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Affordable Family Entertainment

By Ili Aqilah

A quick vacation or even just an outing with your family is important. Not only can it strengthen the bond between members but it also will allow you to learn a thing or two about the places you visit. However, with the rising cost of living and the current economy we are facing now, it can be hard to plan for a family holiday. We at Ipoh Echo understand the situation, hence we have prepared a list of affordable family entertainment around Ipoh to help you plan for enjoyable trips with your family!

Continued on page 2



Mural at Concubine Lane

PANGKOR THE ISLAND PARADISE

Pangkor Island, one of the most stunning islands in Asia, got its name from the Thai phrase, "Pang Ko" which aptly means "a beautiful island". True to form, the beauty and cleanliness of the beach are its primary attractions.

Teluk Nipah, Pulau Giam, Pulau Mentagor and Pasir Bogak are weekend favourites where one can relax, swim, snorkel, fish and partake in numerous water activities such as jet-ski and banana boat.

One can easily tour the island thanks to the easy availability of car, motorcycle and bicycle rental services. Along the way, do drop by the famous Fu Lin Kong Temple, Batu Bersurat (historical rock), Dutch Fort and Pangkor Gallery. And don't miss watching the making of traditional fishing boats.

However, your trip will not be complete without a visit to the fishery market which features blue-eyed anchovy, salted fish and dried sotong (cuttlefish) followed by a trip to town for its seafood products and creative handicraft.

Next, experience hornbill feeding at Teluk Nipah and get Instagram-worthy shots with the tame birds. Not to forget, the must-have traditional delicacies of laksa mi Pangkor (rice noodles served in a curry sauce), nasi lemak Pangkor (rice cooked in coconut milk), lempeng pisang (banana pancake) and cucur ikan (fish fritter).

Brimming with various modes of accommodations, there are hotels and resorts to suit everyone's pocket.

For the perfect end to your vacation, explore Pantai Teluk Batik, situated just a stone's throw away from the Lumut jetty.

Pangkor is, by any definition, the ideal family-oriented holiday destination you'll ever dream of. So, why wait? Pack your bags and head for this island paradise.





From caves to parks to street art, there is something for everyone

1. Lang Mountain or Gunung Lang

Located at one of the busiest roads in Ipoh, it is a surprise to experience how quiet and peaceful Lang Mountain is. Also known as Gunung Lang, this mountain may sound as if you need a hike but it is actually one of Ipoh's best places for a quick picnic with your friends and family. The park is divided into two sections and is located off Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman (formerly known as Kuala Kangsar Road).

Once you enter the main entrance to the mountain, a breathtaking vista greets you with luscious green trees and playgrounds. As you walk further, a boat will be waiting to take you to the main part of Gunung Lang. As it may get busy during weekends, you might need to queue to get in but fret not. To kill time waiting, you can feed the fish at the jetty. You can buy pellets at the counter for only RM1 per pack.

The 10-minute boat ride is also one of the main attractions of Gunung Lang. Filled with captivating views, it is an amazing ride, not to be missed.

The other side of Gunung Lang offers its visitors a park with colourful flowers and a mini zoo. The entire park is surrounded with big shady trees that is perfect for picnics or small gatherings. You can take a walking stroll around the area that is free from the city's hustle and bustle.

Opening hours:

Monday to Thursday: 8am till noon; 1.30pm-7pm
 Friday: 8am till noon; 2.45pm-4pm
 Saturday, Sunday and public holiday: 8am till 6.30pm

Boat ride fees (return ticket):

Adults – RM3; Kids (3-12 years) and Senior Citizens (above 55 years) – RM1.50
 Address: Taman Rekreasi Gunung Lang, Off Jalan Kuala Kangsar, 30010 Ipoh.

Contact: +605 506 3088 (tel.); +605 253 7396 (fax)



Gunung Lang



Mini Zoo at Gunung Lang



Gunung Lang



Gua Tempurung



Gua Tempurung

2. Tempurung Cave

Named as one of the must-visit places in Perak, Tempurung Cave doesn't need much introduction. Located only 45 minutes away from Ipoh, Tempurung Cave is one of the largest limestone caves in Peninsular Malaysia.

Why go caving? Simply for the experience to see the beauty of untouched nature and enjoy pristine views. Carved through time by water, visitors will get a glimpse of glistening marble along the tour in the cave. Not only will you be fascinated with the unique rock formations, stalagmites and stalactites, be ready to be amused with the patterns and interesting shapes of the rocks.

There are currently four different tours available at Gua Tempurung. The first, called the Golden Flowstone is a 40-minute guided tour and another tour available is the Top of The World Tour, which is slightly more strenuous and may take about 1 hour and 45 minutes. These two are the easiest and suitable for those who want to take caving lightly. The third tour, Top Of The World & Short River Adventure is an exciting tour of 1.2km journey. Starting from the main entrance to the Golden Flowstone, to the Top Of The World and finally down through the underground river that will lead you back to the main entrance. Last but not least is the fourth tour called The Grand Tour, a trip comprising all three tours. The challenging and exciting tour will take you through a complete 1.9km journey all the way from the entrance to Golden Flowstone, to Top of The World with full length underground river until the end of the cave.

This is definitely one of our favourite spots to bring tourists as the experience of caving is truly exciting. Families with small kids or even older parents are all welcome to try.

Tour 1: Golden Flowstone Duration: 40 minutes Rate: 1 Adult: RM8 1 Children (6-12 years old): RM4 1 Senior Citizen: RM4 *Tour starts every half an hour from 9am to 4pm	Tour 2: Top of The World Duration: 1 hour 45 minutes Rate: 1 Adult: RM12 1 Children (6-12 years old): RM6 1 Senior Citizen: RM6 *Tour starts every half an hour from 9am to 3pm
(WET TOUR) Tour 3: Top of The World & Short River Adventure (minimum 8 adults) Duration: 2 Hours 30 Minutes Rate: 1 Adult: RM15 1 Children (6-12 years old): RM7.50 1 Senior Citizen: RM7.50 *Tour starts every half an hour from 9am to 12 noon	(WET TOUR) Tour 4: Grand Tour (Minimum 8 Adults) Duration: 3 Hours 30 Minutes Rate: 1 Adult: RM30 1 Children (6-12 years old): RM15 1 Senior Citizen: RM15 *Tour starts every half an hour from 9am to 11am

Address: Pusat Pelancongan Gua Tempurung, 31600 Gopeng, Perak.
Tel: +605 3591561



STANDING UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS

If the religion preaches compassion and forgiveness then why the urgency to enforce stricter punishments for crimes?

Are there crimes committed in the country that entail the wrong-doers a prison sentence of 30 years or a fine of RM100,000 or 100 lashes of the cane? But this will be a reality should amendments to the controversial Syariah Court Act 355 get a nod in parliament. The Pan-Malaysia Islamic Party (PAS) has been pushing for heavier punishments in Syariah courts for many years. And the eagerly awaited debate on the subject is due once more in this month's parliamentary session.

The burning question on every sane people's mind is, does a moral mistake deserves the same kind of punishment as a criminal act? If our political representatives in parliament, our so-called *Yang Berhormat*, deem it fit that those on the wrong side of the law should be so punished, then religion has assumed a new dimension in our racially and religiously-diverse country.

I consider this charade as nothing more but an act of political desperation. What we have now is two Malay-based parties jousting for power and influence. One wishes to remain in power forever while the other wants to remain relevant with its mainly Malay-Muslim supporters, which is dwindling in number and size each passing day. The dominant ruling coalition party, Barisan Nasional (BN), is courting the Islamist party purely for reasons of expediency and nothing more.

And those caught in between, for one reason or another, are ordinary folks like you and I who want no piece of the action but prefer to maintain our current lifestyle. A lifestyle as defined by our nation's Constitution that abhors violence, discrimination of any sorts and above all, upholds racial and religious equality. In short, no one race or religion should dominate over the other. Malaysia, as it is, is a secular nation both in letter and spirit. Period.

Although PAS President Hadi Awang's proposed amendment bill (popularly known as RU355) is to enhance the powers of the syariah courts in Kelantan there is this nagging feeling that the bill, once passed by parliament, will have a knock-on effect in other states. Thus the fear of *hudud* has taken a new meaning.

Hudud has long been identified with the amputation of limbs for thievery and the stoning of women for adultery. This form of punishments is deemed barbaric in this modern age. Countries that observe such archaic laws, which are considered divine, are nowhere near the world's marginally-advanced economies. Most, in reality, are failed states where corruption and religious bigotry are rife. I am sure no sane Malaysians would want their country to degenerate and become another Afghanistan or perhaps Syria where sectarian violence is the norm.

