk. What type of impression are we giving our tourists?

Instead of passing the buck, the relevant authorities must maintain the river bunds.

A. Jeyaraj



Announcement

NO PARKING ZONE

Please be informed that areas around the city's popular night market, "Gerbang Malam", has been designated a no-parking zone by Ipoh City Council effective Tuesday, January 6, 2015.

The affected areas are where the traders ply their trade. The public is advised that the parking of cars and commercial vehicles within the said areas is prohibited beginning 6pm till 2am the following morning.

The action is taken following complaints by traders and the public about indiscriminate parking by those patronising the market. There had been a number of heated arguments resulting in fistfights over parking space.

Council's enforcement officers will not hesitate to issue compounds to motorists who flout the ruling. Vehicles can be towed away too.

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Community

Community in Solidarity

Ushering in the New Year of 2015, Perak Women For Women (PWW) and Pertubuhan IKRAM Perak, along with civil movement Malaysians for Malaysia (M4M) collaborated to organise a gathering to strengthen the solidarity, harmony and respect among the various races and faiths.

Named "Harapan 2015: Community in Solidarity", the objective of the gathering, which was well attended by representatives from various non-governmental and religious organisations, was to try to get back the Malaysia that we had before and to help convey the message to the masses.

It was also an evening to express and restore hopes for a better year ahead, and to celebrate diversity and differences by experiencing the various cultures and embracing them, and to respect each other as individuals.

Malaysia went through a rough 2014 with the unprecedented air tragedies and the worst flooding the country has ever seen at the tail-end of the year.

In her opening speech, Halida Mohd. Ali, President of PWW, said, "We're all here this evening with one hope and one wish, and that's to work towards a better Malaysia."

In a show of solidarity, the national anthem, Negaraku, was sung by all attendees. Presentations of videos, dance and music were also part of the line up of programmes for the evening, while a poem titled, "Perpaduan" was recited by S. Sundralingam, with the background music of a Chinese musical instrument, the erhu.

Religious leaders from the Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh and Christian communities shared their messages of hope and peace. Guest-of-honour, Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir, said, "I do see hope in Malaysia because the average Malaysians came forward in the time of need to help one another.

Ordinary citizens found courage in each other and overcame challenges together. I

believe all of us are here today with the intention to do good. May our country be blessed and our future be bright."

The auspicious event was held at Sarang Sepaloh, a boutique hotel along Jalan Sultan Iskandar, Ipoh on Saturday, January 10.

Emily



Telecommunication Tower Worries Residents



Residents staying along Jalan Lasam, Ipoh are up in arms over the construction of a telecommunication tower in their area. Construction works began some six months ago and it is becoming apparent that a deferment will not take place although a formal complaint has been lodged with Ipoh City Council.

Retiree Ho Mook Sing, 58, who has been living in the said area for over 20 years, expressed his fear when met by Ipoh Echo recently. "My major worry is the after-effects of electromagnetic waves emanating from the tower once it's in operation. They will definitely have an impact on residents' health, as tests have proven so."

The residents have objected to the tower being built in their area and had, collectively, filed a complaint with Ipoh City Council in October 2014.

"The Council had, subsequently, issued a stop-work order to the contractor, as the facility doesn't comply by conditions stipulated. However, works on the tower continue unabated. The irresponsible attitude of the contractor and the owner of the tower is worrying, as people's health is at risk," Ho protested. "I hope the Council will do something before tragedy strikes."

Dato' Khalid Abdul Halim, 79, formerly the Director of Education Perak and a long-time resident of Jalan Lasam is similarly perturbed by events taking place in this quiet neighbourhood.

"The majority of the residents here are pensioners and retirees who had contributed to the well being of Ipoh and the state. We want nothing more than peace and quiet to while away our remaining years," he lamented. "The Council should not abdicate its responsibilities for pecuniary reasons. Residents' health and safety take precedence."

According to Puan Normala Latiff of Ipoh City Council, a stop-work order was issued to the contractor on Thursday, November 20, 2014. The one-month notice expired on Saturday, December 20, 2014. The landowner, Majlis Agama Islam Perak and the contractor appealed against the decision and were given a month's extension. The grace period expires on Friday, January 23.

RM



New Year Contribution from Volunteers

KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital celebrated New Year 2015 in a more meaningful way. In view of 2014 having been a challenging year for Malaysia with three air tragedies, the latest crisis of massive floods in Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang, Johor and Perak prompted KPJ volunteers to assist the affected people of Kampung Gajah in the evacuation centre in Maktab Rendah Sains MARA (MRSM) Pasir Salak. In their first 2015 CSR outreach project, KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital contributed almost RM10,000 which included cash, medications and food for the flood victims.

KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital which never forgets its responsibility to society, together with the Doctors' Charity Fund of KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital, provided medical checkups with prescriptions of medications and supplements to almost a thousand evacuees which included the elderly, children and their family members.

More than 40 young energetic volunteers from non-nursing, nursing, Medical Officer and six Consultants took part in this noble cause, spearheaded by the Chief Executive Officer of KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital, Asmadi Mohd Bakri.



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Total units	100
Exp. Completion date	October 2015
Land tenure	Freehold
Price	Min RM 866,210 Max RM 1,267,800
Approving Authority	Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh

Community

School Uniforms for Orphans

The joy felt by the 40 children was clearly etched on their faces when they were given the chance to pick their new school uniforms and other schooling essentials for the 2015 school term. They were orphans from Pertubuhan Badan Kebajikan Darussalam who went on a "shopping spree" on Monday, December 29, 2014.

Eonsave Klebang operations manager, Zamzuri Mansor, said that the allocation of RM100 voucher per child was a contribution from the hypermarket chain. "This is part of our Corporate Social Responsibility programme that was launched five years ago to assist the less fortunate. We'd like them to be as happy as their peers who are from well-to-do families."

Hostel manager, Norizan Razali, 46, was grateful for the gifts, as they helped lighten the home's burden. "We wish to express our heartfelt thanks to Dato' Hamidah Osman, the management of Eonsave, Perak Media Sports and Welfare Club, Ipoh City Council Senior Officers' Club and Kinta Riverfront Hotel for their assistance. It's most timely." The kids were then treated to a sumptuous lunch at Kinta Riverfront Hotel.

During the function, a Flood Victims Relief Fund was launched. To kick-off the fund, Ipoh City Council donated food and daily necessities worth RM3000 while Kinta Riverfront gave 50 cartons of mineral water.

RM



Gotong Royong to Battle Dengue



Lim Garden is listed as a dengue hotspot for week 50 till 13 December 2014 on the website of Perak State Health Department. Rukun Tetangga (RT) Lim Garden and Resident Representative Committee in conjunction with Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh (MBI) organised a gotong royong to clean up the place.

Committee members of RT had identified the areas where garbage is dumped. Since MBI did not collect household garbage on the previous day as scheduled, garbage was placed in the collection sites along the road. Workers from MBI and residents cleared the garbage and due to heavy rain in the morning only about 40 per cent of the rubbish was removed.

Councillor Ong Chee Keng was present and visited the garbage sites. He listened to the problems of the residents which were basically clogged drains, grass cutting, garbage collection. He was also shown the area in front of the houses facing Sungai Pari where buffalos and cows come to graze, destroying trees and plants. The place stinks of cow dung and urine and becomes breeding ground for mosquitos. In spite of repeated complaints, no action has been taken by MBI.

Most residents in Lim Garden are pensioners and there are a number of professionals but only about 30 residents turned up. Senior citizens may not be able to do physical work, but they could have turned up to give moral support.

It has been identified in a survey that individual and communal septic tanks have a serious problem of mosquito breeding. The solution to reduce mosquito breeding and prevent dengue is to build a Centralised Sewage System and this has been highlighted. Until CSS is built, there is a constant danger of dengue outbreak in Lim Garden.

AJ

Ushering in New Year

The Evergreens, a group of senior citizens from St Michael's Church, Ipoh, ushered in 2015 with a bash at their clubhouse.

Members, friends and guests, numbering about a hundred, mingled excitedly while exchanging New Year greetings with one another. With Christmas still lingering in the air, everyone had a jolly good time tucking into the spread laid out for the occasion as Christmas carols resonated in the background. An exchange of gifts followed. No one left empty-handed.

Amidst all the fun and gaiety, everyone was reminded that as they celebrated and welcomed the New Year, to not forget the less fortunate who had suffered great losses in the past few months and that 2015 will be a better and brighter year for all.

SH Ong



Grant A Wish Event

Clutching her present still wrapped in gift wrapping, Wong Poh Mei said that she was very happy to receive a school bag. The 9-year-old girl from Ipoh Christian Centre was one of the lucky children from seven orphanage homes who had their wishes granted in conjunction with Christmas.

