

# Can Our Public Hospitals Cope?

By Nabilah Hamudin, Tan Mei Kuan and Ili Aqilah

**H**ealthcare in Malaysia, without doubt, has undergone tremendous changes compared to several years ago. Government hospitals are now the pillar of the nation's healthcare system which guarantees cheap and affordable healthcare services.

The Health Ministry website states that there are 15 public hospitals in Perak, with a total of 5780 beds to cater for 2 million people in the state.

Although the number of private hospitals in Malaysia, as well as Perak, has increased, the charges imposed by these private entities can burn a hole in one's pocket. This explains why most Malaysians visit government hospitals for their health needs.

However, are the services provided abreast with patients' needs? In this issue, Ipoh Echo examines common problems – the good and the bad – at Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun (HRPB) and elicit suggestions from patients and medical professionals.

*Continued on page 2*



**YEAR END  
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# The Good, the Bad and the Ugly of Public Hospitals

## Insights into Patients' Experience

Seventy-seven-year-old retiree, A. Jeyaraj, has been frequenting the eye clinic of the general hospital for about eight years now. "Most of the doctors are kind and do respect my age and speak English so I have no communication problem," he told Ipoh Echo.

His only unpleasant experience is the long waiting time. "The doctor can only see a certain number of patients per hour and that number must be allocated. When a doctor is on leave, there's no replacement and the doctors on duty have to handle more patients. The first appointment is at 8am, but the doctors don't call in the patients at that time. One general hospital (GH) for Ipoh is not enough for a population of over 700,000. Ipoh needs another hospital," Jeyaraj reasoned.

"The waiting rooms are full and there is no room for extension. I feel sorry to see elderly patients standing. On the patients' side, some elderly ones who are too old and can't hear properly have communication problems. Doctors must be really patient to treat them. Someone must accompany these oldies. In one incident, an elderly person fainted. I was told there are volunteers from NGOs to help out, but I haven't come across any," he added.

Being a retiree without a steady income, there is no other choice for Jeyaraj other than GH. He used to go to the Hussein Onn Eye Hospital in Kuala Lumpur. "The doctor's fee was not high, but the eye drops are expensive and there's the traveling cost. There's also a long waiting time," he stated.

When asked about the shuttle bus service provided by the HRPB, he commented, "I use the shuttle service. It is convenient. The shuttle bus doesn't go to the parking area of the polyclinic though there is a timetable. Patients like me staying in Pari Garden and surroundings must travel all the way to the stadium. If you board the bus at the stadium and request to be dropped at the polyclinic, the drivers oblige. Actually, it is difficult for elderly people to get on and off the bus. The steps are too high."

According to him, some of his doctor friends say that it is best to send emergency cases to GH which is well equipped and have the expertise to handle them. "GH does not demand upfront payment before treatment is started. After initial treatment patients can be transferred to other hospitals," he pointed out.

Another Ipohite who used to frequent the pharmacy and outpatient departments for health check-ups once every six months said, "Two years ago, my friend had a painful swelling in the hand. The doctor diagnosed it wrongly as skin infection when eventually it turned out to be a blockage in her artery."

"The pharmacy always claims that they run out of medicine, especially Zohor for my cholesterol yet the one who came after me could get the exact one! After giving the prescription at the pharmacy, my sister has to come back after one hour to collect it," she told Ipoh Echo.

"In general, the nurses are very rude and can't be bothered. My sister has been checked to have no high blood pressure but every time they claim that she has. This is because when they put the blood pressure monitor on her, they go roaming!" she recalled. Now, she stops going to the general hospital altogether.

"The services should be improved. Senior citizens shouldn't be made to wait so long. Give us oldies an appointment and let us come according to the time and date fixed. Why can't that be done?" she lamented.

Another patient who only wanted to be known as Nurzimirrah, 21, was admitted for seven days when she had an accident in 2016. The tragedy had forced her to undergo neurosurgery and physiotherapy sessions to recover.

"During my stay at the hospital, the staff were helpful and friendly. Not only towards patients but also visitors. My mom had to accompany me throughout the seven days and the staff were so kind, providing a special bed for all caretakers," said Nurzimirrah.

"Even after I was discharged and had to continue my physiotherapy sessions, I was impressed by their exceptional treatment. Our hospital can get over-crowded but the staff always give their best. In fact, I can recall a nurse who was pregnant and she had to work the night shift. The doctors were also helpful. I'd like to express my thanks to everyone who has made my stay easier, especially Doctor Farhan and Doctor Azmel," Nurzimirrah added.

However, she believes that the facilities in the hospital are in dire need of repairs. She had to stay in ward 6B where the doors almost broke down due to the strong wind. The same worry was expressed by our photojournalist, Luqman Hakim Radzi, 25, who used to bring his mother for her monthly check-ups at the general hospital.

"The staff in HRPB definitely deserve praise. They're helpful, friendly and polite. My mother needs to visit the hospital every two months for consultation and since we have scheduled appointments, she doesn't have to wait for long. The hospital might want to consider upgrading some of their facilities though, for example providing more wheelchairs as the ones they have now aren't enough and a few chairs are broken," said Luqman.



Insufficient seating capacity at pharmacy



Insufficient parking spaces

He said that the hospital should also pay heed to the cleanliness of the compound, especially the toilets.

"The GH receives a lot of patients and visitors daily, hence they need to check on the toilets regularly. Some toilets are smelly. I too wish they will give priority to elderly patients and not make them wait too long for consultation," added Luqman.

The facilities at the hospital are a mixed bag – some good and some bad. The hospital only provides one ATM machine near the pharmacy. Is one ATM machine sufficient for all the people and staff of the hospital?

The public toilets on the ground floor are surprisingly clean and well-maintained by the staff.

However, we noticed that some chairs at the waiting area in front of the emergency department were broken and some patients have to play 'musical chairs' just to rest while waiting for their turn. This is something that the hospitals should address. Otherwise, people have to stand while waiting.

The observation also revealed that a mini mart in the hospital is operating 24 hours, which is convenient for the relatives to get something for their loved ones. The cafeteria is also clean and the food offered are affordably priced.

## Suggestions from an Experienced Doctor

Dato' Dr Ramanathan Ramaiah, was the former head of the Orthopaedic Department of HRPB and had served 34 years in public hospitals. He shared his experiences and suggested ways to overcome problems in order to provide better services to the public.

Dr Ramanathan felt that decentralisation of services at the general hospital is the way forward.

"About 15 years ago, when I was an orthopaedic surgeon and Dato' Amar Singh was a paediatrician, we suggested to the hospital, the state government and the Ministry of Health that it's time to build an annex in Batu Gajah or Meru or anywhere nearby.

"However, our suggestion fell on deaf ears. As doctors, we felt that there was a need for an extension to take on the load," said Dr Ramanathan, who served 20 long years at HRPB. He retired in April this year.



Dato' Dr Ramanathan Ramaiah



Clean and tidy toilets





# HOLIER THAN THOU

*This holier-than-thou stance is not benefiting the nation in any way, and the only people who will gain are the corrupt and the irresponsible.*



The increasing number of ustaz and ustazah (Islamic preachers, not scholars both male and female) is there for a reason. The cause for the proliferation of their number can be traced to money and there are heaps of it, courtesy of a generous government who feels that the only way to the Malay Muslim community is via religion. And the constant badgering via our government-controlled media network bears testimony to this general perception. The federal government, through Jakim (Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia) or the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia, allocates a whopping RM1 billion annually to the department for the development of Islam and this is being widely reported and questioned.

The department is under the stewardship of Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom, formerly the director of KAGAT (Kor Agama Angkatan Tentera) or the Armed Forces Religious Corps. His rank in the armed forces was that of a major-general. Jamil resigned from military service in 2009 and assumed the post of a minister in the Prime Minister's Department. He was placed in charge of Jakim's wellbeing.

As per stated in the department's website, its historical origins are appended as follows:

*"In 1968, the Malaysian Council of Rulers decided that there was a need for a body that could mobilise the development and progress of Muslims in Malaysia, in line with the country's status as an Islamic country, which was growing in strength as well as fast gaining worldwide recognition. In realising the fact, a secretariat for the National Council of Islamic Affairs of Malaysia was formed to protect the purity of faith and the teachings of Islam. This secretariat was later expanded to become the Religious Division, Prime Minister's Department which was later upgraded to become the Islamic Affairs Division.*

*On 1st January 1997, in line with the country's steadfast Islamic development and progress, the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) was established by the Government of Malaysia to take over the role of the Islamic Affairs Division."*

Why the sudden hike in status-quo? I believe it is more about placing everything and anything pertaining to Islam under one authority, perhaps due to the fact that Islam comes under the purview of the nine sultans, as mandated by the Federal Constitution. That being the case, Islam is the responsibility of the sultans rather than a controlling body in Putrajaya.

Then came the heady end when the Sultan of Johor rebuked Jakim and Zamihan Mat Din, a preacher under the employ of Jakim, for criticising him over his objections to the Muslim-only launderette in Muar. Sultan Ibrahim had called Zamihan "an empty tin with no brain". To emphasise his displeasure the sultan decreed that the state religious authority (Majlis Agama Islam Johor) not to deal with Jakim on matters pertaining to Islam. A similar rebuke was made by the Raja Muda of Perlis when one such launderette made an appearance in Kangar, Perlis.

Subsequently, a statement by the Keeper of the Rulers' Seal was issued on behalf of the Conference of Rulers on Tuesday, October 10 cautioning against the spread of religious bigotry and fundamentalism. The statement rejects extremism and divisiveness in our society. The blame is directed at those who deliberately instil this feeling of uneasiness for their own ends.

The Sultans have made it clear that they do not want religion to be hijacked and made an exclusive right of anyone. Islam should remain a "religion of tolerance, moderation and inclusiveness," as being widely perceived.

Similarly, on October 7, 2015. The Council had expressed its views about aspects of financial management of the nation that impact upon its integrity. It was in obvious reference to the still unresolved 1MDB scandal that has affected the reputation of the nation globally.

When the Council of Rulers takes a stand on matters pertaining to governance, integrity and the role of Islam in a multi-ethnic country like ours, the government and its citizens should take heed. The Sultan of Johor, Sultan of Selangor and the Regent of Perlis have spoken up, hopefully others would follow suit. This is to reinforce the point that religion should not be left to the extremists whose goal is the destruction of civil society, and the nation, eventually.

Not to be outdone a Penang-based preacher, Zahul Hamid, insisted that Muslims should not patronise hair salons run by non-Muslims as interaction with them is considered "haram" (taboo). He had since denied the accusation in spite of the presence of a live recording from the media. This little hiccup only accentuates the idiocy of some who pine for attention without knowing the consequences. To them making an unsubstantiated statement that borders on the incredible is permissible so long as there is a receptive audience who is prepared to accept and ingest their pronouncements, however ridiculous they may be.

This has been the trend since the upswing in religious fervour following the Iranian revolution of 1977. Islam, being the "official" religion of the country, thus has commonality with the majority Malay Muslim community. It is only to be expected. And



a ruling coalition, on the verge of being irrelevant, will do whatever in its power to use it as a tool to fulfil its hegemonic dreams.

The unholy alliance between Islamist party PAS and UMNO is a clear indication of this unhealthy development. This holier-than-thou stance is not benefiting the nation in any way, and the only people who will gain are the corrupt and the irresponsible. They, God forbid, have no qualms about turning this bountiful country into another Afghanistan or Syria. Perhaps, sending these recalcitrant preachers on a "lawatan sambil belajar" (study) trip to these warring countries may be the answer.

