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30 SEN FOR DELIVERY TO YOUR DOORSTEP -
ASK YOUR NEWSVENDOR

ISSUE

283

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Interview with Human Resources Minister

By Tan Mei Kuan

Ipoh Echo had an exclusive one-on-one with newly-minted Human Resources Minister, M. Kulasegaran who in spite of his very heavy schedule took the time to come to the Ipoh Echo office on Sunday, June 3 to speak to us.

Kulasegaran (more fondly, Kula) was called to the English Bar in July 1982 by the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn. Upon his return, he was admitted and enrolled as an Advocate and Solicitor of the High Court in Malaya in 1983.

"First, let me thank Ipoh Echo for inviting me. I've been very fond of Ipoh Echo from day one. I was an Ipoh City Councillor in 2008. In my speeches at the council I often asked that Ipoh Echo be adopted as the council's paper. We should promote our own indigenous product. I'm pleased that the community newspaper has survived for so long despite its many challenges. It's always a pleasure to read Ipoh Echo," he said before the start of the noon tete-a-tete.

"Let me just start off by saying that this is the ministry I specifically asked for. I told the Prime Minister and my party (DAP) that if I were appointed a minister, I wanted this portfolio because it's nearest to my heart. I feel very strongly that we can achieve quite a bit for the B40 (bottom 40 percent) and below, namely families that earn RM3900 and below. This is either the lower income group or the hard-core poor. The bulk of Malaysians are within this category," he highlighted.

Continued on page 2



Local Boy Makes Good



Following are questions posed and Kula's answers:

Ipoh Echo: Can you give a general overview of the labour situation, regarding both local and foreign workers?

Kula: All this while there seems to be no coherent and consistent policy on foreign labour. The primary importance of our labour, our people, has been overlooked. The objective of the growth and empowerment of our people is secondary. The primacy of the previous government's policies has been to bring in foreigners purely to make money and to fill up as many jobs as possible. Filling up jobs is most welcome but at the same time, preference should be given to Malaysians. Malaysian workers must come first, there is no compromise.

I am not at any time saying foreign workers should be deported immediately, no. Many Malaysians don't like to take the 3D (dangerous, dirty, difficult) jobs. Even then, why in other parts of the world like Australia and New Zealand, people can do such jobs?

Basically, it's the quantum of salary/income. I've already asked the policy division of my ministry to look into this. In regard to foreign workers, we are going to reduce, if not stop, taking foreign workers unless there is an absolute necessity. We agree in some plantation industries deep in the jungle, we need these foreign workers. But from the news and reports that I came across, we have more than enough.

Ipoh Echo: How did we reach such a staggering figure of millions of undocumented labour?

Kula: By the very casual attitude of our border people over the time. First and foremost, control of our borders should be tightened and strengthened. Bringing in workers by middlemen should also stop.

Ipoh Echo: Regarding the 1.5 million Bangladeshi nationals that had registered under former DPM Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, can you enlighten us on that?

Kula: Foremost, I'm disappointed with the previous government. The approval for foreign labour was taken and parked in his ministry. Zahid and the former minister were supposed to meet and resolve the matter. Although they had an understanding, they had zero meeting. Nothing was discussed as to how to facilitate, streamline, synchronise the whole intake and all that. That's a colossal failure. It's basically Umno imposing itself on other parties.

Ipoh Echo: Is the agreement still on?

Kula: The agreement is still on. We'll review the agreement and, if necessary, we'll cancel it entirely.



Ipoh Echo: How is the ministry going to tackle the scams in which foreign workers are falling for (human trafficking, etc.)?

Kula: I've been in my ministry only about two weeks. There is no denial there is a colossal failure on the enforcement. I've told the ministry: we must be able to work overtime, at night, on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. And get moving fast. I've also told them I don't want to have meetings during office hours as far as possible. It should be after office hours so that it doesn't disrupt the existing mechanism.

Ipoh Echo: How effective are the state labour department and other down-liners?

Kula: The enforcement is very, very relaxed. I'll go around the country unannounced to check on vocational institutes, etc. I've requested for immediate interim reports on enforcement actions such as how many cases are taken to court and how many people are being prosecuted. Once enforcement takes place, other things fall into place.

Ipoh Echo: On the brain drain situation, how is the ministry going to retain local talents?

Kula: It was done by Talent Corporation earlier. We must get back to basics by empowering and encouraging our people to stay back in our country. Some people couldn't get a scholarship to study and they leave the country. It's a sad scenario. We should encourage these people to come back. The human resource pool that we have, there must be an opening to encourage and give them that liberty to do what they want.

I've heard from some people that their children are coming back after this new government came to power. This is very heartening. There's a glimmer of hope. This great country of ours has an abundance of resources. Why should our youngsters not enjoy them and make Malaysia great again? We are 60 years late but that doesn't matter.

Ipoh Echo: On the new Employment Insurance Scheme (EIS), how does it work?

Kula: When somebody is retrenched, the government has some money to be given to that person for the first three months for him/her to see through those trying months. A lot of Malaysians don't realise that they're living beyond their means thus when they lose their jobs they don't know how to sustain themselves. We want to cushion it. At the same time, we have *JobsMalaysia* which will find jobs for them.

Ipoh Echo: What about the Skim Latihan 1Malaysia (SLIM) programme?

Kula: We are going to review it. The reason being is to avoid overlapping. You've heard SPAD. There must be synchronisation of things to cut cost and to deliver to the people. That should be the priority.

Ipoh Echo: Regarding the rehiring programme for illegal foreign workers, which will end next month, as announced by Home Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, what is your ministry's role here?

Kula: We are discussing with the Ministry of Home Affairs to have a win-win situation. We don't want to upset the present worker-employer relationship in the industry. We are giving them some breathing space to rehire, etc. but there must be a cut-off period to encourage more Malaysians to work.

One of the things we aspire to is that every Malaysian in this country will be covered by SOCSO. One of the backbones of Malaysia is women and housewives, yet they don't have that coverage. My ministry is talking with the Finance Ministry to reach out to 1.2 million housewives because without them, there is no peace in our working places. Our mothers and sisters at home contribute as much as our fathers and brothers or more.



By Fathol Zaman Bukhari

THE MALAY PSYCHE

The Malay psyche is not something difficult to fathom. It is the result of years of indoctrination by a political party that is long on hopes but short on ideas.

On Friday June 1, two pro-Malay activists were forced to make police reports denying their involvement in alleged death threats and declaration of war against the new Pakatan Harapan (PH) government. The threats were directed at Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir.

In a Facebook posting that went viral the originator calling himself, “Ayahanda Fadzley Mohd Yusof” claimed that Malaysia is currently in turmoil caused by a witch hunt. The Facebook posting called for “Zionist Prime Minister Dr Mahathir” to be jailed, labelled Defence Minister, Mat Sabu a “clown” and insisted that Deputy Prime Minister, Dr Wan Azizah unfit for the post because she is a woman.

The post claimed that it received the support of right wing and pro-Malay elements such as the Red Shirts, Pekida and the Malaysian Muslim Consumers’ Association. Even fugitive Jamal (Jamban) is mentioned. It made veiled threats at ruling coalition Pakatan Harapan and called for the return of Barisan Nasional (BN).

Rani Kulup, a former army warrant officer and a dandy with his fanciful uniform and trademark dark glasses, made yet another police report claiming that his outfit, Martabat Jalinan Muhibbah Malaysia, was wrongly linked to the complainant. A guy by the name of Fadzley Mohd Yusof lodged a police report claiming the viral post was not from him as he is a PH supporter. His is worried for his safety following the posting.

So, what is the fuss all about then? Well, if you feel a perceived rise in racial sentiments then you are not alone. The feeling is being shared by many.

On Monday, May 28 a group calling itself Hindraf 2.0 made 25 demands to the Institutional Reforms Committee, of which my friend and former colleague, Brig-Gen (Rtd) Mohd Arshad, is a member. Among the demands were land schemes, business opportunities, repatriation of illegal workers and one that irritates the Malays most – opening up of Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) to everyone not just the Bumiputeras. The reaction was spontaneous. The UiTM alumni association which is usually silent on many issues, including IMDB and Rosmah’s huge collection of Birkin and Hermes handbags was up in arms. It started a petition opposing the opening of the institution of higher learning to non-Malays.

Nonetheless, it remains a travesty and an irony that UiTM accepts international students but not Malaysians other than Malays.

Dr Mahathir’s subsequent announcement of a committee to review and reform federal Islamic agency, Jakim riled Malay Muslims not used to (till now) having their privileges questioned. Pas kingpins Nasruddin Hassan and Ahmad Dusuki Rani questioned why Jakim when vices like 4-D Sports Toto, Magnum and the Genting Highlands casino are allowed to proliferate. It does not matter that the comparison is not only odd but laughable considering that no one is forced to part with their hard-earned money. It is entirely one’s choice but these so-called holier-than-thou Malay Muslims felt otherwise.

They don’t appreciate the fact that these gaming entities are part and parcel of a thriving economy, decadent though it may be. Magnum, Sports Toto and the Genting Highlands casino don’t impinge on the rights of those who don’t gamble or bet. Unlike IMDB, a fake sovereign fund account whose objective was to launder money for use by the high and mighty of the land. Fortunately, the crooks have been identified and actions are presently being preferred against them. And mind you, all of these culprits are Malay Muslims.

A country with a sizeable Muslim population requires a federal agency of Islamic affairs to oversee and regulate seemingly petty tasks like the fixing of prayer times, halal certification, regulating of mosque and religious officials, drafting Friday prayers’ sermons and administering pilgrimages and tithes. What it does not deserve is being placed under the Prime Minister’s Department to be used as a tool to control and manipulate the country’s citizens, especially Malay Muslims. Nor should it be allowed to espouse anti-human rights and impose anti-liberalism policies on Muslims in its bid to enhance its Islamist credentials. There is no necessity for Jakim to go beyond what it is designed for.

And surely the agency does not require an inflated annual budget of almost RM1 billion so it could focus its attention on “converting the LBGT”, inspecting the genitals of a perceived transgender celebrity, raiding budget hotels and brothels to flush out Muslim couples committing *khalwat* (close proximity) and apprehending Muslims who do not fast.

After a month of efficient house-cleaning and creating a new and now “reformed” Malaysia, PH has touched some raw nerves with those who resisted change. The Malays have been mollicoddled for over six decades by Umno to the extent that many consider the party their Saviour and protector. Other parties, particularly Democratic Action Party (DAP), they insisted is being led by chauvinistic Chinese whose singular objective is to wrest control of the country from them. This feeling is so entrenched in the Malays. A liberal-minded Malay like yours truly finds it difficult to convince his brethren that the Chinese in DAP meant no harm and they have no hegemonic tendency.

The Malay psyche is not something difficult to fathom. It is the result of years of indoctrination (brainwashing) by a political party that is long on hopes but short on ideas. Fear mongering is Umno’s forte because the party believes that Malays are under threat. That their religion and their sultans are being assailed and belittled by imaginary goblins and make-believe enemies. The delay in endorsing Tommy Thomas, an Indian, as the new Attorney General to replace Apandi Ali exemplifies this fear.

Anyone other than a Malay and a Muslim is considered unworthy to assume any sensitive appointments which are only reserved for Malays. But on hindsight it is the



Malays who have let the nation and their own kind down. Najib Razak, Rosmah Mansor, Apandi Ali, Rahman Dahlan, Tajuddin Rahman, Khalid Abu Bakar, Jamal (Jamban) and all the obscenely-paid heads of government-linked companies are Malays. But this is of no consequence to a race that makes up over 60 percent of the nation’s population. They continue to feel threatened. I call this a self-confidence deficit.

