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ISSUE **214**

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Ipoh Rallies to Plight of Nepal's Earthquake Victims

By Nantini Krishnan, Ili Aqilah & Tan Mei Kuan

The devastating earthquake that struck Nepal on Saturday, April 25 2015 caused huge loss of lives and properties in Nepal. While the world focused on Nepal itself, what of the Nepalis who are foreign workers on Malaysian soil, worried sick about their families back home and doing their best to send meagre funds back home in an effort to alleviate the suffering from the devastation that ensued? Ipoh Echo sent their reporters to find out...

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“A man’s true wealth is the good he does in this world”

700,000 Nepalese in Malaysia

Malaysian Digest reported in their article “Nepalese Workers Are Sent Back To Slave Era After Arriving In Malaysia - Nepali Ambassador To Malaysia” published on Wednesday, December 31, 2014 that, Malaysia employs the highest number of Nepali workers abroad. Recent statistics from the Department of Labour and Employment, shows that about 700,000 Nepalese are currently working in Malaysia.

With major parts of Kathmandu reduced to rubble, including many World Heritage sites, the quakes killed at least 8000 people, and left many in desperate need of shelter, medical help, food and other aid. The people of Nepal are still trying to recover from the two major earthquakes and countless aftershocks.

Earthquakes are not new to Nepal, but the scale of this disaster is unprecedented. Badly damaged roads and landslides have cut off access to remote parts of the country where the impact is unknown. Nepal is an impoverished country, and the buildings do not follow any earthquake safety codes. As a result, the concrete buildings were reduced to rubble, trapping people underneath. Residents in the capital Kathmandu, are sleeping out in the open, fearing aftershocks. Many historic structures such as palaces and temples have been irreparably damaged as well. Each day is a struggle in many parts of the country and naturally the Nepali workers here, while their physical safety remains unscathed, are helpless in the face of the hardships faced by their families back home.

Ipoh Echo sat with a group of Nepali workers who were shaken by the tragedy and worried about the future of their country. These devoted Nepalis working as waiters, staff and security guards for Meru Valley Resort, Insight Alliance Security Service, Microtech Security Sdn Bhd and Citrus Wine & Dine Restaurant have been working hard to support their families.



SI Kathmandu volunteers distributing rice



Meru employees, L-R: Janga Karki, Hark Raj Karki, Govinder Timalisina, Mahesh Bahadur Chand and Rajendra K.C.

Nepalese in Ipoh

The number of Nepali workers in Meru Valley is 5 staff from The Dome Restaurant. They also outsource their 22 security staff from Insight Alliance Security Service and 10 staff from Microtech Security Sdn Bhd. The total number of Nepali workers in Citrus Wine & Dine is five. We spoke to them and asked how the tragedy had impacted them and their families back home.

For Mahesh Bahadur, 29, who works at the Dome in Meru Valley Resort, it was a relief to know that his family were not affected by the earthquake but he can still remember the first few hours after the news broke and he couldn’t get in touch with them.

“As soon as I saw the news, immediately I called my family but they were unreachable due to the earthquake. I was beyond worried, thinking about my beloved family and friends.”

It was a different story for Hark Raj, 28, from the district of Okhaldunga, who also works at the Dome. The tragedy took his aunt and cousin’s life and Hark wished he could be there to comfort the family.

“I cried when I heard the news and since I’m staying here I couldn’t do anything except send prayers, and wish for my family to stay strong and embrace the dark situation,” said Hark to Ipoh Echo.

When Rajendra who works as a security guard, aged 31, from Kathmandu read the news on his social media site, he cried, knowing his family was in danger. He soon received a call from his family, informing him that his son was severely injured by the quake and had been taken to the hospital for further treatment. Unfortunately for him, his house had collapsed, leaving his family homeless and staying temporarily in the camp centre provided by the government.

Govinda Timalisina, 32, also works at Meru Valley, from district of Kavrepalanchok, and before who has been living in Malaysia for two years, collapsed when he read the news. He was crazed knowing that his family house was destroyed by the massive 7.8 Richter scale earthquake.

“I didn’t lose anyone in the tragedy but we don’t have a house anymore. Although I do send money to my family, building a house from scratch is not cheap. However, I am working as hard as I can to support them in any way



Ram Kumar & Prabat Kambang from Citrus

possible,” said Ram Kumar, 26, from Kathmandu who has been working as a waiter at Citrus restaurant for three years.

“The best I can do to help my family is to send them what I earn so they can rebuild the house. Although it is not much, knowing that I can offer something, comforts me,” he added. The same sentiment was expressed by Mahesh. Although he cannot do much from here, he’s determined that once he returns to Nepal, he will donate as much as he

can, including adopting kids from an orphanage.

“I pity the kids whose parents died in the tragedy. The least I can do is to adopt some and raise them once I’m back in my hometown even though I don’t make much money,” he added.

Basic Amenities Needed

For most of the Nepali workers, they cannot afford to go back to Nepal and help their families as their livelihood is dependent on their jobs here. Hence they expressed the wish for Malaysia to work together with the Nepali government to re-establish a place that used to be a beautiful country.

“Malaysia has become my second home for the past two years. It broke my heart to see what is happening to Nepal. Hopefully, more funds will be raised to rebuild what once used to be a magnificent place,” added Govinda.

“Kathmandu is beautiful city, the people are warm and the food was the best,” said Janga Karki, 28, from Kathmandu, currently working as a security guard in Meru Valley.

“I hope my family, especially my kids, stay strong and keep their spirits up. This tragedy is a test to strengthen our bond. I can’t wait to be back with them,” said Prabat Kambang, 28, from the district of Panchthar who has been working as a waiter at Citrus.

Survivors of the tragedy are currently in need of basic amenities like clothes and food. Although donations have been made all over the country, there is still plenty to be done to help them.

Ipoh Corporations Donate

True to the quote “a man’s true wealth is the good he does in this world”, Kinta Properties Holdings Sdn Bhd (KPH) which is synonymous with property development within Perak for more than 40 years, and its sister company, the Meru Valley Resort Bhd (MVRB) have pledged RM10,000 each to relieve the grieving and struggling Nepalese via the Soroptimist International Ipoh’s Nepal Earthquake Fund.

Ipoh Echo will be continuing this fundraising effort by appealing for donations in the newspaper for a period of two months starting Monday, June 15. Similarly, Meru Valley would reach out to its members for donations to the fund.

Continued on Page 6...



SI volunteers distributing necessities



• From the Editor's Desk
By Fathol Zaman Bukhari

WHY WAIT FOR A DISCOUNT?

Tempting wrongdoers to pay up by providing discounts is definitely not the answer. It will only encourage Ipohites to delay payment...

It has become a ritual of sorts for Ipohites, and by extension Malaysians, to wait for the very last minute to pay their dues. It could be the obnoxious utility bill we receive at the end of the month or a parking ticket stuck to our car windscreen by an attentive council parking attendant or an overzealous traffic policeman. Settling the bill and parking compound on time and as per the instruction is not the least of our concern. Many would either delay paying or would conveniently misplace the ticket for no rhyme or reason. The recalcitrant from among us would either discard or destroy the tickets claiming ignorance for their action.

Why do we resort to this when settling a bill or a compound is a responsibility of every law-abiding citizen? Some are prompt with their payment but many I know don't give two hoots. Is apathy the cause or is it simply an attitude we suffer from? I feel it is a combination of both – apathy because we do not exercise our responsibility judiciously and attitude because most of us have an attitude problem. And compounding this are law enforcement agencies that have lost all sense of direction and credibility.

In a nutshell it is symptomatic of the dichotomy between the two parties – the public and the law enforcement agencies. In the case of Ipohites, it is Ipoh City Council on one end and ratepayers on the other end. Relationship between the two is not only fractious but also fractured. It does not take a rocket scientist to identify this. The writing is on the wall.

I believe at least a hundred compounds are issued daily in the city to motorists and vehicle owners who double park, wrongly park, not parking in the designated lot and worse, triple-parking. The Council's enforcement officers, in their customary blue uniforms, are hard at work going round the city enforcing the council's traffic regulations. But how many of these compounds are settled within the required period is beyond me. Things must have reached such a worrying stage that a reprieve is needed each passing year. It has become a habit for Ipohites to wait for the big discount day, which normally comes on City Day or some other auspicious occasions – to pay up.



This year, in conjunction with the 27th City Day celebration and the installation of the new Sultan, a similar discount was announced. The period was three days – May 27 to 29. The response, as expected, was overwhelming despite little publicity and the suddenness of the announcement.

Payment counters at the Council's main building were 'mobbed' by motorists so much so that the Council had to extend operations right to 11pm daily. Additional counters had to be opened at the Urban Transformation Centre in town and the

Enforcement Division next to the High Court to cater for the deluge. A total of RM773,134.65 was collected within the three days.

Incidentally, the collection on the final day, May 29 was the highest at RM386,412.25. All in all over 80,000 compounds were settled within the grace period. The 75 per cent discount bait did the trick and it motivated the most stubborn from among the offenders to own up. A few I spoke to had accumulated compounds running to a few thousands ringgits. The 75 per cent reprieve was the biggest ever dished out by the Council. In the

past it was only 50 per cent. Whether this is the right thing to do is debatable.

The Council may have lost 75 per cent of its projected revenue from parking infringements but it is hard cold cash it is getting from difficult paymasters. That is the plus point. Having said so, is this the right strategy to employ?

Tempting wrongdoers to pay up by providing discounts is definitely not the answer. It will only encourage Ipohites to delay payment. The Police face a similar problem too and in spite of threats to arrest the culprits, the problem persists.

And now that a precedent has been set, Ipohites will wait for the next 'gala discount' to settle their dues. It has become a cat-and-mouse game.