## EYE HEALTH — WORLD SIGHT DAY 2017



**In conjunction with WORLD SIGHT DAY on October 12, Ipoh Echo talks to Consultant Ophthalmologist Dr S.S. GILL on Eye Care Tips.**



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

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 285 million people are visually impaired worldwide. It is unfortunate that of the 285 million people, almost 80% of them could have been avoided or prevented. In this second part in conjunction with World Sight Day, Dr Gill shares some tips for Eye Care:

### 1. LIVE HEALTHY

**Good Nutrition:** Your diet should be rich in green leafy vegetables and fruits that contain vitamins and carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin, along with meats like fish that are rich in Omega 3 Fatty Acids.

- **Avoid Smoking:** The effects of smoking should not be taken lightly as it accelerates cataract formation, macular degeneration and nerve problems.
- **Medical Conditions:** Keep all medical conditions such as Diabetes Mellitus and hypertension well controlled. These illnesses can have profound effects on the eyes.
- **Avoid Obesity:** Keep your weight in check. Obese people are more prone for health as well as eye problems.

### 2. WEAR GOGGLES

Always wear a pair of protective safety goggles whenever you do any chores around the home. This includes the wearing of goggles during gardening, while playing certain sports and while mowing the lawn. Remember, eye injuries cost a lifetime of problems to an individual and to their families too.

### 3. MINIMISE UV-LIGHT EXPOSURE

Wearing sunglasses that cut off ultraviolet light rays from the sun is a must. Look for a reasonably good pair of sunglasses that have the CE marking, to filter off UVA and UVB light rays from entering the eye. Sunglasses that are polarized are a bonus. Remember, as discussed in previous issues, ultraviolet radiation promotes cataract formation and macular degeneration.

### 4. USE ELECTRONIC DEVICES CORRECTLY

Placing your computer screen at an ideal viewing angle of roughly 10 to 20 degrees below the eye level is important. Placing it too high can lead to dry irritated eyes as it forces you to concentrate and invariably blink less number of times per minute. Remember to practise the 20-20-20 rule of taking a break every 20 minutes, by looking away into the distance of 20m for at least 20 seconds.



### 5. EYE CHECK

If you are 40 years and above, you should get your eyes checked once a year. Getting the eyes checked for your glasses prescription is not enough. It should be part of your annual medical examination and blood testing. It is recommended that all adults between 18 to 40 years get their eyes checked every 3 years, those 40 to 50 years should get an eye check every two years and those above 50 years should get an eye check annually.

For more information, please call Gill Eye Specialist Centre, Hospital Fatimah **05-5455582** or email [gilleyecentre@dr.com](mailto:gilleyecentre@dr.com)



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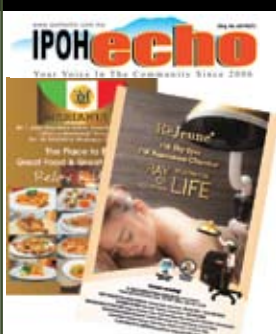
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# Are You a Double-dipper?

You are at a party and your hosts are serving crudites and dips as well as crisps and hummus. Someone dips his carrot into the salsa and takes a bite of the vegetable, before he dips the rest of the vegetable, into the dip.

You recoil in horror when he double-dips. You think that the man might as well have used his tongue to taste the dip, like licking ice-cream. Others have compared double-dipping to putting one's own mouth into the dip.

Imagine another scenario. You are seated for dinner with a group of people. You host sees that your plate is almost empty, and reaches over, chooses a piece of meat from the communal dishes in the centre of the table, and puts it onto your plate. He thinks he has done you a favour, but inside, you feel sick.

Others see that you could do with more food, so they use their own spoon to serve some fish, vegetables and other choice morsels onto your plate. Instead of feeling happy that your fellow diners are attentive to your needs, inwardly, you suppress the urge to throw up.

Although you know some of the guests, it does not excuse the fact that they broke etiquette. They should not have used their own spoons to put food on your plate.

This action is called double-dipping and some of you may think there is nothing wrong with this.

What would be your reaction if someone were to double-dip at dinner? Someone I know has no qualms about scolding the double-dipper. He insists that a serving spoon is used.

If the double-dipper persists, the person will throw the dish straight into the bin, to the consternation of his wife. He tells her that he would rather waste a bit of food, than allow others to be contaminated. He says that it is better to be safe, than contract a contagious disease.

You may think that the person who is double-dipping is just being cheeky, or has not seen the serving spoon.

The double-dipper may think there is nothing wrong in double-dipping, but there is scientific evidence to prove that this act is both harmful and dangerous.

The Sunday Times reported that the editor of the Harvard University's Healthbeat journal, Dr Robert Shmerling, wrote about a study, in the Journal of Food Safety, which showed that the amount of bacteria in dips, increased if someone had double-dipped.

Even the process of dipping into a bag of popcorn with your saliva contaminated fingers will introduce and increase the amount of bacteria in the packet of popcorn. A paper in Food and Nutrition Sciences reported that saliva contained 1 million bacteria per millilitre.

So, do you double-dip? Do you use your own spoon to dish food onto a friend, or family member's plate, instead of using a serving spoon?

Can germs from your mouth be transferred to the food on the dish? Or, from a crisp into a dip?

Does the person who double-dips lack table manners? Will he contaminate food that is to be shared at the table?

So what happens when you use your own spoon to transfer food to another person's plate?

When you eat food from a spoon, some of your bacteria is transferred from your mouth to the spoon. When you use the same spoon to dish out more food, from the communal plate, the bacteria from your spoon, is transferred to the food. When someone else eats the food from that communal dish, he will ingest your bacteria, which was left behind on the food.

A health worker said "I frequently work with HIV/AIDS people, and I am careful that they do not double-dip when having communal food. It is not just HIV/AIDS you have be careful of, but there are other diseases like Hepatitis which are just as dangerous. People just do not think about the health implications."

Another person said, "People may think they are clean, but who is to know? When seated at a table with strangers, or people I do not know too well, I would rather people observed proper etiquette."

"Would you like it if a doctor or dentist did not



by Mariam Mokhtar

properly sterilise his equipment, and used it on you, after he had examined a HIV/AIDS person, someone with Hepatitis or someone with tuberculosis or even flu?

"I do not double-dip and I warn my guests at dinner, not to double-dip. People are very careless these days, but you could spread many diseases, from a simple act with a contaminated spoon."

Double-dippers show arrogance and lack of consideration for others. Double-dipping is not a part of Malaysian culture. The Chinese have their *gongkuai* (serving chopsticks), the *putongkuai* (personal chopsticks) and their serving spoons. The Malays and Indians use serving spoons.

Food for thought for the double-dippers!

## CHILD HEALTH

Dr Shan Narayanan

Consultant General Paediatrician, Hospital Fatimah

### Genetics

Genetics is interesting and puzzling. In this article we continue to look at the various terminologies:



Diagram 1

#### KARYOTYPE, AUTOSOME, SEX CHROMOSOMES

Our body is made up of numerous cells with many different cell types like muscle, kidney, skin, etc. Each cell contains 46 chromosomes. Each chromosome can be identified by its relative size and location of the centromere, a constriction in the chromosome.

The chromosomes come in pairs. The 46 chromosomes, make up 23 pairs. In each pair one chromosome comes from the father and the other from the mother.

The arrangement of chromosome in one cell according to its size is called Karyotype. This is created by photography.

The first 22 pairs (that is, Nos. 1 to 22) of chromosomes are called 'autosomes'. They decide our appearance and instruct cells to carry out the bodily functions.

The last pair, the 23rd is called the 'sex chromosomes'.

A part of it decides the sex of the individual and the rest carries other information. Males have one X chromosome and one Y chromosome. Females have two X chromosomes.

#### ALLELES AND LOCUS

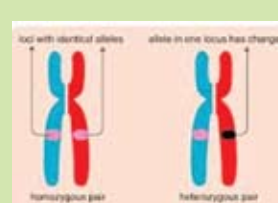


Diagram 2

From the previous article we know that a gene is a stretch of DNA in the chromosome. As chromosomes are in a pair, genes are also in pairs (except in the sex chromosome). The gene pairs are a set of instructions that tell the cell how to make a specific product called protein.

Each gene may have different forms. Alleles are the different form of the same gene. An individual has two alleles of a gene (as genes are in pairs).

An individual may be homozygous or heterozygous for a gene. A homozygous individual has two identical allele for the gene. A heterozygous individual has two different allele for the gene.

Locus is the position of the gene in the chromosome. Alleles and locus are illustrated in the diagram above (Diagram 2).

#### GENOTYPE & PHENOTYPE

At a specific locus there is an allele in each of the two chromosomes. In the above diagram the first pair of chromosome has identical allele at a specific locus (homozygous). The second pair of chromosome have different alleles at a specific locus (heterozygous).

The two allele together are called genotype. As gene determines our traits, there are different genotypes for different traits. The traits being physical, behavioural and predisposition to medical condition.

The observable traits such as height, colour of eyes, blood group, severity of inherited medical condition, temperament, etc., are called phenotype.

#### An example:

For our blood group there are three alleles, namely A, B and O.

Genotype	Phenotype
A/A, A/O	Group A
B/B, B/O	Group B
O/O	Group O
A/B	Group AB

This explains why a couple, one with blood group A (genotype : A/O) and the other with blood group B (genotype B/O) can have a child with blood group O (Genotype O/O).

The next article will be about patterns of Inheritance: Autosomal dominant, Autosomal recessive and X-linked.

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**ON IPOH  
FOOD**



By **SeeFoon Chan-Koppen**  
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Pics by Vivien Lian



## SeeFoon Ventures into Old Town

Ipoh is now HOT. I am not referring to the weather. Thanks to Lonely Planet's accolade placing it as 6th best place *in the world* to visit in 2016 and the efforts made by Perak Tourism in this year's Visit Perak Year 2017, Ipoh is being "re-discovered" as "THE" place to visit, explore and eat.

Today, Ipoh's old town has been transformed. The plethora of cafes, boutique hotels and restaurants abound, side by side with the 'Lo Chiew Pai' coffee shops and up market restaurants. Which makes me avoid Old Town on weekends...packed with hordes of tourists, all agog with what to buy, where to go, what to see and where to eat.

Wonderful for the proprietors I say but I prefer the relative quiet of a weekday to explore and enjoy Old Town and to discover some of the new places that have sprung up. One of these is **Belfield Road**.

Opened since 2016, Belfield Road is the third of **Kenneth Lee's** Food and Beverage ventures in Ipoh. Having successfully operated **Patisserie Boutique** across the road and **Milk Cow** next door, Kenneth admits to Belfield Road being an opportunity to cater to pork lovers.

Here the menu is hearty, from all-day brunch to appetizing appetizers; hunks of meat, be it lamb, pork, chicken or fish and voluptuous desserts served in irresistible ways that tempt even a non-dessert eater like me.