Pakatan Harapan’s major challenge in the months to come is to continue with its reform agenda while, at the same time, prevent divisive and malicious ethno-religious sentiments from flaring up before the next general elections. A tall order indeed for Tun Dr Mahathir and his multi-ethnic but highly motivated team. Time is running out on them. But with people like Lim Guan Eng, M. Kulasegeran, Dr Maszlee Malik, Tony Pua, Hannah Yeoh, Gobind Singh Deo and Anthony Loke around I am prepared to stick my neck out.

EYE HEALTH - ITCHY EYES

In our continuing series on Eye Health, Fatimah Hospital's Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S. S. GILL talks to us about ITCHY EYES.

ITCHY EYES can be so annoying! The challenge of not giving the itchy eye a good rub is enormous. If the itch overcomes you and you end up rubbing the eye, be prepared for the consequences of the rubbing which may range anything from persistently teary eyes, eye discomfort, bloodshot eye, infection and blurring vision. Scratching the eye just makes things worse by increasing inflammation, so do try your best to avoid it.

Most itchy eyes are caused by exposure to allergens, however, there are also other causes that may result in itchy eyes.

Some of them are:

- 1. DUST AND ANIMAL FUR:** This is very common and is often associated with allergies to the nose and skin too. The condition may be long standing and recurrent, occurring throughout the year.
- 2. POLLEN:** This is usually seasonal and often occurs during a particular time of the year. The condition is sometimes referred to as seasonal allergic conjunctivitis.
- 3. MEDICATIONS, EYE DROPS AND CHEMICALS:** This occurs when the eyes are exposed to any of these. This sometimes poses a problem as a person may be allergic to the preservatives used in an eye-drop bottle. Most eye drops will contain a preservative including eye drops used to treat allergies.
- 4. CONTACT LENS RELATED ALLERGIES.** This is called Giant Papillary Conjunctivitis (GPC) and is usually due to longstanding contact lens wear. This mainly occurs in non-disposable contact lenses.

SYMPTOMS:

Symptoms of eye allergies include the following:

- Itchiness and/or burning sensation.
- Redness of the eyes.
- Swollen puffy eyelids (often both eyes)
- Lacrimation or excessive tearing.
- Photophobia or sensitivity to bright lights.
- Sometimes itchy, red, scaly eyelids.

These symptoms may or may not occur alongside nasal allergy symptoms of sneezing and runny nose.

OTHER ALLERGIES THAT MAY BE ASSOCIATED:

Skin allergies (*atopic dermatitis*), asthma, nasal allergies and sinusitis (hay fever) may all cause itchy eyes too. Watch out for these symptoms and highlight them to your doctor.

TREATMENT:

Firstly, avoid rubbing the eyes to aggravate its consequences! Rubbing the eyes stimulates the tissues of the eyes to release more chemicals like histamine from the mast cells which only makes it worse. If you have identified an allergen (substance that triggers the allergy), then removing the offending agent is essential. A cool (not cold!) pack over the eye often soothes the itchy eyes as temporary measure. If your symptoms are prolonged, then always seek professional medical help.



Dr S.S. Gill
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The Potential of the Unkempt Parks and the Kinta River

At one time, an Ipohite could rely on workers from the Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh (MBI) to spruce up his residential area. Rubbish was cleared, grass in the parks was cut regularly, and trash was removed from the playground.

Ever since the work was privatised, readers of the Ipoh Echo (IE) complain that they are lucky to see the workers once every six months.

Grass in the parks is left unkempt and rubbish accumulates. Why is this happening? Does the MBI monitor the schedule and work performance of the contract workers?

Some people claim that their complaints to MBI are rarely addressed. Perhaps, the Ipoh mayor, could look into this problem.

One reader has the following suggestion, "This important task of keeping our residential areas relatively tidy should come under the purview of the councillor, who is in charge of the area."

"Actually, most of us have no idea who our councillors are and how they serve the public. We pay our rates and we want something in return. We are proud of where we live. Will the MBI, or our councillors, play their role more effectively?"

On a more positive note, the article "Will The New Perak Administration Build More Parks After GE-14?" published on May 16, prompted one IE reader to contact this paper and write about the joy of strolling along the Kinta River.

She, and her group of friends, who are regular walkers, claim that the only accessible part of the path, which runs along both banks of the Kinta River, is between the Kinta Riverfront Hotel and the YMCA.

She said, "If the grass was cut and the place tidied up, we could go all the way to Kampung Gajah, and Tanjung Rambutan, in the other direction."

"Tourists would like this very much. They would enjoy the walk along the banks of the Kinta River, appreciate the beautiful, countryside and take in the surroundings."

"The only problem is that the river is dirty, with rubbish floating in it, and plastic bags trapped by floating tree branches."

"The other issue, which puts people off walking along the river, is security and unkempt areas."

She described the existence of artificial trees planted at regular intervals in between real trees, along the path, adjacent to the Riverfront Hotel.

"The artificial trees allegedly cost around RM2000 each, and although they are expensive, they more or less, blend in with the real trees. At night, when they are lit up, they are pretty and light the area so people feel safer, otherwise the place would be dark."

"Most of these artificial trees are situated near the Kinta Riverfront Hotel, and the rest are placed on the route towards the YMCA. They are already proving to be quite a hit with both tourists and locals."

She and her friends think that the authorities should try and improve the walk along the river bank, concentrating on one stretch at a time. She also wants them to do something about cleaning up the river.

She said, "Apart from making the place look pretty and safe, think of the health benefits to the people. People will take up walking, but only if they think they will not come to any danger."

Aware that Kampung Gajah is around 75km from Ipoh she said, "I recall a former Menteri Besar who hailed from there, and at one time, organised a canoe race from here to his village. As the river is quite shallow, so it may be difficult to have this water activity all the time."

One of this group's favourite route is the walk from the Kinta Riverfront Hotel to the YMCA and Gunung Ceroh, and back. They then head in the other direction to St Michael's school, near Wisma Taiko, and turn back at the bridge.

They claim that that one can go further in either direction, but they like this route and it takes them a comfortable 90 minutes, with stops to admire sights along the way.

She said, "There is a fallen tree trunk along one stretch of the path, which has lain there for many weeks."



THINKING
ALLOWED

by Mariam Mokhtar

Perhaps, MBI should remove it, as it may fall and hurt someone who is foolish enough to walk under it."

Perhaps, people could phone the MBI office, to alert their workers to obstacles like this.

"On the bank opposite the Kinta Riverfront Hotel, there are some mysterious structures. They look like models of a tin sluice, and ancillary tin mining hardware, but all are covered with undergrowth," she added.

She recalls a tin mining museum, but is not sure what happened to it.

She said, "Perhaps, people stopped visiting the mining museum, as they preferred to walk in the well lit areas."

So, is this part of the Palong Tin Museum. Can someone shed some light on this. Is the Perak Tourism office able to help? Why have the artefacts been abandoned? Wasn't this project started by the Kinta Riverfront Hotel, MBI and the Perak Water and Drainage Department?

Perhaps, this is one other mystery that needs to be resolved, by the Ipoh mayor.

Malaysians are only too aware of abandoned projects, which were started with lots of funding and funfare. Few are maintained, and interest in them is not sustained, because the people running these projects lack imagination. In the end, they become eyesores, and a waste of time, money and resources.

Many issues were raised, and as a result, many promises made by Tourism Perak and the former MB, Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir, in the IE article "Revival of Kinta Riverfront Walk". Were the issues resolved?

The abandoned tin mining models tell another story.

Pull your socks up Perak Tourism and MBI!

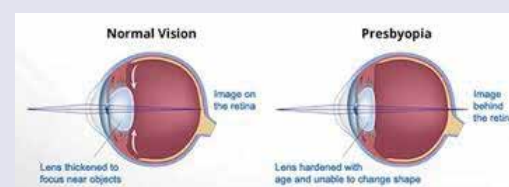
ABOUT LASIK

Dr Lee Mun Toong
Consultant Eye Specialist Surgeon KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital

Can Presbyopia be Cured?

What Is Presbyopia?

Presbyopia is when your eyes gradually lose the ability to see things clearly up close. It is a normal part of aging. In fact, the word "presbyopia" means "old eye" in Greek. You may start to notice



presbyopia shortly after age 40. You will probably find that you hold reading materials farther away in order to see them clearly.

What Causes Presbyopia?

When you are young, the lens is soft and flexible, easily changing shape. After age 40, the lens becomes more rigid. It cannot change shape as easily. This makes it harder to read, thread a needle, or do other close-up tasks.

There is no way to stop or reverse the normal aging process that causes presbyopia. However, presbyopia can be corrected with eyeglasses, contact lenses or surgery. If you do not correct presbyopia, you may be bothered by headaches and eye strain.

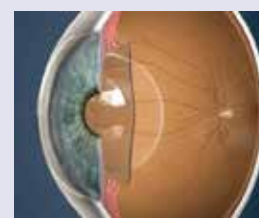
How Can I Treat Presbyopia?

1. Blended vision from Carl Zeiss Visumax/Mel 80



2. **Refractive Lens Exchange (RLE)** - In the RLE procedure, the eye's natural lens is replaced with an artificial lens implant (IOL) that is customized to fit the measurements and vision needs of each patient. Patients who have undergone RLE have a 96% satisfaction rate, with more than 80% reporting that they have completely eliminated glasses from their lives¹.

3. **Implantable Contact Lens (ICL) Surgery** - ICL surgery can give better outcomes for vision correction in young patients with high prescriptions, dry eyes or corneal abnormalities. The implantable contact lens works from within your eye, instead of sitting on the surface of your eye. It enables light to focus properly on the retina for clear vision without corrective eyewear. Visual recovery is very quick, with near-normal vision within a few hours after surgery.



¹Journal of Ophthalmology Volume 2014 (2014), Article ID 458296.

*Most Information from AAO academy.

For more information, readers can call Lee Eye Specialist 05 254 4388 or email at ishkpj@gmail.com. Also visit their Facebook page: LASIK Services at KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital.

Opening hours: 8.30am-5pm (Mondays to Fridays), 8.30am-1pm (Saturdays).

SeeFoon Discovers Quintessential Malay Cuisine



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



I have often lamented the dearth of good Malay restaurants especially in Ipoh and with a very few exceptions, most of the Malay food I have sampled here in restaurants have been middling to downright poor. The few good ones will certainly be in my upcoming book, the second edition of the **Foodie's Guide to Best Eats in Ipoh**.

During Ramadan, the food scene changes when many housewives come out to sell their home-cooked specialties at the Ramadan bazaars and this is when the rest of us can go on discovery saunters through the various bazaars picking out various delectables that are otherwise not available commercially.

But fear not intrepid foodies, for, top-notch Malay food has arrived on our doorstep in Ipoh in the Traditional Malay House Rumah Kutai where restaurant **LABU SAYONG** has been serving superlative Malay cuisine since its opening in August last year.

Here 60% of the menu items are traditional recipes from Perak state and the rest from other parts of Malaysia. These classical dishes have been languishing in the backwaters, having been eclipsed by the more readily available and less appealing ones that are ubiquitous everywhere.