Kelantan and Terengganu have been languishing behind other states economically. Crime rate, especially in Kelantan, is high and so are incidences of poverty, sexually-transmitted diseases and AIDS. I wonder if increasing the penalties for syariah-related crimes by Muslims would make the state any better than it is now. A glaring example is the fate of flood victims. The problem has not been fully addressed three years after the devastation occurred and now the PAS-led government wants to introduce *hudud*. Come on, I am certain Allah has other better things to do than to ensure that his "laws" are being strictly observed by his adherents at this moment in time.

All this has to do with how Islam is perceived in Malaysia. California-based physician and author, Bakri Musa, a one-time columnist with Ipoh Echo said that the fallacy of contemporary Muslim scholars is their obsession with the islamisation of knowledge.

"The conceit flies in the face of reality as evidenced by the wide spectrum of views within Islam throughout history and now. Muslim *ulamas* and leaders prefer the flock to be like sheep, subscribing to the only one true form of Islam they see fit," he lamented.

Yes, they prefer us to be dumb followers who don't question our leaders' decisions. It is blind faith and loyalty to the masters. Corruption, they claimed is not an offence, as there is no mention of it in the Quran. Therefore, the insistence that justice is prevalent in Islam is a myth.

Islam, in its infinite truth, is not about punishment only and what is *haram* and not *haram*. It is not about what so-and-so *ustaz* or *ustazah* uttered and proclaimed. It is about humility, righteousness and treating your fellow citizens, regardless of their race or creed or sexual orientation, with respect not disdain.

But the opposite seems to be the case with Malay-Muslims today. There is more to the religion than caning, stoning and amputation. If the religion preaches compassion and forgiveness then why the urgency to enforce stricter punishments for crimes? Is the current syariah system inadequate and flawed that it needs to be corrected? Correct yourself first before correcting others. Isn't this more divine?

My one advice to all peace-loving Malaysians, stand up for your rights. Don't allow bigots and the ill-informed con us into submission. As if the arrogance of the expelled North Korean ambassador is not enough, we are being browbeaten by some self-professed mullahs whose credentials are suspect. This is most unbecoming.



EYE HEALTH — Intraocular Lenses

Ipoh Echo's EYE HEALTH series continues with Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S.S. GILL talking to us about artificial lens implants during cataract surgery.

Thanks to ophthalmologist Dr Harold Ridley (1906-2001), we have intraocular lenses today to replace cloudy cataracts during cataract surgery. A curious intern who was watching Dr Ridley perform cataract surgery asked him why he was not replacing the **cloudy natural lens (cataract)** that he had removed during cataract surgery. That question got Dr Ridley thinking about implanting an artificial lens **intraocular lens or IOL** during cataract surgery.

During World War II, Dr Ridley noticed that RAF pilots who had pieces of **shattered canopy fragments** which had accidentally pierced their eyes resulted in **no inflammation**. This made him realise that this Perspex canopy material was **inert** and could be used to make the **artificial lens (IOL)**. He then embarked on implanting the first IOL in 1949 using similar material to that of the airplane canopy. The rest is history with implantations of IOL's being routinely performed restoring vision to millions throughout the world. Once implanted the IOL requires **no aftercare** at all and would generally last a **lifetime**. A question that often confronts a patient planning for cataract surgery is "What kind of IOL should I choose?" Well, there are **many varieties** of intraocular lenses in the market today. They can be broadly classified as follows:

1. **Monofocal IOLs**
2. **Astigmatism-correcting monofocal IOLs (Toric IOLs)**
3. **Presbyopia correcting IOLs**
4. **Presbyopia and Astigmatism correcting IOLs**

MONOFOCAL INTRAOCULAR LENS

Photo courtesy of Alcon

These are the **most commonly used** type of IOL implants worldwide which have stood the test of time. The monofocal IOL is basically a **single focus** lens that corrects vision well. A monofocal intraocular lens cannot alter its shape to bring objects at different distances into focus. It improves vision for the distance planned preoperatively, that is, either near, intermediate or far vision. This vision is of course heaps better than seeing through a cataract! Most of the time, the eye surgeon generally selects a lens (IOL) that will provide **good distance vision**, and the person then resorts to wearing **reading glasses** for the **near vision**. Most patients usually just go back to wearing similar multifocal spectacles that they **used to wear before the operation**. A small number who may be happy with their distant vision, may just make spectacles for **near reading only** (presbyopic glasses).

Monovision Correction is a good alternative plan for visual correction. Here the **monofocal IOL** implanted in **one eye corrects for clear distant vision** while the IOL implanted for the **other eye is corrected for near vision**. This is called monovision and the patient slowly gets adjusted to seeing clearly for **distance in one eye with near reading clearly in the other eye**. This kind of correction requires a little **patience** on the patient's part as he or she gets adjusted to the monovision correction but satisfies the visual demands of most patients. Ultimately the decision on the kind of lens to be implanted is based on the eye condition, visual demands and of course the budget of the patient.



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



IOL – monofocal
Photo courtesy of Alcon

For more information, please call Gill Eye Specialist Centre, Hospital Fatimah **05-5455582** or email gillyeyecentre@dr.com

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Why can't Malaysians appreciate their local heritage?

Why can Malaysians commit to redevelopment projects and preserve both historical and cultural heritage, thousands of miles away, whilst our own areas are left derelict and decaying? What will make Malaysians place a value on, and a sense of pride in local products?

Halfway across the world, beside a grey river, lies an old power station. It is a huge building and a major landmark for the nearby city. It was built in 1933 and was last occupied thirty-four years ago, when it closed and stopped generating electricity for the nearby city.

The city is London. The building is the Battersea Power Station, a Grade II, art deco, listed building.

In simple terms, an English 'listed' building has been placed on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. A Grade II listed building is of special interest and warrants every effort to preserve it.

For three decades, the derelict Battersea Power Station, reputed to be the largest brick building in Europe, had a succession of buyers. Each time, the new owners tried to redevelop the building, they were thwarted by the rising costs. Either that, or the company struggled under financial difficulties and had to sell the Battersea power station, again.

Then one day, a Russian oligarch, Roman Abramovich, who owns Chelsea FC, decided to buy the power station, so that he could build a new 60,000-seat stadium. He placed a bid, and was livid, when he found that he had been outbid. He could not put into motion, his plans and vision for the place.

The new owners of the Battersea Power Station, are well known to all Malaysians. The consortium of investors are from Malaysia. They are three of Malaysia's biggest consortia; property Developers SP Setia, the Malaysian Employee's Provident Fund (EPF) and Sime Darby which is the world's biggest palm-oil producer.

In a newspaper report, the consortium issued a statement meant to reassure heritage conscious Londoners, that the Malaysian firms "would preserve the facade of the historical power plant, with its iconic chimney stacks".

In addition to preserving the heritage of the Battersea Power Station, the consortium has also committed to help fund the former London Mayor, Boris Johnson's plan to extend the Northern Line of the London underground network, to Battersea power station.

The Malaysian redevelopment, which will cost around RM44 billion (£8 billion) will restore the power station, extend the tube network, build 3400 new homes, offices, retail units, new hotels and an entertainment district.

The consortium have assured Londoners that the four chimneys, will be carefully dismantled, because they have been deemed unsafe, and exact replicas will be made. They promised to return Battersea to its former glory.

Nice!

Back in Ipoh, a building sits forlorn in the centre of the city. That building is the Station Hotel, or as it was recently renamed, the Majestic Station Hotel, which closed its doors, on March 11, 2011, after several decades in operation.

Opened in 1917, the Station Hotel, according to one oldtimer, was the place to be seen, the place to stay and the place to dine. The English directors of the Perak River and Hydro-electric Power Company, would be put up in the best rooms, at the Station Hotel.

One returning expat said, "I have fond memories of

the place. It had its own character. If you know the Coliseum Cafe, in Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahmah in KL, you will know what I mean.

"Crisp white tablecloths, white linen napkins, the waiters with starched white uniforms. You could choose from a Chinese or a western menu. We always chose the western menu. Who could forget the soft, white, locally baked bread to go with your soup."

A local was asked what he thought about the decline of the Station Hotel and said, "I was taken to the Station Hotel, as a treat, when I was a young boy.

"I now live overseas but when I returned in the nineties, I decided to take a trip down memory lane and bought my family to dine there. I wanted to show them the grandeur of the place, the dome, the pillars, the long bar and the balcony that stretched the length of the building and the creaky old lift.



"I wish I hadn't. A rat came into the dining room and the children were terrified. We left immediately."

Another Ipohite, who lives and works in Paris said, "I cannot understand why the state cannot find visionary buyers for the Station hotel. It's location is ideal. It has a lot of history. Both local and foreign tourists know about it.

"The irony is that the Keretapi Tanah Melayu (KTM) railway station is a hive of activity and yet, the famous Station Hotel, which is above the station, is dead.

"If London can regenerate the old victorian building which sits on top of St Pancras railway station and turn it into a luxury hotel, why can't we? The Eurostar departs from St Pancras and connects London to Europe.