John, 16, from Vision Home, received a guitar. The self-taught guitarist had been playing his friend's guitar since he was 12. He said, "I am happy and thankful that I finally have my own instrument!" John, a student at SMK Buntong, also participated in last year's event where he received a long-sleeved shirt.

The Grant A Wish communal drive organised by Ipoh Parade ran for the fifth consecutive year, with the objective of granting the wishes of children in orphanage homes in Ipoh. The annual event was to inspire the community to pay it forward.

For one month, the wishes of these children from Good Shepherd Family Home, Precious Gift Home, Salvation Army Ipoh Boys Home, Vision Home, Pertubuhan Anak-Anak Yatim & Miskin (Anning Ipoh), Ipoh Christian Centre (Agape Family) and Pertubuhan Kebajikan Harapan Baru were displayed at the concourse area of the shopping mall.

Shoppers and well-wishers then had the opportunity to grant these wishes either through sponsorship of new gifts, donation of pre-loved items or even cash. Cash donations were used to purchase gifts that were not among those donated by patrons.

Tenants of Ipoh Parade, namely Kopitiam Avenue, Chicken Rice Shop and Born & Bread also sponsored gifts for these children, putting huge smiles on the faces of the kids.

The children, numbering almost 140, were then invited to the shopping mall on Monday, December 29, 2014 for a gift presentation. They were also treated to a Latin dance performance by junior dancers from Yencsi Dance Studio and a stage magic show by Uncle Frankie, making their day a memorable one.

Said Centre Manager of Ipoh Parade Chan Yu Yin, "In keeping with our tradition, we are happy to be able to get into the holiday spirit of giving by providing a platform for everyone to contribute to the happiness of these children who have their wishes granted."

Emily





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A Season of Giving

Doing its part during the season of giving, Fairview International School (FIS) raised RM10,000 for Batu Gajah-based Rumah Kebajikan Kanak-Kanak Cacat (RKKK), a welfare home for the physically handicapped.

The centre currently hosts 46 individuals with special needs between the ages of 14 to 63. They suffer from cerebral palsy, hip dislocation, mental retardation, speech disabilities and autism. Some are from single-parent families.

Acting Head of FIS, Michele Lum said RKKK was picked as the school's recipient because the home cares for these individuals by imparting practical life skills and knowledge to them. "Our objective is to bring cheers to these occupants as they are often neglected," she told Ipoh Echo.

"The center is in dire need of household items such as kitchen utensils and sofa cover sets, as well as money to pay for their utilities. Our students sold pastries and cookies as well as handmade T-shirts and tote bags during break time. They organised a "Hang-Your-Wish-On-The-Christmas-Tree" project where wishing cards were sold at RM2 to RM3 each," she added.

Caretaker Esther, 20, said the occupants of the home could look forward to a brighter new year with the monetary donation by the school. Expressing her gratitude, she said, "Somehow we have individuals and corporations who willingly help us in our moments of need. We're grateful for their generosity."

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Education



Training on Leadership Breakthrough

UTAR and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) jointly organised a training programme titled, 'Leadership Breakthrough!' at UTAR Perak Campus recently. A total of 60 highly motivated youths from UTAR and USM participated in the collaborative leadership training programme.

The two-day training programme included workshops, outdoor activities and games to develop leadership qualities. The participants attended three workshops which focused on areas such as critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, decision making, stress management, communication skills and emotional intelligence. Their outdoor activities included a half-day excursion to Gua Tempurung, Kampar on the first day and a captain-ball game on the second day.

At the closing ceremony, former Dean of UTAR Faculty of Arts and Social Science Dr Cheah Phaik Kin presented certificates and souvenirs to the participants. Dr Cheah also presented the Best Group Award to Group 5 and the Best Group Leader Award to Kho Ying Han who holds the position of Ex-Co of the Chinese Arts and Cultural Secretariat of USM.

The main sponsors for the training were Gua Tempurung Outdoor Camp and Restaurant Jia Kampar.

Young Perak

Rohini Does Everyone Proud

Besides studying hard, taking care of her health was also a major factor in helping a student succeed in her recent Form Three Assessment Examination now known as Pentaksiran Tingkatan 3 or PT3. Bubbly Rohini, 15, from Ipoh, was elated after obtaining 10 As in PT3 for 2014, and was selected as the top student of the Sri Murugan Centre (SMC).

"I'd like to thank my teachers and tutors for their guidance and assistance. My parents are proud of my achievement today," said the second of three siblings to Ipoh Echo.