In The Name of My Father's Estate

Episode 42 • by Peter Lee

One week after the car accident, John Lee and Connie (Co-Administrators of Lee Sr's estate) regained consciousness in the hospital as all their family members were waiting anxiously for their recovery. However, both of them remained paralysed. Once they were in a position to talk, Mrs Patricia Lee (Lee Sr's first wife) and Michelle (Lee Sr's daughter and Co-Administrator) together with Dave (the family lawyer) began to discuss with John on his position as the Co-Administrator of his father's estate. John asked, "Dave, what are my options now since I am in this condition? In reply, Dave said, "As you know, Connie's condition is similar to yours. Therefore, among three of the Co-Administrators, I can only see that your father's estate is now left with only one Administrator, that is, Michelle who is capable of doing the job at the moment. Your option right now, which I have also discussed with your family members, is to withdraw yourself as Administrator from the application for (L.A.) submitted to the High Court allowing a fresh application to be made for the appointment of say, Michelle to be the sole Administrator.



John then asked, "I am okay with this but what about Connie's decision?" To this Dave explained, "I have to speak to her about this. But I have also discussed with your family members on the possibility that she may not agree to Michelle being appointed as the sole Administrator. Michelle interrupted and said "I have spoken to Connie's sister, Jessica, the other day and there is strong indication that she will convince Connie to appoint an independent party to be the sole Administrator." John quickly asked, "Who can that be?" "A Corporate Trustee," was Dave's reply. John asked further, "Are they reliable?" Dave went further and explained that the option to choose "Corporate Trustees" is most suitable as they will be seen as impartial to both sides of the family.

"I have identified a reputable trust company to meet up with all family members when all beneficiaries agree to this appointment. For your information your family members have agreed to it as they want the application for L.A. to be expedited." After a few seconds of thinking, John gave his approval to this option and he said "Now it's up to Connie." Dave then went and explained the same thing to Connie to which she agreed. With both sides of the family agreeing to the appointment of a 'trust company', Dave brought along representatives from a 'Corporate Trustee' to meet up with all family members at the hospital a few days later since both John and Connie were still in hospital.

The representative commenced the meeting by introducing themselves. Then the first thing the family members wanted to know is what is the difference between a trust company and an individual being appointed as the Administrator of an Estate. To this, the representative said, "I believe Dave has explained to you much earlier on the role and duties of an Administrator. Now, our role would be the same, to apply for the L.A. However, the difference is that, as a trust company, we are able to provide continuity as we are not affected by death or disability, ensuring that the estate is administered in a professional manner from the beginning to the end. At the same time as a trust company, our decision making is done collectively at the management level to ensure impartiality to all beneficiaries and compliance with the relevant laws. The law also imposes on us higher standards of accountability compared to an individual administrator in terms of the administration of the estate. Furthermore, our duties are governed by the Probate and Administration Act 1959, Trustee Act 1949 and more specifically under the Trust Companies Act 1949." Michelle then asked, "How much are your fees?"

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 excelsec@ms.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; S.S. Mubarak, Jln Sultan Yussuf; Ipoh Echo and at all major bookstores.

EYE HEALTH – SUNGLASSES, FASHION OR PROTECTION?

Ipoh Echo's EYE HEALTH series continues with Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S. S. GILL talking to us about the role of SUNGLASSES.



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

Almost always I am asked about whether there is really a place for sunglasses in our daily lives. Most ladies have no problems about wearing sunglasses because it makes them look good. In fact, many women actually look out for sunglasses that are stylish to fit into their collection of fashion accessories. While it may make you feel good wearing a fashionable pair of sunglasses, there are actually more important reasons to get those sunglasses than just fashion.

Here are some pointers to take note of. For a start, be aware of the dangers that ultraviolet (UV) light especially from the sun can pose. Harmful UV radiation from the sun can damage various parts of the eyes including conjunctiva, lens and also the retina (nerve). Long-term exposure to sunlight increases the risk of cataract formation and also *pterygia* (a growth on the surface of the eye).

In short, the sun that can burn our skin can also burn our eyes! In fact, staring at the sun can cause permanent burns (solar retinopathy) resulting in scarring of the retina which is the nerve behind the eye that is very important for good vision. Too much glare from sunlight may also trigger off headaches. Therefore, it is important to take adequate precautions to protect your eyes from the harmful UV rays.



Clouds actually don't make too much difference because the sun's rays easily pass through thin clouds without much problem. These rays can also penetrate through haze (that has affected Malaysia many times in the past). So, do not let such weather conditions fool you into thinking that you are safe from UV rays. It would be best to wear protective sunglasses. Here are some points to note when getting a pair.

- Get a good pair of sunglasses that block off the harmful ultraviolet or UV rays.
- The ability to block off UV light does not depend on how expensive the sunglasses, or how dark the sunglass lenses are.
- Brand does not matter!! Of course looking like James Bond or Audrey Hepburn when wearing them is a bonus but it's the quality of the glass that matters most.
- Choose a pair of sunglasses that either has a CE mark, a label that says 100% UV protection from UVA and UVB rays, or has a UV400 tag.
- Buy your sunglasses from a reputable retailer who is unlikely to sell you anything inferior.
- Choosing a pair of sunglasses that wraps all around to the side of your face is preferable as it prevents strong sunlight from passing through the unprotected sides.

It's never too late to begin protecting your eyes from the harmful UV rays of the sun. Take all the necessary precautions to ensure that you do not succumb to eye problems that can be prevented due to harmful UV rays. Wearing the appropriate sunglasses will help.

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

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Social Media Halts Cruel 'RM10 for one dog' Campaign

“The greatness of a nation, and its moral progress, can be judged by the way its animals are treated.” In early June, the intervention of concerned Malaysians, on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, managed to halt the controversial and cruel ‘RM10 for each dog’ campaign in Tanjung Malim.

The idea was for the residents of Tanjung Malim and Slim River, to help the council control the number of stray dogs in the area. The campaign, which was slated to run from June 3-12, encouraged residents to exchange dogs for cash.

Instead of getting the people’s support, many Malaysians were outraged, and by midnight on June 2, the council was forced to withdraw the campaign, from its Facebook site.

Dr Ranjit Kaur Mendhir, who is the founder of the animal rights group, Noah’s Ark Ipoh (NAI) and other veterinarians, had already planned a protest march, to the office of Menteri Besar, Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir, to voice their objection.

She said, “We wanted to ask him why do this, when everywhere in the world, governments are neutering dogs?”

“The campaign is very barbaric. People will not only bring their dogs to the council, they may catch their neighbour’s dogs or any dog that they see,” she said.

Dr Ranjit also sought the help of state executive councillor Rusnah Kassim, to put a stop to this cruel act.

At the same time, Ricky Soong, the president of the Ipoh Society For The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPCA), solicited the help of state executive councillor Dr Mah Hang Soon, to speak to the Tanjung Malim council.

In the end, the combined efforts of these individuals and organisations successfully convinced the Tanjung Malim Council to halt their barbaric practice.

Nevertheless, the problem of stray dogs must be tackled, because stray dogs in the community can and do present a problem to its residents. Education, and not eradication, is the key.

The common fears should be addressed. People are afraid of the spread of disease by dogs, which often scavenge for food in rubbish bins and tips. They are unable to bear the noisy barking and howling of dogs, the sight of dogs mating, the presence of dog faeces and the strong smell of dog urine, especially from dogs that are not neutered or spayed.

People are afraid that their children may be attacked or bitten by stray dogs, as they walk to school or play in the playground.

As an alternative to killing, Dr Ranjit has suggested that private veterinarians assist the council in a Trap-Neuter-Release-Manage (TNRM) plan. She has also said that they would attempt to attract funding and sponsorship from private companies.

Soong said that dealing with strays, by killing them, was a cruel solution and that councils probably adopted this cheaper route, as it could cost between RM100 and RM150, to spay or neuter each dog.

In some countries, it is compulsory for anyone who wants to keep a dog, to have it spayed or neutered. Those who wish to breed dogs, need to apply for a licence. Both these measures help to reduce the stray dog problem.

People who are keen, to keep dogs as pets, should attempt to adopt dogs from a dog pound or animal shelter, and possibly adopt older or injured dogs, instead of getting a pure breed or pedigree. Charity begins at home. What could be better than giving a home to a stray dog and giving him a better quality of life, for a few years?

Education is the best policy. We must educate our local councils and more importantly, the people.

If you want to keep a pet, then you must learn to be responsible for its well-being and health. Stories of



THINKING
ALLOWED

by Mariam Mokhtar

people who will show off their wealth, by putting their pedigree dogs in tiny cages, in the front of their homes, so they can be seen by visitors, are common. Tales of people who have found the responsibility, and expense of keeping a dog, to be too great, and have therefore, released the dog in a quiet lane or back street, are also common. Dog owners must also secure their premises so that dogs cannot escape easily.

A dog is for life. Not just for Christmas, New Year, any other festival or birthday. A dog is not a toy to be paraded around. Look after your dog, and it will grow to become your best companion.



Han Chin Pet Soo

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Dr Saravana.K
Consultant Physician,
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Digestive Health

Primary Biliary Cirrhosis

Primary biliary cirrhosis is a disease in which the bile ducts in your liver are slowly destroyed. Bile, a fluid produced in your liver, plays a role in digesting food and helps rid your body of worn-out red blood cells, cholesterol and toxins.

When bile ducts are damaged, harmful substances can build up in your liver and sometimes lead to irreversible scarring of liver tissue.

It is considered an autoimmune disease, in which the body turns against its own cells. Researchers think it is triggered by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. It usually develops slowly and medication can slow its progression, especially if treatment begins early.

Although some people remain symptom-free for years after they’re diagnosed, others experience a number of signs and symptoms.

Common early symptoms include:

Fatigue, Itchy skin, dry eyes and mouth, bone, muscle or joint pain, yellowing of the skin and eyes, darkening of the skin that’s not related to sun exposure, swollen feet and ankles, build up of fluid in the abdomen due to liver failure

Risk Factors

Women, most likely to occur in people 30 to 60 years old and having a family member with the disease makes it more likely that you will develop it.