**1980s Benedict**, with back bacon, homemade hollandaise on English muffin was a treat reminiscent of the good ole' days when one threw caution to the wind, and weight was never an issue – **RM19**. The same goes for their signature **Belfield Big B'fast**, an over-the-top offering consisting of scrambled egg, streaky bacon, back bacon, Belfield sausage (imported pork banger) baked beans, sauteed mushrooms, coconut croissant, chips and lavender honey creme brulee. Now if that isn't a mouthful of a description, try eating it! I would safely say that this is a portion meant for two, if you have an average appetite like me. Very tasty though, the combination of sweet melding well with the savoury – **RM30**. For those looking for a lighter bite, I'd recommend the signature **Smashing Avocado**, honey glazed bacon on a bed of mashed avocado and feta cheese served on a sourdough toast and topped with a poached egg – **RM19**.

One appetizer that caught my eye was the **Burgundy Escargot**, another of their signature dishes which I have not seen on any other menu in Ipoh. Escargot, or snails, are a real delicacy and the ones served at Belfield Road are as delicious as any I've eaten especially in France where they are popular. These are also prepared in the French fashion, with herb garlic butter, a touch of cream and blue cheese and served with herby, crusty breadsticks – **RM18**.

The **'Sheep In The House'**, a 270g NZ lamb steak, marinated overnight in the Belfield signature rub, charred on the grill and served with mint sauce, Thai salad and fries was fragrant and juicily tender, grilled medium rare (you can choose) – **RM65**.

The 200g **Iberico Pork Steak** pan-seared and fork-tender, was served with a curried pumpkin mash (yumilicious), a soya reduction and Thai mango salad. The curation, with the soya reduction which accentuated the already umami flavour of this Spanish pork combined with the curried pumpkin mash offset by the tartness of the Thai mango salad was perfect – **RM58**.

The **Paulaner Pork Rib**, a sharing for three to four people was way over the top for our small group but we soldiered on. A whole rib of pork, marinated overnight in **Paulaner wheat beer** and spices, grilled and basted with Belfield's special smoke-infused sparkling wine sauce arrived fall-off-the-bone-tender and it was such a pity we couldn't do justice to this delectable hunk of grilled goodness – **RM77**.

And then it was dessert time! Thank goodness Kenneth only ordered one for us and this was not only a sweet mouthful but a spectacle in itself. A chocolate brownie topped with one scoop of gelato, it arrived on a sizzling pan and a shot of peanut butter cream was poured in. The resultant sizzle and smoke created when cream hit pan resulted in an indescribable gooey crust at the bottom of the pan which we all tucked into with gusto. Unforgettable.



**Belfield Road**

No. 3 Jalan Panglima, 30000 Ipoh.

Tel: 017 558 8897

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## Can Our Public Hospitals Cope? . . . continued from page 2

He suggested other ways also, such as build a similar hospital in another place nearby or detach certain departments of HRPB to other areas and allot them different buildings.

"For example, maternity and paediatrics hospitals can be built together in Meru. This will reduce the congestion," he said.

Even the late Sultan of Perak, Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah had suggested to the Health Minister to buy an abandoned building in Ipoh and turn it into an annex.

"Had it gotten through, we'll not be facing this problem today," he reasoned.

Commenting on the parking issue at HRPB, Dr Ramanathan said it is unfair for the hospital to not provide sufficient parking. "It's true that you should not block the road, but there's no parking at all. So, it boils down to proper planning.

"Many years ago, KL Hospital and HRPB parking lots were discussed in parliament. It was such a major issue but it's still an issue in Ipoh. Over in KL, they've built a multi-level parking lot," he said, adding that there were many businessmen who wanted to put up a private multi-storey parking lot for HRPB but were rejected.

He said the establishment of the Ambulatory Care Centre (day-care centre) was not only premature but without the advantage of hindsight. It does not have a parking lot.

"They could have reserved a few floors in the building for parking purposes. When I suggested this to one of the directors, the answer I got was that parking was not the hospital's problem. It's unfortunate that we have such people. Looks like consultants are more concerned about patients than the directors," he posited.

The provision of a bus shuttle service is admirable but it is a waste since not many people use it, as most are unaware of its existence. "Perhaps, it's not user-friendly. The service, I feel, is not properly managed and scrutinised," he said.

Dr Ramanathan added that the new huge building which is being built within the hospital will provide two floors of parking to the visitors.

"The new building which is being built will cater for the three fields of Cardiology, Maternity and Paediatrics.

"Initially, it was to be built with four floors of parking but I hear it has been reduced to two floors," he said.

On the delay in waiting time he has this to say, "One reason, I think, is the general economic situation. More Malaysians are now resorting to general hospitals for their medical needs. Another reason is the preponderance of junior doctors who are unable to make decisions for serious illness, conditions and injuries. We have many junior doctors but insufficient senior doctors.

"Most of the senior doctors have left to operate their own clinics or work as locums. Allowing doctors to work as locums is good, as it allows them to earn an extra income. However, there must be a definitive long-term plan in place to retain these experienced doctors," he said.

Another reason for the delay in waiting time is insufficient space and facilities in emergency wards. "I'd prefer a bedside X-ray so patients need not move about. These unnecessary movements delay treatments. The moment they're in the emergency department, they don't have to move. That's how it should be. In the red zone, the hospital should have at least four to six beds equipped with all the required facilities including bedside X-rays. By doing so, standards of the emergency department will improve," he suggested.

He voiced that the emergency department should have a drive-in roadway, and it should be isolated to avoid crowding. This is not so at HRPB.

Dr Ramanathan suggested that those in positions of authority should get their heads together and think rationally how to improve services on the whole.

"At the moment this is not happening. Nobody seems to care about the general health of the public. It's only the professionals, the doctors, paramedics and the nurses who are concerned for the wellbeing of the *rakyat*. And this is not good," he deplored.



New building being built on site

## Arts and Culture

# Perakeans @ Nando's Art Initiative



Winners of digital art category



Winners of fine art category

Hitting the 10-year milestone, the Nando's Art Initiative has become a recognised platform for the Malaysian young and upcoming artists to launch their art careers.

"We at Nando's believe that these creative individuals not only need a platform to showcase their skills and talents, but they also need support and guidance to progress to the next step," Mac Chung Lynn, the group chief executive officer of Nando's Chickenland Malaysia stated.

The art competition which started in 2008, was aimed at uncovering talented youth in the art industry. In the past 10 years, Nando's has showcased more than 500 art pieces and has helped over 400 new artists exhibit their original works.

Running on the open theme of 'Your Art, Your Story', this year saw the initiative receiving a total of 578 entries from 46 participating universities and colleges. The exhibition was held from September 12 to 22 in Publika, Kuala Lumpur during which a silent auction was held, where bidding forms for the exhibits were made available to the public on site. Fifty per cent of the silent auction amount would go to the selected charity organisation or the college/university of the grand prize winner.

The two categories competed are fine art and digital art. For fine art, medium is open and can include acrylics, oil painting, silkscreen, collage, ink, mixed media, wood, canvas, metal, cloth and others. Meanwhile, digital art must be digitally produced which can include digital painting, vector drawings, 3D graphics and others.

In subsequent issues, Ipoh Echo will be featuring in-depth interviews with Perakean artists whose work had won or been shortlisted in the initiative.

Thus stay tuned!

Mei Kuan



Display in Publika



## Tourism

# Mrs Malaysia Tourism Queen Promoting Tourism in Ipoh

Twenty-two Mrs Malaysia Tourism Queen 2017 finalists, including a 75-year-old grandmother made heads turn during a fun, easy and adventurous tour in the old town of Ipoh.

The road trip saw the beauties, who were all married women between the ages of 27 and 75 on the two-day visit on October 23rd & 24th 2017.

Aimed at promoting tourism, culture and friendship, Pageant Director of Mrs Tourism Queen International 2017, Jenet Foo said that it was thrilling to see the presence of 75-year-old Ng Hong Lian, from Sandakan in Sabah, together with the married women and several single mothers on this trip.

"Madam Ng made it a point to fly from Sabah for the tour with the rest of the finalists. At 75, she is still active at work, looking after the plantation business left by her late husband. Her participation in this pageant is an empowering call for all of us to bravely pursue our dreams no matter how old we may be. Her sheer grace and passion aptly matched up to the pageant's theme of 'Crowning the Strength in You.' We are truly happy to have her."

Jenet noted that the finalists visited many exciting places in Ipoh for photoshoots and filming while promoting the Malaysian hospitality – in line with Malaysia's target of achieving 31.8 million visitors in 2017 under the theme 'Malaysia Truly Asia' and the Visit Perak Year 2017.

"They all had an unforgettable trip, mesmerised by the beautiful heritage attractions and delectable food in Ipoh," said Jenet, who is also Mrs Malaysia World 2015 Champion, ERM Beauty Ambassador 2017 and Founder of Sentinel Pageant Sdn Bhd, the organiser of Mrs Tourism Queen International.

On the first day of the tour, the finalists checked out the Banjaran Hotsprings Retreat and Lost World of Tambun theme park upon arriving in Tambun.

On the second day, they donned the elegant Baju Kebaya for photos and video filming around the old town areas, such as the famous Concubine Lane, Hale Street and The Happy 8 Café. The beauties also tried their hands at making the local delicacy 'kayang kok' (Kaya puff) at the famous Sin Weng Fai Peanut Candy Shop.

The grand finale of Mrs Malaysia Tourism Queen 2017 will be held at the Shangri-La Hotel in Kuala Lumpur on November 24, 2017.

For more information: Vanessa (012 399 1138); Jenet (012 657 7689).



## Wellness

By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

### Dr. Growth Factor, now Dr. "Stem Cell"

In a Nov. 2010 article which I wrote about Dr. Vishvanathan, Consultant Orthopaedic, Trauma & Sports Surgeon at KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital, I called him the 'man of the hour' then and named him "Dr. Growth Factor" an epithet as he was and still is popularly called by his patients.

In the meantime, many new developments have occurred in the medical world and Dr. Vishvanathan has not been resting on his laurels. Where he was injecting growth factors then (concentrated from centrifuging patients' own blood) into knees, shoulders, hips, and other injured areas, he has now incorporated all the latest discoveries and learnings from stem cell research into his practice and advises patients on its uses and limitations. His primary concern however, is to dispel misconceptions about stem cells held by the public.

After having administered the growth factor injections (some repeatedly) to more than **twelve thousand (12,000)** patients since 2007 when he first trained in this technique in Spain, under the auspices of The European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR) which represents the patient, health professional and scientific societies of rheumatology of all the European nations, Dr. Vishva can now predict how well these injections work for different stages of degenerative joint diseases. Classifying them into four stages, his experience shows that in Stage 1 and 2 arthritis, there is an 80% chance of success, Stage 2-3, 50-60% Stage 3-4, 30%, Stage 4 which is very advanced has at most a 20% chance of success. Growth factors will only work on joints which are still in alignment, beyond which surgery is the only option.

Recent advances in stem cell research however has now upped the ante on **regeneration** of joints and joint disease. Regeneration is now the buzzword on the medical front with Stem cells leading the way as the panacea for all aging and degenerative diseases. Dr. Vishva however is the **voice of caution**, and proceeded to give me a mini lecture on the current stage of stem cell research and what is **possible, permissible** and even **plausible**.

"Stem Cells are not the panacea for all ills as some believe. Yes some headway has been made in the field as I discovered when I was in Beijing on a study tour. But it's important for me to dispel the myth that stem cells will give you back the body of a 20 year old. Stem Cell therapy is now available in Malaysia but there is no guarantee of success. The results which I have found promising, will vary from person to person. It is also very important to understand the different types of stem cells that are being used with its own set of consequences," he stressed.