According to Rohini, the format of PT3 is different to the previous Peperiksaan Menengah Rendah or PMR as PT3 posed subjective questions whereas PMR questions were objective. "A higher level of thinking skills is required to prepare students for their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination in Form Five two years later. This is a good beginning," she added.

K. Nachemuthu, co-ordinator of SMC said it was difficult to compare PMR and PT3 as both are different and in different formats. Through PT3, candidates were tested with questions based on thinking skills as there were no objective questions. "We accept these changes as education is becoming more competitive, globally. We hope those who had acquired good grades in PT3 would continue with their extra classes at SMC until they sit for their SPM," he added.

The presentation ceremony was held at the Sri Murugan Centre, Ipoh on Saturday, December 27, 2014.

Lugman



Announcement

BOOK LAUNCH

The book entitled, "Ripples", authored by Betty Ong will be launched on Saturday, January 24 at 4pm at Symphony Suites Hotel, Ipoh. The event is organised by Perak Academy and will be officiated by philanthropist, Mr Koon Yew Yin.

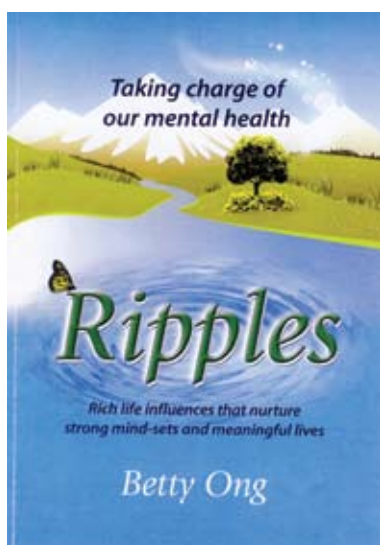
Ipoh-born Betty Ong is a registered councillor with a nursing background. She also specialises in substance misuse (drug/alcohol). Her last workplace was at Central North West London NHS Trust, UK. During her career in mental health and independent practice she was exposed to a full spectrum of human capability, both positive and destructive.

Betty's book "Ripples" stems from the vast distress she saw in society and people's reluctance in seeking help. They would choose to wallow in the fragmentation of mental health and when fatality sets in, would wonder why.

The book attempts to explain what mental health is all about in relation to personal moral qualities and how these are integrated in our everyday life practices. It lays bare the pervading stigma and argues that a new pragmatism is required. To this end, seeking-help must be accepted as a norm.

The 150-page softcover is priced at RM30 a piece but will be sold at a discount during the launch.

For details and reservations call Wai Kheng at 05-2413742 or 016-5518172.



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.

Sportability Workshop by British Council, Malaysia in collaboration with Youth Sports Trust, UK. The workshop aims to improve the competence level of teachers and those working with young people with special needs when teaching them Physical Education, coaching sport or working on community programmes. Sunday, **January 25** from 8am to 5.30pm at M Boutique Hotel, No. 2, Hala Datuk 5, 31650 Ipoh. Admission: Free. Limited to 35 participants on a first-come-first-serve basis. For details and registration call Ms Hanna Kamal at **017 648 0083**. Email: hannah.kamal@britishcouncil.org.my.

The Family Wellness Club, Ipoh, Perak (FWC) is organising a dinner followed by a talk entitled, "Mental Hygiene – The missing link between body, mind and spirit" by Paul Jambunathan, Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Senior Lecturer, School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Monash University Malaysia. Saturday, **January 31** beginning at 7.30pm at Royal Ipoh Club. For details call Sumathy at **012 236 5037** and **012 239 6190**.

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Christmas and New Year Round-up

By Angain Kumar

Ipoh Echo took the liberty to go about town to see how Ipohites celebrate Christmas and welcome the New Year. A royal decree by HRH Sultan Nazrin Shah to tone down festivities in view of the floods this New Year resulted in a subdued affair compared to previous years. Nevertheless, some form of merriment did take place but on a much-reduced scale. Angain Kumar visited some of the premier hotels in Ipoh and filed this report:

Weil Hotel

In the spirit of the festivities, Weil Hotel offered a lovely dinner set at RM100 which featured international cuisine prepared in Ipoh's first open-kitchen concept restaurant. Guests were accompanied by carolers who belted out Christmas carols effortlessly. There was a plethora of tempting delights from their signature restaurants, Tiffin and Yuk Sou Hin. As the year drew to a close, the hotel's countdown party drew the most attention. The hotel gastro bar, The Deck, officially opened with performances by popular deejays, Skeletor and Virus. The Deck offers a bird's eye view of Ipoh's charming night lights. The evening featured hip upbeat music that was melodious enough to tempt the crowd to usher in the New Year.