As liver damage progresses complications can occur including:

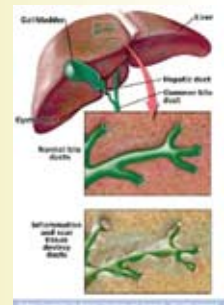
- Cirrhosis. Cirrhosis is liver scarring that makes it difficult for the liver to function normally
- Increased pressure in the portal vein. Blood from your intestine, spleen and pancreas enters your liver through a large blood vessel called the portal vein. When scar tissue from cirrhosis blocks normal circulation through your liver, blood backs up, much like water behind a dam, leading to increased pressure within the vein. When circulation through the portal vein is slowed or blocked, blood may backup into other veins — mainly those in your stomach and esophagus. The blood vessels are thin walled, and increased pressure in your veins can cause bleeding in your upper stomach or esophagus.
- Liver cancer.
- Vitamin deficiencies. A lack of bile affects your digestive system’s ability to absorb fats and the fat-soluble vitamins, A, D, E and K. This sometimes leads to deficiencies of these vitamins in advanced cases
- Decreased mental function.

The following tests and procedures may be used to diagnose primary biliary cirrhosis.

Laboratory tests:

- Blood tests to check liver function and signs of autoimmune disease. An analysis of your blood may reveal anti-mitochondrial antibodies (AMAs). A positive AMA test is considered a very reliable indicator of the disease. However, a small percentage of people with the disease don’t have AMAs.
- Because no cure exists for primary biliary cirrhosis, treatment focuses on slowing the progress of the disease, relieving symptoms and preventing complications.
- Ursodeoxycholic acid is a bile acid that helps move bile through your liver. It doesn’t cure it, but it may prolong life if started early in the disease
- Liver transplant. When the liver begins to fail, a liver transplant may help prolong life.

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



MUSINGS ON IPOH FOOD

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

Pics by VWSL



SeeFoon Reels from an Epic meal with flavours of North East China

How often do you taste 21 dishes at one sitting? Well, a group of my friends succeeded recently when Eddie Foo, who is a serious Foodie and THE leading antique dealer in Ipoh, invited us for a meal at the newly-opened Black Earth restaurant in Greentown Business Centre.

Granted we were a large crowd (15 people) who made short shrift of the 21 dishes, but nevertheless there was more than a surfeit of food. The dishes came fast and furiously and Eddie had to tell them to slow down.

Authentic flavours from North East China (Harbin) claims the menu and pretty authentic it is as far as my taste buds go, having been to Harbin on quite a few occasions. Northern Chinese cuisine is known for its dumplings, and the measure of authenticity lies in the texture of the dough wrapping and of course the taste of the filling inside.

Black Earth Restaurant has quite a selection of **dumplings** to choose from, both steamed and fried with a variety of fillings. I tried both the pan fried and steamed dumplings, with the three types of fillings: **Pork and Capsicum, Prawns and Cucumbers** and the **Egg and Chives** which also come as a pan fried pancake **RM1.50 each**. There is also a pure **vegetarian** one. **Steamed RM7 for 7 pieces** and **Fried RM8 for 7 pieces**. I preferred the steamed dumpling over the fried as the steamed dumplings measured up to my taste test where the wrapping is still resilient, the filling moist and if you put the whole dumpling in the mouth, there is still the residual juice left inside that oozes out, adding its umami goodness to the whole mouthfeel. Just like a good *Xiao Long Pau* except the wrapping in the latter is much thinner.

The **fried mushrooms** we started with where the batter was light and crispy, the mushroom still pliable and served with 'wah yeem' or seasoned salt, was snapped up with alacrity and we promptly ordered another plate – **RM16**. This was followed by one



and Chinese

of their signature dishes, the **seasoned 'cloud ear' mushroom** served as a cold dish, crunchy velvety all at the same time, with hints of sesame and wine – **RM18**.

Another cold dish to come was the sliced **belly pork**: tangy, delicately thin slices of semi fat pork crowned with a hillock of garlic that found favour amongst all at our table – **RM20**. A must have dish to order is the **Veggie Balls**, delectably crispy balls of *Tong Ho* or chrysanthemum flower with meat and served with their tasty spice salt – **RM20**.

The soup we ordered was the **mustard greens (ham choi) and potato flour glass noodles with pork bones soup**, the pickled mustard greens imbuing its mild salty, citrusy flavours to the soup and the glass noodles which have the delightful texture of being slippery while still retaining a slight resilience on the bite – **RM28**.

Their signature dish of **Braised Pig's Trotter** has justifiable pride of place on their menu. Braised to a perfect tenderness, the skin and fat reduced to jelly, this is a dish requiring a big group to do justice to it – **RM38**.

Space constraints here limits my ability to describe all of the 21 dishes we had and I will only mention the ones that I would recommend. Their whole **ladies fingers stir fried** and topped with minced pork were each delectably tender, while the stir fried long beans with minced pork were suitably well seasoned particularly with garlic and still had a crunch to them. Both **RM16** each.

Other dishes of note were the **Eggplant stuffed with minced pork**, which came on a sizzling platter – **RM18**, and their **Soya Sauce Fried Rice** which was well rounded and most tasty – **RM8.80**.

We ended our meal with an old favourite: one that is seldom found in restaurant menus anymore, the **Hot Toffee Sweet Potato**. Usually using apples, this was an interesting variation. Of course this has to be eaten immediately, dunking the pieces into the cold water to harden the molasses and immediately feel the crunch as one bites into it – **RM16**.

The Black Earth is certainly worth patronising. Their menu is extensive, service is fast and at lunch time, they have a little stall outside selling the fried pancakes both sweet and savoury. Their private rooms upstairs are very comfortable with the one room we were in able to accommodate two tables and for a minimum order of RM300, the room is free and so is the Karaoke which comes with the room.



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Tel.: 05 241 0219

Opening hours: 11am-3.30pm; 6pm-11pm

Fundraising for Earthquake victims in Nepal

Continued from Page 2 . . .



Relief work in Sudal Village



Distribution of mats



Jean Chai – President SI Ipoh

Fundraising Through Soroptimist International Ipoh

All monetary donations would go directly to Soroptimist International Ipoh (SI Ipoh) while some of the monies raised by Meru Valley would be channelled directly to its staff with families affected back in Nepal. Through SI Ipoh, the funds raised both from the general public and from the Meru membership, would be 100% redirected to Soroptimist International Kathmandu for the distribution of necessities like relief materials, tents, floor mats, rice, dry food, biscuits to various districts and to be used to help the people in the village of Sudal, a mere 20-minute bus ride from Kathmandu, for building temporary homes and schools.

SI Ipoh is a registered NGO and part of a global volunteer movement with a network of around 80,000 club members in 130 countries working at local and international level to transform the lives of women and children.

Immediate Response Time and Quick Action SI Ipoh

The reasons for MVRB and KPH selecting SI Ipoh to be the recipient instead of other relief agencies for the donations are the immediate response time for transfer of funds and the quick action on the ground from the local chapter of Soroptimist in Nepal in disbursement of funds for rebuilding damaged homes and schools, providing food and shelter, without incurring any administrative costs.

No administrative costs

Said Jean Chai, President of SI Ipoh on the news of the generous donation from MVRB and KPH and the efforts MVRB is making in soliciting donations from its membership, “We are so touched by the generosity of spirit from these corporations in helping the

Nepalis in their hour of need. On our part, Soroptimists are comprised of volunteers who incur no administrative costs in ensuring that every cent donated is channeled to doing the rehabilitation work that Nepal needs right now.”

SI Ipoh Most funds Raised

“SI Ipoh has so far, out of all the 15 clubs in Malaysia, raised the most funds for the Nepal Earthquake fund. It would be so heartening for more companies to rise to the occasion and follow the lead set by MVRB and KPH”, she added.

It is heart-warming to see all the inspiring hearts and minds unite to help the victims going through the darkest time of their nation. Indeed, we cannot help everyone but... everyone can help someone. With the seed money provided by Meru Valley Resort Berhad and Kinta Properties Sdn Bhd, it is hoped that everyone will also be forthcoming in donating to a worthwhile and noble cause.

Where to Donate

Please send your donations made out to **Soroptimist International Ipoh** marked on the back with: **FOR NEPAL EARTHQUAKE FUND**. You will be issued a receipt for your donation provided you put in your return address. Please send them to:

Soroptimist International Ipoh

52 Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah, 31400 Ipoh.

Attn: SI Ipoh Treasurer Yip Siew Keen

Tel: 012 521 2480

Yang Tu Yang Ni

Let Insanity Rule OK

I have taken “Yang Tu Yang Ni – this ‘n that” – the title of Ismail Hashim’s exhibition of his paintings and photographic works as the title for this column. I remember Ismail, wispy hair, a small man with a big heart. We would sometimes shoot the breeze at Koay’s gallery (Galleri Seni Mutiara, Armenia St, Penang) over a beer or two. He was at one time the Director of the Arts Centre, Universiti Sains Malaysia.

The late Ismail Hashim like many Malays of his generation spoke excellent English. He was a liberal and had a “live and let live” philosophy.

I have always maintained that there was never any deep-seated racial divide between the diverse communities in our country. We had our grumbles but never the rancour that we see today in certain quarters.

However, it has been argued that the view many of us still hold of a Malaya/Malaysia which was harmonious and where the different races mixed freely is nothing but sentimentality. The facts prove this it contended.

This is correct of course only if one chooses to look only at statistics. But statistics tell you what you want it to, anyway. At the best of times it doesn’t tell the whole story.

It is a fact that nationwide there was little mixing between the different races. But this is because the Malays were mostly in the kampongs, the Indians in the estates and the Chinese in the towns. Therefore, there was little interracial mingling on a national scale. But if you look beyond the demography you get a different picture.