A smart move by the Perak State Development Corporation in building this traditional Malay house and setting up an exquisite restaurant with the menu in the capable hands of Corporate Chef, Hospitality and Tourism, **Nazrie Bin Shaaban**. We sat down to a spectacular meal hosted by **Ahmad Bin Mohamed Salleh**, Operations manager and **Mahathir Mohammed**, Marketing Manager. And all prepared by **Chef Amran** who interprets all the recipes with his skilled touch.

From the decor, ambiance and the service coupled with the menu items, I can certainly predict that Labu Sayong will become the **GO TO place** for any visitor to Perak wishing to sample superlative Malay food.

Labu Sayong, named for the famous water calabash from Kuala Kangsar whose burnt-black colour and unique gourd-shape give it the ability to cool its contents quickly and some believe that water stored in such a manner is palliative against many illnesses and disorders; seats 68 people.

The downstairs area is fan cooled with ample seating and on the night we went, a magnificent spread was beckoning from the buffet table set up for buka puasa and by sheer serendipity some of my non-Muslim friends were also there, with one of them



saying that this was his sixth time at the restaurant and will continue to come back! Upstairs was air conditioned and elegantly furnished serving as the perfect backdrop for fine dining.

Our first dish was the **Ayam Kaduk Kerabu Limau Bali**, steamed minced chicken rolled up and stuffed with desiccated coconut, cumin, turmeric, and served on bed of pomelo salad with bunga kantan or ginger flower, pegaga leaves, blue butterfly pea petals, the fragrance of the various herbs and spices blending into a heady aroma; **RM13**.

Next we had **Tenggiri Kepai Pandan Udang Kertas**, a fish mousse accompanied by crispy deep fried prawns and topped with a black seafood sauce; **RM15**. Then followed one of their signature dishes, the **Ikan Purba Kuala Sayong**, a 700g sea bass stuffed with 27 local ingredients and deep fried, accompanied with chili ginger sauce; **RM60**.

Rusuk Kambing or lamb rib braised with Tongkat Ali (alleged to have aphrodisiac properties) was tender with a smooth blending of spices; **RM22**, followed by the **Beef Curry Gulai Kawah** which is beef curry with banana stem, a local favourite popular at weddings. This was mild and the spices well merged with the banana stem lending a special exotic touch to the dish. Alas this was from the buffet table and not on the à la carte menu.

We then had the **Rendang Daging Sayong**, a beautifully tender beef rendang that was more creamy than the usual Perak Rendang Tok and far less sweet, which suited my palate perfectly; **RM25**. Next came the **Kari Ayam Limau Purut Sungkai**, using limau purut (kaffir lime) juice and leaf to marinate with all the rest of the ingredients which were freshly ground and then cooked with red chillies; **RM20**.

The **Ikan Perkasam Coli Bawang**, a special salted fish deep fried with onions and chillies and served as a side dish, went marvellously well with the curried dishes; **RM13**.

For dessert we had the **Wadai Kiping Gula Kabung**, flour dumplings with palm sugar served with coconut milk **RM10** and **Sira Pisang Berangan Buah Kabung**, chilled bananas with attap seeds (from the Nipah palm); **RM10**.



Labu Sayong Signature Restaurant
5 Jalan Meru Bestari A14, 31200 Ipoh.
Tel: 05 237 5237

Website: www.labusayong.com.my

Set lunch: 11.30am-2.30pm; Malay afternoon tea: 2.30pm-6pm;

Dinner: 6pm-10pm.

Open 24/7; closed only 5 days a year.

Ask for their barbecued tenderloin too.

They also have a Cafe at Silveritige.

Interview with Human Resources Minister. . . continued from page 2

Ipoh Echo: What are your ministry's future plans?

Kula: If you look at the *Buku Harapan*, there is one chapter on equal opportunity commission to enable workers to get the job they have been denied. It's quite prevalent in most western countries. We want to establish that department to assist these kinds of people.

The second thing is on industrial relations. When I took over two weeks ago, there were 1600 outstanding cases for referral to the courts. I propose that this referral power be taken away from the minister. Ministers need not be judge, jury and prosecutor. I want to abolish that portfolio and give that right to the worker to go direct to the industrial court so that there will be speedy disposal. There must be more freedom for workers. This is one of the things I want to achieve.

My immediate project is, after Raya I'll take the staff from the labour and SOCSO departments to visit markets like I frequently do. Over the last 20 years I've been going to the markets on weekends to meet people. I found nearly 70 percent of problems are either related to the labour office or SOCSO department. I want to do a trial in Ipoh first. Once it picks up, I'll have the department extended to all the 222 constituencies in the country so that they can be people-friendly.

Ipoh Echo: Outside of your responsibility as a minister, what is the latest on Indira Gandhi's case?

Kula: As a lawyer until two weeks ago (once you become a minister, you cannot practise), we have won all the orders. We are waiting, finally, for the police to locate the child because there is an order from court and to arrest the husband because he is in contempt by not coming to court.

I also encourage a lot of Malaysian lawyers to do more *pro bono* cases because that's part of their social responsibility. We must bring equality to everybody.



Ipoh Echo: Expectations of Malaysians are sky high. So how is PH going to sustain itself in the next five years?

Kula: One of the promises that DAP has made is ministers, MPs, state assemblymen, councillors and party chairmen should not accept honorific awards such as datukship from states and federal. Thus you see the same Kula for the next five years. We're not allowed to take or apply for an inch of land from the government. We're not allowed to get involved in any business deals with the government. And we're required to declare our assets. I got no hesitation about that.

I'm happy that the expectations of the *rakyat* are very high. Please do your duty and keep us on our toes. My ministry's doors are always open. I'm just an ordinary Kula who visits markets every Saturday and Sunday.

Above all, our lifestyles don't change, we must be as humble as possible and reach out to the *rakyat*.



Ipoh Echo: Could you tell us a little bit about yourself?

Kula: I was born in an estate, son of a rubber tapper. We had a very tough time. We didn't have water and electricity for the first ten years. I'm the eighth out of nine children. My late mother was illiterate but she insisted on one thing, every kid of hers must be educated. My late father was such a hardworking person. After the Japanese Occupation in 1945, he cycled 30km to town to sell salt. The bicycle those days had hard and airless rubber tyres.

After school, I sold newspapers, did household works and looked after farm animals. We never had a refrigerator to store food like today. These hardships taught me how to survive.

Ipoh Echo: How did your journey in politics begin?

Kula: That triggered me when I was very young. I was one of those with a red IC when I was twelve. I never understood why. After three years, I was able to acquire a blue IC and then sat for my Form Three LCE examinations. When I was in Form Five or Six, I liked to listen to *ceramahs* and was pretty excited by these political speeches.

I contested as a DAP candidate in Canning Garden in 1995, Teluk Intan in 1997 and Ipoh Barat in 1999. My joining politics is only for one simple reason – to empower and to help the people. And I firmly believe there must be zero involvement in corruption.

Ipoh Echo: Before we end, is there anything else that you would like to add?

Kula: I am concerned that a lot of youths are not so involved in politics. Start questioning your politicians, MPs, state assemblymen and local councillors. They must be answerable to you. Start engaging with them via NGOs, etc. so they will be on their toes. Tomorrow's world is with the youths thus they play a pivotal role.

We will make the electoral process easier via automatic (online) registration. It costs the government RM110 million to register voters. Our onerous Election Commission is wasteful and silly when you can do everything online without any cost.

We'll reduce the voting age to 18. Why don't governments worldwide want to register young voters? This is because young voters generally vote against the government. With the RM110 million how many low-cost houses, schools and hospitals can we build? How many children can get scholarships? These have been going on for years and years. And this should stop.



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.

Wishes for a New Malaysia

We are a nation in transition.

We are in a 'back to the future situation' – trying to reclaim our birthright as Malaysians; what we experienced in our early days as a nation.

But old, backward ways and voices try to hold us back, calling us back to the dark side.

Religion, Race, Division, Corruption, Special Rights, Some above the others, Fear.....

All of these are the voices of the dark one, evil is their path.

As Yoda said "fear is the path to the dark side".

We need to move collectively to the light and to reclaim Malaysia for all Malaysians.

"Tired we are, of the old ways." We need to leave old and failed ways behind, leave them to failed parties and blinded people, full of hatred and poison in their souls.

So we need to speak Trust, Truth, Justice, Hope, Kindness, Understanding, Love, Acceptance, Unity, One People.....

Can we articulate some wishes for our brave new Malaysia that dwell in many hearts:

It would be good if we stop using ethnic descriptions in speech or writing.

No more the use of "Malay" and "non-Malay". None of us are "non-anything", we are Malaysians.

Let us focus on the needs of our people, especially for the poor in our country, everyone, everywhere, including our foreign workers who help build Malaysia.

It would be good to remove the titles and barriers that hinder communication and that encourage

'false' homage. Our homage is only to God. All of mankind are equal in God's eyes. The term "YB" should refer to "yang berkerja" untuk masyarakat. Elected representatives and those in the civil service are there to serve the nation, not be lords.

We would love to see the return of respect that we owe to all religions, and even to those who choose not to follow any. Belief or lack of it is a personal choice, no one can dictate to another. Return religion to the domain of the personal and remove it from all official activities. Let us not be critical of another person's spiritual belief system but work to deepen our own.

For wishes to come true we will all have to work, and work really hard to undo years of poisoning of the hearts and minds of our people. But now we have an opportunity, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

We, the people, have to be the check and balance our government needs us to be.

We will have to be the fabric of love that holds the people together amidst the tension and fears.

We will have to be the love that glues us together until race, religion, power, money no longer divides us.

One Malaysia, One People, One Nation, One Dream, Unity.....

Dr Amar-Singh HSS (Dato')

Dr Lim Swee-Im (Datin)

A Little Bit of Palm Oil in Everything



KUALA LUMPUR KEPONG BERHAD

Oil palm is known as Malaysia's golden crop¹ and the cultivation of this crop is the main core business of Kuala Lumpur Kepong Berhad (KLK), a public listed company located in the heart of Ipoh in historic Old Town. But not many Ipohites know about the wonders of this golden crop - what it is used for and where it is used in. So we thought we would run a series of articles introducing you to the oil palm tree and the many benefits of this rather unknown and sometimes misunderstood crop.

Did you know that palm oil, derived from the fresh fruit bunches of a palm oil tree, has been part of your daily life whether you realized it or not. When you start your day with a shower before heading out to breakfast at your local mamak store, chances are you have already used products or consumed food with traces of oil palm in it.

Palm oil is the world's most widely consumed vegetable oil. It is used in a wide range of products, from the creamer in your morning cup of coffee or the margarine spread on your breakfast toast, to the chocolate and ice cream in your dinner time dessert. Palm oil is also widely used in soaps, cosmetics and even as biofuel for cars and buses.

Among major oilseed crops, oil palm is the most efficient oil-bearing crop globally, requiring the smallest percentage (5%) of cultivated land but producing the largest percentage (31%) of total output. Oil palm requires only 0.26 hectares of land to produce one tonne of oil while soybean requires 2.22 hectares, sunflower requires 2 hectares and rapeseed 1.52 hectares to produce the same².

This makes palm oil the least expensive oil in the world, which increases its uses across many products. It's no wonder when you head to the supermarket, half the packaged products on the shelves contains palm oil. From sunrise to sunset, there is a little bit of palm oil in everything you use or consume and KLK is committed in producing high quality crops in a sustainable environment.

Apart from plantations, KLK also diversifies into resource-based manufacturing and property development with a global workforce close to 40,000 employees. The products manufactured by KLK reaches out to more than 120 countries across the world like China, India, Singapore, USA, Japan and South Korea. For more details on KLK, visit www.klk.com.my

¹ Fernandez, Alvin. "Oil Palm - Malaysia's Golden Crop." The Star Online Web 5 May 2012.