"The St Pancras building is familiar to Harry Potter fans, and last operated as a hotel, 80 years ago. It has lain empty for three decades. Ten years ago, plans began to convert it into a luxury hotel. Now the St Pancras Renaissance has rooms which cost RM1400 (£250) a night and the multi-roomed Royal suites is priced at RM55,000 (£10,000)."

This Malaysian was aware of the Battersea development and said, "A Malaysian consortium can help regenerate a seedy part of London into a hive of luxury living. Most of the multi million ringgit apartments have been sold to people from Malaysia, Singapore and the People's Republic of China (PRC).

"We need to find creative buyers who will redevelop the Station Hotel, and make them think of the historical and architectural heritage of this famous landmark. The state government must try harder to sell a vision of a new, rejuvenated Station Hotel. If Malaysians can do it in London, why not in Ipoh?"



THINKING
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by Mariam Mokhtar

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Nosh News

By Ili Aqilah



The Morning After

A new cafe wittily named **The Morning After** (wonder how many hangovers get cured here?) recently opened at the **M-Roof Hotel** which is also in the throes of a soft opening. *The Morning After* cafe, decorated in a clean minimalist, almost edgy style in keeping with the rest of the hotel, is another must-try spot for hungry foodies.

Run under separate management from the hotel, a large selection of options is available for diners whether it's a bewildering array of delicious coffees served by a very talented Barista or snack items to full-course lunch or dinner platters.

Customers can choose from mouthwatering treats such as Garlicky Chicken Soup with smoked beef bacon (RM12), Chicken Pot Pie with garlic mash potatoes or Mexican Nachos that come with diced tomatoes, Beef Bolognese and a special guacamole sauce, priced at RM18.

Aside from that, there are three gourmet burgers available; Gourmet Beef Burger with cheese, sunny side up, mushroom and bacon bits (RM28), the Chicken Burger with garlic rosemary mayonnaise at RM28 or the Crab Meat Burger which is served together with crispy daikon, mango, chili salsa and a side of chips priced at RM32, is worth trying.

For those who crave carbs, there are eight different pastas such as Spicy Aglio Olio (RM22), Mushroom & Tomatoes craze (RM22), Smoked Beef Bacon and Mushroom (RM20) or their pilaf series of Vegetarian



Special (RM22). The carnivore can go for the Grilled Chicken (RM25), Striploin Steak/Grilled Salmon (RM28)

The cafe also serves an assortment of sammies such as Vegetarian Delight (RM18), The Perfect Chic (RM19)



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

SeeFoon succumbs to a bug (not the edible kind). She will return in the next issue.



and the Juicy Lamb (RM24). Fans of brunch must not miss their Brunch for Champs menu such as the Eggs Benedict; two poached eggs on sourdough muffin, smoked salmon, baby spinach and hollandaise sauce priced at RM19. Or visitors can switch the smoked salmon to a crab meat patty instead for a different experience.

For desserts, the Fine Treats selection such as The Chocolate Cake (RM11), The Sneaky Cheesecake (RM13), The Mandarin Special (RM13) and Red Velvet Cake (RM14) go with any coffee available on the cafe such as Americano (RM8/RM9), Green Tea Latte (RM12/RM13) and the barista's special, Salted Caramel Macchiato (RM13/RM14).

The Morning After opens everyday from 8am till midnight and reservations can be made by calling 05 543 9891. The cafe is pork-free and is located inside the lobby of M-Roof Hotel at Jalan Dato Lau Pak Khuan, Taman Ipoh (Ipoh Garden), 31400 Ipoh.

News

Promoting Good Governance

Perak Academy (PA) has upped the ante by organising a talk titled, "Combating Corruption and Promoting Good Governance" presented by award-winning investigative journalist, R. Nadeswaran on Saturday, March 11.

The two-hour talk, which is part of PA's "Perak Lectures Series" was held at Ipoh Swimming Club. It was attended by over 70 people.



R. Nadeswaran, better known as Citizen Nades, began by alluding to several cases regarding corruption and abuse of power within government and enforcement agencies, which he had uncovered during his 45 years as a journalist.

Although he has retired since December last year, his passion drives him to sniff out bread and butter issues like what he discovered during a recent visit to Melbourne for his book launch.

Nades advised members of the public to make changes by taking action, one at a time, to promote good governance in the country.

"It starts within ourselves. It'll help in a small way. This is our commitment to make a change.

"If it's wrong, don't do it, even if it'll inconvenience us," he said.

Nades disclosed that corruption is something difficult to prove. He said this with much conviction as he was once a panel member of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission.

"Can you imagine where the bribe starts when both parties benefit? Everything looks good on paper. These days nobody cares about audit. All they care is about themselves and their future," he said.

One of the participants, Zaira Tak, 66, said it was good of PA to organise a talk on a serious topic which impacted all Malaysians.

"I enjoyed what was discussed today. But what's disappointing is the absence of youthful participants. I hope the younger generation would open their eyes and see what's happening in the country, as they are the future leaders. They'd listen to the talk and make changes," he implored.

Anthony Law, 66, said what inspired him most after the talk was the responsibility all shared as citizens of this bountiful country.

"Nades did what was expected of him although he was just a journalist and a watchdog for the people," he said.

The talk ended with a book-signing session of Nadeswaran's popular book entitled, "Curi-Curi Malaysia". His book was formally launched at Selangor Club on Friday, January 20.

Nabilah Hamudin

... continued from page 2

3. Han Chin Pet Soo, Ho Yan Hor and Mural Hunting

If you are looking for a quick and fun entertainment for the family, may we suggest a trip to the Hakka Tin Miners Club? Now known as Han Chin Pet Soo, the museum has no entrance fee but appointments must be made before entering and donations are welcomed to keep this place running.

Why? Aside from the fact that it is a guided tour, the house was built in 1893! Founded by Towkay Leong Fee, the house used to be a mystery to the public because only club members and their VIP guests were allowed in. The building was rebuilt in 1929 and is across the street from Concubine Lane another favourite tourist haunt. Han Chin Pet Soo museum contains artifacts, collectibles, actual life sized figures dressed in costumes and photographs from the 19th and 20th century.

Located next to Han Chin Pet Soo is the Ho Yan Hor museum, where visitors will get a chance to know more about the first and longest-standing product from Hovid Berhad. The museum was the place where the tea, touted to be a panacea for all ills, was invented and was the original home of the founder, Dr Ho Kai Cheong and his family.

Similar to Han Chin Pet Soo, the building stored many historical artifacts and went under restoration before opening early last year in 2016, and has been receiving flocks of visitors ever since. Guests will get the chance to see some of Dr Ho's personal items such as his calligraphy set, his paintings and even the original advertisements.

You can also bring your family around Ipoh's old town and new town for a mural hunt. There are approximately more than 50 murals scattered around Ipoh, painted by locals and also international artist Ernest Zacharevic. Famous mural locations in Ipoh are between Jalan Masjid (Hume Street) and Jalan Sultan Iskandar Shah (Hugh Low Street) where more than twenty murals were painted by the locals and artist, Eric Lai. Another hot spot location for mural hunting is located off Jalan Sultan Pasir Pinji Ipoh where murals are painted by Eric Lai and three of his students.

Artist Ernest Zacharevic's murals, the Art of Oldtown, are placed at Jalan Bandar Timah, Jalan Bijeh Timah, Concubine Lane, Jalan Tun Sambanthan, Jalan Panglima and Jalan Bandar. All these roads are within walking distance, so it won't be any trouble finding them all!



Han Chin Pet Soo

The Most Important Time is Family Time

Although it may be tough to take your family out for cheap entertainment these days, we believe that the effort is really what counts. There are many other cheaper options such as visiting the Dream Big World museum located at No.7, Level One, Lorong Panglima (Concubine Lane), 30000 Ipoh (Malaysia's first model car museum featured in issue 251), a trip to DR Seenivasagam Recreational Park, Lubuk Timah Hot Spring and Waterfall, Lata Kinjang Waterfal, Ulu Chepor, Bandar Seri Botani Eco Park Batu Berangkai Waterfall, (Urban Escape: Ipoh's Green Lungs, issue 223) and more. Spend as much time as you can with your family as they are the ones that matter the most. Let's explore!



Han Chin Pet Soo



Mural at Jalan Masjid & Jalan Sultan Iskandar Shah



Ho Yan Hor



Ho Yan Hor

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Affordable Healthcare For All



Perak Community Specialist Hospital (PCSH) is a non-profit hospital with a mission to provide affordable healthcare for the community. Throughout the years, PCSH continues to value the needs of the community and had ensured that its healthcare facilities and ward services are continuously being upgraded and improved to provide quality medical care.

Maternity Ward

As a hospital which has been offering maternity services for more than 100 years, PCSH's maternity ward has delivered hundreds of babies into the world every year. Its experienced midwives and staff nurses make sure that expectant mothers are well taken care of throughout their entire delivery process.