Ibis Styles Hotel

sTreats, Ibis Hotel's in-house restaurant offered a special weekend BBQ buffet brunch. The promotion featured BBQ styled chicken, beef and seafood varieties. The pay-3-free-1 promotion was priced at a reasonable RM45 (adult) and RM22.50 (children). For the New Year's Eve countdown, the hotel hosted an exclusive Countdown

Party at its resident Mu Bar. The RM70 price tag was inclusive of one drink and a party pack. The bar offered a selection of cocktails at affordable prices with other drinks and finger foods. Guests welcomed the New Year with the deejay playing a mixture of retro and contemporary music.

Kinta Riverfront Hotel and Suites

Palong Coffee House at Kinta Riverfront celebrated Christmas with a sumptuous high-tea buffet. The buffet featured appetisers ranging from waldorf salads and assorted canapé. Guests also feasted from an elaborate food station which had roasted lamb leg and rib-eye accompanied with béarnaise and black pepper sauce. There was also a dinner buffet, priced at RM48 with an even larger spread. Guests had a variety of soups and salads to choose from and an assortment of lamb and chicken on display. They welcomed the New Year at the Tin Ore Bistro and Lounge. The countdown was the least of the worries for the attendees, as the atmosphere was most conducive for the occasion.

Symphony Suites

Symphony Suites hosted around 75 guests for its Christmas Eve dinner and held an equally eloquent



Christmas Day buffet. The Christmas Eve dinner was fully subscribed with guests celebrating the auspicious day with loved ones. The Christmas buffet featured delicious Western delights such as roasted lamb leg with mint sauce, Tagliatelle carbonara and roasted turkey with cranberry sauce. Guests could choose to dine inside the hotel or outside on its beautifully floral-decked terrace. The mix of international and local dishes was priced at RM60 per person.



Casuarina Meru

The celebration mood was in the air at Casuarina Meru from Christmas till the New Year. It started with a splendid Christmas Eve buffet dinner at the coffee house featuring a western spread with a touch of local flavor. Diners were serenaded with songs by a live band as they feasted on a variety of barbequed chicken and lamb. This was followed by a scrumptious Christmas Day Tunch (Tea-Lunch) and buffet dinner. The New Year was celebrated in style amidst a cheerful crowd at the podium. Guests were spoilt for choice from a spread of western and eastern cuisines with a good choice of desserts to end it all. A live band playing old and new songs entertained guests as they ushered in the New Year.

MH Hotel

MH Hotel celebrated Christmas in style with a delightful set dinner at Sky Lounge, under the starry Ipoh night sky. Set dinner began with creamy white asparagus soup as starter and a mix-grill main course fit for a king. Christmas was heralded with a majestic fireworks display. The party did not stop there as Sky Lounge enjoyed another full house for its New Year's Eve countdown party. The event was filled with an energetic crowd who welcomed the New Year with drinks and good company. A blend of upbeat music played under a moonlit night overlooking the city, set the mood for the guests to count the last few seconds of 2014 and welcomed 2015 with a loud cheer, minus the fireworks.



Community

Vale Volunteers Promote Learning



Fifty Vale volunteers, comprising Vale employees and their family members, ran a 5-km race from Sekolah Semangat Maju, Sitiawan and back, to raise awareness on the importance of keeping a healthy lifestyle before heading on to develop a 'sensory room' at the school. The room is aimed to promote learning and development for the 60 special needs school children.

The volunteer initiative was carried out in celebration of the Global Vale Volunteers programme's 10th year anniversary and their annual V-Day celebration, an event where Vale Volunteers around the world gather to make a difference to the lives of others.

In setting up the 'sensory room', the volunteers utilised the toys and facilities donated by Vale's employees and contractors aimed to enhance the interaction, discovery and communication of the special needs children through increased awareness of their surroundings. These environments encourage stimulation of the senses – sight, sound, touch, taste and smell, which are crucial elements in daily life.

Maintenance manager of Vale in Malaysia, Alexandre Carneiro said, "We hope that with the setting up of the 'sensory room', it could create a stimulating and enjoyable yet calming atmosphere for the children." He added, "Vale has always been emphasizing the importance of educational activities in its volunteer and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in contributing to a better quality of life, and we do hope that this little contribution of ours will make way for better learning and development for these children."