² <http://www.mpoc.org.my>, MPOC Webmaster at. "What Is Palm Oil?" Palm Oil and Palm Kernel Oil Applications, MPOC Malaysia, www.mpoc.org.my/Palm_Oil.aspx.



Our Malaysia

Tommy Thomas, Our New AG

After a near deadlock, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Sultan Muhammad V, finally consented to the appointment of Tommy Thomas as the new Attorney-General (AG) of Malaysia. A statement released by Istana Negara on Tuesday, June 4 stated, "Referring to Article 145 (1) of the Federal Constitution, his Majesty has granted the appointment of Mr Tommy Thomas as the Attorney-General of the country, on the advice of the Prime Minister."

Prior to his appointment, many had voiced their dissatisfaction with the nomination of a non-Malay as AG. Nasrudin Hassan from PAS said that the sensitivity of Muslims must be respected. Was Prime Minister Tun Mahathir right in appointing Tommy Thomas as the AG to replace Mohamed Apandi Ali? In order to get expert opinions on the matter, Ipoh Echo spoke to those in the know.

Ipoh-based lawyer, Yee Seu Kai, 55, who has been practising law for over two decades, said that the Federal Government had made the right decision in implementing institutional changes based on merits and not race or religion.

"Tommy Thomas is the right person for the job. He has practised law with much honesty and integrity for years and has vast litigation experience," said Yee. He was amused by claims that the AG must be a Muslim. "Article 145 (3) of the Federal Constitution doesn't bar a non-Muslim from holding the position of AG. It also provides that the AG's power excludes Shariah Law. There ought to be different voices in a democratic country. Be that as it may, what's important is that our government implements institutional changes for the good of Malaysia; and all appointments be based on meritocracy in our beloved multiracial country," he added.

Retired teacher and social activist S. Sundralingam expressed his delight with the appointment of the new AG. "Tommy Thomas is a very versatile lawyer. I don't think anyone can question his credentials. He's been very consistent in his practice of law and is a very skillful lawyer. What makes me feel he's the perfect person for the position is that he is a man of integrity. Malaysia needs an AG who is honest when carrying out his duties," he stressed.

The 61-year-old retiree said that Malaysians must understand that the country has



Tommy Thomas



Yee Seu Kai



S.Sundralingam

had non-Muslim AGs before. Thomas will be the country's third non-Muslim AG, following his predecessors, Thomas Vernor Alexander Brodie and Cecil M. Sheridan. He will, however, be the first non-Muslim AG since 1963. "The people of Malaysia should not feel threatened. Under the Constitution, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong can relieve the AG of his position if he finds that the AG is infringing the rights of the rakyat, including the rights of the Muslim citizens" he enjoined.

Muhammad Hasanuddin Mohd Yusoff, 29, a practising lawyer for five years, believes that the Federal Government appointed the right person for the position. "I've friends who have done their internship with Tommy. I heard nothing but positive remarks about him. He's a renowned lawyer in the country. I don't think anyone would want to face him in court. He's extremely knowledgeable. You'd struggle to find someone more qualified to be the country's AG. Hasanuddin maintained that there are no requirements for the AG to be a Muslim. "Shariah law has its own jurisdiction. The Muslim community need not worry, as the AG has no control over it," he insisted.

The people of Malaysia harbour hopes that the new AG will carry out his duty with dignity, integrity and responsibility. All said and done, the appointment of Tommy Thomas augurs well for the integrity of the country's Judiciary.

Joshua Jacob

Masseter Muscle Reduction Procedures

Dr. Leow Aik Ming

Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon
Pantai Hospital Ipoh and Pantai Hospital Manjung

The essential role of masseter muscle is for adequate mastication (chewing). This bulky muscle is located laterally to the mandibular ramus, and thus plays an important role in facial aesthetics. Masseter hypertrophy is recognized as an asymptomatic enlargement of one or both masseter muscles. A hypertrophied masseter will alter facial lines, generating discomfort, and create negative cosmetic impacts in many patients. This leads to the prominent mandibular angle which is considered to be aesthetically unacceptable. The muscle function may also be impaired, thus resulting in conditions such as trismus, protrusion, and bruxism.

In most cases of masseter hypertrophy, it is bilateral and symmetric, but asymmetry is not unusual. In majority of the cases, the etiological factor is unknown therefore it is considered to be idiopathic. Unilateral occurrence can also be seen when patients chew or clench primarily on one side.

There are various treatment modalities for the management of masseteric hypertrophy. The aim of the treatment is to improve facial balance, change the shape of an overly square face and relief pain or discomfort as a result of an overly large masseter muscle.

The treatment modalities can be categorized into:

(A) Non Surgical Treatment for Masseteric Hypertrophy:

Conservative management of the idiopathic masseter hypertrophy includes psychological counselling, use of mouthguards, muscle relaxants, anxiolytic drugs, analgesics, physical therapy, dental restorations, and occlusal adjustments to correct premature contacts. A good result can be achieved in the patients with mild hypertrophy but there is no reliable success rate of isolated clinical therapy. Injection of botulinum toxin type A (Botox) into the masseter muscle was considered as less invasive modality for the treatment of muscle hypertrophy. Local injection of very small doses of Botox into a muscle produces local paralysis and therefore, individual muscles can be selectively weakened and atrophy of the muscle occurs. Perhaps the biggest disadvantage of botulinum toxin therapy is that the treatment effect wears away and reverts to the original condition in 4 - 6 months. Unlike surgical excision of muscle tissue that reduces the actual number of muscle cells, botulinum toxin type A only reduces muscle volume temporarily.

(B) Surgical Treatment for Masseteric Hypertrophy:

This surgical treatment consists of removal of 3/4 to 2/3 of all muscle mass via intraoral approach. Occasionally, mandibular cortical bone or angle osteotomy can also be performed at the same time to achieve a streamlined jawline contour. The surgery to access the masseter muscles and the mandible (jawbone) is performed through incisions on the inside of the mouth, between the gum and cheek (lower buccal sulcus area), leaving no visible scarring. Once the correct amount of bone and muscle has been removed, the incision is closed with self-dissolving sutures. The result of surgical approach to masseteric hypertrophy is predictable and longer lasting compared to non surgical method.



Education



Public Speaking

On Tuesday, May 29, Ed Quest Global held a certificate presentation ceremony at their centre at Ipoh Garden South. Certificates were presented to eight graduates, who enrolled in Ed Quest's inaugural Public Speaking/Master of Ceremonies Programme. The eight underwent 15 intensive training classes beginning in March.

The objective was to improve the participants' ability to organise and deliver proper presentations, as well as to improve their confidence when speaking in public. Harry Seggu, the founder of Ed Quest Global, said he approached K.T. Pillai, the lead trainer to assist him in carrying out the session, a year and a half ago.

"I've always wanted to share my experience and knowledge with others. I've been a professional speaker for 31 years now and I never had the opportunity to learn from a professional. When Harry made the proposal, I didn't think twice. I'm always willing to offer my guidance to those who want to learn," said Pillai.

Pillai feels that public speaking is an essential skill that has to be acquired by everyone. "You see big names on television. Most don't seem too confident when speaking. That shows you the need to learn how to speak with the right poise and composure. In fact, public speaking should be a subject in schools. But for now, I'll do what I can to help," said an enthusiastic Pillai.

Abhiram Sandheep, 13, and Arwin Nanntha, 14, were two of the eight who received their certificates. The two students from Tenby International School, Ipoh expressed their pleasure with the progress they had made since doing the programme.

"I'm in my school debate team. I lacked confidence when speaking. So, I decided to join the programme. I've improved since," said Arwin delightedly.

Readers wishing to enrol in the Training programme can call Harry Seggu: 016 558 4815 for details.

Joshua Jacob

Tourism

Bubur Lambuk WOW 2018

Over seven thousand packets of bubur lambuk (spiced porridge) were distributed for free during a cook-off programme at MBI Square on Tuesday, June 5.

Organised by Tourism Perak, it was joined by 17 governmental and private agencies, including Perak Media Sports and Welfare Club.

Tan Kar Hing, the Executive Councillor for Tourism, Arts and Culture said that the WOW Bubur Lambuk programme could strengthen relations between various agencies and Ipohites.

Bubur lambuk is among the traditional Malay delicacies which is popularly enjoyed during the month of Ramadan.



Perak Tourism Master Plan

Despite receiving the highest number of domestic tourists for three consecutive years, the Executive Councillor for Tourism, Art and Culture, Tan Kar Hing believes that more need to be done to further improve Perak's tourism and art scene.

During the annual Tourism Perak's breaking-of-fast dinner with media practitioners held at Heritage Hotel, Ipoh on Tuesday, June 5, Tan announced plans to review tourism infrastructures and existing facilities, including ongoing upgrades of Perak's touristic hotspots.

"A complete audit will be done on contractors and tourist agencies to ensure all concerned are carrying out their duties truthfully. Perak has many potentials in the tourism sector, hence why we'll be launching the Perak Tourism Master Plan soon," said Tan.

The plan is based on four crucial elements; Creativity, Identity, Diversity and Sustainability. According to Tan, this idea was built to create a more holistic and organised approach into making Perak the best in the tourism sector. The department will establish a Creative Tourism Fund with the expressed aim of finding creative and innovative talents that will help promote Perak's tourism.

"Aside from the fund, we're working to diversify the sector by creating fair-share opportunities so districts can be promoted fairly," Tan added.

Ili Aqilah



"This is the seventh to be organised since 2012. Support from various ethnicities is simply great," he said.

Besides distributing the porridge, Tan too presented prizes to the winners.

Malaysian Association of Hotels was adjudged overall winner taking home a cash prize of RM1000.

Rosli Mansor



Connexion

By Joachim Ng

A time to apologise and to forgive

Maaf Zahir & Batin. "Forgive me for whatever wrong I may have done to you whether physically or emotionally." Beyond the joviality and kenduri, the ritual of seeking forgiveness is one of the great spiritual highlights of Hari Raya Aidilfitri. Addressing their staff before a meal, bosses would ask to be forgiven. This is also a season for parents and children to reconcile with one another if they have become estranged through misunderstandings.

It's a salutary practice that other communities should emulate. Senior-generation Chinese used to do it in a roundabout way by enquiring of someone: "Have you eaten yet?" It's an expression that actually says: "It's okay between us, so let me treat you to a meal." Acceptance of the offer denotes willingness to patch up if there has been a spat.

Why should you apologise? It cools tempers down in a rage incident, dissolves anger, and averts retaliation or limits the counter-blow to a demand for recompense if the apology is accepted. Without apology and forgiveness, there is no reconciliation and relationships may be permanently damaged.

Why should you forgive? Because it's a healthy thing to do! American soldier Richard Fiske, who survived the World War II bombing of Pearl Harbour, so hated the Japanese that he developed a bleeding ulcer. He became a prisoner of his own bitterness. Forty years on, he accepted an apology from a Japanese pilot who came to Hawaii to make personal atonement, and Fiske's life took a turn for the better thereon. The healing and restorative power of the apology and forgiveness eventually dissolved hatred.

Should you forgive only when an apology is made? That makes your behaviour reactive. Do you know what's the No. 1 killer in Malaysia? Not global warming. It's hot temper. A man in Kuantan quarrelled with his wife over a parking summons and strangled her. Family arguments, fights between couples, road rage, squabbles among friends or strangers — the police murder files are full of such tragedies that could have been prevented if we habitually forgive instead of retaliating for slights. And we should habitually apologise instead of justifying our wrongdoings.