Surgical Ward / Medical Ward

In recent years, the surgical and medical wards have been refurbished and upgraded to provide better environment for the patients. People who have not visited PCSH in recent years are often wowed by its renewed look and enhanced services. Now, patients have access to WIFI, Astro, and personalised nursing care during their short stay here.



Intensive Care Unit (ICU)

The intensive care unit (ICU) is a special ward that provides intensive care medicine. It caters to patients with severe and life-threatening illnesses and injuries, which require constant, close monitoring and support from specialist equipment and medications to ensure normal bodily functions. The ICU ward is equipped with advanced medical resources and facilities that are not routinely available in other ordinary wards. It is staffed with specialist doctors and highly trained nurses to care for critically ill patients.



Paediatric Ward

The paediatric ward is a newly designed ward which caters for both the need and comfort of the child and the convenience of parents. It offers excellent care for newborns to children up to 13 years of age. The ambience of the ward has been planned so as to reflect an informal and relaxed atmosphere akin to a home/children's environment while making sure that it meets all clinical requirements and needs.



Perak Community Specialist Hospital is located at 277, Jalan Raja Permaisuri Bainun (Jalan Kampar), 30250 Ipoh, Perak Darul Ridzuan. Call them at 05-2419000 or visit www.pcsch.com.my for more info.

Community

Class of 1974 Reunion



It was a joyous occasion as former students of Ashby Road English (Boys) School Ipoh (now Sekolah Kebangsaan Sri Kinta) Class of 1974, gathered at their alma mater on Sunday, February 26 and Monday, February 27. The reunion, which lasted for two days and a night, was organised by members of Ashby Road Old Boys (AROB).

Three former teachers and about 60 former students from various parts of Malaysia, and as far as Australia, were present. The gathering was an occasion for them to reconnect and catch up with each other after a 43-year absence. All said that they were overjoyed and happy to reunite with their schoolmates after over four decades.

A sense of nostalgia filled the atmosphere as they reminisced on the good old days and laughed over their antics at school. Datuk Seri Zulkifli bin Noordin, an alumnus from Kuala Lumpur, recalled how they would dash towards the "Milo" truck when it visited



but run away in fear from the "Colgate" truck.

Zulkifli remarked that the education system 43 years ago helped shape true Malaysians who sought to live in peace with one another regardless of race, creed and religion. He added that being well-versed in both Bahasa Malaysia and English makes him no less of a Malay.

According to the President of AROB, Azizul Mohd Othman, the get-together was an opportunity for them to relive their primary school days.

"We even went for assembly this morning," Azizul told Ipoh Echo on Monday.

Alumnus Liew Chin Voon said that the reunion was one of a kind, as primary school reunions are rare.

"We hope that such reunions will be held more frequently, every year if possible. We're very excited to meet our teachers, and we don't know if we'll be able to see them again," Liew added.

Among the activities conducted during the gathering were tele-match, bowling, karaoke and a gift-exchange session.

Leanne Tan

Community

Mini Health Carnival at Meru Valley Resort



KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital organised a Mini Health Carnival especially for the residents and club members of Meru Valley Resort, at the Rehabilitation and Physiotherapy Centre.

The objective of the event was to cultivate a healthy lifestyle through health screenings, activities, materials, demonstrations and the latest information. Besides, the carnival also focused on motivating the participants to make positive health behaviour changes and share self-care practices.

Amongst the activities held were blood pressure and random blood glucose screening, postural awareness, 3-minute step test, cooking demonstration, Body Mass Index (BMI), diet counselling, eye screening, consultation from resident consultants from various disciplines, namely, orthopaedics, obstetrics & gynaecology (O&G) and paediatrics.

All screenings at the Carnival were made available free of charge. The event started from 8.30am and ended at noon.

Meru Valley Resort now has the first ever community-based health centre providing a comprehensive range of services, encompassing a medical clinic, home nursing, rehabilitation and physiotherapy services, following the signing of a Collaboration Agreement between KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital and Meru Valley Resort Berhad.

Abandoned Building a Nuisance



A two-storey building, overgrown and deserted, in Taman Sri Rapat has become a drug den besides being a rubbish dump.

Located at Hala Rapat Baru 10, it is left abandoned for almost 20 years, causing much inconvenience to over 2000 residents of the housing estate, including local traders.

Half of the building is overgrown with lalang (weeds) while the other half has become an illegal dumpsite with all kinds of rubbish being dumped by irresponsible individuals.

Residents claimed that complaints had been made to the relevant authorities but to date no action is forthcoming.

Chan Kok Hong, 75, said that he was being troubled by a group of unkempt youths whom he suspected were drug addicts. They would throw stones at him when he jogged in the morning.

"They'd taunt and tease joggers, making us feel fearful and unsafe to exercise. The place has become a convenient den for drug addicts. I believe some of them are staying there. The negativity will have an impact on the sanctity of the place," he lamented.

Adun for Sungai Rapat, Radzi Zainon, requested that the National Anti-Drug Agency, Ipoh City Council and the State Crime Prevention Committee take heed of the problem and act accordingly.

The owner of the building, said Radzi, should be fined for disturbing public peace.

"I propose the authorities to rid the place of drug addicts. Strict enforcement is needed, as it is a populated area.

"The building, which was originally planned as a market, should be demolished as it doesn't bring any benefit to the people. I am worried that snakes and strays would make the overgrown portion their home," he added.

Rosli Mansor



To Ban or to Wait?

Early last year, Perak state EXCO for Education, Environment and Green Technology. Dato' Dr Muhammad Amin Zakaria stated that Perak will ban the usage of plastic and polystyrene material from cafeterias in government buildings.

According to him, this is an effort made by the government to encourage cafes to start using biodegradable containers. With the state aiming to ban both plastic and polystyrene usage in all sectors and fields in Perak, Dr Amin said the final stage of the programme scheduled to start in June 2017 is to ban these items especially in supermarkets, hypermarkets and sundry stores.

Dr Amin then added that local authorities can take action under the by-laws against those who failed to adhere to the ruling.

However, when asked, Mayor of Ipoh, Dato' Zamri Man gave an opposite answer, "Ipoh City Council (MBI) is doing our very best, through campaigning, to ban the usage of styrofoam especially among food vendors and restaurants. We can't fine them yet as we are still waiting for the official orders," said Zamri when interviewed.

With two months left, have Ipohites changed? Or are we still using styrofoam and plastic because it is more convenient for us?

"I feel like it is our responsibility to stop using styrofoam. It is a little bit more expensive, of course. But it is for a better cause," said Amar Asyraf, co-founder of Nasi Lemak Lah who has been using biodegradable food containers since the first day of selling *nasi lemak*. Amar also added that the polystyrene food container is not suitable for hot food as the container might shrink as well as leach chemicals onto the food.

As for Wong Wai Har, a local food vendor selling *chee cheong fun* at New Hollywood Restaurant, she decided to change to biodegradable casings to avoid getting fined in the future, "I can still remember the order made by the authorities. Either we have to change to biodegradable or we will be fined. It is better to make the change now," said Wong who also admits that although it is safer, these biodegradable containers are slightly more

expensive than the usual plastic food case.

While Amar and Wong are among those who have changed to a safer option, my visits to other restaurants; especially 24-hour restaurants, saw that some are still using plastic and polystyrene to pack and wrap their food.

It is important to know that the reason why the change must be made is because plastic and styrofoam cannot be composted. In addition, when change is made, food vendors must make sure that their biodegradable containers have passed the ASTM (American Society for Testing and Material) D6400 Test for Compostability, EN (European Union) 13432 standard test or the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI). Only containers that have met these tests can be composted.

Although MBI is carrying out their campaign, perhaps more needs to be done. Food vendors are not the only ones that need to be encouraged, but so do the customers. Instead of using containers provided, customers can start bringing their own tiffin carriers and bottles. Everyone must play their part to ensure zero tolerance towards the usage of plastic and polystyrene.

Ili Aqilah





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Community

Speed Humps Required



Residents are appealing to Ipoh City Council to immediately build two speed humps along Jalan Rapat Baru in Taman Taufik, Gunong Rapat for the safety of road users.

Over a thousand vehicles use the road daily, especially during peak hours. And this is compounded by lorries plying the route, as the area is located near the Kinta Light Industrial Zone.

Jamail Mat Diah, 59, had witnessed many fatal accidents involving motorists and pedestrians over a span of two years from his roadside stall nearby.

Once his nasi lemak stall was almost rammed by a motorist trying to avoid a motorcycle which exited a junction suddenly.

"The real culprits are the lorry drivers. They would speed along the route towards the industrial area. The road is their shortcut to avoid the traffic jam along the main road.

"I have lost count the number of times I've helped accident victims. It's worrying as such accidents happen every week, some minor some major," he said.