Few as they were in the urban areas, the Malays got along well with the others.

In the rural areas and on the East Coast, there were pockets of Chinese who integrated with the Malay society and spoke Kelantanese or Trengganu Malay like a native.

I grew up in a block of shophouses with two Malay families, a Mamak, a Sinhalese and a Tamil. The rest were Chinese. The Malay boys spoke excellent Cantonese. Race and religion was never an issue.

There is another way to look at the racial position in the past. Put together did the different races get along? And the answer is YES. Demography is the result of circumstances and not always of choice. By itself it is not a good gauge of the racial relationship in our country. But how they got along when they were put together is.

The point is this: Whenever there was racial mixing, the different races got along and in the rough and tumble of their daily lives they sorted out their differences.

Usman Awang, the late poet laureate, in his poem, ‘Sahabat Ku’ castigated the government for dividing the people with one stroke of the pen.

“My friend the one free race we dream of seems so distant from reality. My anger turns to sorrow when they drive a wedge between us. The distance grows, I get the title ‘bumiputra’ and not you.”

As I wander around Tanjong Rambutan (we are allowed out once in a while) I sense that muhibah is alive and well. Just the other day I went to look at a mulberry plant in the market and picked one. The Malay lady who was watching tsk tsk-ed me and said I had picked the wrong one. She made me return it and picked another for me. We laughed at my ignorance of plants and we chatted. An Indian man who passed us asked if I live in Jalan Tambun . . . “you look like someone I know”. People are friendly and relaxed in TR.

Malaysians are inherently decent people but are often misled by those with their own selfish agenda. If we listen to our heart and ignore the religious and racial bigots our country will be a better place.

Left on our own to mix freely without political interference, this will be a better country.

The racial mix of TR is somewhat like Malaysia’s. But unlike the country this little town is in many ways the “one free race we dream of”.

Cynics and skeptics will call this an insane dream. If so, Usman Awang must have been insane when he wrote:

“Meeting you in youth when the people’s anger begins in cities which resound with new voices. I knew a generation of undergraduates passionately holding onto idealism, helping me to strengthen confidence, friendship and equality among the people. The dream of creating a new world. . .”

Lately, we have senior politicians and even a prince calling for race-free policies so that we are one people as was intended by the founding fathers of the nation.

Is this another insane dream? If so, let insanity rule okay!

Yin

(the man from TR)





Han Chin Pet Soo

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News

Tigerair's Inaugural Flight to Ipoh



There was much excitement in the air as the inaugural Tigerair flight from Singapore to Ipoh touched down at the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport on Friday, May 29.

Executive Councilor for Tourism, Arts and Culture, Dato' Nolee Ashilin binti Dato' Mohammed Radzi, was on hand to officiate the Singapore-based budget airline's inaugural flight and welcomed the first group of passengers. Present at the launch were Ho Yuen Sang, the Chief Operations Officer of Tigerair, Teh Yik Chuan, the Sales and Marketing Director of Tigerair, Mohamad Kamil bin Dato' Shafie, the Chairman of Perak Tourism Management Bhd., Tuan Haji Ibrahim Seddiqi bin Talib, the Director of Tourism Malaysia (Perak) and Mohamad Suhaimi Abdul Mubin, the General Manager of Malaysia Airports Sdn Bhd.

"It's a smooth flight, the cabin crew are very professional and friendly plus the runway is good. I've heard a lot about Ipoh, all the good food. I am looking forward to enjoy them all," said Yang, one of the lucky holidaymakers from Singapore on board the flight, to Ipoh Echo.

The new route by the leading Singapore-based no-frills airline will be serviced by an Airbus 320 with an approximate capacity of 180 seats. It will carry about 1440 passengers per week, making Tigerair the only Airbus operator to fly directly to Ipoh four

times a week.

The starting fare is S\$39 (about RM105) for a one-way trip from Singapore to Ipoh and the ticket from Ipoh to Singapore starts at RM99. In Singapore, the flight lands at the Changi Airport.

During the press conference, Dato' Nolee highlighted that the new route is not only ideal for business travellers but also for those looking for a short getaway to enjoy the many attractions Ipoh and Perak have to offer.

"Based on data by Tourism Malaysia, the number of hotel rooms in Perak, ending 2014, has increased by 26.9 per cent. There are now some 14,333 rooms available for tourists. The number of hotels too have increased from 253 in 2013 to 288 in 2014. These figures augur well for tourism, both local and foreign, in Perak," she added.

Ipoh will be Tigerair's fourth Malaysian destination besides Kuala Lumpur, Langkawi and Penang.

Mei Kuan





Impiana Hotel

The coffee House at Impiana Hotel has prepared an exciting Buka Puasa menu for its customers. Priced at RM80++ for adults and RM40++ for children, guests can select Impiana's famous dishes like Roasted Lamb & Beef, *Udang Sambal Bawang* and Seafood Cannelloni for their Buka Puasa. Each diner will receive a door gift and stand a chance to win the lucky draw including hampers worth RM2000; one night stay at Impiana's club room with complimentary breakfast for two worth RM400 and BBQ buffet dinner for two persons worth RM116.

Early bird reservations will enjoy a special price of RM60++ per person and groups of 20 person and above will receive 20% discount. Exclusively for CIMB bank card holders, dine for four people but pay for the price of three. The hotel will also be giving away 2000 bowls of *Bubur Lambuk* on June 18 starting at 4.30pm onwards. The event will take place in front of Impiana Hotel Ipoh.

For more information and reservation, call at 05 255 4364.



Syuen Hotel

Celebrate Ramadhan Al-Mubarak with Buka Puasa with family and friends at Garden View Cafe, Syuen Hotel. Guests can sample Syuen's signature dishes, *Nasi Lobak Merah Istimewa*, Ipoh Koey Teow and *Rendang Tok* together with other buffet temptations specially made for this fasting month. Book before June 18 and you get to enjoy 10% off! RM39.99++ for adults and RM19.99++ for kids aged between 5 to 12.

Reservations can be made at 05 253 8889 ext 8224.

The hotel will have a free *Bubur Lambuk* (Mixed Rice Porridge) session on June 23 at 4pm. Two thousands packets of *Bubur* will be given to orphanage homes, government staff and the private sector.



Weil Hotel

From Middle Eastern to Chinese and local dishes, it will be hard for guests of Tiffin at Weil Hotel to choose which among the dishes will be their favourite. More than six types of *Kerabu* (Local style salad) such as *Kerabu Udang Mangga* (prawns and mango) and *Kerabu Betik* (papaya) together with assorted main dishes like Chicken Kuzi and grilled fish will be served at the in-house cafe. The dessert table will laden with a mixture of both western (Apple Crumble with Vanilla Sauce, Strawberry Mousse, Mint Chocolate Tart and others) and local delicacies like *Kuih Ketayap*, *Kuih Lapis*, *Kuih Koci* and others will be tempting palates.

RM68++ will be charged for adults and RM38++ for kids aged between 6 to 12. Guests who purchased 10 coupons will receive another 2 seats for free! The hotel is also having a special room promotion where guests will stay for a night with one seat for iftar priced at RM220++.

Reservations can be made now at 05 208 2021.



Heritage Hotel

Polo Cafe at Heritage Hotel is having a special '100 local meals' buffet promotion for the upcoming Ramadan. Guests will be spoilt with choices like Chili Crab, *Balitung Buluh*, *Sambal Udang Petai* and an assortment of local desserts such as *Sago Gula Melaka* and *Kuih Muih*.

Adults will be charged RM55+++ per person nett and kids at RM35+++.

For reservations, call 05 242 8888.



Symphony Suites Hotel



Barbeque Buffet will be served during Ramadan at Symphony Cafe at Symphony Suites Hotel. The buffet will start on the second week of Ramadan, June 22 until the day before Aidilfitri, July 16. A variety of local dishes and desserts will also be served during the session. Priced at RM50+++ for adults, kids aged between 5 to 7 get to enjoy 30% off per person exclusively for the Ramadan buffet. Groups who purchase 5 seats will get another seat for free.

Symphony Suites Hotel is also having special room promotions for guests during Ramadan. Book a room and reserve a seat for Bersahur session at the hotel for RM170 and add RM30 for Buka Puasa.

Reservations can be made at 05 312 2288.

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News

Humble First Took Top Honours

Two weeks of preparation paid off for Humble First from Perak when they won the group category at the *Shuddup 'N' Dance Volume 2* contest at Ipoh Parade recently. The five-member group stunned the judges with their exquisite moves and synchronised dance movements beating nine other teams.

Chan Hon Fee, Eric Soo, Yang Yang Young, Scarlett Oh and Russell Wong were screaming and jumping with joy when the judge announced the results.

"We've been dancing for two years now and feel honoured to get the recognition we truly deserve," said Scarlett Oh. The team will be up against other groups in the third volume of *Shuddup 'N' Dance* taking place at Klang Parade.

Following them to the competition, is the winner of the Solo Performance Battle, Danial XP (Danial Aliff bin Rosdy) from Kamunting, Perak. Danial's breakdance (B-boying) defeated Vei (Teoh Kian Vei) from Penang. He won a trophy, RM2000 cash and prizes.

Ipoh-born dancer and judge, Eric Chan from Kartoon Network was pleased with the standard of competition and hoped more would participate in subsequent contests. The remaining two on the judging panel were Dennis Yin from Elecldxhot and Danny Lee from Rejuvenate Dance Crew.

"Learn why you lose and why others won. The lessons learnt will enable you to perform better and make you the ultimate winner. We are where we are today largely because we never give up no matter what comes our way," said Danny Lee to the losing teams.

Ili Aqilah



Ear, Nose & Throat Care

By Dr Rekha Balachandran



Where's my voice?

Using one's voice is not an uncommon complaint. The voice becomes progressively raspy and breathy in nature. Is this something to worry about? What can we do to treat this? Read on and find out!