Maaf Zahir & Batin. A festival season is an appropriate time for all Malaysians to patch the wounds of misunderstandings that develop in any relationship.



Snail Service at Animal Clinic



The Perak Veterinary Department, located at Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah Utara (opp JPJ) provides medical treatments for cats, dogs and pets, generally. However, Ipoh Echo has received countless complaints from Ipohites about its "snail" service.

We sent our team recently to investigate and much to our horror there was truth in what was reported. Our reporter had to wait over three hours to see the vet with her "sick" cat.

The animal clinic within the department has laid out rules regarding registration — visitors can only register between 8am and 11am for morning session (45 cases) and between 2pm to 3.30pm (25 cases) Monday till Thursday. On Friday it is between 8am and 10.30am

(45 cases) and between 2.45pm and 3.30pm (25 cases). The clinic is closed on weekends and public holidays.

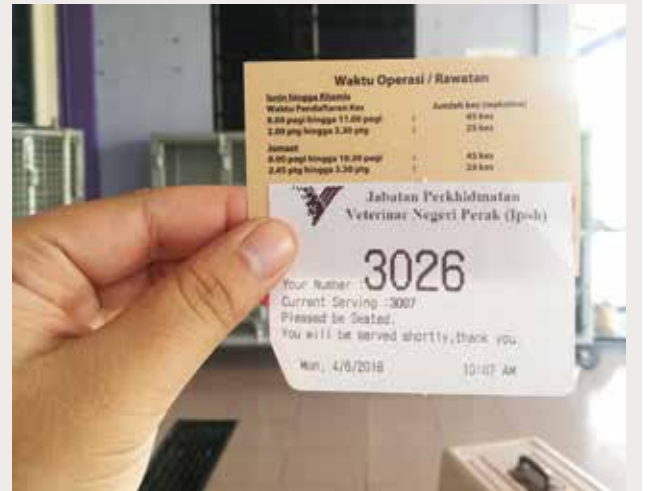
The Executive Councillor for Public Utilities, Plantation and Agriculture, Abdul Yunus Jamhari who is responsible for the department said he has not received any complaints thus far.

"I advise aggrieved parties to file a complaint with me or my office. I'll act on their complaints upon receipt," he told Ipoh Echo when contacted. "Forward your complaints to my office," he insisted.

The public have the option of choosing private animal clinics in town, government-run clinics, nonetheless, should not only be efficient but people-friendly too. It is the new era of openness and engagement. The "repressive" years of Umno/BN are gone following GE 14 on May 9.

Readers wishing to file complaints regarding services at the Perak Veterinary Clinic can send them to Abdul Yunus Jamhari, Pejabat Setiausaha Kerajaan Negeri, Bangunan Perak Darul Ridzuan, Jalan Panglima Gantang Wahab, 30100 Ipoh, Perak.

Ili Aqilah



Opinion

Follow the World Bank Procurement Guidelines

Like any Malaysian, I am very happy to read Tun Dr Mahathir's interview with the Financial Times. In an interview with the Financial Times on Monday (May 28), Tun Dr Mahathir said the nation's financial situation was his government's top priority.

"We need to do away with some of the unnecessary projects, for example the high-speed rail, which is going to cost us RM110 billion (S\$37 billion) and will not earn us a single cent. That will be dropped."

The newly-appointed Malaysian Finance Minister, Mr Lim Guan Eng said last week that the nation's total government debt, including liabilities from the scandal-hit 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) state fund, had spiralled to more than RM1 trillion, or 80 percent of gross domestic product.

The quickest way to save money is to scrap all the contracts awarded by the BN Government without open competitive tenders.

Although it is necessary to spend huge sums of money on infrastructures, it must be carried out in the proper way. The best and only way is to follow the World Bank procurement guidelines.

Soon after Malaysia got independence from the British in 1957, our government borrowed a large sum of money from the World Bank for the Muda River irrigation project in Kedah and Perlis to enable us to produce double the amount of rice. Before the project implementation we could only grow one crop of rice during the north-east monsoon.

I was one of the contractors for the Muda Irrigation project. That was how I founded Mudajaya which joined up with IGB and Jurutama to become IJM Corporation Bhd eventually.

The World Bank gave out cheap interest loans to help underdeveloped countries, and Malaysia was an underdeveloped country then.

Anyone can get the World Bank procurement guidelines for free by typing "World Bank procurement guidelines" on google search. This system will prevent corruption even in the most corrupt countries in the world. Malaysia must follow this system.

The BN government often gave out huge contracts and concessions without open competitive tenders. Sometimes, the BN government just called a few contractors to submit their proposals for consideration. Each contractor would submit his own proposal with his price. How could the government select the cheapest and the best contractor? How could the government compare apple, orange or banana?

Who can refuse a one billion Ringgit bribe?

I cannot imagine any government official would not be tempted to accept a RM1 billion bribe when he is involved in the negotiation of a multi-billion Ringgit contract.

What is the difference if contract price is RM110 billion or RM109 billion? Who can refuse a RM1 billion bribe?

The complete World Bank procurement guidelines is more than 100 pages long. Let me give you a summarized version of the guidelines.

The Best Way to Evaluate Tenders

The best way in terms of award of tenders is for government to follow the guidelines as established by the World Bank. Incidentally, these procurement guidelines are easily available over the website and are even applied in some of the most corrupt countries of the world in an effort to reduce corruption.

Firstly, the government must engage a reputable engineering consulting firm which has experience with similar projects to put up a proposal and to open the project bidding to all contractors to tender. All the contractors must be pre-qualified based on both their technical and financial ability. All contractors must submit tenders conforming to the original design so that the cheapest tender can be selected. If all the contractors are pre-qualified, the government tender board has only to look at the tendered price. Always award the contract to the contractor who submits the cheapest tender assuming that all the other criteria are met.

It is important not to allow anybody from the government to negotiate with any contractor to avoid corruption.

Finally, transparency and accountability require that all documents on the proposal be placed in the public sphere — not just limited information but detailed and full breakdowns in accordance with international best practices.

If we want to reach the status of a highly-developed nation, we must immediately implement the standards of economic good governance, accountability and transparency that come with it.



Nosh News with SeeFoon

CI YI Claypot Restaurant

It is very heartening for me see young Ipohites coming home to roost and for a Foodie like me, right down my alley – opening restaurants – bringing with them their expertise gleaned from running restaurants in other parts of the world. Kent Lim is one of these enterprising young people, coming back to Ipoh from Ireland where he had a restaurant and opening **CI YI Claypot Restaurant in Bercham.**

And what a perfect time too to be running a restaurant in Ipoh, what with all the international media beating a path to our doors, raving about our great food, our wonderful touristic potential and in general making Ipoh the “In” place to visit.

With CIYI restaurant, you’ll have a meal with a difference, a selection of different types of claypot dishes, each in a size serving at least two people. Like the Lamb pot, deliciously aromatic and tender lamb ribs braised with bean curd skin **RM38.80**; the pork ribs with ginger slices **RM29.90**; the Pork Rib Soup which Ken promises no MSG that was totally divine at **RM29.90** and the Patin fish Claypot at **RM36.80**. I would have ordered more like the Sea Cucumber claypot at **RM88** and the abalone claypot at **RM118**; but being only six at the table we had to slow down as the best was yet to come.

For the braised dishes, after all the goodies were emptied, the soup which came in thermos flasks, was then poured in, the fires started under the claypots and the steamboat fun begins. With 55 options of side dishes to choose from, you can spend a very

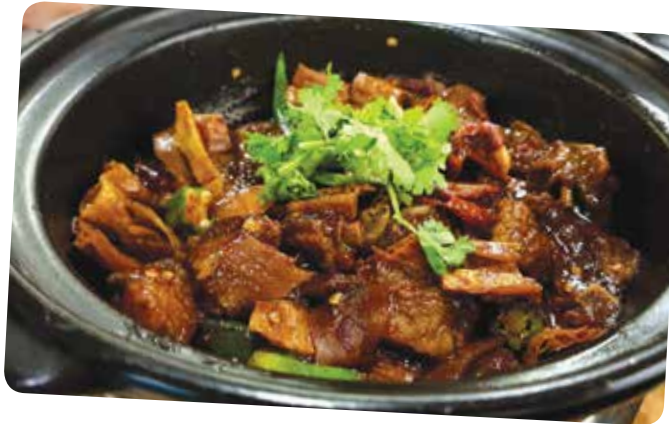
long evening indeed (as we did) going back and forth to select yet another side dish to cook in the delicious broth. Prices range from **RM1.80** to **RM6.80**. And did I mention the 12 types of noodles including some very delicious Yee Meen which eaten with the broth and vegetables brought us all to culinary heaven. They also have the **Teochew meatballs** which is fish paste stuffed with minced meat inside.

You can also take breaks in between all this eating to admire and perhaps even to purchase the art adorning the walls of the restaurant as well as the gallery upstairs.

No. 66A, Jalan Bercham Taman Ria, Taman Seri Dermawan, 31400 Ipoh.

Tel.: 05 541 7973

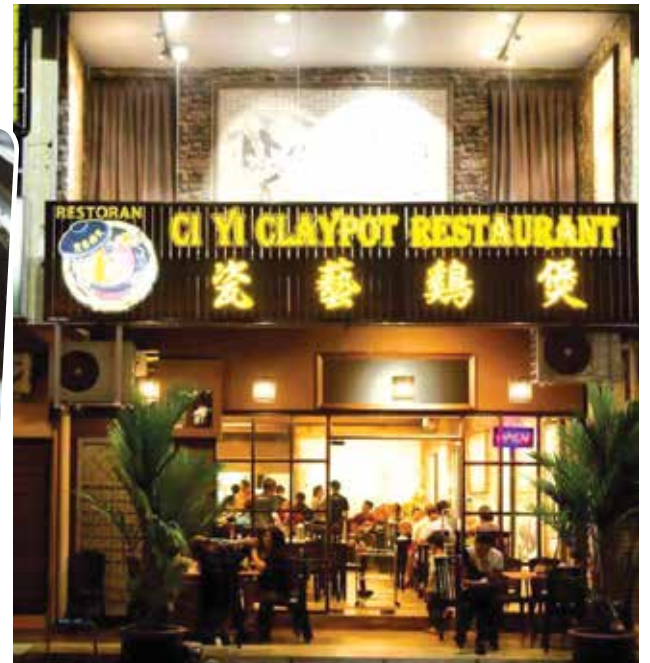
Operation hours: 11.30am-2.30am, 5pm-11pm. Open 24/7.



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Entertainment

Should MAPS be Closed?

In a media statement on Saturday, May 26, Perak DAP Chairman, Nga Kor Ming urged board members of Perak Corporation Bhd (PCB) to resign and take full responsibility for an RM340.6 million loss.

It pertains to costs incurred in the running of the Movie Animation Park Studio (MAPS) in Meru, Ipoh. Financial losses in fiscal year 2017 alone was a staggering RM280 million. Imagine what this amount of money could do for the state?

Nga hoped newly-minted Menteri Besar, Ahmad Faizal Azumu, would hold a meeting soon to discuss the future of MAPS.

“Maintaining and managing the theme park, shouldn’t be the state’s responsibility,” Nga reasoned. “The previous state government had blatantly ignored this and Perakeans now have to bear the consequences,” he said.

The statement generated a flurry of comments from the public on Ipoh Echo’s Facebook page.