Jamil hoped that the problem would be attended to by the relevant authorities. He could not bear to see people getting injured on a daily basis.

Adun for Sungai Rapat, Radzi Zainon said that the road is dangerous as it is straight and bends as it approaches the traffic lights on the main road.

"The 1km road is close to the housing area and there are no speed humps to discourage speeding. This is a serious matter that requires immediate action by those concerned,"

he added.

The area in question is the meeting point between industry and housing, connecting Taman Seri Rapat, Taman Lapangan Lagenda, Taman Seri Berjaya and Taman Soong Choon.

Rosli Mansor

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News

New City Stuns the City

Ban Hoe Seng Sdn Bhd joined in the official launch of the Honda City with new and improved features on Thursday, March 2 at its premises along Jalan Raja Permaisuri Bainun.

With every enhancement, the City outdoes itself. Among the exciting innovations are multi-angle reverse camera, dual tone alloy wheels, LED headlights with LED Daytime Running Lights, ducktail spoiler with LED brake light, LED tail lights and front LED fog lights. For instance, the multi-angle reverse camera allows you to choose from three angles to get a complete view of your surroundings when you reverse.

Available in crystal black pearl, dark ruby red pearl, lunar silver metallic, modern steel metallic and taffeta white, the price ranges from RM78,300 to RM92,000 for Peninsular Malaysia.

It was followed with a showroom event on Saturday, March 4 brimming with festivities. It provided potential customers a closer look at the vehicle and a more detailed briefing on its new features and performance as well as to place bookings for the car.

The event started at 11am on a Saturday with a drawing competition for children, some whose parents were busy checking out the vital statistics of the new model. Meanwhile a model, dressed up in kimono-finery, was on hand to pose with guests beside the gleaming new car. After the photo sessions, guests were invited to a buffet lunch served by Dome Restaurant, Meru Valley Resort.

The event ended with a lucky draw for customers and guests, some going home with gifts while some with the signed bookings for the new Honda City in hand.

There are special discount and gifts for early birds, so rule the road with the City that makes heads turn now!

Ban Hoe Seng Showroom: 14-20, Jalan Raja Permaisuri Bainun (Jalan Kampar), 30250 Ipoh, Perak.

Tel: 05 241 3433 / 017 565 7800

Email: email@banhoeseng.com / banhoesengsb@gmail.com

Mei Kuan & SH Ong



MBI to Start 1 State 1 DCP Champion

Ipoh City Council (MBI) will be one of the first to start its "1 State Dealing With Construction Permits Champion" (1 State 1 DCP Champion) programme where it will automatically reduce the time taken to get approval for construction projects.

Aiming to lessen 30 less important procedures to 12, Mayor of Ipoh Dato' Zamri Man believes that this will not only be beneficial for investors but will also bring in more projects to Ipoh, "By lessening these procedures, we will also be able to reduce the time taken for approval; from 175 days to only 70 days. Kuala Lumpur City Council (DBKL) has successfully reduced its procedures to 15 in 76 days only. They've set such a good example and hopefully MBI can excel too," said Zamri during the workshop launching at Tower Regency Hotel on February 27.

Officiating the affair was the deputy director for Malaysia Productivity Corporation, Datuk Abdul Latif Abu Seman who stressed on the importance of having efficient procedures in any line of works especially in construction.

"DBKL has already started the programme about five years ago and the result has been good. Hopefully more city councils in Perak will follow the MBI's steps and will slowly boost up more opportunities for investors to come in," added Abdul.

Through the implementation of *1 State 1 DCP Champion*, contractors involved will be able to get necessary permits collectively.

Ili Aqilah



Econsave Opens in Jelapang



Residents of Jelapang, Taman Meru and Manjoi now have another place to get fresh groceries, at the newly-opened Econsave at Jelapang SQ.

During the official launch held on February 26, over 15,000 visitors paid a visit to the 62nd Econsave in Malaysia, that is located strategically next to the Ipoh-

Lumut highway.

"The Jelapang SQ has many potentials. With over 250,000 residents nearby, it can be assured that Jelapang SQ will be the next big thing," said Michael Tan Hau Koon, the director of Team Keris Berhad (TKB).

Other VIP guests during the affair was the Econsave's Operation Manager, Zamsuri Mansor, Econsave's Operation Manager for North Region, Chua Yong Chian and Econsave's Practice and Development manager, B. Ummappathy.

According to Michael, Jelapang SQ will also house several other big shops and stores including Starbucks, Old Town White Coffee and a furniture outlet that will start operating in April this year.

"It has been one of TKB's main focus to build not just any typical commercial lots, but also to encourage local retailers and shops to compete and promote their business to the next level," added Michael.

With the new, soon to be opened, Movie Animation Park Studios (MAPS), TKB is expecting bigger crowds to come to Jelapang SQ; a perfect opportunity for those who want to purchase any lots at Jelapang SQ. The company is currently offering prices as low as RM138,000 per lot for those who are interested.

"In addition to Econsave at Jelapang SQ, two more outlets will be opened in Chemor and Seri Iskandar. There are over 300 vacancies to will be available soon," said Yong Chiang Yang.

Ili Aqilah

News

A Workshop on Dengue

Some 1429 dengue cases were recorded in Perak between January 1 and March 4 this year compared to 1114 cases the same period last year, an increase of 28.3 per cent (315 cases).

A total of five deaths were recorded between the first and ninth week this year compared to zero cases the same period in 2016.

Between February 26 and March 4 this year, a total of 206 cases were recorded, a decrease of 8.4 per cent or 19 cases as opposed to 225 cases the previous week.

A total of 90 localities with active dengue cases were identified, 10 of which are uncontrolled outbreak localities and 66 of which are controlled outbreak localities. In addition, a total of 14 hotspots were identified in the Kinta district.

The increase is attributed to filth in housing estates, markets and recreational parks. These places are littered with rubbish and plastic receptacles left by irresponsible people. Stagnant water found in parking lots in shopping malls and apartments are convenient breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

The Perak State Health Department and local authorities are hard at work combating the disease, especially within the Kinta district.

Readers are advised to apply mosquito repellent and wear bright coloured clothing to prevent mosquito bites when staying outdoors or partaking in outdoor activities.

In order to reduce the death toll and to ensure that all dengue patients in Perak receive the right treatment and care, the Perak State Health Department, the Perak Medical Practitioners' Society and the Malaysian Medical Association Perak will jointly organise a workshop to update private medical practitioners in Perak about treating patients infected with the disease.

The Perak State Health Department reminds everyone to keep their surroundings clean and free from stagnant water to prevent mosquitoes from breeding.

Luqman Hakim



Rumours Unfounded

The Haven Resort Hotel and Residences chief executive officer, Peter Chan, has faced many obstacles in his line of work. No matter what, he has overcome them with grace and finesse befitting his demeanour.

One favourite method employed by his detractors, or perhaps enemies, is making false accusations which are aimed at belittling his efforts and his project. His current stint in Tambun, Ipoh is not without such distractions, which can be discomforting and irritating at times.

Incidentally, the Haven Resort Hotel is a 2016 Travellers' Choice Award winner based on the reviews of the global travel community – the highest honour given by TripAdvisor. Hence, it is little wonder that there will be some who would spread rumours, perhaps out of envy of Peter Chan's success. The Haven has to date won 42 national and international awards, a feat few could replicate.

The latest spin, which has gone viral on social media, is about a stabbing incident involving one of the resort's apartment owners, a lady. The rumour mill is hard at work turning a fictitious incident into a serious crime taking place within the confines of The Haven.

The truth is, the lady in question is alive and walking around the resort, hale and hearty.

Peter's pet project comes with a 24-hour 8-level surveillance system. The resort is covered with a 16-megapixel high definition CCTV incorporating the latest digital technology. Therefore, an incident such as this is highly improbable.

This is a classic example how a cooked-up story by a malicious person can spread like wildfire, especially with the advent of the social media.

"The accuser has nothing better to do but to undermine all my good efforts. Looks like some don't really appreciate what I've done for Ipoh," Peter lamented.

Mei Kuan



RUU355: Realities, Fiction and How Does it Affect You

Act 355 was first enacted in 1965 and at that time, it was known as the Syariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act 1965 and has undergone a number of amendments. Currently the Act empowers the Syariah Court to sentence a person up to three years in jail, RM5000 fine and six strokes of the cane.

Private Member's Bill by PAS president and Marang MP Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang proposes to increase the maximum sentences in accordance with Islamic law other than the death penalty.

BEBAS, a movement that upholds equality, opposes racial discrimination and advocates for religious freedom in Malaysia organised a forum on RUU355 at Sarang Paloh Heritage Stay to discuss the above bill and how it affects Muslims and non-Muslims.

Azrul Mohd Khalid, spokesman for BEBAS questioned what is wrong with the current system. What problems need to be solved? Syariah system is in chaos and must be made better.