K. Muthu, chairman of Sekolah Semangat Maju, Sitiawan, said that "I'm very grateful to Vale, who took the initiative to organise this event as it creates awareness on the needs of children with intellectual disabilities, which unfortunately is still quite taboo in today's society. This kind of realisation and contributions of an organisation like Vale makes this planet a better place to live."

Opinion

By Koon Yew Yin

Can this Method of Flood Mitigation be the Silver Bullet?

Like all Malaysians, much of my attention lately has centered on the news and scenes of the flood devastation that has occurred in the country, especially in Kelantan.

While I also share the concern of many others as to whether our political leaders and authorities have been on top of their game or have bungled in their disorganized efforts at providing relief, the main focus of my scrutiny has been on whether any practical mitigation measure can be undertaken to minimize the impact of this almost annual climatic phenomenon which has caused so much suffering and socio-economic loss.

In looking for an answer, I believe I am better qualified than most people in the country in view of my long experience as an engineer who has been involved in various major water-related projects such as the Muda Irrigation scheme since the 1960s.

Of special relevance is that about 30 years ago, my company undertook the contract to fill up the Kelantan Medical University site which is a few kilometres upstream of Kota Baru/Sungai Kelantan. From my working experience in dredging the sand from the river, I noted that the few hundred thousand cubic metres we dredged from the river was soon re-filled by the constant new inflow of sand.

From this, it is clear to me that one of the major causes of the annual flooding is the accumulation of sand at the mouth of Sungai Kelantan which is more than 10km from Kota Baru and that an enormous quantity of sand amounting to perhaps several hundred millions of cubic metres, must be taken out to mitigate flooding.

But how can this be done in a cost effective way?

The answer lies in another project which my company, obtained at the same time to dredge sand from Sungai Tiram in Johor for export to Singapore. The sand from the river was used to create the beach at Sentosa Resort in Singapore. In the process we not only cleared that particular Malaysian river and solved its flooding problem but we also generated jobs and income from the revenue received from Singapore. This was a win-win situation for our two nations.

Although I was one of the founders of Mudajaya and IJM Corporation, I am now no longer associated with these companies nor have I any business interest in the construction industry. However, I will support dredging of the sand resources of Sungai Kelantan, subject to various environmental safeguards, to alleviate the flooding.

Shortly after returning to Malaysia from his overseas trip, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak announced an allocation of RM500 million to help the flood victims cope with the disaster. Kota Baru floods every year and very often the Government allocates hundreds of millions of ringgit to help the flood victims. All this money is not solving the flooding problem. We must find a way to mitigate the flooding.

A Win-Win Situation for Malaysia and Singapore

My proposal to the Prime Minister is a simple one which can meet both short and long term goals. If we sell the sand taken out from Sungai Kelantan to Singapore at say RM10 per cubic metre, we would gain several billion of ringgit to make up for the growing shortfall in government coffers arising from low oil prices. At the same time, if properly planned, the dredging will eliminate the flooding problem of the Kota Baru and Kelantan population.

The public and I are aware that for various political reasons, selling sand to Singapore was disallowed by the Mahathir Government. It is time to review this policy. The mitigation measure I have proposed is an easy, practical and common sense solution to Kelantan's annual flooding. It also provides Singapore with access to cheaper sand (presently Singapore is importing from as far as Cambodia!) and will have the effect of improving Malaysia-Singapore relations.

UMNO hardliners may not agree with what I am proposing but can the Prime Minister's Department please also ask the people of Kota Baru and Kelantan what they want.

Arts & Culture

Watoto Children's Choir

Coming all the way from Kampala, Uganda, 18 orphaned children from 6 to 13 years old gave two energetic stage performances in Ipoh at the Red Crescent Hall, as part of the choir's tour of Asia, named "Beautiful Africa: A New Generation".

The children's choir, the 67th group since its inception in 1994, goes on tours all over the world, including performing at the White House and Buckingham Palace, to build awareness of God's concern in Africa and to raise funds for the thousands of other children cared for at Watoto children's villages, through a holistic care programme. It was initiated as a response to the overwhelming number of orphaned and vulnerable children and women in Uganda.

On the road since September 2014, Malaysia is the choir's third country after Hong Kong and South Korea, staging a total of 120 shows before returning home in February 2015. These tours were also an opportunity for the children to build self-confidence and strengthen discipline.