“Thanks to my annual pass I could visit the park a few times. But it’s a huge disappointment, as many of the billed attractions and facilities are non-existent,” said Noor Ain Mokhtar, a frequent visitor.

Executive Councillor for Infrastructure and Corridor Development, Dato’ Seri Ir Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin feels that a forensic audit should be conducted to determine the park’s faults and flaws.

“The facility is in bad shape. In its current form it’ll deter visitors from coming. After a soft launch in June 2017, it has yet to be fully operational due to ongoing renovations and construction works,” said Nizar.

The Adun for Sungai Rapat and former Menteri Besar, Nizar felt that MAPS could be revitalised but it would cost the state government a fortune. If revitalising the “stalled” park is considered uneconomical and a sheer waste of funds, then closing it seems the only option left.

PCB, a subsidiary of the Perak State Economic Development Corporation, a state-linked company, owns 51 percent of MAPS’s shares; 34 percent belong to developer RSG MAPS Sdn Bhd while the remainder 15 percent is held by an unspecified individual.

According to an inside source the theme park makes barely RM1 million in ticket sales a month. With such a paltry collection can it service its loans?

Should the park remain open despite the losses? Or should it be closed?

Here are some more comments received from concerned Ipohites:

- Nooris Ismail wondered whether a feasibility study was done before the theme park was built. A study, he said should now be done to determine the flaws and rectifications be made. Closing the facility should be the last option, as there are parties keen to manage or buy it.



- John Nadason feels that the entrance fee was a wee bit too pricey. Moreover, there is nothing much to see. A good marketing strategy may help.
- Sarjit Singh was more livid. He bought a one-year pass. On the opening day it was exciting but as the days passed by the excitement soon vanished. Many attractions are still incomplete, although they are being billed. He had to wait two hours to get in and 15 minutes to get out. He insisted that the park be closed so it won’t incur further losses.

We received some 140 comments and the piece was shared 200 times. The majority of readers felt that MAPS should be closed for good.

Ili Aqilah

YOGA? You must be joking!

That was my first reaction when my dear wife asked me to go for a private lesson in Yoga about two years ago. Me? I was past 50 years old then and stiff as a board! How would I be able to do any form of yoga! But when the good wife commands, one has only to follow. So off we went.

Twenty minutes into the warm-up flow, while performing the crescent moon pose, I got a severe cramp in my back and all I could do was lie flat on the floor for the rest of the class. However, I was not one to give up especially with my wife looking smug, so I went for my second session the next weekend. Again! I cramped and collapsed on the floor. This time I had to visit the orthopaedic doctor for muscle relaxants and painkillers.

You see, I suffered from a 30-degree scoliosis kink in my spine probably from birth and exacerbated by years of playing vigorous tennis and trying to hit the golf ball as far as I could (with limited success I might add) where I only twist my body one-way all the time. The doctor said there was nothing to be done as it was not bad enough to require surgery but there was no cure – just live with it.

Later, when I started meditation and tried to sit crossed-legged on the floor I kept wondering why I could not sit for more than 5 minutes without excruciating pain while others could sit serenely with their knees relaxed on the ground for hours, obviously in great bliss!

Looking back, I am very glad I did not give up and persisted with Yoga. My back is almost straight now and I can sit in half lotus for a bit longer and have a small taste of the serenity and calm that meditation is supposed to provide.

Yoga has transformed my life. I no longer worry about getting back muscle cramps first thing in the morning simply by stretching in bed. On a good day I can even do the headstand without falling over. I started to enjoy slow jogs again without pain in my knees and lower back and all wrapped up in knee guards.

I have come to realize that Yoga is indeed beneficial, especially for middle-aged men (and women) like me. Most of us are somewhat health conscious and spend a fair bit of time doing some sort of exercise like running, tennis, golf, aerobics or gym. These are all very good, except that none of them involves the entire body – muscles, tendons, ligaments, bones, joints and cardio. Most popular exercises work only on a specific group of muscles and neglect the



By Dr Tan Chin Yong



Lifestyle

Celebrate Father's Day at Meru Valley Resort



Thinking of where to treat your special man on Father's Day? Treat Dad to something he deserves at Meru Valley Resort which will be at-the-ready on Sunday, June 17 to help show Dad how special he is. Check out the following offers at the resort.

- **Father's Day Golf Promotion:** Think of novelty presents that play to his interests from Meru Valley Resort. Treat him to a round of golf and walk away with a sleeve of SRIXON golf balls. Book your tee-time now by calling **05 529 3300/05 529 3333**.
- **Father's Day Treat at the Dome Restaurant:** Do something a little different. Skip the tie or the cufflinks and take Dad out for a relaxing meal at the Dome Restaurant. Spend a minimum of RM80 in a single receipt and receive FREE Himalaya products of his choice. Call **05 529 3358** to book a table.

For more information, log on to www.meruvally.com.my or swing by its Facebook page: **Meru Valley Resort**.

Mei Kuan

others. As we age, we naturally become less flexible and combined with the imbalance in our musculature built up over the years, would regularly lead to all kinds of body aches and pains with back, neck and knee pains being the most common. Like most people, I used to go for massages a lot in search of temporary relief without curing the root cause.

Next issue: You don't have to be flexible to do Yoga. You do Yoga to become flexible.



iSpeak

By A. Jeyaraj

Community Programme to Handle Garden Waste

MBI has come up with a Community Programme to handle Garden and Bulk Waste and put flyers in letter boxes in housing estates including Medan Tambun, whose residents wanted to know more about the programme.

Mohd Syahrizal Azmi, Ipoh City Council Public Relations Officer informed that MBI has stopped the monthly collection of garden refuse and bulk waste like old furniture. He said that there was an increase in the number of households disposing of these and many illegal dumpsites are cropping up. People are throwing garbage everywhere and it is becoming very difficult to locate the ever increasing locations of dumpsites. MBI workforce is finding it difficult to cope with the workload on garbage disposal.

However, he added that if residents in a housing estate get together and organise cleaning activities or gotong royong, MBI would assist in disposing the garbage.

MBI has given list of contractors whom individuals can call to collect garden refuse from their houses. It is up to the individual to negotiate the price.

Many rate payers do not accept the reason given by MBI. With more houses coming up, the revenue collected increases. MBI has also implemented a coupon parking system in many housing estates thus further increasing revenue. It is the responsibility of MBI to collect garden refuse.

During my evening walks I take different routes and notice that people are throwing garbage including garden waste and old furniture wherever they like. I have seen people coming in cars and throwing garbage. Residents living near a big illegal



dumpsite in Merdeka Garden informed me that men come in lorries at night and throw construction waste. It is difficult to locate and collect garbage from all the sites.

If a person buys new furniture or an electrical item he can ask the shopkeeper to take away the old item. When I replaced my old mattress, the shopkeeper took away the old one. He informed me that he would give the old one

to an orphanage. He is doing social work without publicity.

Even if MBI collects garden refuse once a month, if a person cuts his tree the day after collection, he must store it for one month before collection. Many residents pay their grass cutter extra money to dispose of garden waste.

Residents living in corner houses at road junctions beautify the piece of land at the road junction. Unscrupulous people throw garbage at this location.

The pamphlet also gives guideline on how to pack garden and bulk waste. Cleanliness is the responsibility of the public and we should follow the guidelines to prevent contracting diseases.

As far as disposal of garbage is concerned, the so-called educated and uneducated people do the same thing. It is up to civic-minded people to educate these people. With this type of mentality we cannot achieve first world status.

With the change of government, a new mayor will likely be appointed and ratepayers can take up the issue with him.

Cleanliness is next to godliness.

Community

KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital Celebrates Ramadan



As part of its CSR effort to support the community, KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital made a difference this year with a series of Ramadan celebrations involving both the underprivileged as well as the public.

This second holy Friday of the Ramadan month, KPJ Ipoh made a contribution comprising rice, sugar, cooking oil, biscuits, flour and other essentials to Rumah Darul Hidayah, Jalan Lahat, a shelter for the Rohingyas and Pertubuhan Kebajikan Rumah Orang-orang Tua Islam Titian Abadi (PEKITA), Lahat.

A total of 40 Rohingya children and 10 Rohingya adults from Rumah Darul Hidayah, Jalan Lahat and 31 senior citizens from PEKITA enjoyed the time spent with the hospital's volunteers.

The hospital's CEO, Yusmah Salleh said, "This is the first round of our Ramadan celebrations with the underprivileged and the public. Besides celebrating with the



Rohingya children and the elderly in PEKITA, we are happy to celebrate this holy month of Ramadan with the public who are perhaps unable to break fast at home. Therefore, we are distributing the Iftar pack at Ipoh Railway Station, today".

KPJ Ipoh will celebrate another two Fridays in Ramadan with another two homes in Perak and will be distributing the Iftar pack at Terminal Amanjaya Ipoh.

"It is especially heartening to see the smiles on the children and the old folks' faces and it was such a pleasant experience for them to meet and get together with the staff of KPJ Ipoh," said Yusmah.

This programme is part of KPJ Ipoh's continuous support towards the underprivileged communities in the state where they continue to organise many worthy causes besides the other three being health awareness, education and environment.

Luqman Hakim

Free Biryani



Over 200 Ipohites gathered at Masjid India Muslim, Ipoh on Thursday, May 24 to receive free biryani rice in conjunction with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

The event has become a norm for Ipohites, entering its fourth consecutive year now.

It was organised by Persatuan India Muslim Perak (PRIM) and was well received by Ipohites who find the food delicious.

Society president, Mohamed Arib Aliah, said the objective was to enliven the spirit of Ramadan and to spread the festive goodness.

"When we first started, we gave away only 500 packets. Over time, the number had increased. This year we prepared 2000 packets.

"I'm sorry some did not receive their share due to the unexpected crowd. We'll prepare more next year. Perhaps, 3000 packets, insya allah (God willing).

"I wish to thank our sponsor Nasi Kandar Padang Kota RTC Gopeng, the food was prepared by the restaurant whose owner is an active member of our society," said Mohammed Arib.

Mohamed Arib opted for biryani instead of the traditional bubur lambuk, as it is the Indian Muslim community's speciality.

"Biryani is our trademark and preparing in our very traditional way is our forte," he remarked. The event will be repeated next year in the month of Ramadan. Mohamed has assured that there will be enough biryani for all and sundry.

Luqman Hakim

Closure of Roads for Private Functions

A reader complained to Ipoh Echo about public roads being closed for wedding functions and when you take a diversion another tent would be blocking your route. She enquired whether there is a law that allows this practice.

Mohd Syahrizal Azmi, Ipoh City Council Public Relations Officer said that those who wanted to put up tents across the road in front of their house must get permission from Bahagian Penguatkuasa MBI whose office is in Jalan Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab (next to Royal Ipoh Club). Applicants must fill a form for permission and pay fees based on the number of tents erected. There are no charges for funerals. I was not aware of this and wonder how many people know about this law.

A spokesperson from the enforcement office said that there are cases where inconsiderate people blocked the road for days and neighbours had to make police reports for removal of tents. The fee is mainly to cover removal of additional garbage generated. He added that road closure prevents MBI lorries from collecting garbage.

When I went to MBI to get information on this, I met one of the senior officers in the Health Department and when I told him of the issue, he said when the father of his Chinese neighbour died, the road in front of his house was closed for three days. The neighbour was always saying sorry. He parked his car away from his house. He said he

understood the situation and it was part of life. On another occasion it may be his turn to close the road.