Azrul emphasised that Malaysia is a secular country and agreed that this is not a Hudud Bill. However, it gives opportunity to include many offences under this Bill and punish offenders under the Syariah system. Even now, non-Muslims are affected by existing laws. The harsher Syariah punishments that PAS is seeking would most likely target the weaker and more vulnerable members of society.

Azrul pointed to recent incidents such as non-halal paintbrushes being seized and fast food chain McDonald's only allowing halal-certified birthday cakes at its premises. These are just small issues in comparison with what will happen. These affect non-Muslims.

Azrul cited the example of Indonesia's Aceh province, where an elderly non-Muslim woman was whipped in public for selling alcohol and said this proves that non-Muslims can be affected by the Syariah amendments.

Siti Kasim, lawyer and activist said that Malaysians do not understand their rights.



The Bill will give a blank cheque to punish the Malays. Malays are the most oppressed people in the country. Instead of giving harsher punishment PAS must promote Islam as a religion of compassion, harmony and mercy.

It is a political ploy of PAS. In addition, imperfect implementation of Islamic law will also pollute the name of Islam itself. Instead of destroying Islam, PAS must fight against corruption, help single mothers and Orang Asli. Investors will not come and the country will go down the drain.

Azrul and Siti called on all Malaysians to speak out against the amendments popularly known as Hadi's Bill. We elected our MPs and they must represent our interests. All of us must meet our respective MPs and ask them to vote against the Bill.

This Bill is not of Islamic law and so, every Muslim can choose to support or reject the bill.

In spite of the wide publicity only about 30 people attended, which included representatives from the media and the organisers. Except for Dr M. Jeyakumar, MP for Sungai Siput, no other politician turned up. This is an important issue and will decide the future direction of the country. It looks like we have elected the wrong guys to represent us. Of the four speakers, only two turned up. There is no point in being complacent now and regret when the damage has been done.

After the function I spoke to Dr Jeyakumar and he said that Malays have met him and asked him to support the Bill. So the MPs will have a tough time in making their decision.

A. Jeyaraj

8th Tan Sri Lee Loy Seng Perak Grand Prix Chess Championship 2017

Below are the dates of chess tournaments in and around Ipoh.

1. Perak Chess Rapid Tournament – 26 March 2017 (Sunday) at State Library.
2. Sungai Siput Open Chess Tournament (National Rated) – 2 April 2017 (Sunday) at Dewan Perhutanan, Sg Siput (U).
3. KRT Tapah Open Chess Tournament – 8 April 2017 (Saturday) at Dewan KRT Tapah.
4. KLK Batu Gajah Chess Tournament (National Rated) – 16 April 2017 (Sunday) at SMK SYS, Batu Gajah.
5. KLK Tapah Chess Tournament (National Rated) – 7 May 2017 (Sunday) at SMK Buyung Aidil, Tapah.
6. KLK Final Chess Tournament (National Rated) – TBA.

For further details, contact Perak Chess Association / Persatuan Catur Negeri Perak at <http://perakchess.blogspot.my/> or Abu Bakar 018 664 0108.

News

Night of Disney

Co-organised by the Rotary Club of Greentown and Tenby Schools Ipoh Interact Club, a charity fundraising dinner running on the theme, "Night of Disney" successfully raised about RM26,000 on Friday, March 3. Held at the ballroom of the Excelsior Hotel, the funds from the charity drive will be channelled towards the purchase of necessary equipment for the oncology department of the paediatric ward of Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun (HRPB) via the National Cancer Society of Malaysia. It also bears the cost of treatment for affected children.

"Child cancer is the leading cause of death by disease in children under 15 years old. Childhood cancer research is vastly and persistently underfunded. Tonight, the funds that we raise will go towards purchasing machines that will aid early diagnosis of cancer in children which is vital for their survival," Jane Kuok (pic), the campus principal stated in her speech.

Subsequently, Dr Aishah, an oncologist from HRPB presented a child cancer talk. "In HRPB Ipoh, we have diagnosed around 50 to 60 new cases of childhood cancer in Perak every year. That means, one child is diagnosed with cancer every five days and roughly one in those five children will lose their battle of fighting cancer. You might be thinking to yourself, why should I care? Or how does this affect me? Childhood cancer impacts everyone in some way or another. There are many ways to get involved and start being the voice for



these children. For me, what you are doing tonight is just amazing," she said.

Attended by over 400 donning yellow ribbons to raise childhood cancer awareness, also present was Mark Parkinson, CEO of Tenby Schools.

The lively evening ensued with flash mob, charades, lucky draw and singing performance.

Formed in 2008, Tenby Schools Ipoh Interact Club currently has 84 active members with over 30 completed projects.

Mei Kuan

General Mas'od Bids Farewell

After serving over a year from September 2015, the Commander of the Ipoh-based 2nd Malaysian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General Dato' Mas'od bin Hj Muhammad handed over duties to newly-promoted Brigadier-General Datuk Mohd Nizam bin Hj Jaffar.

The handing-over ceremony was held on the parade grounds of Headquarters 2nd Malaysian Infantry Brigade along Jalan Hospital, Ipoh on Saturday, February 25. There to witness the handing over of duty was Major-General Dato' Mohd Ramli bin Jaafar, General Officer Commanding 2nd Malaysian Infantry Division.

"I'm feeling rather good today. I'm being posted to Port Dickson as Commandant of the Army Training Academy effective March 3," said Mas'od to Ipoh Echo.

Touching on his high points while in command of the brigade, he said, "The best was we're runner-up in the Army Combat Readiness Competition 2016. Second Brigade, represented by men from the 23rd Royal Malay Regiment, took third spot in the Army Infantry Section Proficiency Test 2016. The same battalion took part in a field exercise with units from the Royal Thai Army in southern Thailand. The objectives of the joint exercise were met."

When asked if he had achieved whatever he had planned for when he took over, he stated, "I'd gladly say yes, within the short term, of course. But there's room for improvement."

"The new commander may have his own way of doing things in line with the requirements of the army. He is a seasoned officer, I know him very well. He's young and brilliant," he added.

The farewell parade started off with an honour guard mounted by 18 Officers and 211 Other Ranks forming five detachments, one each from 23rd Royal Malay Regiment, 2nd Royal Ranger Regiment, 9th Royal Ranger Regiment and two other ancillary units under the brigade's command. This was followed by the signing of the handing-and-taking-over document, the handing over of the baton of command and three shouts of the army war cry, "Gempur Wira".

The affable commander did away with the traditional send-off routine of riding on an open land rover and being pulled by his officers and men. Instead, he walked and greeted the soldiers who were lining the road leading to the guardroom. Even a slight drizzle did not dampen his enthusiasm.

"I've nothing but praise for my men. They've performed extremely well and I never, for once, doubted their loyalty. The relationship between the brigade and state agencies was superb. These are some of the fondest memories I'll bring with me to Port Dickson," the outgoing commander concluded.

Mei Kuan



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Anak Perak

Blind Student Excels



Being blind did not stop A. Mahvithia of Kolej Tingkatan Enam Seri Putera Ipoh from acing her STPM examination.

The 22-year-old obtained a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) score of 2.92 with an "A" in History and "B" in Bahasa Melayu, General Studies and Economics.

Hailing from Buntong, Mahvithia, who is also an orphan, was the only disabled sixth former at her school. Out of 15 students in her class, Mahvithia came in fourth.

Mahvithia said that she was grateful to have achieved such excellent results despite her handicap.

"Due to the lack of learning resources, I found it rather challenging to study with my able-bodied friends. Thankfully, my teachers and friends gave me lots of support, which prompted me to work harder to succeed," said Mahvithia after receiving her results on Tuesday, February 28.

According to Mahvithia, her sources of inspiration was her disabled friend who studied law at the University of Malaya and the late Professor Datuk Dr Ismail Salleh, a well-known economist who was also visually impaired.

"I'd like to repay my cousin who has taken care of me all this while. I decided not to care about what others say and think, but to concentrate on my studies. As I aspire to teach students with disabilities, I plan to enrol in Special Education at either the National University of Malaysia or the Sultan Idris Education University," said Mahvithia.

Luqman Hakim

Tourism

Working with RTM

The programme, "Negaraku Jom Singgah – Sehati @ RTM" held at Arena Rakyat Tualang Sekah, Malim Nawar on Friday, March 3 and Saturday, March 4 attracted over 3000 people.

Dato' Nolee Ashilin Mohammed Radzi, the Executive Councillor for Tourism, Arts, Culture, Multimedia and Communications said that the programme, hosted by RTM, was one of the biggest held in conjunction with Visit Perak Year 2017.

"Via the programme, we indirectly introduced Tualang Sekah to the public. The township, which is within the parliamentary constituency of Kampar, has many tourist attractions nearby. One such attraction is Gua Tempurung.

"Cooperation with RTM provides plenty of useful input to the constituents, besides strengthening the bond between leaders and the people," she reiterated.