There are different types of stem cells being researched currently, some which carry ethical issues like **embryonic stem cells** and are forbidden in most countries. **Cord blood cells** coming from the umbilical cords of newborns, can be stored for future health issues for the child and its family members.

The area of most interest in regenerative medicine lies in adult stem cells in what is known as **Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells** or IPS for short. These can be harvested from the patient's skin, adipose tissue (fat) or bone marrow where stem cells are abundant.

When harvested from **bone marrow**, these stem cells can be used immediately and injected fresh into the site of injury. When **skin or adipose tissue** is used, a more complicated process is involved, where (as in skin) a one cm square of skin is removed from the back of the patient's ear, sent to the lab where it is subjected to various chemical processes and stem cells are extracted and grown. This is a very accurate process where the exact number of stem cells can be measured and that one skin sample can be kept infinitely to generate any number of future stem cells. The stem cells harvested are then injected back into the patient.

The only drawback to this process is the time involved (takes about 3 months) and the costs which varies between RM10-15,000) and the specimens have to be sent to Kuala Lumpur. Nevertheless, for the well to-do, it is ironic that groups of them have been known to come from Kuala Lumpur to have this done as it is still cheaper in Ipoh!

"And what about the age of the patient? The older the less stem cells surely?" I asked.

"That is true", answered Dr. Vishva, "it just takes longer to cultivate enough of the stem cells. But it is do-able", he emphasised.

"There are also banks of **allogenic stem cells** available which are stem cells donated by healthy individuals which are available to the public, this being a topic to be discussed with your private physician", he offered.



**Dr. T. Vishvanathan**  
Consultant  
Orthopaedic, Trauma  
& Sport Surgeon  
MBBS (Gwalior), M.  
MED. Ortho (USM)  
Fellowship in  
Arthroscopic Surgery,  
Seoul Korea.  
Fellowship in Foot and  
Ankle Surgery, Seoul,  
Korea.  
Fellowship in Shoulder  
Surgery, Seoul, Korea.  
Fellowship in Soccer  
Medicine, Federacion  
Catalana De Futbol,  
Barcelona, Spain.

**Dr. Vishvanathan's clinic:**

Suite 2-25, KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital,  
26, Jalan Raja Dihilir, 30350 Ipoh. Tel: 05 240 8777 Ext. 8508/8509  
Email : tvishna@ish.kpjhealth.com.my

## Facebook Comments

Named as the cleanest city in Malaysia, what do you think?



Ipoh Echo | Why Can't We Learn from Our ASEAN Neighbours?

By A. Jeyaraj There have been a number of cases of pedestrians being knocked down at pedestrian crossings. Once it happens there is a hue and cry and soon...  
ipohecho.com.my

**Chong Mei:** Learn from Singapore. Heavy fines. Not only Tesco Ipoh Garden has flooding toilets but Ipoh Parade is much worse – zero toilet seat covers and toilet tissue not even provided. Ipoh is far from being the cleanest city. Just how are these polls done? Random 10 streets?

**David Swami:** Seriously, cleanest city? What are you guys smoking?

**Norfolk Park:** Singapore is far ahead.

**Leong Kam Seng:** Must be kidding...just back from dinner in Jaya Grocer Ipoh Parade. The toilet outside is disgusting. Broken pipe and basin. Floor was smelly....

Ipoh and Malaysia still lagging behind cleanliness. Our MB doing his rounds in garbage truck really tickles us all.....

**Paul Wood:** Still a fab place...

### FAMILY SAFETY WORKSHOP

(Part 2)

In conjunction with the National Family month of November

Conducted By



Prevent Crime Now

Organised By



Family Wellness Club

### Breakaway - Practical Crime Prevention

\* An experience which will help keep yourself safe from becoming a victim of crime  
\* Equips you with the knowledge to protect yourself, with **NO Punching or Kicking**

Come in your Daily Attire

Topics:  
Snatch Theft  
Carjacking  
Smash and Grab  
Home Break-ins  
Personal belongings  
Bank Scams  
and many more Current Crime Techniques



Date: 25th November 2017

Day: Saturday

Time: 2.00pm - 5.30pm

Venue: The Andersonian Club Hall, Jalan Hospital, Ipoh.

Open to All aged 18 years and above.

Registration: Free (for Family Wellness Club Members) and RM 20 (for others)

Limited places. First come, First serve. Early Registration is advised

Call or send SMS to 019-229 6190 (Ms. Samanthi) to register.





## Community

# Memory Walk 2017

The Dementia Society Perak (TDSP) has been organising the Memory Walk since 2013 to create awareness among the public on this debilitating illness. Even though organised on a much smaller scale this year, TDSP nevertheless achieved the aim of spreading greater awareness among the general public. This annual event was organised in conjunction with World Alzheimer's Day which falls around the third week of September every year.

This year, the Memory Walk was held at Sultan Abdul Aziz Recreation Park (Polo Ground). As it was a Sunday, many families came in full support of the event. The Polo Ground was bustling with activity with the arrival of registered participants from 6am onwards. The first participant arrived as early as 5am all the way from Batu Gajah on his bicycle! Later we learned that he is a regular since the beginning of Memory Walk.

The 'warming up' aerobic session before the walk prepared the crowd for the start of the event which was launched by the Gopeng MCA Division Chief Datuk Albert Chang, who represented the State Executive Councillor Datuk Dr Mah Hang Soon. Dr Mah contributed RM3000 to TDSP on that day.

Construction work has already started on a new double-storey Dementia Day Care, costing RM2.8 million, on a half acre land along Jalan Lang, Off Jalan Padang Tembak. The new centre will be named 'BebeLEC Villa' after the donors Dr and Mrs Bebe Lim Eng Cheang.

The current Dementia Daycare, located at Jalan Foo Choong Nyit, can only accommodate about 25 clients. 'BebeLEC Villa' expected to be ready by end of 2018, has the capacity to accommodate twice the number of clients. Plans are underway for



a residential block adjacent to 'BebeLE Villa' to complement the Dementia Day Care Centre.

Ipoh is the fourth largest city in Malaysia with the highest number of people over 65 years, with Penang being the second. According to data released by the United Nations, about 123,000 Malaysians are living with dementia and it is expected to double by 2030. The time has come for us to act now and fast! We cannot afford to be indifferent. We have no time to wait or waste.

**Sr Ramayee Sinnasamy**



## Bandar Tasik Amanjaya a Failure?

Amanah Perak sought answers from Menteri Besar Incorporated (MB Inc) regarding the Bandar Tasik Amanjaya project which, to date, has yet to begin. The proposed housing project is located at Tronoh.

According to party chairman, Asmuni Awi, during his recent visit, there were no building structures, show houses or a sales office at the site although the project was launched by Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir in 2014.

He felt that it was highly likely the project had failed or discontinued. The only visible activity was lorries, going in and out, carrying sand.

"I welcomed such a project as it makes an impact on the state's development. It too helps solve the people's housing woes.

"What has come of the project? It was announced that the first phase would be completed in 2016 and the second phase in 2017," he told reporters during a media conference at Wisma Amanah Perak, Ipoh on Wednesday, October 11.

Present were Secretary of Amanah Perak, Salman Salleh; Political Secretary to Chairman of Amanah Perak, Safarizal Saleh and Amanah Perak Youth Chief, Hasnul Zulkarnain.

"It looks like the only function of MB Inc is sand and minerals mining while its other projects have yet to take off," Asumi chided.

MB Inc did not respond when contacted.

**Rosli Mansor**

## Do Caves and Cement Mix?



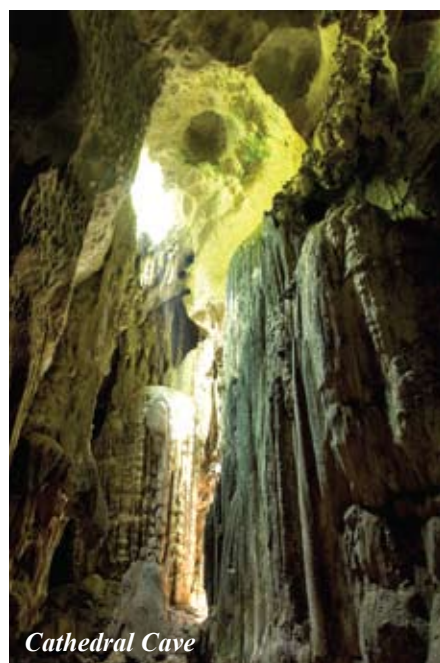
Did you know that there are over 60 quarries in Perak alone? This is a staggering figure and is indicative of the extent of the local quarrying business.

As a state that takes pride in its heritage, colonial architecture and food, we have strayed from the single-most important symbol that makes Ipoh special – its limestone hills and caves that constitute a major portion of the quintessential Kinta Valley.

Lafarge Cement (Kanthan), a plant that produces cement, aggregates and ready-mix concretes, has come under scrutiny over the years for its quarrying activities that may threaten the biodiversity of a nearby cave known locally as Gua Kanthan or the "Cathedral Cave" for its immense size.

The cave is home to an endemic trapdoor spider named *Liphistius kanthan* which is listed as "endangered" and it is on the International Union for Conservation (IUCN) Red List. There is a lingering fear, among environmentalists, that mining activities by Lafarge may impact the survivability of spiders.

In light of this, Ipoh Echo and other media teams were given the opportunity to participate in the first ever media visit to the Lafarge Kanthan cement plant and the Kanthan Cave on Saturday, October 14. The visit was organised by Rantau PR on behalf of Lafarge. It was aimed at exposing sustainability measures taken by Lafarge to protect the flora and fauna of the cave and its surrounding areas, allaying fears that the company plans to mine the cave.



A safety briefing by Lafarge officials set the ball rolling before journeying into the cave. The interior of the cave seems almost unscathed by human activity except for some railings, ladders and ropes put in place by past visitors. Natural features include a 109m-high ceiling and a stream. Incidentally, the cave is 270m long.

Following the treacherous hike to-and-from the cave was a short ride back to the plant, where lunch was served and a tour was in order. Environmental concerns, other than those regarding the biodiversity, were deliberated.

"Our plant uses 35 per cent alternative fuel derived from wastage, 55 per cent of petroleum coke and the balance from coal," said M. Bala Sundram (pic left), the plant's Production Manager. "This makes us more sustainable in our production".

When prompted with a question on their emission levels, he responded, "We always try to keep it as low as possible. In fact, our emission levels are well below the DoE

standard of 50 as ours is between 30 and 40."

Some of the future plans for Kanthan Hill will include conservation efforts where sensitive species are found, establishing a nursery for native species of the area with the objective of rehabilitating the quarry with these local species that not only includes the trapdoor spider, but also the bent-toed geckos, cave crickets and cave millipedes, amongst others.

The importance of the cave's biodiversity has led to collaborations between Lafarge and several other organisations, governmental departments and universities, namely University of Malaya, Tropical Rainforest Conservation and Research Centre, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Flora Fauna International, Department of Minerals and Geoscience Malaysia and Department of Environment Malaysia.

The question remains: will this preserve our biodiversity and satisfy the critics? Is enough being done?

**Jack Foo**



## Nosh News with SeeFoon

Pics by Vivien Lian

# Bamboo Biryani

What sets one **Biryani** apart from another? For someone like me who lives to eat, it's all governed by my taste buds, having been honed from young to detect nuances in food, often lost on untrained palates. So when a superlative Biryani comes my way, the taste memory lingers, nudging, in fact prodding, me to relive the experience.