What's the cause?

Most of the time the causes of this voice change or hoarseness isn't serious and is self-limiting in nature. Voice is produced by the vibration of the vocal cords. When we talk or sing the vocal cords come together and vibrate. When there is any change in the structure or movement of the vocal cords, it results in a change of voice.

The commonest causes for hoarseness are:

- An upper respiratory tract infection usually, which causes the voice box to become inflamed (aka Laryngitis).
- People who need to use their voice loudly for prolonged periods of time like teachers and singers develop scar tissue or nodules called Singer's nodules on the vocal cords.
- Acid reflux from the stomach (GERD).
- Tumours of the vocal cord which can be either benign or cancerous.



How do we manage it?

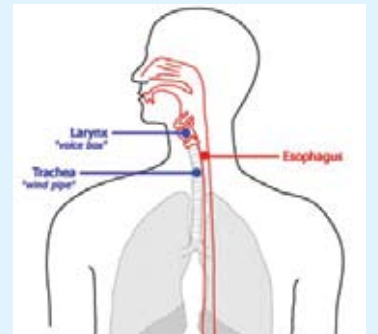
Hoarseness that occurs during or after an upper respiratory infection is often self-limiting and the voice should return to its normal tone in a few days. This can be helped by:

- Voice rest. This is the single most important thing to do. Patients are advised to refrain from talking as much as possible. No whispering either as it usually worsens the hoarseness as it puts more strain on the vocal cords.
- Drinking plenty of fluids.
- Avoiding cigarettes and alcohol.
- Avoiding acidic foods and fruits especially.
- Taking a soft soothing diet and avoiding extreme temperature of foods and drinks.

When do we seek medical help?

If someone has any of the following symptoms they should seek advice from an ENT doctor:

- Any hoarseness or change in voice for longer than 3 weeks.
- Repeated episodes of hoarseness that occurs without any preceding upper respiratory tract infection.
- Any associated difficulty or pain during swallowing with the hoarseness.
- Whistling sound or any noisy sound during breathing.



How are the vocal cords examined?

The voice box or larynx is examined using a scope which is introduced either via the mouth or the nose. This is a simple, office based procedure done using local anaesthetic.

How is it treated?

If there is no structural abnormality or growth in the vocal cords, majority are treated with voice rest and sometimes prescribed speech therapy. The speech therapist will help to educate on how to use your voice without straining it too much.

If there are growths on the vocal cord these need to be treated with surgery. Nodules, cysts and polyps of the vocal cord can be removed using endoscopic devices without any neck incision or scars. These are done under general anaesthesia. If the growth is cancerous, more extensive surgery may be required and in some cases the entire larynx may need to be removed.

Rekha ENT Specialist Clinic

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

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RekhaENTClinic

The Haven Launches Investigation

The Permai Lake View Apartment and The Haven Lakeside Residences investigated the cause of the browning of the water in the lake which occurred from late December 2013. The report confirmed that the probable cause of the discolouration of the water and poor quality was due to the construction activities at the land, Lot 29947.

The report states, "Our conclusion is that there is established the linkage of waterways beneath the surface of the construction site and that of The Haven and that hydrostatic pressure caused by construction activities, soil works, earth works, drainage and concrete structures into the ground, and such backflow or restraining the water flow below the ground, have contributed to the discolouration of the lake at The Haven site. This discolouration will likely cause other adverse effects on life matters in the lake."

"The report from the geological survey has clearly shown that our lake water is being affected. The owners and developers of Permai Lake View Apartments as well as The Haven are very seriously looking into the possibility of taking action against the developers and the owner of the land because this is a very serious matter. It is going to effect The Haven which is a very important development in Ipoh," said Steve Oh, Secretary of Joint Management Committee of The Haven Lakeside Residences.

"So what we want basically is the land to be restored to its original state. The government cannot allow this sort of thing because it creates uncertainty for developers, investors and others," added Steve.



Nantini

Community

Sunway Celebrates World Environment Day

In conjunction with World Environment Day 2015, Sunway City Ipoh collected recyclable materials and gave out free eco cotton bags to its community on Saturday, May 30, from 10am to 4pm at the Sunway City Ipoh Property Sales Gallery.

Aiming to raise awareness on the importance of sustainable living, as well as promoting the 'No Plastic Bag Day', Sunway City Ipoh invited its community to be a part of its initiative in commemorating World Environment Day.

Sunway residents and Sunway City Ipoh Property PALS were welcomed to collect an eco cotton bag at the Sunway City Ipoh property sales gallery upon contributing recyclable materials. An SMS message was sent to each Sunway City Ipoh PALS before the event as an invitation.

All recyclable materials collected were contributed as charity to Pusat Kitar Semula Aurora, Ipoh.

World Environment Day, celebrated every June 5 is a day the United Nations honours, to stimulate worldwide awareness of environmental issues and encourage political action. Advocating sustainable living, this year's theme is titled, 'Seven Billion Dreams. One Planet. Consume with Care'.

The recently launched Serene Villas at Sunway City Ipoh is also part of the Green Building initiative which embraces environmental friendly philosophy. The gated and guarded development defines urban nature living at its best with a green reserve park that offers sustainable living that cares for the environment. Each unit built is equipped with energy and water efficient technology and a touch of green innovation.

To keep informed on the upcoming events, log on to www.sunwayproperty.com. Alternatively, call Sunway City Ipoh Sales Gallery at 05 548 6668 or 1800 88 1998.



St Peter's Church Pestaria Food Fair

Crowds thronged the Pestaria Food and Fun Fair held at St Peter's Church, Fair Park on June 6. The fair was opened by the Anglican Bishop of West Malaysia, Datuk Ng Moon Hing who congratulated the church for raising funds for charity. According to Dr Teoh Soong Kee, the organising chairman, the church raised RM110,000 for the welfare of the Village Communities especially for the Orang Asli and the New Villages. A member of the public commented that our Food Fair had the largest variety of food. Most of the food were cooked by the church members themselves as they came from various ethnic groups such as Chinese, Indians, Ibans, Indonesians and Orang Asli. The food sold included Sarawak laksa, fried kueh teow, bak kut teh, *lemang* and *ayam bakso*, chicken rice, chicken burger, and *nasi lemak*.



Festival Rebana 2015



On Sunday, June 7 Cahaya Warisan Sri Kinta won a trophy, a replica of a *rebana* (drum) and RM2000 cash for winning Perak's Festival Rebana in the Youth category. The event was held at the Department for Culture and Arts (Perak) hall at Jalan Caldwell, Ipoh. The team won third place in the open category where they won another replica of a *rebana* and RM1000 cash.

The competition was held to promote Perak's traditional musical instruments to the tourists. The two-day contest saw 12 teams from districts in Perak. They competed against each other to win the respected titles.

Department Director, Jasmi bin Rasi was pleased to see participants as well as the visitors who came to watch the show.

"The first Rebana festival was held in 1986. We wanted to promote Perak's culture and art scenes to the public, especially to the younger generation," said Jasmi to the media.

Sinar Baru Teluk Intan from Teluk Intan won the open category. They took home a trophy and a RM2000 cash prize.

Deputy Director of the National Department for Culture and Arts, Mesran bin Mohd Yusop graced the occasion and gave away the prizes.

Ili Aqilah

Perak Women for Women Society's

Make It Happen!

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Perak Women for Women Society (PWW) supports women and children in crisis:

Make A Difference Support Our Event.

PWW is a non-profit organisation offering immediate assistance to women and children who are victims of violence, promoting awareness on violence against women and respect for gender equality and promoting changes in our society and legal system for the protection and betterment of women and children.

SATURDAY, AUG 1, 2015
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Happenings

Yoga with a Difference

In conjunction with the First World Yoga Day on Sunday, June 21, as announced by United Nations, the International Association for Human Values (IAHV) Southeast Asia is organising the second 10,000 smile yoga event at SRJK Bercham, Ipoh beginning at 6am. The event will be held concurrently in Malacca, Penang and Petaling Jaya.

IAHV is an international humanitarian and educational non-governmental organisation committed to promoting the resurgence of human values in all aspects of life across the globe. It was set up in 1997 by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar in Geneva.

According to organiser Fiona Lim Fong Ying, the event targets to enrol 1000 people to partake in the gathering. It is a yoga exercise suited for everyone, young and old, irrespective of physical capacity, as it combines simple and fun movements to bring and enhance inner smile.

"The emphasis is on doing yoga not only for our own benefit but to extend our hands to the needy. This year the Nepal earthquake disaster becomes the focus of our attention. This is the driving force behind the charity bazaar, which will be held soon after the smile yoga at the same venue," said Dr Wong Chong Yuen, the event advisor.

Smile yoga is all about releasing stress and bringing back your smile and your inner joy. Come and indulge yourself in smile yoga, as it will bring your smile into each and every part of your body.

For details and registration call Fiona Lim 012 566 9044 or Ms Lau 016 546 8800.

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Community

Living with Cerebral Palsy

Afidah Ayob aimed to be the head of department in her company before she turned 40, which was not an easy goal but she believed in her potential and was determined to reach the position.

Her world fell apart when her youngest child, Aiman, was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy, a condition with muscle disorders and which inhibits movement.

"I was a hardworking employee. After giving birth to Aiman, I was still working and my dedication paid off when I got promoted but then, it hit me. I realised I was no longer passionate about it," said Afidah during a talk about dealing with kids with Cerebral Palsy organised by Institut Darul Ridzuan on Thursday, June 4. The talk was held at the institute's office in Greentown Square, Ipoh.

Afidah quit her job although her employer rejected her resignation letter. She decided that it was time for her to focus not only on Aiman, but her two older daughters.

"I was disappointed with the education system in Malaysia. No schools, kindergartens, even schools for gifted children, wanted to take Aiman because of his condition. Although my son is not like normal kids, he deserves to get an education and that was when I decided to homeschool him myself," said the mother of three.