A resident from Lim Garden once complained in a WhatsApp group that access to her house was blocked. She received many negative comments saying this does not happen every day and to be an understanding neighbour.

Normally when people put up tents for marriage or other parties in housing estates, they get permission from the neighbours and try to limit full road closure for a short duration only. The neighbours are also invited for the function. If possible they keep one lane clear for cars to pass. Road closures by residents are normally done in housing estates and there are alternate routes except if the road is a dead end.

Malaysians are civilised and understand the practices and culture of other races and are accommodating and willing to bear some inconvenience. This does not happen every day. If your neighbour puts up a tent today you may do it tomorrow.

I sum up by quoting a couplet from the Tamil Classic Thirukkural written more than two thousand years ago.

*"Those are fools however learned
Who have not learned to walk with the world"*

A. Jeyaraj

BORANG PERMOHONAN KELULUSAN UNTUK MENDIRIKAN KHEMAH DI DALAM RIZAB JALAN
SEK 46(1)(a) AKTA JALAN, PARIT DAN BANGUNAN 1974

BAHAGIAN PENGUKUTKUSA, MAJLIS BANDARAYA IPOH
JALAN BANDAR, 30000 IPOH, PERAK DARUL RIDZUAN
NO. TEL : 05-242 6676 (Kuarterm) NO. FAX : 05-266 3188

TUJUAN: (Isi dengan tujuan permohonan)

A BUTIRAN PEMOHON **NO. PERMIT:**

Nama: _____
No. Kad Pengenalan: _____ No. Telefon: _____
Alamat/ Lokasi khemah didirikan: _____
Ukuran Khemah: _____ Bilangan Khemah: _____ unit
Tujuan: _____
Tarikh Mula: _____ hingga _____ Tempoh: _____ hari

B KADAR BAYARAN PERMIT KHEMAH

BILANGAN KHEMAH	KADAR BAYARAN PERMIT KHEMAH (SEHARI)	KADAR SEWA PETAK LETAK KERETA (PER PETAK)
1-3	RM 20.00	RM 8.00
4	RM 25.00	
5	RM30.00	
6	RM35.00	
Yang seterusnya	Tambahan RM5.00 per khemah	

C SYARAT-SYARAT

- Mengemukakan pelan skematik tapak lokasi khemah di kawasan.
- Lampirkan surat kebenaran jalan, sekiranya melibatkan jalan rumah (bertujuan untuk dan nombor telefon).
- Mengemukakan rekod bayaran letak kereta MBI sekiranya menggunakan petak letak kereta.
- Bayaran RM25.00 sehari dikenakan bagi 3 unit khemah (maksimum) dan RM5.00 untuk setiap tambahan unit khemah seterusnya.
- Pemohonan permit hendaklah dibuat 3 hari sebelum khemah di pasang.
- Kemudahan yang bertukus-kusatan adalah ditanggung oleh pemohon permit (sua rumah).
- Kawasan khemah hendaklah dibersihkan dengan cahaya lampu pada waktu malam.

Saya _____ (Nama Pemohon) _____ (No. KPJ) yang bertandatangan seperti dibawah dengan ini mengemukakan butiran-butiran yang benar seperti diatas dan akan mematuhi segala syarat-syarat yang telah ditetapkan oleh pihak Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh. Sekiranya pelanggaran syarat-syarat ini telah dilakukan oleh saya daripada wakil saya maka pihak Majlis berhak memusnahkan khemah saya dan dikenakan denda tiga-tiga mase tanpa memberi apa-apa sebab dan juga boleh menyerahkan apa-apa indikasi undang-undang yang berkaitan memusnahkan denda bagi kesalahan tersebut.

Tarikh: _____ Tandatangan Pemohon/Cep: _____

Community

Free Water for Perakeans

Access to clean and free water will be given soon to those in need. This was promised by Perak Menteri Besar, Ahmad Faizal during a breaking-of-fast dinner on Tuesday, May 29 in Manjoi.

If the state government makes good this promise, would it be a step forward for Perak? Here are the views of Ipohites with regard to the matter.

"Free water is good and will benefit the people of Perak," said Suren, a self-employed youth. He feels that access to free water will make an enormous difference to low-income families. "I spend RM6 every two months on my water bill. That may not amount to much but to those earning below RM1000 a month, RM6 is a lot. It keeps me full for one whole day. I'd be real happy if the MB follows up on his promise," Suren remarked.

"Water is a necessity and it's the right of the people," said a delighted Fendy "We spend about RM10 every two months. I'm sure the government can afford to absorb the amount."

Plus, the water department need not send its staff out to check water metres. It'll save cost. I hope the state government doesn't stop just there. There're plenty more it can do," he insisted.

"That's good news," said 60-year-old Selvaraj, a pensioner. "This has been implemented in Selangor, so why not Perak? This is why we voted in a new government in Perak. I look forward to changes based on Pakatan Harapan's manifesto."

There is nothing definite as yet. Nonetheless, it has gotten many Ipohites excited. Hopefully, things will look brighter in the weeks and months to come.

If people in Selangor get to enjoy free water, free electricity, free tuition, free Wi-Fi and other perks, it is only proper that similar privileges be accorded to Perakeans.



The fate of the rakyat has changed following the May 9 elections, which saw the ouster of a political party that has been in power for over 60 years.

Perakeans' expectations are high. However, since our nation's debts are in excess of RM1 trillion, we need not be so jubilant after all. Nonetheless, the rakyat have risen to the occasion by donating to Tabung Harapan initiated by the Finance Ministry on Thursday, May 31. It is the responsibility of every Malaysian to help the country in its time of need.

Joshua Jacob

Meru Valley Resort Spread Cheers to Less Fortunate

Meru Valley Resort's dedication to corporate social responsibility was further demonstrated with a visit to Pertubuhan Jagaan Kanak-Kanak Setia at Silibin on Thursday, May 31.

Being a responsible corporate citizen of an organisation that has been blessed with success and favour, Meru Valley Resort organises community outreach programmes to help those in need from time to time.



Pertubuhan Jagaan Kanak-Kanak Setia has been providing care for 40 disabled children and adults who have been abused, neglected, abandoned, orphaned and at-risk for the past 20 years. The residents are between six and 50 years of age.

The CSR initiative aims to cultivate relations among employees towards a common cause and promotes engagement with the community. The senior management team of the resort participated in the programme.

The welfare home was presented with essential items including rice, oil, canned food and toiletries in support of the home's daily operations and necessities. The visit gave the team a firsthand understanding about the residents' needs.

"Through this CSR programme, we aim to instil awareness on the need to care for senior citizens and children with love, moral and financial support. This would give them hope to look forward to a better future with enthusiasm and confidence," said Florence Foo, the General Manager of the resort.

Mei Kuan



Coca-Cola to the Fore

Ramadan, being a holy and sacred month for Muslims, is also a time for family and friends to gather and bond. In tandem with the fasting month, Coca-Cola along with its partners, organised a buka puasa dinner for 86 orphans from Pertubuhan Badan Kebajikan Anak-Anak Yatim Darussalam and Pertubuhan Kebajikan Anak-Anak Yatim/Miskin Dahikmah on Saturday, May 26 at Mydin Meru Raya.

After organising a similar event the previous year, they were intent on carrying it out again, but on a larger scale. Support from partners such as Astro and Marrybrown ensured the success of the event.

The children gathered at the venue as early as 6pm, as they were treated to several performances with the one from The Lost World of Tambun winning most approval all around.

A sense of unity was present throughout the event. The staff and children were engrossed in conversation despite them only getting to know each other on the day, embracing the true spirit of Ramadan.

Finas Wani Zin, the Head of Public Affairs and Communication of Coca Cola Malaysia said that it was important to value the community. "Coca-cola may be a global brand, but we're as local as the community we serve. If we don't give it back to them, who else do we give it back to? It is very important for us to stay connected," stressed Finas.

Coca-Cola hopes to carry on organising similar events after receiving an overwhelming response from partners who were willing to help.

Joshua Jacob



Community

PCSH Physiotherapy CSR

Perak Community Specialist Hospital (PCSH) sent their physiotherapists to Persatuan Kebajikan Warga Tua Seri Bahagia, Jalan Raja Dr Nazrin Shah (formerly Gopeng road), on May 26, to offer physiotherapy to the needy ones. The physiotherapists succeeded in giving treatments to five patients on that particular day.

As we age, our body inevitably goes through many physical changes. These natural age-related changes include reduced bone density, reduced muscle strength, increased body fat, poorer coordination and stiff joints. However, physiotherapy has been shown to improve many of the factors associated with ageing including strength, balance, coordination, flexibility and pain levels.

The session included soft tissue manipulation for muscle tightness, pain relief management using Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS) on the old folks' knees and also lower back pain. Not only that, the old folks were also taught strengthening exercises for lower and upper limbs by using cycling paddles and active assisted exercise.

The Chief Executive Officer of PCSH, Nicholas Chan hopes that these physiotherapy sessions, which will take place once in a month at the Persatuan Kebajikan Warga Tua Seri Bahagia, will encourage the old folks to actively engage in regular physical activities. Old folks who lack exercise will find themselves affected by muscle stiffness in the long run. These physical activities will improve their balance, strength, coordination, motor control, flexibility and even memory.



Unity Through Fasting



To promote friendship and understanding among races and religions in the country, Perak Women for Women Society (PWW), invited all Malaysians to fast in solidarity with their Muslim friends on Sunday, May 29. This was followed by a breaking-of-fast dinner at Syeun Hotel, Ipoh.

According to PWW president S. Sumathi, the event has been held in Ipoh for five years running.

"This is the only way how we, as non-Muslims, can appreciate and better understand what our Muslim friends go through for 30 days.

"It's very challenging when they've to fast, work and perform their duties at the same time," said Sumathi, who went without food on the day of the event.

A member from Perak Pink Champion Association, Tun Norul Huda Noor Rasid, 62, was thrilled by the encouraging response from non-Muslims.

"Over 60 people, the majority of them non-Muslims, gathered for buka puasa. There's a sense of camaraderie among us that's truly engaging.

"They fasted and skipped food just to buka puasa with us. They told us to take our food and drink first and then ate together," she added.

Dementia Society Perak's administrative assistant, Prema Nair told Ipoh Echo that she has been participating in the event for several years.

"I never refuse whenever invited. I tried to fast and I know it's not easy.

"Malaysians understand the spirit of Ramadan very well, regardless of their beliefs and ethnicity. This is an opportunity for me to meet up with friends and to make new friends, as well," said Prema.

Past president of Soroptimist International Ipoh, Jean Chai explained her reasons for fasting, "I want to understand the Malay culture and traditions in order to live in harmony. We, as Malaysians, are supposed to spread love and harmony in the country. As for me, I'm not a Chinese but I'm a Malaysian-born Chinese," she said.

Pathma Devi, Perak Malaysia Hindu Sangam, shared her experience of being a regular at the get-together. "This is the biggest crowd ever. This is what we want. We want to be known as Malaysians and we're the true representatives of the country.

"Every year, I'll go to my best friend's house, who's a Muslim. We'll cook and buka puasa together. It's like our annual event, as I grew up surrounded by many Malay and Muslim friends," she said.

After the dinner, the participants gathered on the stage, with miniature Malaysia flags in their hands and sang the national anthem together.

Nabilah Hamudin

Zero-rated GST

Traders in Perak are warned to update and display zero-rated Goods and Services Tax (GST) prices. And they have 30 days to comply beginning June 1 till June 30.