Which was what happened when I tasted my first **Bamboo Biryani at Kannaa's**, a new Banana Leaf Restaurant very close to Medan Kidd bus station, barely six months old. The experience and the taste of this Biryani was so special that I had to gather some friends to share this gastronomic adventure with me within the space of a week. That's how good it is.

So what am I raving about? "The original idea came from India as did the chef," said Shan the proprietor who admits to this being his first foray into the F&B business. "He mixes the spices and cooks the biryani to about 80% done-ness, after which they are packed into big bamboo segments and steamed till the rice is fully cooked," he added.

The presentation is where the fun begins. Each bamboo segment is brought to your table and the rice is gently tapped onto the waiting banana leaf. As my friends and I waited in the air-conditioned section (it is a huge place), a cacophony of this tap, tap, tap sound was all around us, the aromas wafting from surrounding tables intensifying our hunger and wondering when our turn was next.



Finally it came, both **Mutton and Chicken Biryani** which we shared. Like all banana leaf restaurants, the vegetables come free and you can help yourself to as much as you can eat.

The biryani rice was beautifully spiced, peppery, redolent with cardamom, cinnamon and other spices. There was the faintest hint of pandan fragrance which they add as a cover while steaming. Usually I eat my biryani soaked with gravy but this was so tasty and fragrant, it seemed a shame to even add the fish or chicken gravy, which you can ask for.

Available only on Wednesdays (mutton, RM15, chicken RM12, and vegetarian RM10 biriyani only) Saturdays and Sundays, (with additional prawn RM15 and fish biriyani RM15) From noon till 5pm only on these days.

During Biryani days as well as other days, they have chicken, mutton and fish dishes and curries as well as the usual accoutrements popular in banana leaf restaurants. All tasty and worth sampling. But I come back for the Bamboo Biryani anytime.

### Kannaa's Banana Leaf Restaurant

17 Jalan Tun Abdul Razak, 30100 Ipoh.

012 222 4445

Business hours: 6.30am-9.30pm daily. Closed two days a month (call to check).

## Foods Project

By Ili Aqilah

Located at Sunway City, Foods Project has been operating since 2012 where they serve a mixed of both Western and Asian cuisines.

Foods Project's manager, Nabihah Mahayuddin, 23, welcomed all customers to try all their signature menus including Foods Project Fried Rice that comes with sausages, fries, wedges, popcorn chicken and sunny-side egg, good at RM12.

According to Nabihah, to cater the needs of all their visitors, she has been working hard with her team to create the perfect menu.

"Some of our customers have special diet restrictions. For example, there are customers who don't take beef but they want to have our Carbonara Pasta as we make the sauce from scratch. So, we provide some options for them to either have Spaghetti Chicken Carbonara or with Seafood. We also have beef or chicken options for Spaghetti Bolognese and some customers also enjoy our Tomyam Spaghetti. All priced at RM13 per plate," said Nabihah.

Over the past four years, Nabihah and her team has been experimenting with new ideas and recipes to satisfy their customers, "We had a fun time creating our chicken chop. Guests can choose to have it grilled or fried and served with either black pepper or mushroom that is made fresh in the kitchen. It took us nearly two years to create the perfect recipe and we are still experimenting for more," added Nabihah.



She also suggested to customers to try their Buttermilk Chicken that comes with White Rice (RM7.90), Crazy FP Burger – fried chicken and beef patty served in one burger (RM14.90), Meatball with Blackpepper Sauce, fries and fruit jam (RM8/RM12) and more. Foods Project also have lengthy list of drinks such as Blackcurrant Soda (RM3.90), Lemongrass Herb Soda (RM3.90) and Three Layer Bandung (RM3.90).

The cafe also accepts reservations for 15 pax and above and opens every day from 5pm till midnight. For bookings please contact 011 2150 5789 or visit their Instagram at [www.instagram.com/foodsproject](http://www.instagram.com/foodsproject) or Twitter at [www.twitter.com/foodsproject](http://www.twitter.com/foodsproject) or Facebook at [www.facebook.com/foodsproject](http://www.facebook.com/foodsproject). Foods Project is located at: 1 Jalan SCI 1/7, Sunway City Ipoh, 31150 Ipoh.



# One Million Stars to End Violence!

The “One Million Stars to End Violence” is a community-based project led by the Perak Women for Women (PWW) and Soroptimist International Ipoh in conjunction with the 16 Days of Activism against the global pandemic of Gender-based violence; a problem that truly continues to plague the world even until today.

This special initiative, the first of its kind in Malaysia, will be fronted by a display of over a “Million Stars” made up of folded ribbons, recycled magazines and newspapers. The unique spectacle is believed to symbolise a sense of hope, safety and solidarity to those affected by violence in all its many shapes and sizes.

“We’re not just talking about human or gender-based violence,” said Sumathi Sivamany, President of Soroptimist and Vice President of PWW. “Racism, bullying and issues with crimes are also on the list!”

The project will be showcasing a considerable number of stars, contributed by donors, members of public and board members, in the Heritage Gallery at 22 Hale Street on November 25. Interestingly, this day coincides with the “16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence” campaign, an annual event developed by Women’s Global Leadership Institute.

“Making the stars may appear difficult,” remarked Sumathi. “But if you really sit down and fold them, it is something you can be proud of. As long as whoever sits and makes these stars focus on the purpose behind the effort, which is not to accept or tolerate violence in any shape or form, and to bring hope to those who have been violated.”

Making the stars have bonded some families, helped seniors feel useful again, helped hospital patients to take their minds off their illness, and help recycling efforts of papers, ribbons and any other materials which can be used to make stars. “We hope



during the whole journey of making the million stars, people will learn a thing or two about violence, abuse, peace, teamwork, commitment and in general to make the world a better place,” added Sumathi.

However, a million stars is a target that is clearly not a numerically inferior value, and will thus require the joint efforts from the public to reach this target. To achieve the goal, the society is offering gathering sessions where anyone and everyone can come and take part in creating these stars! Furthermore, you can also help out by contributing some ribbons and/or coloured papers, which can be dropped off at the PWW Centre at No. 52 Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah, 31400 Ipoh, Perak.

“To see people weave these stars show that there is hope. I hope we will have a million stars by International Women’s Day in March next year.” said Yip Siew Keen, Co-Founder-Secretary of PWW.

For more information, please contact them at **012 508 2480** or **012 588 2313**. You can also visit their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/1MillionStars/>.

Jack Foo



Pics by Richard Davies

## Is It Just Me or Is It Getting Hot in Here?

Kedai Kopi Kong Heng is a popular kopitiam that serves many of the hawker foods we grew up loving – Sar Hor Fun, Rojak and Popiah to name a few. However, what’s above it might still be a mystery to some.

Sekeping Kong Heng is amongst the many hotels established in the heart of Ipoh by the Sekeping family of retreats. It is truly an impressive accommodation for travellers as it casts them in the scene of busy-bee Ipoh in all its glory – from hawker foods to mural arts. But just like how you can smell the smoke and aroma rising up from the boiling White Coffee from below; one day you just might smell the smoke coming from the back of your room!

So what do you do in response? The obvious answer would be to run to the nearest fire exit. However, when there is no exit to run to, there is no escape!

Several customers of this hotel have come forward to Ipoh Echo for an investigation into the matter of fire safety and regulations that such hotels undertake, and whether they conform to fire safety standards set by the Fire and Rescue Department Malaysia

(FRDM). This includes the initiatives taken up by hotelier(s) to provide clear visual direction to fire exits or, at least, on what to do in such an event.

“Fire safety is a big concern to my family”, reads one of the comments sourced online. “We have to open locks from within the gate through a small opening which I doubt the Fire Safety Department will approve of such a set-up.” He added.

“Given that we’ve recently had a fire tragedy in KL,” reads a letter to Ipoh Echo. “Can someone please let me know whether this hotel conforms to local fire regulations?”

Clearly, as alarming an issue as this is, it only adds to the wound when just below the hotel are industrial-sized gas cylinders that could be the catalyst to a very big problem – one that could end with disastrous consequences.

The question at stake; is this building approved under the Fire Safety Act?

(See letter on page 15)

Jack Foo



## Community

# The Gotong Royong Spirit

**M**enteri Besar, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir stated that the gotong-royong spirit of the local community is a catalyst to the people's welfare. The local community in question refers to the villagers and residents of housing estates.

According to him, the locals are a vital social structure which strengthens the nation and optimises efforts by the government for the people.

He was speaking during the state-level launching ceremony of National Blue Ocean Strategy 7 – My Beautiful Neighbourhood and a gotong royong at Masjid Al-Ansar, Meru Raya on Saturday, October 14.

Along with Mayor Dato' Zamri bin Man and members of Ipoh City Council, he spent over 30 minutes cleaning the area around the mosque, including drains of the nearby housing estate.

Present were Dato' Rusnah Kassim, Executive Councillor for Women's Development, Family, Community Welfare, Housing and Local Government and Dato' Shahrul Zaman Yahya, Executive Councillor for Human Resource, Youth and Sports.

The Nbos MyBN Gotong Royong 2017 programme is expected to benefit the 49,000 residents at the parliamentary constituency. This is a way to improve the wellbeing of the people.

Luqman Hakim



## LIFE Campaign by DOSH

**D**epartment of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) together with OTIS Elevator Company organised a special campaign on the safety of using lifts and escalators (LIFE) at Angsana Mall on October 15.

DOSH took the much needed initiative where they urged the public to always be careful while using lifts and escalators, especially when there are kids. The programme was launched by the deputy chairman for state Human Resources, Youth and Sports, Azenil Ibrahim.

"We hope the public won't do any vandalism towards all the facilities such as removing the buttons on the lifts and more. Everyone needs to take care of all public facilities like they are their own. Parents also need to educate their children about lifts and escalators," added Azenil.

With the numerous cases reported on the faults and dysfunction of these facilities, Azenil also added that all landowners must make sure they have gotten the official CF (Certificate of Fitness) given by DOSH before allowing public access.

According to recent statistics, over 61,275 units of lifts and 12,312 units of escalators are registered with DOSH. Of these, 1383 lifts and 408 escalators are registered in Perak.

Together with Azenil were the director of DOSH Perak, Ir Mohd Hatta Zakaria and Head of Operation of Angsana Mall, Bahrin Md Saman, attended the event.

Luqman Hakim

## WEVents Comes to Ipoh

**W**EVents, a women-only social gathering, held its first event in Ipoh in conjunction with THE FACE SHOP on Saturday, October 14 at Mustard Sandwich House. Seats were snapped up weeks before the event took place as attendance fee of just RM5 per guest was waived for early bird registrations.

The interactive workshop kicked off with an ice-breaking session amidst tempting food. Running on the theme 'My Face, My Look', the beauty masterclass provided the ladies with a demonstration from the specialist followed by a hands-on experience for a 20-minute makeover.

Participants were in for a treat as they walked away with THE FACE SHOP products as door gifts and lucky draw prizes. The top five with the best make-up look were rewarded too.

Ipoh-born Jeanisha Wan, the founder of WEVents told Ipoh Echo, "We are definitely keen to have more WEVents activities in Ipoh after this and we hope we can bring the same fun and enjoyment to more working ladies here, as we did in KL."