Ummu Nadirah's eldest daughter, Balqis, was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy when she was three years old.

"We moved to United Kingdom because the facilities there were excellent. There is a school specifically for kids like Balqis and she gets to mingle and learn many things," said Ummu to the audience.

Unfortunately, that was the first and the last time Balqis went to school. After moving back to Malaysia, Ummu hit rock bottom. She was upset because her daughter could not go to school since there is none in the country.

After four years of disappointment, Ummu, her husband and their six children moved to Miami, USA to get the best education for Balqis.

"Living in Miami cost us a bomb. Balqis's treatment alone was about RM10,000 but we were lucky as it was borne by our insurance company."

After staying in Miami, Ummu and her husband decided to move to Medina, Saudi Arabia. Although Miami was the best, they realised Balqis needed physical therapy.



"It was hard to leave Miami but I knew we'd made the right decision. Balqis seems happier and her therapy has been going well," concluded Ummu.

The two strong-willed women hoped that there would be changes in Malaysia's education system to help children with Cerebral Palsy. When asked about the advantages of having special kids like Aiman and Balqis, both mothers said that there were none.

"It teaches me to be patient, appreciate what God has given me and to embrace it," said Afidah.

Both speakers had committed their experiences in dealing with children with physical challenges into writing. Their books entitled, 'Lihat Langit Tinggi Menggapai Impian Aiman' and 'Balqis: Di Mata Kami, Di Sisi Nya' are available online and at major bookshops.

Ili Aqilah

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LETTERS

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Astro, Please Terminate My Account

I have two Astro smart cards, one still under contract and one is an old smart card taken in 2012.

I have requested for termination of my old smart card. They told me to make full payment once the May bill arrives and I made a payment on May 7 (amount RM338.80) for both smart cards.

I have also requested on April 27 to downgrade my new smart-card package by removing the sports package and they said it would take immediate effect but I was still charged for May and now being charged for June.

I have spoken multiple times to Astro personnel and everyone gives me different information.

I receive my June bill and my old smartcard has yet to be terminated. The downgrading of sports package in my new smartcard was also not done. I have also told them I didn't subscribe to Astro on Demand and yet they keep saying I am paying for it!

I am not paying for this June bill, as it doesn't state the correct amount. I have been

asking the personnel to give me a report number but they refused. They didn't want to send an email with regards to my issues. They even refused to put me through to the manager.

Every time I call, there is a phone bill charge which is paid by me yet my problems have not been resolved even after over a month. Astro is liable for my phone calls because nothing has been done in spite of many calls.

I would like Astro to send me an email on my report and give me the correct amount to pay in June, which is supposed to be only RM82.50. I am not paying a single cent without a black and white.

The public needs to know this and Astro should compensate me for all my calls made and the inconvenience caused. I would like to terminate my account once and for all. There is no professionally-trained personnel to manage customer issues.

A few hundred ringgit may be small for Astro but it is a lot for me.

Daniya

Ways to Reduce Strays

I am an ardent animal lover. However, I am deeply concerned with the ever increasing number of stray dogs and cats in our environment of late. It appears that certain irresponsible pet owners are now abandoning their pets in housing estates. This cruel and barbaric practice has contributed to a rise in strays and associated public complaints. Whatever the reasons, it is inhumane to abandon a pet. There so many other alternatives if all these fail it should be given a 'humane exit'.

The increase in prices due to the introduction of the new Goods and Sales Taxes (GST) for pet food/products/medicines and veterinary care has made the situation worse. I have personally come across so many abandoned dogs in housing estates. There are two abandoned dogs taking shelter in my house at the moment. Animal welfare homes and SPCAs are in no position to provide shelter to all these poor creatures as they have their limitations.

The public should view the increase in stray population seriously. We should realise that stray dogs and cats experience poor health due to lack of resources or provisions to safeguard their freedom. These animals can pose a significant threat to human health through their role in disease transmission.

I am of the view that any ad hoc solution taken with regards to managing the strays will not be effective. The authorities need to conduct a proper study on the stray population, its dynamics et al. Based on the findings they should develop long-term

strategies to effectively deal with the problem. A proper study will reveal the actual situation of our stray population and how best to deal with it. At the moment there are no proper statistics on strays.

According to the World Society for the Protection of Animals the following elements are said to be essential in controlling strays: a comprehensive and effective legislation, registration and licensing, control of breeding and sale of pets, environmental management, pet owner education and cooperation between the authorities and animal welfare organisations.

The authorities, in the interim, should focus on spaying and neutering the strays and releasing the healthy ones in a safe environment. Local councils should introduce special mobile vet clinics to provide the services. Ideally they should be provided gratis.

Guidelines can be drawn up so that the free services are not abused or exploited. If the authorities are short-handed they can always get animal welfare groups to assist.

On behalf of animal lovers, I wish to appeal to the government to remove taxes imposed on pet food, products, medicines and veterinary care. This will help in reducing the number of strays in the country.

S. Param

Glimpse of Light for Boat People

I'm proud to be a Malaysian. Because our leaders especially our Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has taken the initiative immediately to address the boat people issue on humanitarian grounds. This reflects on the whole that Malaysians have the heart to help others without looking into colour, creed or religion. A myriad KUDOS. Although the whole issue is not our problem yet we have our human obligations. As a fellow being we can't afford to watch their suffering. On compassionate grounds it is our utmost duty to hold responsibility for the humanitarian crisis too.

The international group talking about human rights should come forward to solve the social problems. The UNHCR must play a vital role by looking at the boat people issue and find permanent solutions.

I request everyone who advocates human rights to think globally on the issue and act locally to put to an end to this social menace once and for all.

I hope our Prime Minister will set the ball rolling by showing the world that we Malaysians always 'Walk the Talk' in upholding the basic principle of human rights.

James Ratnam

President Love and Welfare Society Kinta

Menara Condong Teluk Intan should have a clear view

Although many Teluk Intan people had objected many times to MPTI for issuing licences to erect tents or stalls at the vicinity of Menara Condong, the objections have fallen on deaf ears.

Honestly speaking, the Menara Condong image is totally tarnished currently due to the setting up of mega Kraftangan sales tents, obstructing the beautiful view of the tourist landmark. Being a school holiday break, I noticed tourist buses found difficulty in enabling visitors to snap a good view of the historic clock tower. Approving sales permits indiscriminately is giving visitors a bad impression.

I hope the local council will take a serious view of this matter. Mega sales events can be located elsewhere, like the old Telekom store or the Arena Square. Promoting visit Teluk Intan is a big challenge!

Chris Chong Phee
Teluk Intan



Dengue Menace

Although dengue is still a number one public health threat, it is heartening to note that the dengue fatality rate is somewhat declining overall for the country. With the change in weather which is favouring the dengue virus vector we should continue to be vigilant. We should also be on alert as this virus has the potential to mutate under 'stress'.

Destroying breeding sites of dengue mosquitoes has proven to be the most effective and excellent way to control the spread of this deadly dengue virus. We should focus our priority on destroying aedes breeding sites at all times. The authorities should keep a sharp look out for abandoned and unmonitored construction sites and foreign workers' settlements. These places are known to be notorious breeding grounds for dengue mosquitoes. Some experts (Virologist) suspect the dengue virus may be circulating in the highly mobile foreign workers population.

Whatever it is, we should not let our guard down on this rampaging aedes mosquitoes onslaught. Keeping our house clean and participating in gotong royong activities will go a long way to keep all of us safe from the mosquito-borne disease.

Having said that, I wish to point out that gotong royong campaigns at dengue endemic areas is associated with some element of inherent risk. Sprucing and mass clearing activities especially at the mosquito resting sites/habitats inadvertently exposes one to the mosquitoes. The chances of one being bitten by a mosquito during these clearing activities is relatively high.

I have come across individuals who have participated in gotong royong activities in dengue endemic areas falling sick with dengue infection. Those participating should take the necessary safety precautions such as using mosquito repellents, etc. It is safer to do fogging first before carrying out any large-scale clearing work in dengue endemic areas. The authorities should consider reviewing the safety guidelines or SOPs for gotong royong programmes and other community-based voluntary activities that has the potential to inadvertently expose people to mosquito bites.

S. Param

Opinion

The opinions expressed here in this column do not necessarily reflect those of the editor.

Taking Local Bus Concessionaires to Task

The State Public Transport Committee, of which I am a member, met on March 23. One of the key discussion points was the weaknesses and failures of local bus concessionaires in providing information to public transport users. The issues can be summarised as thus:

Lack of a comprehensive and integrated, easily accessible intra-city bus route map on neither the internet nor other off-line strategic places.

Absence of an integrated as well as a reliable bus timetable, allowing ease of understanding and access.

The absence of the above two on most/all bus stops.

Opposition lawmakers have, within and outside of the state assembly, raised the issue of accessibility of bus information and also reliability of service provided. But the calls have fallen on deaf ears. Neither the State Government have taken a strong position nor have the concessionaires themselves responded to the criticisms with corrective actions.

Consensus was reached within the committee that there was an urgent need to take to task bus concessionaires, especially those operating routes within the greater Ipoh area, to answer to the continued failures to meet expectations, despite repeated calls to improve and to buck up.

The committee resolved, announced by committee chairperson Dr Mah Hang Soon, who is the Executive Councillor for Transportation and publicised in the media, that bus concessionaires involved will be subpoenaed to answer and clarify their positions, and reasons behind their reluctance.

It has now been almost three months since the announcement to call the concessionaires to a hearing, the committee and taxpayers, whose rates and taxes subsidise these companies, have yet to see action taken by the state government.

On behalf of the long-suffering public, I call for the following:

The state government to make its stand on why there is yet to be any action taken to ensure bus concessionaires meet both contractual and public service obligations of providing something as simple as a bus timetable on the internet at strategic websites and at all bus stations.