In Ipoh, where the concerts were organised by Glory Creative Team, the children dressed in colourful African costumes, sang gospel songs and danced to uplifting music, all to convey the message of love and hope.

Through music and dance, which was a fusion of contemporary gospel and traditional African rhythm, the children also celebrated the beauty of Africa and shared



the Word of God through stories of transformation.

These children, as ambassadors for Watoto representing the 3000 children under care, presented the vision and mission of their organisation, and to raise funds through the sale of craft items, among others.

Readers who would like to sponsor a child may do so at RM120 a month. For further information, check the website of www.watoto.asia or email asia@watoto.com.

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.

Ambulance Accidents

It is indeed very disturbing to read frequent news reports of ambulances getting involved in nasty road accidents in the country. Some of these ambulance related accidents have turned out to be tragic and fatal.

I welcome the announcement by the health minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam, that all newly purchased ambulances by his ministry will be installed with a speed limiter – a device to prevent drivers from speeding. (The Star, Dec 16, “New Ambulances To Have Speed Limit”.)

The proposed speed-limit device may be a good idea to ensure ambulance drivers do not go too fast. However, instead of waiting for new ambulances to arrive, I suggest if it is practical to install the speed limit gadget in all ambulances that are currently in service.

Apart from installing a speed-limit device in ambulances it is equally important to focus on the right and effective model of training for our ambulance drivers so that they can carry out their duties and conduct themselves in a professional manner.

I believe with a well designed professional training programme we should be able to motivate and mould our ambulance drivers with the right skills, knowledge and attitude for the job. In this context I urge the authorities to review (if there is already one in existence) the ambulance drivers' training curriculum to meet the modern day medical emergency complexities and challenges.

An ambulance driver's job must not be equated with any ordinary vehicle driver. They deserve special attention from us, as they are part of the life-saving team. They need special training to be always on the alert and skillful in handling the ambulance on busy roads to ensure the safety of the patients and medical staff on board.

We need to standardise our ambulance drivers' (public and private) training curriculum in the country. Ideally, an ambulance driver operator safety curriculum should be in place.

Ambulance drivers should be required to pass the above special safety programme before they are allowed to operate an ambulance full time. Ad hoc training modules for ambulance drivers are not that effective and suitable for the present day medical emergency needs.

Annual random health and drug/alcohol abuse screening should also be in place for ambulance drivers.

The entry requirement, emoluments, promotion prospects for ambulance drivers should also be reviewed to boost the image of the profession.

S. Param
Taman Kemuncak

Stop Cutting Trees

Years back, Meru Golf & Country Resort in Ipoh was a very nice valley with natural surroundings and atmosphere. Just look at this picture how trees are being cut down by the management in order to have more projects. I hope all owners/residents/members can fully support me to stop this unhealthy activity. We should stop and think about what they are doing. The world is getting more and more polluted. We should save the trees for future generations. Our ancestors left a beautiful ecology for us. Why ruin it? In addition, trees are important for living systems including us.

Jose Voo



Name Change a Sign of Change

The re-naming of major roads in the federal capital, Kuala Lumpur, has attracted many comments and remarks from Malaysians. Jalan Duta is now Jalan Tuanku Abdul Halim, Batu Road has become Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman and several other roads were similarly renamed.

I have no qualms about renaming the roads after Malay rulers and other leaders of the country. In Ipoh many streets and roads have their names changed. Anderson Road is now Jalan Raja Musa Aziz, Tiger Lane is Jalan Raja Azlan Shah, Brewster Road is Jalan Sultan Idris Shah, Hugh Low Street is Jalan Iskandar Shah, Jalan Hospital is Jalan Raja Asman Shah and others. It is done to respect and honour our great rulers and leaders.

Renaming important buildings too is justifiable. The General Hospital Ipoh is now Hospital Raja Perempuan Bainun. As such, it is therefore appropriate to rename KLIA 2 and Istana Negara.

Changing of road and street names is nothing new. It is a sign of change. History and heritage will not be affected as the old names will still appear below the new names. Let us take the name-change in a positive way rather than make a mountain out of it.

K. Letchumanan

Kudos to State Tourism Board

I refer to the Srivijaya Inflight magazine (August - December 2014 issue). It was indeed a pleasant surprise when I opened the magazine to find between its covers, articles promoting Ipoh and Perak. About time!

I am particularly impressed by the Tourist Map of Perak by the State Tourism Board. The Medan Travel Agents Familiarisation Tour of Perak will hopefully lead to more visitors from North Sumatra in the near future.