Perak Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Department (KPDNKK) assistant enforcement officer, Rus Bakar Ruraini Shahfie said action would be taken against errant traders under the Enforcement of Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 1999 and the Trade Descriptions Act 2011 should they fail to do so.

"Checks will be conducted by us (KPDNKK) and the Royal Customs Department (JKDM). Therefore, all traders are urged to comply with the government's directive by displaying the new prices within the grace period.

"Following the new ruling, some 300 enforcement and price monitoring officers have gone to the ground to gather information," he told a press conference after checking on prices at retail outlets at Aeon Kinta City, Ipoh with State Executive Councillor for Civil Society, Consumer Affairs, National Integration, Human Resources and Health, A. Sivanesan, today.

Rus advised consumers to check their receipts each time they pay for the items bought to make sure that the GST is at zero percent. This is because price on the tags of the goods on display racks and that on the receipt may differ, as retailers need time to change the tagged prices.

"The six percent GST must be deducted at the cash register and reflected in the receipt, although retailers are allowed to maintain the old price tags for the time being.

"Consumers must be alert and ensure that the receipt shows GST at zero percent, not the standard-rated six percent any more. If it's still there, they can lodge a report with the JKDM or the KPDNKK," he said.

Members of the public can file complaints with KPDNKK through the Consumer Complaints Line at 1800-886-800, Strategic Operations Movement Centre (PIGOS) line at 03-88826088/6245, Strategic Operations Movement Centre (PIGOS) line at 03-88826088/6245, KPDNKK E-Complaint System or go to the nearest KPDNKK office.

Sivanesan said he was satisfied with what he saw and the turnout of shoppers at the mall.

"We're not worried about retailers at shopping malls or supermarkets but what I'm



worried about is small-time traders in the markets and shops. We'll start checking on them too.

"We can see many people doing their shopping today. I'm very satisfied with the situation. I was informed by the Aeon Co. (M) Bhd management that there were less turnout two days ago. Many people waited until June 1 to do their shopping," he told reporters.

Checks by Ipoh Echo at Aeon Kinta City shopping mall saw an increase in the number of shoppers doing their Hari Raya shopping after GST is zero-rated today, as compared to yesterday.

Housewife, Malinda Abdul Rahman, 39, told Ipoh Echo that she and her husband had taken leave just to shop for their children's needs today.

"After the new Pakatan Harapan government announced that GST would be abolished on June 1, my husband and I planned this outing. We managed to save a bit," she told Ipoh Echo.

Farhana Zailani, 42, said she was pleased with the opportunity to buy goods at a lower price during the transitional period before the Sales and Services Tax (SST) comes into play on September 1.

"I've three kids. This is the right moment for me to do my shopping for Hari Raya, as I can save more," she added.

Perusahaan Otomobil Kedua Sdn Bhd (Perodua) Ipoh Sales Manager, Nor Hairol Azril Abdul Halim said that since Perodua launched GST rebates for purchase, service and parts between May 18 and 31, sales had picked up tremendously.

"We can see the difference before and after. The highest-selling models are Perodua Myvi, followed by Axia, Bezza and Alza.

"The sales is set to pick up during this festive season due to the zero-rated GST," he said.

Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH) Perak Chapter Chairman and Director of Syeun Hotel, Maggie Ong told Ipoh Echo that not all hotels in Perak are revising rates, as some hotels have been absorbing the six percent GST and giving customers nett rates instead.

"For Syeun Hotel, we've been observing this since 2015. Thus, there'll be no changes in terms of pricing after GST is abolished," she remarked.

Nabilah Hamudin

News

Dinner of Hope

On May 30, Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced the setting up of a trust fund, Tabung Harapan Malaysia, for Malaysians to contribute towards reducing the country's debts. The fund as of Wednesday, June 6 stands at almost RM36 million.

Many companies, corporations and associations have stepped forward to donate to the fund. One looking to join in the fray is YMCA Ipoh. On Friday, July 22, YMCA Ipoh will organise a fundraising dinner. The dinner will be held at the YMCA hall beginning at 7.30pm. Proceeds from the event will be channelled to Tabung Harapan Malaysia.

Honorary president of YMCA Malaysia, Daniel Lim Seng Peng, felt that he had to play his part as an NGO and a concerned citizen. "We cannot sit back idly when the country is in need," he said.



Twenty five tables of ten, priced at RM10,000, RM5000 and RM1000 will be made available on the day. Halal tables will be provided upon requests.

Dato' Daniel Tay, the president of YMCA Ipoh reinforced Daniel Lim's statement saying, "The effort is small though but it amplifies our commitment to help the nation in its hour of need. Hopefully, it'll be a catalyst to spur other NGOs to do the same."

Thomas Kok, Honorary Secretary hopes the active participation by people will inspire the government to work harder, as Malaysians are behind them. "The amount we raise may not be much, but we certainly hope to encourage others to contribute as well," he added.

Those wishing to attend please make your contribution to YMCA in the form of cheques addressed

to Tabung Harapan Malaysia. Booking of tables can made immediately.

For further enquiry, contact YMCA Ipoh at **05 254 0809** or email: ymcaipoh1@gmail.com.

Joshua Jacob

Why do Philosophers Argue?

Perak Academy hosted a lecture on argumentative philosophers and their contributions to public conversations on Friday, May 25 at its premises along Jalan Tun Sambanthan, Ipoh.

"Philosophy is a very rich tradition of argument and engagement with the public in conversations. Conversation, of course, is the *summum bonum* (supreme good) of life. Conversation in philosophy takes many great forms. Plato called it dialogues, Hegel called it dialectics and Wittgenstein called it epigrams," said speaker, Koh Chye Hock.

The presentation was a small extract from a book that he has been working on by the same topic.

Chye painted the broad outlines and evoked flashes of what philosophy is through examining key divisional aspects of philosophy and philosophers in the history of Western philosophy.

Why do philosophers argue? "There are two broad reasons. First, it is the subject matter itself. Philosophers deal with things that are uncertain. Philosophers argue, they do not quarrel, it is nothing personal. Secondly, character. Human reason is troubled by questions that it cannot dismiss but also cannot answer. Philosophers are wired to argue and debate," Chye insisted.

According Chye, it is the business of philosophers to both ask questions and argue the answers to tease out the fundamental truths.

Without public conversations, there would be public silence. Democracy requires meaningful public conversations.

The programme concluded with a question and answer session.

Attended by over 50, present were Chan Kok Keong, Deputy Chairman of Perak Academy and Howard Lee Chuan How, the Executive Councillor for Youth, Sports and Character Building.

A native of Ipoh, Chye studied philosophy at the University of Utah, USA. By

profession, he is a lawyer. He is the author of "*The Chronicler: One Man's Diary on Life*". Specialising in oil and gas law and working for an American multinational oil company, he is an active leader in his community in non-profit and performing arts space.

"I've often been asked how my studies in philosophy have helped me in the practical application of the law and the cut and thrust world of corporate business. I do not cut or thrust; I practise law with a heavy dose of philosophical persuasion, compassion and detachment," he stated.

Mei Kuan



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ARTS & CULTURE

The Michaelian Chinese Orchestra presents 'RHYTHM OF THE BLUE SEA' on JUNE 30 (Saturday), 7.30pm at Main Hall, St Michael's Institution Ipoh. Fundraising for the school. Tickets: RM20 & RM 50. For details, call Madam Woo **012 526 8731**.

SHARPENED WORD proudly presents STIMULATING PERFORMING ARTS. With the prima donna of contemporary theatre, JO KOKATHAS, sharing the stage with her is SHAMSHUL RAHMAN aka DR SHARK. **JUNE 23 (Saturday), 2pm-5pm at IDR Knowledge Centre, Greentown Suria** (GPS: 4.6013N / 101.0961 E). Entrance by donation. For updates please visit our face book page: www.facebook.com/sharpenedword.kinta.

COMMUNITY

HOSPITAL FATIMAH PUBLIC FORUM: 'COMMUNICATION AND PEER CARING' (in Cantonese). **JUNE 24 (Sunday), 2pm-4pm, Bro. Liborius Auditorium, 6th Floor, Hospital Fatimah Ipoh.** By Dr Anita Chiu Lai Mun, Assoc. Fellow of Hong Kong Professional Counselling Association. Entrance is free of charge. For more information, call: **05 545 5777 Ext. 214**.

ST JOHN'S CHURCH IPOH COMMUNITY SERVICES FAIR 2018. JUNE 30 (Saturday), 9.30am-12.30pm at St John's Church Hall and Kindergarten Block, Jalan St John (Off Jalan Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab), 30200 Ipoh. (1) 'Exhibition & Promotion of Christian Community Services' and NGO Community Services; (2) Fun games (RM1 only); (3) Treasure Trove Prizes (sale of coupons at RM1 only); (4) Drinks & Snacks at RM1-RM2. For further enquiries, kindly contact the church office **05 254 8146** or Rev Tom Cherian **013 772 7570**.

TECHNOLOGY, EDUCATION & CAREER (TEC) 2018. JULY 4-5 at Chancellor Complex, Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS, 32610 Bandar Seri Iskandar, Perak. TEC is a career fair that creates a perfect platform for students to participate and secure their internship with reputable companies that will be exhibiting and engaging with students through career talks and interviews. For more info, contact: Mittran **012 714 1595** or Kerishmaa **012 281 2598**.

DEMENTIA SOCIETY PERAK CAREGIVERS TRAINING. JULY 14 and 15 at KPJ Ipoh Specialist Centre. For further details please call **05 241 1691**.

FREE SEMINAR: TRANSFORMING YOURSELF FOR YOUR FUTURE. JULY 14, 2pm-3.30pm at YMCA Ipoh. In this seminar, learn tips on how to transform yourself. Registration is limited to first 30 people. Register online: <http://bit.ly/dmfree1> or contact Debugging Minds at **013 734 5008**.

EDUCATIONMEDICAL

KPJ IPOH SPECIALIST HOSPITAL ANTENATAL CLASSES FOR 2018. Dates: MAY 19 (Mandarin Class), JULY 21, SEPTEMBER 29 and NOVEMBER 17 (Mandarin Class), 1pm-5pm at Dewan Anugerah, 5th Floor KPJ Ipoh Specialist Hospital. Contact customer service at **05 240 8777 ext. 8111** for enquiries.

HISTORY & HERITAGE

HISTORY DAY CUM REMEMBRANCE DAY. JUNE 8, 8am-2pm Wesley Methodist School Ipoh (International), 42 Jalan Silibin, 30100 Ipoh. Organised by Wesley Methodist School Ipoh (International) in collaboration with Warriors' Association Malaysia. Activities: Art Competition for students age 5-12 years old; Malaysian History Quiz for secondary students, History Exhibition. Participants: Kindergarten to Form 5 students. Attire: school uniform. Contact: **05 254 5122** or **012 500 5033**.

Inaugural Leong Sin Nam Annual Lecture: "IPOH AND THE KINTA VALLEY: HERITAGE LOST". JUNE 24 (Sunday), 3pm-4pm at '15 Clarke Street', 15 Jalan Sultan Abdul Jalil, 30450 Ipoh. Speaker: Rtd. Commander Ian Anderson. Free admission. Seat reservations before June 20. Contact: Ms Lily **05 241 3130** or **0111 685 5775**.

IMPORTANT

REPORT BULLYING. All schools in Malaysia have an Anti-bullying Guideline. Anti-bullying hotline: Talian Aduan Disiplin **1800-88-4774** or email adudisiplin@moe.gov.my. You can also call **15999 Childline** to report bullying.



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