Among the activities organised were the vaganza exercise participated by over 200, a home-repair programme, agriculture exposition, competitions and distribution of goods and clothing to the needy.

Guest of honour, Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir officiated the two-day event.

According to Zambry, the programme reflected the unity of the community coming together for a common cause.

"I want this cordial relationship to continue, as it's not only healthy but is beneficial for everyone," he remarked.

Rosli Mansor



LETTERS

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

Help Finding Room-mate from England

I am writing to you to ask for your help in finding an old room-mate, Alan Tan. I shared a room with Alan back in 1979/80 in a house in Kingsland Road, Birkenhead, England. At the time Alan was attending Birkenhead Technical College studying for his 'A' levels. Although many years have passed Alan is not forgotten. I am a member of a WhatsApp group (15 members) who met each other at that time while studying, and we would love to rekindle our friendship with Alan. I am from England (now living in Australia) and the others are from Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Thailand and Hong Kong. I kept in touch with Alan for a while after he returned to Malaysia in 1980 but we lost contact. Unfortunately, the Internet was non-existent then.

- Alan Tan – I think his initials were TC, so could be Alan TC Tan.
- Last known address in Ipoh was 4 Jalan Mui Fah, Victoria Park.



Alan and me

- Studied 'A' levels at Birkenhead Technical College in England. I think his 'A' level subjects were Maths, Physics and Chemistry.
- Lived in Kingsland Road, next to the college. The landlady's name was Mary.
- Liked Tae Kwon Do.
- Worked as a waiter in a restaurant many miles away – I think the restaurant was in Whitchurch.

I would be eternally grateful for any help in tracing my old friend. I'm hoping there is somebody (relative/friend) in Ipoh that could put me in direct contact with Alan, wherever he may be.

Ian Horgan

ian.horgan@gmail.com

Mobile: +61 (0)405 214 652



Mary and some of the students. Alan is circled

Kudos to Ipoh Echo...Keep Up the Good Work!

I happened to bump into your free copy of newspaper in Ipoh recently; back home to celebrate Lunar New Year. I found some older editions at a barber shop. While waiting for my turn, I just have some time to browse through your newspaper issue 250 and found that interesting with articles concerning Ipoh and Perak in general.

One article titled A Bright 2017? by Fathol Zaman Bukhari is particularly interesting which really highlighted the reality of life and the current 'dire' situation we are all facing while those who are holding the power keep giving us all a false sense of security and wellness. As you have highlighted the ever shrinking Ringgit is just one of them. Since late last year the Governor of BNM, Muhd. Ibrahim, keeps announcing that the Ringgit would rebound early this year, the latest in tandem with the rebound of oil prices. This was what I learnt from the RTM news broadcast.

Unfortunately, in reality this is not the case.....the Ringgit keeps sliding down (at least against the US or Sing Dollar) while petrol prices are going up and up. (Each time up 20 sen but if it's down, only 5 sen) I wonder what formula they use to calculate

the oil price or is it just a mumbo jumbo magic figure that comes up to suit them. I have written to the KPDNKK to request for this monthly oil price formula to be published and how they arrived at the figure but until now no avail. There should be transparency in this...don't you agree?

Back to the Ringgit issue, now I heard that they forecast the recovery in 4th quarter of the year, pushing back the time. I bet this will never happen. If miracles happen, it may be just a very brief relief only before resuming the downtrend. Just look at the long-term historical trend, once it was down, it would be very hard to climb up. You can see the chart is going south all the way.

A shrinking currency and high cost of inflation creeping up are really a double whammy for the rakyat...sigh.... This hasn't taken into account the possibility of the Government raising various other taxes...quit rent, assessment, water, etc. These are all possibilities...Horrible!

A Disgruntled Man on the Street



iSpeak People's Park – Back to Square One

A. Jeyaraj

After reading Mariam Mokhtar's article "Will Ipoh City Council Ever Learn?" (Ipoh Echo, Feb 1-15, 2017), I decided to visit People's Park a.k.a Kinta Riverfront Park to see its condition. There is still no signboard of its official name.

About a year ago Mayor Dato' Zamri Man carried out a landmark gotong royong at the park which went viral and was reported in all the media and the Mayor received more coverage than he expected. As remembrance of this event, he planted a tree saying that it would provide shade when it grows. However, the tree had died a natural death. What remains now is a patch of grass with two tiles placed in the centre. I saw the tiles only during my last visit.

After the gotong royong, Zamri said that MBI planned to return the park back to its original role, that of a family park. It is the People's Park and is for the entire Ipoh community. Zamri added "We need to find ways to draw the residents back to the area. The city council plans to carry out activities in the park to attract more visitors. We want an entrance that welcomes visitors and we will place signboards to make passers-by aware of the park and guide them in. The paddling pool for children will be improved, including new lighting. We are starting anew and working very hard to upgrade the facilities."

I visited the park four times, the last one just recently; thrice during the day and once at night. During my first visit on a Sunday morning, I noticed the place was littered with fallen leaves. There was hardly any plastic garbage lying around indicating that people are not visiting the place. More than half of the park is roped off. On the following Sunday I noticed that the leaves were cleared and the pools were cleaned. As usual men were sitting and lying down under the shelters. There was also a young couple. There were no genuine visitors.

A number of floor slabs had come off, causing a tripping hazard, and other structural damage. The buildings are starting to deteriorate but maintenance work has started. Plants are growing on one of the lamps at the top of the lamp pole along the river bund.

There is clear stagnant water in the basin of the fountains which is a breeding ground for mosquitoes. There are also other receptacles containing stagnant water.

During my last visit I saw styrofoam containers and plastic garbage lying at a corner near the river bund. There are signs that the garbage is being burnt. I am not sure who is doing this.

During the night when I was driving along Jalan Sultan Iskandar (Hugh Low Street) to go to the park, there were two motor cyclists in front of me and they entered the park. The place is dark and I could see men sitting and lying down under the shelters. There is a steel structure in front of the buildings in which fluorescent lights are installed, but they are not working. I was scared to enter and only looked from the road.

I do not know who are the people taking refuge under the shelters. I think the welfare department must reach out to these people and help them. Are they homeless, abandoned or drug addicts? These people scare visitors away.

One year after the historical gotong royong it looks like only the new entrance from Jalan Sultan Iskandar to the park has been completed and everything else is the same. The park hardly attracts any visitors.

I remember Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Deputy Prime Minister saying "Malaysians are good at initiating things, but do not follow through." This is true for People's Park.

Will the park be returned to its former glory?



Stagnant water: perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes

IE Newspaper distribution areas:

Information counters:

AEON Kinta City
AEON Klebang
AEON Station 18
Tesco Ipoh Garden
Tesco Station 18
Ipoh Parade
Mydin @ Meru
Giant @ Sunway (Entrance)

At the lobby:

MH Hotel
Impiana Hotel
Tower Regency Hotel
Ibis Styles Hotel
BP Healthcare Group @ Ipoh
Regalodge Hotel
Syeun Hotel
Symphony Suites Hotel
Kinta Riverfront Hotel
Excelsior Hotel



Financial Planning

The Empty Nest

This is Part 10 of a continuing 12-part series on financial planning.

Adam and Aida can finally give a big sigh of relief now. One of the greatest financial burdens was lifted from their shoulders as both their children, Aiman and Alisa, have graduated and are living on their own. Adam and Aida are in their late 40s now and have a couple more years to retirement.

Many people don't really think about planning for their retirement until all their other obligations have been fulfilled, especially funding their children's education. This is understandable as people tend to prioritise their needs on urgency basis and may not have enough time to save up for their retirement. We may be able to catch up on all those books that we've not been able to read but we may not have the luxury of time to catch up on our retirement savings. It takes time to build wealth and for the power of compound interest to work effectively, even longer time is needed. Many rely solely on their EPF savings, which may not be sufficient.

Of course, the best time to start planning for your retirement is as soon as you start working. You should be saving at least 10% of your income into a separate retirement fund (apart from your EPF) and allow it to grow throughout the years.

So, how should we then manage our finances during this phase of our life, especially if we've not saved up much for our golden years? Let's take a look at some of the strategies:

- Re-budget – yes, we should continue with our habit of having a budget and more importantly, sticking to it. At this phase of our life, we should have a clearer and more accurate picture of what our retirement lifestyle is going to look like. Therefore, we should review our budget and make the necessary adjustments to better reflect our post-retirement lifestyle, taking into consideration inflation and other emergencies.
- Reallocate – as you've been used to saving for your children's education all this while, it is not too difficult to carry on with this habit. Nevertheless, you should reallocate whatever you've been saving for your children's education towards your own retirement funds to supplement your EPF savings for the years to come.
- Reassess – you have to do an assessment of the financial risks and take the necessary steps to minimise the impact:

- Consider the effect of inflation on the future purchasing power of your money today.
- Relook into the asset allocation of your investments. An overly conservative asset allocation may put you at risk for not being able to outpace inflation.
- Be discipline on the amount you are withdrawing from your retirement funds so that it does not deplete your retirement assets too quickly.
- Take into consideration the rising healthcare expenses too. As one ages, healthcare expenses tend to rise in tandem and can considerably affect your savings if you don't have a comprehensive health insurance plan.
- Recalculate – after having considered the above, you may want to do a recalculation of your retirement funding needs by following the steps listed below. You may either seek the help of a financial planner or browse the internet for a retirement planning calculator, which is aplenty.