The committee, with the mandate it possesses, demand that corrective actions be taken to address the above issues within four weeks; with failure to satisfy resulting in the withdrawal of all state-borne subsidies.

The committee be convened after the one-month period stipulated in point 2, with all the bus concessionaires be called to the meeting where a public hearing will be conducted. Invitation and notice must be sent out at once to avoid absence by any relevant parties.

The committee appoints, with the funding it is allocated, an independent research body (non-civil service) to carry out a quantitative and qualitative survey of current levels



of satisfaction towards public transport, and ascertain facts and sentiments of existing, as well as potential public transport (especially bus) users in Ipoh.

That the same body proposed in point 4, or another relevant entity, or both be charged to ascertain the 'informational demands' and establish an information communication strategy and its implementation plan, working closely with the committee, SPAD, as well as the bus concessionaires.

That the same body be charged to act as a 'mystery shopper', or anonymous service auditor to measure the success or failure of the bus concessionaires in delivering a pre-determined set of benchmarks deliberated and agreed by the committee.

The above is the position taken by the PR representatives on the State Transport Committee.

Howard Lee
(Adun for Pasir Pinji)



iSpeak

A. Jeyaraj

Complainant's Identity Must Not be Revealed

It is normal practice for MBI staff and the police to inform the identity of the person who made the complaint to the person against whom the complaint is made. One morning the security guard who patrols my area warned me to be careful. He informed that a Singh, the owner of the buffaloes, against whom I had complained to MBI, is looking for me. His buffaloes have destroyed the banana trees and plants in front of my house. He said not to quote him; he is also afraid.



It is imperative that MBI staff not inform the name of the complainant. This is not an isolated case; there are many instances. When a senior citizen complained about uncollected garbage near his place, MBI workers confronted him and told him to mind his business.

Few youngsters were drinking and making noise in a playground and one of the neighbours called the police. The police came and told the guys to disperse and also pointed to the house from which the complaint was lodged.

When I went to investigate a complaint made by a lady in Tiger Lane; she was afraid to give her particulars. She informed me that previously when the neighbours made a complaint, a few men came to their houses and warned them not to complain.

A friend of mine makes frequent complaints to his councillor and one night two men came to his house and asked why he was giving so much trouble to the councillor. They did not threaten him, but he felt it was not right for the councillor to resort to this type of tactics.

A number of residents have taken me to their houses to show the materials stacked by their neighbours, especially contractors, who store their construction materials in front of their houses. The residents are scared to complain saying that the contractor would take action against them. I tell them I cannot do anything; they must lodge a complaint.

In fact, many hawkers and stall owners whom I had interviewed are afraid to speak up saying that if they complain and their names are revealed, enforcement officers would take action against them.

It is time we put a stop to this fear culture. If names of complainants are not revealed, more people would come forward to complain and provide information to enable MBI to take action against irresponsible people.



Education

Mariaville's Excursion

Mariaville Good Shepherd Kindergarten had their yearly excursion for both 5 and 6-year-olds in April.

The 5-year-olds made a trip down to McDonald's, Jalan Gopeng. They were given an opportunity to make their own burgers. They were also brought into the kitchen for a short tour of where the ingredients were kept. The children had a fun time eating their creations after the tour.

The 6-year-olds were brought to the Fire Station for a tour. They were taught on precautions of what to do when there is a fire and also got to experience putting out a fire with help from the firemen. They were educated on all the equipment on the fire truck.



Susan

Class of '95



Main Convent, Ipoh (SMK Convent) received its special guests – students from the Class of '95 on Teachers' Day May 17. The former students returned to the school to trace their footsteps and to reminisce and share their experiences after having left their alma mater 20 years ago. Memories began to flood in, as they caught up with one another.

Over the years, a handful had met up with some regularity but the May 17 gathering was by far the largest. The ex-students recalled their stint at Main Convent with pleasure and a great sense of pride.

The presence of Mrs Valerie Ho, their former principal, accentuated the significance. They huddled and recalled the past while regaling the present.

"We met last Raya celebration and agreed that it'd be nice if we could all meet again. I was tasked to organise this reunion. I took up the challenge and, with much gusto, the impossible was made possible. So here we are today celebrating our 20th anniversary," said organiser, Syariza Mohd Odman to Ipoh Echo.

"Twenty eight turned up today and we're mighty proud of this. Some from among us hold senior positions in the private and public sectors. Some are lawyers, teachers and successful businesswomen. Regardless of their positions, we're the same. Status and stations have no bearing on our relationship," she added.

"It's amazing! They're all pretty much as they were then," exclaimed Rosmini Ramli, 37.

Twenty years have since passed, yet these students still have strong feelings for their alma mater and their camaraderie does not seem to diminish with time. The feeling of togetherness is something they will cherish and relish for a long time to come.

Nantini

Announcement

AKPK Opens in Sitiawan

AKPK (*Agensi Kaunseling dan Pengurusan Kredit*) has started up their counselling office in Sitiawan to serve the Sitiawan folks better. They will operate at the following premises and schedule:

CIMB Bank Berhad
Lot 2871 & 2872 Off Jalan Kelab
32000 Sitiawan, Perak.

Counselling at Sitiawan will commence every 3rd Wednesday of the month with effect from JUNE 17.

Now, customers have the convenience of attending counselling in Sitiawan instead of coming to Ipoh.

The Credit Counselling and Debt Management Agency (AKPK), is an agency set up by Bank Negara Malaysia in April 2006 to help individuals take control of their financial situation and gain peace of mind that comes from the wise use of credit.

AKPK offers the following services to individuals, free of charge:

- Financial education on the responsible use of money and credit management skills.
- Counselling and advice on financial management.
- Debt management programme to assist consumers to regain financial control.

Agensi Kaunseling Dan Pengurusan Kredit (Credit Counselling And Debt Management Agency)

Address: Unit B-2-1, Greentown Square, Jalan Dato' Seri Ahmad Said, 30450 Ipoh, Perak.

Office hours: 8.30am - 5.30pm (Monday to Friday)

Toll free: 1-800-88-2575

Website: <http://www.akpk.org.my>



Han Chin Pet Soo

To book a tour, go online to: <http://www.ipohworld.org/reservation/> or scan the QR code.



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.

Medical Talk, 'How Modern Food is Making Us Sick and What You Can Do Together Healthy', Friday June 19, 12.30pm at the Royal Ipoh Club, Ipoh.

Pantai Hospital Ipoh Free Antenatal Class, Saturday June 27, 2pm-6pm at Dahlia Utama, Level 4, Pantai Hospital Ipoh. Admission strictly by registration. Seats are limited. For further information or registration, call: Ms Renuka/Ms Gloria at 05 540 5712/540 5725.

Blood Donation: A Gift of Life, Saturday July 4, 9am-12pm at Main Lobby, Hospital Fatimah, Ipoh.

Public Forum: Advances in Arthroplasty Surgery by Dr Cheong Min Lee, Consultant Orthopaedic & Trauma Surgeon, Saturday July 11, 2pm at Conference Room, 4th Floor, Hospital Fatimah, Ipoh. Entrance is free. For more information, call: **05 545 5777 ext. 276.**

YMCA of Ipoh Toastmasters Club Mission provides a supporting and positive learning experience in which members are empowered to develop communication and leadership skills, resulting in greater self-confidence and personal growth. The group meets every **2nd & 4th Wednesday** at 7.45pm at 211 Jalan Raja Musa Aziz (Anderson Road), 30300 Ipoh. Contacts: Ramesh Victor 016 566 2866, May Foo **017 466 0943** or Nur Aida **013 346 9490.**

Performances of Traditional Songs and Dance every Friday every week from March 25 at 8.00pm (except fasting month). Held at Kompleks Jabatan Kebudayaan dan Kesenian Negeri Perak, Jalan Caldwell, Off Jalan Raja DiHilir, Ipoh. Come and

experience dances like Dikir Fusion, Nego (Kelantan), Joget Kete Lembu, Tangtung, Kollatum, Joget Malaysia and traditional music. Free admission. For enquiries, contact: Puan Nor Fairus Binti Alias **018 958 9049.**

The Dementia Day-care Centre is open daily from 9am till 3pm. The centre also holds support group meetings every **2nd Saturday and Monday of each month.** All carers who have love ones with dementia and others are welcome to attend. These are sharing sessions. For more details kindly call April at **05 241 1691** before 3pm.

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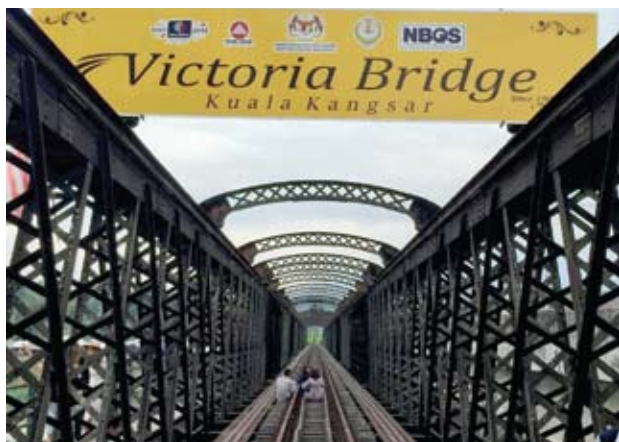
Heritage

A Gala Day for Perak's Victoria Bridge

Victoria Bridge across the Perak River at Karai was honoured on Sunday 31 May 2015 when the 115th anniversary of its opening was celebrated in grand Malaysian style. Indeed it was probably the grandest occasion to take place at the bridge since it was opened by the late Almarhum Sultan Idris Shah I and the British Residents-General Sir Frank Swettenham in March 1900. The oldest railway bridge in the country, it was constructed by British engineers between December 1897 and March 1900 for the Perak State Railway to serve the local tin mining industry.