"And what really keeps me going organising activity after activity is the smile I see on the faces of our working women attendees at the event. That makes it all worthwhile. To know I have given them (working ladies, regardless of their job or titles) a platform to freely be themselves in a social event, with no expectations whatsoever for them to buy anything or behave/dress in a certain way. That they can call WEVents, something they belong to. Like a club of their own," she enthused.

WEVents are non-profit social events organised by a group of working women volunteers in Malaysia since 2010. Their earlier events were held in Kuala Lumpur in collaboration with The Body Shop and Bobbi Brown respectively. The events are held in a casual environment with the objective of allowing women to have an outlet (vent) after office hours, meet new friends and catch up with peers. Operating as a corporate social responsibility towards working women, all sponsorships received by WEVents are in kind and are all channelled back to attendees.

For more updates on upcoming events, swing by their website [www.wevents.com.my](http://www.wevents.com.my) or Facebook page: <https://web.facebook.com/WEVents1/>

Mei Kuan





## Community

## DIDI Spruced up by PORT

People of Remarkable Talent (PORT) together with the Perak State Library Association (PPANK) are working together to build the first mobile bus cafe with library using their mascot DIDI.

“Our aim is to encourage more youngsters to read. Working together with PORT, I am looking forward to seeing the result of this renovation,” said the director of State library, Salbiah Mohamed.

DIDI is the mascot of PPANK’s mobile bus library. There are currently five mobile buses around the state and PORT is in charge of changing one of them into a mobile cafe with library. During the key-giving ceremony, Perak’s State Exco for Tourism, Arts, Culture, Multimedia and Communication Dato’ Nolee Ashilin Mohammed Radzi, who is also one of PORT’s board of directors, was given a video preview of how the bus will look after the renovation.

“We are estimating a total of RM30,000 for the restoration. Recycled metals and other items will be used in the process as well. The estimated completion date is by the end of November as we plan to showcase it for this year’s Pangkor International Poems and Folk Songs Festival (PULARA),” said the head manager of PORT, Zamari Muhyi.

Currently in pink and green, the bus will be black in colour and will be handled by PORT’s merchandise team. After PULARA, the mobile cafe library will be stationed and open for the public at PORT and will also be available for events.

Ili Aqilah



## Cheering Kids from Ipoh Down’s Syndrome Centre

Thirteen kids from the Ipoh Down’s Syndrome Centre together with their teachers and caretakers were brought to the Ipoh Equestrian Centre for a day of fun.

The kids were treated with a special horse-car ride around the stable and a chance to have horse-riding sessions. This was the first time for all the kids and one of their teachers, Christopher A/L L Gabriel, 35, expressed his thanks on behalf of their centre.

“This was the first for us and the kids. It was clear to see how much they are enjoying this and I’m glad that we are invited. Hopefully, we will get more invitations like this because it is quite difficult for these kids to be given opportunities to enjoy themselves like today,” said Christopher.

Seeing how enjoyable the day was, Salwati Hassan, 52, couldn’t help but to see pure joy in her daughter’s eyes.

“My daughter, Aleesya Yusrina turned eight this year and she really enjoyed the day. We’ve been sending her to the centre and she has improved a lot especially in socializing. She is having a blast riding the horse, I would like to express my gratitude towards everyone who organised this event,” said Salwati.

As for Ratna Jeyaratnam, 54, one of the main sponsors of the day, she hoped that more would join her and their group to contribute more to the society.

“Ipoh has been hosting great and big events. I believe it is the right time for everyone to take action and pay back to the community by organising events for the less fortunate. Today’s aim isn’t just about making the kids happy but also to give their family and caretakers a chance to have an enjoyable day as well. We couldn’t have done this without the strong support from the Ipoh Equestrian Centre and hopeful more will participate in the future,” added Ratna.

Ipoh Down’s Syndrome centre is located at **2 Persiaran Bercham 27, Taman Sri Kurau, Bercham, 31400 Ipoh**, tel.: **05 546 8386**, where they have specially trained teachers to teach and guide kids as young as one year up till 12.

Ili Aqilah



## McD Shares Deepavali Joy

It was double the joy as McDonald’s and Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) celebrated Deepavali with residents of Praise Emmanuel Children’s Home and Good Shepherd Family Home on Sunday, October 15.

Held at Good Shepherd Family Home located at Jalan Barrack, Buntong New Village, the festivities began with the lighting of lamps of a kolam (floor drawing made of coloured rice) featuring the golden arches. The games that followed, filled the home with loads of excitement.

Zurina, general manager of McD Gunung Rapat branch said, “We have activities for every celebration. Our objective is to spread cheer to the kids. Together with outlets from Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah and Seri Iskandar, we bring food, drinks, goodie bags and groceries to these underprivileged children.”

Both homes take care of children of single parents or broken families and orphans of all ethnicities.

Jennifer, vice president of Good Shepherd Family Home told Ipoh Echo, “Established 14 years ago, the home needs financial assistance now, as we plan to buy the land next to us to accommodate more children and facilities. Currently, we have 14 kids between the ages of three and 18. Our home requires about RM6000 a month to manage.”

Readers wishing to help this non-profit organisation can call Jennifer at **017 561 1767** for details. Among the items needed (written on the display outside the home) are rice, milk powder, toiletries and school items such as calculators.

Praise Emmanuel Children’s Home was started about 11 years ago. Sella Segar, the home supervisor said, “We need donations to buy basic necessities. A few weeks ago someone gave us an old van. However, it requires repairs and refurbishments. Our 13 kids are between three and 17 years old. The home requires about RM3000 a month to survive.”

Those keen on contributing, please call Sella at **014 340 8968** for details.

Mei Kuan



## One Voice Many Cheers

One Voice Mini was a concert-like event held at Syeun Hotel, Ipoh on Saturday, October 14. It featured a musical band led by Samuel Zane and an insightful talk by a guest speaker. The subject was “GOD of...?”

The concert was preceded with a series of gospel songs such as ‘Planetshakers’ and ‘Hillsong’, popular amongst youths of the local Christian community. The allure of the upbeat tunes was evident, as the crowd seemed to gravitate to the music.

“What’s love to you?” asked Pastor Matthew Dass from Forward City Church Ipoh. “Is it your love for your family, your girlfriend or for God?” A very thought-provoking question, indeed.

When prompted with a question regarding the cultural tolerance of the Ipoh community vis-a-vis One Voice: “From this event, we learnt that Ipoh youths are a representation of a community that embraces culture” said Samuel, the brainchild of the event. “This shows that individuals from different religious backgrounds are open to such Christian events.”

Following this was a blessing session before another round of bass-thumping and guitar-shredding musical fest which capped the evening. It was so invigorating and energetic.

This mini concert, however, was a prelude to a much bigger event by the same team. It is slated for November 10 and 11 at Elim Gospel Hall, Ipoh called ‘One Voice 17 GO’. This event will be held in an evangelical conference setting and several concerts and workshops will be conducted; all for a mere RM10.

For more information, please visit their Facebook page at ‘[One Voice 17 GO](#)’ and/or call Samuel Zane at **016 504 0225**.

Jack Foo





## News

# YSIS Food and Fun Fair

Yayasan Sultan Idris Shah (YSIS) will organise a charity food and fun fair on its eight-acre site at Lorong Bercham 11, Ipoh on Sunday, November 12.

Ten sponsors had bought stacks of coupons to be presented to 20 organisations including orphanages, special needs schools and organisations with disabled people. Hence, the children can have a day of fun at the fair, which will be held from 8am to 2pm.

On Thursday, October 26, YSIS gave letters of undertaking to the 20 organisations concerned. This was done by its Chief Executive Officer, Dato' Dr Ramanathan Ramaiah.

"The coupons will be given to the children on the day of the carnival," said Dr Ramanathan.

The objective of the food and fun fair is to raise money to replace some of the old specialised equipment in use at YSIS.

"The old specialised equipment, used for therapy by those who suffer from stroke, fractures resulting from traffic accidents, speech disorder, brain and sports injuries and autistic patients, will be replaced.

"We hope more people will come forward to donate so those in need will benefit from their generosity," added Dr Ramanathan.

Among the organisations that received the coupons are Rumah Anak-Anak Yatim dan Miskin Anning, Salvation Army Children's Home, The Agape Family Home, JKM-Precious Gift Home, Vision Home, Pusat Jagaan 1Malaysia Perak, Salvation Army Boys, Sekolah Kebangsaan Coronation Park and Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Rokam.

Some of the activities earmarked for the carnival are horse and pony rides, food galore, clown and dance performances, carnival games, face and henna painting and health check-ups.



Readers wanting to buy coupons (RM10 per booklet) can do so by calling Michael Wong 016 537 6783 or Siti 05 548 1905 or get them at the fair itself.

Established in 1982, the centre provides therapy and rehabilitation services for physically-challenged adults and children. It charges a minimal fee of RM30 per session.

Nabilah Hamudin



## Monarchy and the Constitution

The Council of the Justices of the Peace of Perak together with the Perak Academy jointly organised a forum on "The Monarchy and the Constitution" on Saturday, October 14 at Syeun Hotel.

It featured Tan Sri Dr Rais bin Yatim and Professor Datuk Dr Shad Saleem Faruqi as speakers while Dato' Seri Zainal Adzam bin Abd. Ghani moderated.

Present were guest of honour, Toh Muda Dato' Ab Wahab bin Dato' Seri Azizul Hassan, Territorial Chief of Kinta, Dato' Seri Zainal Adzam bin Abd. Ghani, Member of the Perak Royal Council and Dr Adib Vincent Tung bin Abdullah, Chairman of the Perak Academy.

"Malaysia has the most royal families in the world. Our country caters nine royal houses that reign over nine different states in the peninsula. And every five years the royalties gather to appoint one of them to head the federal government and sit on the throne as the Yang di-Pertuan Agong," remarked Wahab in his opening speech.

"This unique succession system, based on rotation, has been adopted by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) but only a handful of us actually know and understand the powers of the Malay Rulers and the role they play in the government," he highlighted.

"It's timely to have such forum to clear any misconception about our constitutional monarchy and the powers vested upon the King and his brother Malay Rulers," Wahab concluded.

Professor Datuk Dr Shad Saleem Faruqi is a professor of law in the University of Malaya, currently holding the Tunku Abdul Rahman Chair as professor of constitutional law.

At the international level, Shad has served as a consultant to many countries including Maldives, Fiji, Timor Leste, Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan advising them on their constitutional documents. In 1991, as part of an Asia Foundation Project, he drafted the constitution of the Republic of Maldives.

He has helped to draft several international documents including the Kuala Lumpur Declaration to Criminalise War and a document for the UN on Protection for Places of Worship.

According to Shad, in Malay history, the Rulers had nearly absolute powers. "The colonial government reduced the Rulers to a ceremonial role except in matters of Islam and adat. The Malay revolted against the Malayan Union and halted attempts to marginalise Malay Rulers further. The Merdeka Constitution restored some of the lustre of the monarchy," he explained.

## Best Destination Manager Award

Heartiest congratulations to Mayor Dato' Zamri Man for having won "The Best Destination Manager Award" in conjunction with the 8th Tourism Promotion Organisation (TPO) General Assembly for Asia Pacific Cities on Friday, October 20.

The annual meeting was held at Tongyeong City, Republic of Korea from October 18 to 20. This non-profit organisation consists of eight member countries within the Asia-Pacific region and is represented by 81 cities along with major tour agencies. Its goal is to promote the exchanges and developments of the tourism industry of cities within the organisation.