Step 1: Project the first year desired retirement income.

Step 2: Estimate the lump sum retirement funds needed (inflation-adjusted).

Step 3: Determine current and future resources of income needed for retirement funding.

Step 4: Convert these current value of resources to their future value at retirement.

Step 5: Determine the Retirement Gap, if any.

Step 6: Determine the funding needs during the pre-retirement period to close the retirement gap.

It is important to note that your retirement planning should include debt reduction, no new debts, diversifying investments and above all, maintaining good health through proper diet and regular exercise. The question of health is vital during old age as healthcare can be a major expenditure and may drain your retirement savings, despite having medical and critical insurance coverage, which may not include or suffice to cover all the procedures and prescriptions that you actually need to have.



Sport

Bukit Aman Wins Bowling Championship



Bukit Aman Contingent won the 2017 Inspector-General of Police Ten-Pin Bowling Championship held at Aeon Kinta City on Friday, February 24. With a grand total of 24,398 pins, the contingent was crowned champion defeating its Kedah opponent by a margin of 478 pins.

Bukit Aman Contingent won the Men's Category while the winner of the Women's Category was the Selangor Contingent.

A total of 20 police contingents from all over the country competed in the championship.

The championship was officiated by Perak Acting Police Chief, Deputy Commissioner of Police Datuk Hasnan Hassan, who represented the Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid bin Abu Bakar.

Present were Deputy Director of the Department of Management (Administration) Senior Assistant Commissioner (SAC) Datuk Azisman Alias, Deputy Director of Internal Security and Public Order SAC Datuk Mastor Mohd Ariff and the Executive Councillor for Human Resources, Youth and Sport, Dato' Shahrul Zaman Yahya.

In Khalid's speech, which was delivered by Hasnan, the IGP said that Police want all ranks to be fit and healthy and being active in sports is one way to stay healthy.

Khalid added that the Police Sports Council will look into developing bowling as a competitive sport in the force.

"Sport not only serves to build our physical toughness, but can also help foster comradeship and teamwork and, indirectly, strengthen our bond as members of a disciplined body," he stated.



Luqman Hakim

KLK Muhibah Cup 2017



Kuala Lumpur Kepong Berhad (KLK) is organising its third Piala Muhibah KLK to encourage and provide a platform for our multiracial populace to come and play a game of football together and at the same time, promote a healthy lifestyle.

The Piala Muhibah will be held at DR Seenivasagam Park in Ipoh on May 6 and 7 for Perak-based players under 12 years old. This will be followed by a similar tournament for boys under 16 in August.

The concept of the tournament, which Ipoh Bug (a local organisation which focuses on developing youth through sports) helped organise, was the brainchild of KLK's Chief Executive Officer, Tan Sri Lee Oi Hian. All team managers and coaches have to ensure that while playing, a pre-determined number of multiracial players are on the field. This is to encourage the muhibah culture amongst the players and these children also get the opportunity to realise their potential talent in football.

Prizes includes cash, trophies, medals and footballs for the winning teams.

Those keen to join the tournament have to register themselves before April 20. For registration forms and more details, call William Chang **012 518 8361**, Wan Azman **017 547 7622** or Matthew **014 603 1600**.

For more updates, follow www.facebook.com/KLKCareWT.

Calling for registration for Perak-based Under-12 Boys Category!

Date: 6-7 May 2016 (Saturday & Sunday)

Time: Saturday – 8.15am to 5.30pm

Sunday – 8.15am to 4pm

Venue: DR Seenivasagam Park, Ipoh

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.

Perak Women for Women Society (PWW) is organising a talk on "Handling Victims of Domestic Violence and Abuse" on Friday **March 17** at the Legal Aid Centre at No. 41, Jalan Dato Maharajalela, Ipoh. Registration starts at 3pm. For details, please call Perak Bar Council at **05 241 5457**.

Public Forum: Cancer...My Greatest Fear! in conjunction with World Cancer Day, Saturday **March 18**, 2.30pm to 4.30pm at Dewan Anugerah, 5th Floor, KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital. Speaker: Dr Lum Wan Wei, Resident Clinical Oncologist. Kindly contact Pn Aziera or Ms Sarah at **05 240 8777 ext 8111** for further enquiries.

Perak Society for the Promotion of Mental Health 43rd AGM, Saturday **March 18**, 3pm at Lot 18200, Batu 8, Ulu Kinta, Tambun 31150, Perak Darul Ridzuan. For more details kindly contact: **05 533 2167** or **05 533 5457**.

Hospital Fatimah Public Forum: Autoimmune Encephalitis in Children: A Treatable Cause of Neuropsychiatric Disorder, Saturday **March 25**, 2pm to 4pm at Conference Room, 4th Floor, Hospital Fatimah, Ipoh. By Dr Alex Khoo, Consultant Paediatrician & Paediatric Neurologist. For more information, please contact **05 5455 777 Ext 214**.

Local Herbs Day: Health, Cleanliness and Remedy. Saturday **April 8**, 9am to 1.30pm at DDK2, Faculty of Science, UTAR Kampar Campus. Featuring talks, exhibition of local herbal plants and herbal soap making workshop. Free admission. Register online at: <https://goo.gl/KnYwub>. For more information, contact: Dr Teh Lai Kuan (tehlk@utar.edu.my), Dr Tee Chong Siang (teecs@utar.edu.my) or call: **05 468 8888 ext 4454, 4501**.

Free Public Health Talk: Understanding Wound Care presented by Tai Clinic. Presenter: Mr Simon Lam (Wound Specialist based in Melbourne). Saturday **April 8**, 2.30pm at Tai Orthopedik Surgeri, 46 & 48, Jalan Onn Jaafar, 30300 Ipoh. Limited participants. Refreshments will be served. To RSVP contact Ms Wu at **05 253 5737** or Cecilia at **013 438 4388**.

Sultan Yusoff School Batu Gajah Class of 1967 Golden Jubilee Reunion Dinner, Saturday, **April 29**. Former students from that class who are keen on attending please make your reservations with either one of the following personnel: Gregory Wong **012 517 2858**, Dr Bhupindar Singh **012 499 6444** or Gopalan Nair **012 450 2620**.

Mother Teresa's Reading Shelter (MTRS) Charity Lunch 2017, Sunday **April 30**, 11am to 2pm at Church Hall, Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, 45 Jalan Silibin, 30100 Ipoh. Vegetarian and non-vegetarian food will be served. For further details contact MTRS office at **05 241 0751**.

Calling all 1976 Kamparians! We are having a 'Back to the 70s' reunion and celebration gathering on the **July 15** at Grand Kampar Hotel, Kampar. This will be a fun-filled night of reminiscing our schooldays and showing our appreciation to our teachers besides talent time, stage games, photos from yesteryears, disco, etc. Ticket price is RM120 per pax. Those interested to attend, kindly sign up before **April 30**. For more details, contact Chow **013 360 3338**, Ng CF **016 285 5939**, Ng SC **012 614 5048**, Tham **012 253 5368** or Tan **12 250 2999**.

Free Arts and Culture Lessons. The Perak Department for Arts and Culture (JKKN Perak) is conducting free music, dance and theatre lessons at its complex along Jalan Caldwell for enthusiasts aged 7 and above. **Traditional dance and music: Every Saturday** from 9.30am to 12pm. **Children's theatre: Every Saturday** from 3.30pm to 5.30pm. **Adult's theatre: Every Tuesday** from 8.30pm to 10.30pm. These lessons will last till the end of the year. For information call Fairus at **018 958 9049** or JKKN Perak at **05 253 7001**.

The Dementia Day-care Centre is open daily from 9am till 5pm. 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. The centre also welcomes volunteers. For more details kindly call April at **05 241 1691** before 5pm.

Garden Market @ PORT Ipoh. Friday, Saturday & Sunday nights, 6pm onwards. Food trucks, book, antiques, vintage comics, collectibles, buskers, bundle, pre-loved items, etc. Wayang Pacak on Friday and Saturday nights.

St John Ambulance Malaysia Perak is recruiting volunteers who are interested to join the Emergency Rescue Unit, Volunteer must be 18 years to 50 years of age. Training will be provided to all volunteers. Those who are interested call up **05 254 5946** or **012 550 4002** Manin Singh for registration and more details.

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