The day of celebration started on the bank of the river around 8am, where a new village had sprung up with a range of tents and stalls had been set up, the largest, complete with a stage surrounded by potted plants. Throughout the morning stallholders and a variety of local organisations, including representatives from the Royal Malaysian Army, provided demonstrations to entertain the crowd. Traditional local food was there for the tasting and T-shirts and other souvenirs were readily available for sale. It was a fun morning with the atmosphere of a traditional country fair from days gone by.

The occasion was graced by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Dato' Sri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz who gave his welcome address to the several hundred gathered there including a group of European visitors. The emcee for the occasion was that popular son of Perak,



KT Pillai.

In his speech the Minister praised the British designers and engineers who had positioned the bridge so well that it had never succumbed to flooding of the river and was therefore unconquered by nature. He then referred to the new bridge alongside the old which led to the eventual retirement of the original bridge. He continued by expressing his desire to turn the bridge into another exciting tourism destination and in pursuit of that objective he promised to have the bridge gazetted as a National Heritage structure thus ensuring it would remain an important part of Malaysia's past for years to come. However, he pointed out that some unscrupulous people had been taking away some of the high quality British steel rails and fittings for scrap and this had to stop.

He ended by explaining that earlier in the day he had planted a new bamboo tree on the river bank as the first step of a project to line the river with bamboo to protect the banks, but he reminded the organisers that he did not have 'green fingers' and tasked them with taking care of his tree.

It was then time for the Minister to cut the celebration cake followed by a very unusual lunch of Perak heritage dishes. These included Putu Perak (rice flour and coconut cake), Masak Lemak Rebung (pickled bamboo shoots in coconut milk), Patin Masak Tempoyak (Patin fish cooked in fermented durian sauce) and Gulai Lemak Siput Sedut (snails) to name but a few.

This was followed by multiracial cultural performances, interspersed with prizes being given for painting and photographic competitions.

The full day of celebration in true Malaysian style, concluded with another local tradition, High Tea.

Ian Anderson
IpohWorld



Property

Lost World of Tambun Receives Award

Lost World of Tambun (LWOT), an anchor component of Sunway City Ipoh (SCI), clinched World Gold Winner in the Resort Category at the recent FIABCI Prix d'Excellence Award 2015 held in Petaling Jaya, making SCI the first integrated development in Southeast Asia to garner five FIABCI accolades including two world titles. His Royal Highness of Negeri Sembilan, Tuanku Muhriz ibni Almahrum Tuanku Munawir, presented the award to Dato' Ngeow Voon Yean, managing director of Sunway Group's property investment division.

Awarded by an international panel comprising 80 top real estate professionals and experts from across 38 different countries, the FIABCI Prix d'Excellence recognises international real estate projects that display distinction in various aspects of a development. This includes concept; architecture, development and construction, community benefits, environmental impact, and financial and marketing.

"We are humbled by this international recognition. As Malaysia's top property developer, tourism development is central to complementing our integrated developments in the townships we build. Having achieved resounding success with Sunway Resort City in Selangor, which is one of the top tourist hubs in the region, we are very proud that Sunway City Ipoh, a joint venture with the Perak state government, is another success story and is now an international tourist attraction in Malaysia. It continues to boost



tourism activity and remains an economic driver for the state of Perak," said Dato' Ngeow.

As the first township in Southeast Asia today with five FIABCI titles to its name, Sunway City Ipoh continues to make significant contributions to the transformation of Ipoh's urban development. This will elevate the nation's reputation in the international real estate arena.

Prior to winning this year's FIABCI World Prix d'Excellence, SCI garnered FIABCI Malaysia Property Award 2010 for the Master Plan Category; The Banjaran Hot Springs Retreat at SCI was awarded FIABCI Malaysia Property Award 2011 for Best Resort and the FIABCI World Prix d'Excellence Award in 2012 for Resort Development Category, while Lost World of

Tambun at SCI clinched the FIABCI Malaysia Property Award in 2014.

FIABCI is the French acronym for "The International Real Estate Federation" which has been in operation for 61 years and represents the world's real estate professions through its Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations Organisation. With chapters operating in more than 60 countries, FIABCI represents every discipline in the industry and links thousands of real estate professionals worldwide.

For more information on Sunway, log on to www.sunway.com.my.

Squatters Advised to Move Out

As the rightful owner of a 1469-acre land in Mukim Belanja, earmarked for a new mixed development township, Menteri Besar Incorporated (MB Inc) advised illegal commercial squatters to move out during a media briefing on Thursday, June 4 at the Perak Techno Trade Centre, Ipoh.



Spokesman for MB Inc, Harris Iskandar Taib said besides delaying the state project, known as Bandar Tasik Amanjaya, the action of the 15 squatters had deprived 1000 families of the opportunity to own new houses. Present at the briefing was Farouq Sahibjahn, the chief of the Group Strategic Communications and Relations of Amanjaya Holdings and Ventures.

"To make matters worse, some of them have rented out parcels of the land as a source of income," Harris lamented.

When fully completed, Bandar Tasik Amanjaya will include residential,

commercial and educational institutions, aimed not only at providing affordable homes, but generating business opportunities and employment for the people of Perak.

During the media briefing, a slideshow was presented to show the plot sizes occupied by the illegal farmers. For instance, corn farming occupied approximately the size of 38 football fields while large scale fish breeding ponds occupied approximately the size of 140 football fields.

Under the National Land Code, squatters risk being fined up to RM10,000 and/or one year imprisonment for illegally occupying government or state-owned land, mining land or reserve land. They also risk a RM250 per day compound by the relevant local authorities if found to be conducting their businesses illegally.

On the flip side, lawyer and human rights activist, Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan will represent eight of the squatters from Tronoh who are facing litigation over the land issue.

The former Bar Council President took up the case because it concerned food security and the rights of the eight who had toiled the land for a living for over four decades but were now considered squatters and faced eviction by the state authorities.

Mei Kuan

Ecology

Belum Adventure Camp

Fifteen representatives from thirteen media agencies participated in a special media sneak preview of Belum Adventure Camp (BAC) recently. They were invited to experience nature in the 130-million-year-old Belum Rainforest, Perak's foremost nature park.

The Belum Adventure Camp is a great place for everybody to enjoy and experience nature differently. It is located on Pulau Banding, an island on the man-made lake along the East-West Highway. The facility can accommodate 30 adults, comfortably.

The camp on the 243-hectare island is managed by the EMKAY Group. The business entity envisions the development of Banding Island as a vital introduction to the Belum-Temengor Tropical Rainforest and aims to position it as a premier heritage destination on the world eco-tourism map.

The BAC is a perfect training camp inspired by the environment and the amazing biological diversity of the rainforest. It is all about experiencing the power of nature and letting flora and fauna teach, heal and strengthen people in body, mind and spirit.

Belum Adventure Camp aims to be recognised as the preferred destination for outdoor-based experiential learning and benchmark for corporate team building events in South East Asia. Some of the activities at the camp include flying fox, high rope challenge, kayaking, rafting and jungle trekking.

According to Dr Daniel Baskaran, Chief Executive Officer of Pulau Banding Rainforest Research Centre, more of such camps should be built for Malaysians to help them understand and appreciate nature, so that they can treat their heritage responsibly and respectfully so that future generations can enjoy them as much as we have.

"This is your time and your world, whatever we protect now will be beneficial to you and your children. So, it is very important for young people to know the importance of environment. If our young people are aware of this, they can then do their part to have a safer world tomorrow," he added.

The participants took part in activities to help acquaint themselves on the facilities available and to spread the gospel when they are back in the office. On their way home, they stopped by the Rainforest Research Centre to witness scientists busy at work to protect the rainforest.

Nantini



Tourism

Forum on Food Tourism



What are the unique selling points of Ipoh? How can Ipoh be branded as a food haven which is claimed by many? What are the major problems Ipoh faces in its development as a food tourism destination?

These were questions which popped up during the Forum on Food, Festival and Tastebud-Tickling Tourism held on Friday, June 5 at the Mini Oasis Library, Ipoh.

Coming in the wake of the highly-successful Pinji Fest 2015, this well-facilitated forum was co-organised by Howard Lee, the Adun for Pasir Pinji, through his Perak-based think tank, PROSPECT and Wageningen University, Netherlands.

"The idea is to consolidate all the information and come up with a policy proposal for the entire Ipoh or even Perak," said the exuberant Howard whose mind is often filled with brilliant ideas, to Ipoh Echo.

As the forum moderator, he encouraged everyone to think outside the box. Hence, radical ideas, new insights and a diversity of views emanated from the 13 participants during the two-and-a-half hour discussion.

Among those present were Anne Pladdet, a Master's student from Wageningen University, Commander Ian Anderson (Rtd), the founder of IpohWorld, Edmund Chak, representing Lavender Lodge, Cheong Xue Mei, representing the Gopeng Community Library, David, the founder of 'All About Ipoh' Facebook page, representatives from Ipoh Echo and some passionate Ipohites.

Anne, a student in leisure tourism and environment with a bachelor in consumer studies, is currently doing a research in Malaysia about food tourism with a comparative study between Georgetown and Ipoh. Her line, "having destination dining venues doesn't make you a dining destination", hit the nail on the head.

Among the issues raised included the need for publicity, the effects of haphazard developments, accessibility and transport.

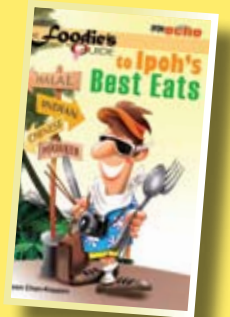
Because everyone had a chance to contribute to the discussion and be heard, the final result felt like it was a consensus of opinion.

"Fundamentally, from what everyone has said today, I think there are promising changes that we can make. It is just about drawing information from all the different corners of society like you guys and then having the expertise of someone like Anne to put it into the right perspective. And this is fundamentally what we're doing today. To get information and to build alliances," said Howard in his closing remarks.

Mei Kuan

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