However, I would like to point out that the authorities should be careful when promoting certain ‘attractions’; for instance, the Kinta Nature Park in Batu Gajah. It took me and my friends a long time to find the place (and we are locals) as it was badly signposted. When we finally found the place it was in a state of neglect. On top of that there were not many birds.

It only takes one or two disappointments to spoil what otherwise would have been an enjoyable trip for visitors. And nothing travels faster than bad news, so we have to be careful about the attractions we promote.

But that aside, overall this is a great effort at promoting the “Town that Tin Built” and the “Silver State”. I hope there will be follow-up articles (for instance about Ipoh food for which the city is renowned) and events (Why not an Ipoh Food Fest in Medan?) to keep travellers interested.

Ipoh and Perak need a tag line so that people can remember us easily. For Ipoh, the old tag of “The Town that Tin Built” would seem most appropriate. And to reflect the beauty of Perak and the warmth of Perakians, perhaps, “Perak – Beautiful Places, Friendly Faces”.

I also noticed that the private sector in Ipoh has advertised in the magazine. This reflects confidence that visitor numbers from North Sumatra will grow. There are many more things the State and private sector stakeholders can do to promote tourism, but this is a good start. (Give) credit where credit is due. Well Done!

Yin

Fuel Price Reduced but Food Prices Stay

Beginning this year, with the fuel price drop, what may have appeared initially to be good news to many of us, hoping that this would cause the price of food and drinks to decrease accordingly; has turned out to be no news at all. It has been a week and the hawkers and coffee shop operators seemed to ignore the price drop. In the past, these operators are very smart; whenever the price of fuel increases, they are so prompt in increasing food prices. This is very unfair to the consumers. Unlike grocery shops which earn a very low profit, hawkers and coffee shops operators are already enjoying a very high profit margin, almost a 200 per cent gross profit. This is not an over judgement as I have made a study on the profit derived by operating a grocery shop and a coffee cum eating shop in Ipoh and Teluk Intan for the past two years. The former being strictly adhered to the price control act, while the latter stand to benefit a lot for free to increase their food and beverage pricing.

In order to prevent hawkers from profiteering unreasonably, and squeezing the rakyat, it is time, the government steps in to regulate the food and drink price as well. Only then can we feel the advantages to be enjoyed when the fuel price is lowered.

Chris Ng Chong Phee

First Class Address but Third Class Infrastructure

Time and time again I have read with disdain that our local authorities have not paid heed to the warnings given in the past.

Many people in Ipoh know of Thomson Lane (Lorong Tun Dr Ismail) and Thomson Road (Jalan Tun Dr Ismail) which leads into Lorong Rani and Jalan Hang Tuah. This locality is the Ipoh equivalent of Millionaires Row, and synonymous with what one would consider an affluent residential area. Although residents here may pay the highest quit rent and assessment rates in Ipoh, the infrastructure that they enjoy leaves little to be desired.

Not many know of the flood woes that have plagued residents in this area for years. In 2001, Hew Yew Can, as the State Assemblyman, wrote of how he tackled the flood woes. By 2006, the flooding had reoccurred. The Ipoh City Council, around that time, imposed as a precondition to development that the developer was to build larger drains. And was this diligently implemented? Read on.

For a while all was well; however since then, one only needs to look around the vicinity of this so called first or high class residential area to see that where the density of such areas was once kept to a minimum, today the aim is to maximise profits, and to squeeze as many units onto a piece of land as possible.

Moreover, as if the increase in the density of housing on a particular plot of land was not enough, soon condominiums will be sprouting to dominate that landscape. We already have a parking problem at the Polo Ground which is just off North Thomson Lane, yet seven condominium towers have been approved for development, and are currently under construction. Yes, seven! That will translate into more than 600 new condo units. Bear in mind that Malaysians who can afford to purchase such units will generally have more than one vehicle.



Parking woes for the joggers and those who frequently go to the Polo Ground will arise.

With all these new developments, surely all the rainwater has to go somewhere. With our torrential thunderstorms, the collection and run-off on roofs and into gutters is immense, in a relatively short space of time. The current drainage system simply cannot cope.

Ipoh City Council should not be practising town planning as if they were just joining the dots and connecting new drains to existing ones. This seems to be still happening despite all the warnings that have already been given by myself and others in 2001, 2009, 2013. At this rate, Ipoh will fast lose its charm. A picture speaks a thousand words, they say. Well, you be the judge of that.

Nathan S. Eliatamby

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