Hopefully, the award will spur the mayor to continue with his exemplary job of managing Ipoh city. Incidentally, Ipoh City Council was adjudged the best local authority in Malaysia and Ipoh, the cleanest city in Malaysia, by the Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government.

The Ipoh City team to the assembly was led by Council Secretary, Zakuan Zakaria, two city councillors and three senior council staff.

Ed



"Under Article 38 (2), the Majlis Raja-Raja (Council of Rulers) has the important constitutional function of electing the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and the Timbalan Yang di-Pertuan Agong. The significance of this power is that the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, in some aspects, represents the Majlis Raja-Raja and, therefore, is accountable to the Majlis," he stated.

"The Majlis Raja-Raja has the great and dramatic power to dismiss the Yang di-Pertuan Agong. Though never exercised, this remarkable power, under Article 38 (6), imposes significant pressure on the King to respect the wishes of his brother rulers," he added.

Tan Sri Dr Rais Yatim was a minister in multiple federal governments from 1974 to 2013. He was the Menteri Besar of Negeri Sembilan from 1978 to 1982. He held the Jelebu parliamentary seat until 2013.

Mei Kuan



## Education

# Kindergarten Graduation Ceremony

Over a hundred kindergarten students attended Tadika Methodist Ipoh's 53rd graduation cum concert on Friday, October 13. The auspicious event was held at the Haewaytian Restaurant, with students, aged between 3 and 6 years old being the main performers.

The graduating classes – Love and Wisdom – were given their leavers' certificates following a series of speeches by class representatives. "Love and friendship is very important," said Aidan Tang of Wisdom Class. "We're proud to say that love and friendship form the basis of our Tadika."

This was followed by wushu performed by members of the kindergarten's Wushu Club who are trained by a wushu exponent from Chin Woo Association Ipoh. This was followed by a solo by Reverend Thong Boon Sen from his repertoire of Chinese gospel songs.

An array of performances came next consisting of dances performed by the youngest to the oldest in the kindergarten.

Other items on the cards included ballet by Bella Yak and a solo by Looi Sin Yi who was dressed in a Chinese emperor outfit.

It was definitely a joyous evening for parents, teachers and students.

Jack Foo



## Reducing Duration of Medical Training

Quest International University Perak (QIUP) and Kaplan Medical signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Monday, October 16.

The objective of the MoU, signed at QIUP, is to appoint QIUP as the Examination Centre for the Northern region of Malaysia for the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE).

Signing on behalf of QIUP was Chief Operating Officer Nicholas Goh, witnessed by Vice Chancellor, Professor Dato' Dr Raman Narayanasamy while Chief Executive Officer of Nugrahan Sdn Bhd, Parthiban Shanmugam signed on behalf of Kaplan Medical witnessed by Dr Inder Pahal, Global Director Institutional Partnerships of Kaplan Health.

Nicholas elaborated that this move is in line with QIUP's continuous efforts to ensure its programmes adheres to global standards.

"We're proud to be associated with Kaplan Medical, where QIUP will act as the Examination Centre for the USMLE in the northern region. This is part of our continuous efforts to build our MBBS curriculum to global standards.

"We're working towards embedding USMLE syllabus into our current MBBS curriculum which will be a value add for QIUP MBBS students and graduates as they will be trained to sit for this international examination before graduation," said Nicholas.

Dr Inder Pahal said that QIUP and Kaplan Medical share the same values, which is to provide the best for the students.

"Although the USMLE is primarily a US-based examination, it's now accepted all over the world. The examination enables students to apply what they learnt in class into practice," he said.

The USMLE is a three-step specialist licensing examination. Students can sit for the first two steps of the USMLE in Malaysia, while for the third step, they can apply with institutions in the US. This reduces the duration of training and allows medical graduates to become specialists by age 30.

Nabilah Hamudin



## Fairview to Offer Ten Full Scholarships Worth RM1.2 Million

*A once in a lifetime opportunity for teenagers in Ipoh to experience the unique teaching methods of an international programme*

Fairview International School Ipoh, the only international baccalaureate (IB) world school which offers the primary years programme in Perak, is offering RM1.2 million worth of scholarships to Perak's UPSR top performers (academic and non academic).



The scholarship which will run for a three year period, aims to house ten students a year from Perak Chinese schools at Fairview International School's Ipoh campus. Here they will complete the five year long middle years programme. The eligible students should be recommended to Fairview by the members of Perak State Principals Association," said Daniel Chian, Chairman of the Fairview Group.

The Fairview Group started the operation of its fifth campus in Ipoh in August 2014. Although the Ipoh campus was just awarded the IB World School status, word is spreading out fast on the effectiveness of the approaches to teaching and learning. During the Perak SJKC school principals' conference in Kampar on July 21st 2017 where University College Fairview was invited to speak on 21st century education, the Group proudly announced the good news on offering ten full scholarships for UPSR students at its Ipoh campus.

Fairview International School is the first IB World School in Malaysia to offer the continuum of International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes; the Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP).

"Our network allows us to share these best practices with all our schools through video conferencing, face to face sessions and various other means," said Chian.

"Our academic programme backed by the UK national curriculum is driven by concepts, inquiry, the learner profile, flipped classroom, technology integrated learning, approaches to learning, expeditions, co-curricular activities, action and service and charity programmes. These are successfully achieved through the IB curriculum framework with the smooth transition from transdisciplinary, interdisciplinary and disciplinary approaches through the 3 programmes culminating in the PYP Exhibition to MYP Personal Project to DP Theory of Knowledge and Extended Essay respectively.

Interested parties should apply immediately as this offer is only applicable for the school's academic year intake in the coming January 2018. Since there are tests and interviews involved, the latest date to submit the application forms is 15th November 2017.

For more information on the scholarship and to apply, please contact our Ipoh campus directly through phone 05 313 6888 or email ([enquiries\\_ipoh@fairview.edu.my](mailto:enquiries_ipoh@fairview.edu.my)).



## 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.

## Royal Belum – the World's Youngest Rainforest?

**“Did you know that Perak has a 130-million-year-old tropical rainforest? It is the oldest in the world, much older than the Amazon jungle in Brazil.”** This bold statement appears on the front page of the Ipoh Echo, Issue 268, October 2017. I do not know the origin of this oft repeated assertion but in any event it is questionable insofar as recent scientific evidence hints at more complex, youthful origins for Royal Belum's rainforest biodiversity.

By roughly 20,000 years ago, when the most recent of the Quaternary Ice Ages was at its maxima, large amounts of the global water budget had been frozen in the great continental ice sheets that covered much of Canada and northern Europe; sea levels had fallen and Sundaland had emerged as dry land connecting the Malay Peninsula with the islands of Borneo, Java and Sumatra. There is now considerable evidence (see for example: Heaney, 1991; Wurster et al., 2010; Rais et al., 2014) that these momentous events were accompanied by local climate changes and that what is now Peninsular Malaysia became cooler and drier. This, in turn, resulted in the Peninsula's rainforests contracting and, except perhaps in wetter refugia, being replaced by open savanna forests. Eventually the global climate shifted again, the great ice sheets waned, sea level rose, and the climate hereabouts once again favoured rainforest over savanna, but this new rainforest that replaced savanna is less than 20,000 years old. We, a ground-dwelling, adaptable species, survived the geologically brief interlude of savanna whereas our rainforest canopy-dwelling cousin, the orangutan, disappeared from mainland Southeast Asia (Yasamin Kh. Ibrahim et al., 2013).

Other rainforest sites in Malaysia and elsewhere also proclaim their great antiquity. Perhaps, in consideration of the scientific evidence, Royal Belum should rebrand itself as the **World's Youngest Rainforest** and thereby introduce its visitors to the complexity of Malaysia's recent palaeoclimatic and biological heritage. Regardless of its age, Royal Belum's rainforest is now the second largest protected, near-pristine wilderness in Peninsular Malaysia. Sadly, the Sumatran Rhinoceros has recently disappeared from the forests of northern Perak but Royal Belum still supports a small population

of endangered tigers and seladang together with other rare and threatened flora and fauna. The writer hopes that the mission “for the preservation and protection of wildlife, plant life and objects of geological, archaeological, historical and ethnological and other scientific and scenic interests” enshrined in the Perak State Park Corporation Enactment will always be the highest priority of Royal Belum's caretakers and visitors.



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W.K. Fletcher

## Fire Escapes at (Sekeping) Kong Heng

I was pleased to visit Ipoh not so long ago, staying at (Sekeping) Kong Heng. Although the hotel was nicely quirky, I had one definite concern. From where my room was, near the water feature, there seemed to be only a single entrance/exit: which had a permanently padlocked metal gate at the bottom.

All guests were given a key to the padlock (or was it just one key per room?). But in the event of any fire or other emergency, it seems like a big problem. What if there is smoke, or the guest is outside the room without the key. It's certainly not an easy lock to undo, even in normal circumstances.

Maybe there is another proper fire escape somewhere, but if there is, I didn't see it signposted clearly: and I looked. Just to add to the concern, the hotel rooms are situated over retails and F&B outlets, who are storing industrial sized gas cylinders on the ground floor. Hmmm!!

Given that we've recently had a fire tragedy in KL, where children were trapped inside a building without proper fire exits, can someone please let me know what the fire escape arrangements from this part of the hotel are supposed to be, whether they conform to local fire regulations.

Richard Davies

(See pics and story on page 10)

## Cement Dust from the Cement Factory in Tasek

I would be much obliged if you could send your reporters to investigate and write reports in Ipoh Echo on the heavy pollution of cement dust from the factory at Tasek. For the past few days, our cars in the Fair Park, Kepayang Putra and nearby areas have been covered with thick layers of cement dust. It is affecting the health of residents in the areas. The Raja Permaisuri Bainun Hospital is also in this area affected. Ipoh was recently declared the cleanest city in Malaysia, but what about the pollution from the cement factory nearby? Please alert the authorities to do something about it. I hope Ipoh Echo, as the voice of the people of Ipoh can highlight this issue to the government to take action.

J.M. Tan

Arena Kepayang Putra

## Business

### MICCI Perak Annual Luncheon

Celebrating 105 years of serving businesses in Perak, the Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MICCI) Perak held its branch annual luncheon on Tuesday, October 24 at the WEIL Hotel ballroom.

Dato' Lim Si Boon, branch chairman stated, “Our activities this year can actually be broken into four areas. First one is cry for infrastructure. Second one is demand for quick completion, quick action and quick explanation. And third is complain about inaction or poor execution. And finally, we learn from the experts and our own peers.”

In the presence of guest of honour, Menteri Besar, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir, Lim shared the members' hopes and aspirations for the new year, “Please create many new high-paying jobs, keep our cost of operation and living cost low, ensure easy accessibility and our environment beautiful with of course, state-of-the-art infrastructure.”

It was followed by a presentation of long-standing membership certificates to eleven recipients in acknowledgment of their unwavering support for the chamber and its activities for over 20 years: Perak Teamwork Sdn Bhd, Henkel (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, Kuala Lumpur Kepong Berhad, Micromechanics (M) Sdn Bhd, PwC, Hexza Corporation Berhad, Lysaght Corrugated Pipe Sdn Bhd, Ernst & Young, HSBC Bank Malaysia Bhd, Foo Nyit Tse & Bros Sdn Bhd and Associated Pan Malaysia Cement Sdn Bhd.

“I am very honoured to be invited. We have been working closely with constant meetings with the association to share ideas and listen to demands,” Zambry said.

According to him, Perak's manufacturing sector recorded a growth of 5.1% in 2016 surpassing even the national manufacturing growth rate of 4.2%. “Those are the areas that Perak really wants to go into and we have to study together with advice from the council,” he added.

Guest speaker, Datuk Phang Ah Tong, the former deputy chief executive officer of Malaysia Investment Development Authority (MIDA) spoke on the vision of industry 4.0 and Digital Free Trade Zone in Malaysia.

According to him, e-commerce is growing globally and Malaysia B2C e-commerce



market is expected to grow to US\$ 3.4 billion by 2020. One of the focus areas for the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2016-2020) under the manufacturing thrusts is smart manufacturing. Among the government facilitations related to smart manufacturing, included income tax exemption of up to 100 per cent of statutory income for a period of up to 10 years.

Next, Phang explained that the Digital Free Trade Zone is the e-commerce window to the world for ASEAN SMEs and the preferred gateway of choice for global brands and marketplaces into ASEAN. Its two key objectives are to enable Malaysian SMEs to export and position Malaysia as a regional hub for e-commerce logistics.

Attended by over 200, present were Dato' Abdul Puhat Mat Nayan, State Secretary and State Financial Officer, Dato' Mohd Ghazali Jalal.

Mei Kuan



## Sport

# GT Sports Opens for Public

Fitness enthusiasts or health junkies can now head to and explore Ipoh's latest recreation club, the GT Sports club located at Lebuhr Bercham Selatan.

The grand opening was launched on October 21 where a day-long event was organised for the public to get a glimpse of the club that has complete wellness facilities such gym, half Olympic swimming pool, table-tennis courts, fitness classes, indoor badminton courts, darts and pool, multipurpose event hall, FIR sauna and more.

"Health shouldn't be a luxury, everyone deserves to have easy access to health knowledge and facilities to make the best choices for their own wellbeing. With our low membership commitment period and entry point for a modern multi-sports fitness and lifestyle facility in town, we strive to provide the best value for your health and money," said the CEO of GT Sports & Recreation Club (GTSRC), Ying Xian Mooi.

During the opening, the centre also organised its first GTSRC Badminton Championship and held, for the first time in Ipoh, a Fitness Demo Classes Marathon conducted by star instructors who came from Kuala Lumpur. The classes consisted of Resistance Training by one of their event sponsors, Sanctband, Strong by Zumba, BeachCORE, Zumba, Piloxing (Pilates + Boxing) and Salsation (dance fitness programme based on functional training).

GTSRC is located at Lot 345761, Lebuhr Bercham Selatan, Taman Bercham Jaya and readers who are interested to know more about their membership deals can contact the centre at 05 543 0603 or 05 543 0963 or visit their facebook page at [www.facebook.com/gtsportsipoh](http://www.facebook.com/gtsportsipoh).

Ili Aqilah



## News

# Parkinson's Symposium



People with Parkinson's disease, caregivers, professors, health professionals and delegates from all over the world gathered for the two-day Perak Parkinson's International Symposium at the Kinta Riverfront Hotel from October 21 to 22.

Samuel Ng, founder and president of Perak Parkinson's Association (PPA) in his welcoming speech said, "We're proud to invite you to yet another major event of patient advocacy which I am confident will achieve PPA's 5As of advocacy namely, awareness and education, advanced medical information and treatment, active networking, affiliation with the government and aid."

"We're grateful to notable speakers such as Professor Dr Peter Lewitt (Michigan) and Professor Dr Joseph Friedman (New York) and to the International Parkinson's and Movement Disorder Society for providing us their ambassadors," he added.

Present was Elizabeth Pollard, executive director of World Parkinson Coalition. Tony Khoo, chairman of Real Estate and Housing Developers Association (Rehda) Perak, who represented Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon, the Executive Councillor for Health, Public Transport, Non-Islamic Affairs, National Integration and New Villages.

Teoh Poh Yew who was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2009 shared, "Initially I shied away from the Parkinson's association because I didn't want to see how the end stage of my life could be. After much encouragement from Samuel, I joined one of the events and saw an 80-year-old lady, a victim for 20 years, could run excitedly to the podium to receive her prize. There should be no problem for me then!"

Founded in 2012, Perak Parkinson's Association Ipoh is a non-profit and non-governmental support group with a mission to enhance the quality of life for people with Parkinson's as well as their families and caregivers. For sufferers who hide at home in denial, PPA helps to bring them back into the community. At the centre, there are volunteers, occupational therapists and physiotherapist whose task is to help conduct effective exercise routines.

The association is located at 128, Jalan Hala Wah Keong, Taman Mirindy, 31400 Ipoh. It is open Mondays to Fridays between 9am and 1pm. Readers can also call the centre at: 05 545 5610 or visit its website [www.perakparkinson.org.my](http://www.perakparkinson.org.my) for details.

Mei Kuan

## HAPPENINGS

**Ipoh Echo IS the ONE and ONLY medium to reach Ipohites and Perakeans for your Announcements or your Ads.**

Only pay RM30 for chargeable events/seminars announcements. You get 3 media avenues for the price of one: • Print (circulation 100,000) • Website (over 1 million hits per month – verifiable) • Facebook Free public events are published FREE.

Announcements must be sent by fax: 05 543 9411; or email: [announcements@ipohecho.com.my](mailto:announcements@ipohecho.com.my), by the 9<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> of every month in order to meet deadlines. Announcements by phone will not be entertained. Ipoh Echo reserves the right to verify any announcement before it is published.

## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

**Sharpened Word. Calling all talents! We want You!** You have the talent, we have the platform. All ages, genders and talents are welcome. Bring your own materials and instruments. Tell your friends. Bring down the roof. Come join us, Saturday **NOVEMBER 18, 2pm-5pm at Old Andersonian' Club**. Registration via Facebook: [www.facebook.com/sharpenedword.kinta](http://www.facebook.com/sharpenedword.kinta).

**Perak Department for Arts and Culture (JKKN Perak). FREE ARTS AND CULTURE LESSONS.** Dance and music: Every Saturday 9am-12pm. Children's theatre: Every Saturday 3.30pm-6.30pm. Adult's theatre: Every Friday 9pm-11pm. JKKN Perak is conducting free music, dance and theatre lessons at its complex along Jalan Caldwell for enthusiasts aged 7 and above. 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.

## CHARITY

**Yayasan Sultan Idris Shah. Food & Fun Fair. NOVEMBER 12 (Sunday), 8am-2pm at Lot 158413, Lorong Bercham 11, Bercham 31400 Ipoh.** Horse & pony rides; horse carriage ride; food galore; carnival games; clown & dance performance; face & henna painting; health checks; etc. For coupons contact Siti 05 548 1905.

**Patchwork Society of Meru Valley Resort. Tenth Charity Bazaar. NOVEMBER 18 (Saturday), 9am-5pm at Function Room, Meru Valley Resort, Ipoh.** Admission: free. All proceedings from the event will be directed to Persatuan Jagaan Kanak-Kanak Cacat Silibin, Ipoh Perak.

**Dementia Society of Perak. 'My Memory' – An Evening of Golden Hits with the Kuala Lumpur Pop Orchestra. Tuesday NOVEMBER 28, 8pm at Grand Ballroom, Syeun Hotel, Ipoh.** Come and celebrate the golden hits of the 70s and 90s with some of the most celebrated artistes. In aid of Dementia Society Perak. Entry by donation: RM150 (numbered seating), RM100 and RM50 (free seating). For more info, contact: 014 974 6885.

## COMMUNITY

**500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation Seminar: What is the relationship of Protestant Reformation & Christians today? NOVEMBER 3, Friday, 9.30am-1pm at Logos Reformed Baptist Church, Ipoh. No.7&9, Laluan Pinji Seni 4, Taman Pinji Seni, Ipoh.** Topics: (1) Reformation & the Reformers, (2) Major Doctrinal Issues faced by the Reformers, (3) The Five Solas, (4) The Importance of the Reformation to Christians Today. Free Admission, light refreshments will be served, call or SMS or WhatsApp 016 526 6722 to reserve your seat.

**Kechara Earth Project. LET'S RECYCLE FOR GREENER EARTH. EVERY 4TH SUNDAY of the month, 9.30am-11.30am in front of Ipoh Garden Post Office, Jalan Dato Lau Pak Khuan, Ipoh Garden, 31400 Ipoh.** Carton boxes, paper, metal/aluminium, electronic equipment, plastics, light bulbs, batteries and used clothes. Funds are channeled towards Kechara Food Bank that serves the urban poor and underprivileged community in Ipoh. For more details, contact: 016 532 8309 (Mr So) or 012 522 3200 (Ms Yee Mun).

**Learn German in Ipoh.** New beginners class has just started, preparing kids (and adults) for the A1 exam. You learn basic communication to get along in Germany, e.g. introducing

yourself, shopping, asking directions, etc. We are still at the beginning and new students are welcome to join. We meet **every Monday 8pm** at YMCA Ipoh. Contact: Heinz Bongers. To join, please message me on Facebook, send an email to [germaninipoh@arcor.de](mailto:germaninipoh@arcor.de) – or just come and see!

## ENTERTAINMENT

**Marina Island. 'Fantasy Lights of Marina' Fiesta. NOVEMBER 24, 2017 to MARCH 4, 2018 at Marina Island, Pangkor, Perak.** LED light displays and more. Early bird tickets will be available from November 1-20. For further information on the fiesta and purchase of ticket, contact ticket hotline: 016 524 9800. Other enquiries, contact Jocelyn 012 515 2862.

## FELLOWSHIP DINNER

**Former staff of Perak River Hydro Electric Power Co. Ltd. and Kinta Electric Distribution Co. Ltd. will be having a fellowship "PHYKED" dinner at Restoran Shabu Shabu, No.14, Jalan Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah, (Jalan Gopeng), Ipoh on Saturday, NOVEMBER 11.** For details, call S. Arunasalam 019 570 1166, A. Gopalan Nair 012 450 2620 or K. Bhaskaran 012 452 1006.

## HEALTH/MEDICAL

**Hospital Fatimah. A GIFT OF LIFE: BLOOD DONATION DRIVE. Saturday NOVEMBER 11, 9am-12pm at Hospital Fatimah Main Lobby.** Free blood test for the first 60 donors. Please contact Customer Service Officer 05 545 5777 Ext 214 for more information.

**Family Wellness Club. Family Safety Workshop (Part 2). NOVEMBER 25 (Saturday), 2pm-5.30pm at the Andersonians' Club Hall, Jalan Hospital, Ipoh.** Registration: RM20 but free for members. Early registration is advised. First come first served. Call or send SMS to 019 239 6190 (Ms Sumathy) to register.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### FREE DIABETES CHECK-UPS

**Diabetes Malaysia Perak** is now offering free check-ups to the community! Among the free services offered at its community centre are diabetes test, blood pressure test, Body Mass Index (BMI), body fat measurement, smoking test, vision test and counselling.

Patients and the public can also purchase medicine and medical equipment such as blood glucometers, strips, lancets, insulin needles, blood pressure sets, at cost price. Please spread the news to your family members & friends! All are welcome!

46A Jalan Hussein Norudin,  
Taman Kin Mee, Fair Park,  
31400 Ipoh, Perak.

Contact number: 012-469 2765 (Mr Chandran Kanniah)  
Operating hours/days: 10am to 12pm / Monday to Friday