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ISSUE **294**

Fake or Real: Can You Tell the Difference?

By Qistina Izfarina

The number of fake products is on the increase in Malaysia. Common ones are branded sneakers such as Adidas, Fila and Nike. Top range perfumes and bags such as Guess, Chanel and Louis Vuitton, Issey Miyake are easily available in the market. These items, incidentally, have no negative effects on end-users and thus are relatively safe. But there are those that may impact users' health when applied or consumed. Ipoh Echo takes a look at fake products that are harmful to our health.

Continued on page 2



Fake make-up products found in malls and night markets around Ipoh

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A Gateway to Nature

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Roots Eco Resort

If you are looking for a spot to relax, one that is surrounded by natural greenery away from the madding crowd, **Roots Eco Resort** is the place to go. Located near Tanjung Rambutan, the resort is on a 1.5 hectare land and it is as close to nature as it can possibly be.

Guest accommodation comes in two types. The villa-type is firmly on the ground while the tree-house type, as the name suggests, is on a tree. They are made of bamboo and wood. It is about maximizing what is present within the environment.

Situated next to Sungai Kinta, the land boasts a good mix of fruit trees and herbal plants. Durian is a fixture here, and the prickly fruits are for picking when in season.

The resort, according to manager Agilan Sandra Sagrin, runs on a eco-green concept enabling guests to enjoy, firsthand, a village cum jungle atmosphere within striking distance from the city.

"There are many outdoor packages, such as **hiking, white water rafting, abseiling, sunset trekking, tubing and kayaking** ideally suited for the adventurous. The 3-km jungle trekking package is a must do. The journey takes you to **Kampung Tonggang**, an Orang Asli village," he said.

After a strenuous walk, take a dip in the **swimming pool** underneath a canopy of bamboo trees. Other amenities available are a barbecue pit, games and Wi-Fi connection.

Don't miss the delicious **mutton biryani rice, chicken tikka and fish cutlets** available at the **Squirrels Hide-Out Cafe**. The aroma of authentic Indian cuisine will tickle your palate. The resort provides breakfast, lunch, tea and dinner with advance booking to ensure the freshness of ingredients. Prices are very reasonable.

"We don't use artificial flavours. Ingredients and herbs used are planted organically. Healthy eating, within a comfy ambience, is our mantra," Agilan added.

Squirrels Hideout @ The Roots Eco Resort
Tel: Sudesh 012 277 0510, S. Agilan 010 371 2498 (Resort Manager)

Facebook: Roots Eco Resort & Restaurant GPS Coordinate: 4.6768° N, 101.1627° E

by Rosli Mansor Ahmad Razali



Real VS Fake



Neelofa and Vivvy Yusof



Statistics, Differences, Effects and Solutions

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime defines product counterfeiting as a form of fraud. A product, purporting to be something that it is not, is sold to unsuspecting buyers. It is an organised group activity because the manufacturing of goods takes people and time, and the goal is invariably to profit. These products are produced based on similar designs as the originals. They are packaged and branded to make them indistinguishable from the genuine stuffs. These manufacturing countries are generally poorer and so have lower capacity for finesse.

According to **Seth Hays, Asia Pacific chief representative from International Trademark Association (INTA)**, approximately RM5.43 trillion (US\$1.3 trillion) of counterfeit goods are traded globally every year.

Fake Beauty Products

The number of fake beauty products bearing popular names such as Nars, ColourPop, Huda Beauty, Kylie Cosmetics, NYX Cosmetics and some of the big names are readily available here in Ipoh.

This scribe visited a few night markets and malls around the city recently and was shocked by what was discovered. You can buy these imitations for a fraction of the original prices. Some for less if one is prepared to haggle. For instance, Kylie lipstick which costs over RM100 a piece is sold for just RM5.

The price is a giveaway and a warning too. It makes you wonder whether the products sold are safe for general use, especially cosmetics which you need to dab onto your face and limbs. Will exposure to the cream and liquid harm your skin which, being the largest organ in the body, is one of the easiest ways for chemicals and pollutants to get inside the body and cause long-term insidious damage.



Fake Kylie 3 in 1 eyeliner mascara sold at only RM19.90

We checked with the authorities concerned. The first was the **Ministry of Domestic Trade, Cooperative and Consumerism** branch in Ipoh. The lady on the phone told us to raise the matter with the Perak Health Department instead. According to her, actions could only be taken if the owners themselves lodge a report with them. In other words, owners of the highly-acclaimed brand names have to come to Malaysia and file a complaint with the department, only then will action be taken.

We then called the **Perak Health Department**, and here is another bombshell. They would only act if it is proven, clinically, that the ingredients used in the products are harmful. The onus is on the consumers, not the authorities. We have to do the groundwork, ourselves.

"I used the fake products for three months even though I knew that it was fake. I loved the colour of the eyeshadow, lipstick and foundation which resembled the original. Furthermore, it is much cheaper. However, after months of using it, my lips became drier than usual and started to flake off. I realised that something was wrong, so I stopped using it before it worsened. I'll never buy fake products anymore and I urge everyone to do the same no matter how cheap or attractive the packaging is. Some of my friends have to seek medication as the products affected their skin. The authorities should do more to eradicate this issue," said Yana, 22.

According to **Dr Terry Lee Lean Hiap, an aesthetic skin care specialist at Terry Lee Clinic Ipoh**, one common disease caused by fake products is Irritant Contact Dermatitis (ICD). Allergic dermatitis is a form of exogenous dermatitis or eczema. The eczema is well demarcated with a glazed reddish surface. The affected area itches and swells.



Dr Terry Lee Lean Hiap

"The worst disease is skin from the effect of hydroquinone. Hydroquinone which is used for hyperpigmentation, must only be prescribed by doctors. The permissible usage is only four per cent but fake products contain up to 10 per cent of this chemical. Other harmful ingredients are mercury and steroid," he added.

Ways to Avoid

The first step is to be an informed consumer. Before buying a product you must ensure that the product is a longstanding brand in the market. Avoid new products. Secondly, check trustworthy testimonials and reviews. If you are unsure, try the sample before you buy the products. Thirdly, check the ingredients label. Fake products, normally, have no information label of ingredients on the packaging.

"The common reason given by my patients who used fake products is the price. The price has been reduced tremendously. Be sure you buy from trusted stores such as Watson or Guardian," urged Dr Terry.



Counterfeit liquid lipsticks



Fake Milk Formula

In February, three traders were charged at the Sessions Court for selling fake infant formula in Johor Bahru. Yap Kai Chai, 59, Ling Mei Nar, 42, and Yap Chang Hong, 26 are joint-owners of several branches of TCM Yong Thye Lian, Chinese medical shop.

Yap Kai Chai (son) and Yap Chang Hong (father) were charged for selling 208 packets of fake milk powder Enfalac A+ Step 1 (1.8kg). Both father and son were charged under Section 8 (2) (c) while Ling Mei Nar (sister-in-law) was indicted under Section 8 (2) (b) of the Trade Descriptions Act 2011. Upon conviction, they may face a fine of up to RM10,000 for the first offence, RM20,000 for subsequent offences and a maximum five-year jail term.

The bogus infant formula packets were placed along with the originals on the shelves. They were sold at the same price of about RM200 each.

Mead Johnson Nutrition Malaysia has set up a Product Replacement Programme Hotline for consumers who, unknowingly, have bought the tainted product – opened or unopened. Affected consumers can call **1-800-88-3585** (Monday to Sunday, 9am to 11pm) or complete an online form at www.enfagrow.com.my to get more details on product return and replacement instructions.

Fake Braces

On October 17, the Department of Dental Health in Sabah shared a video of a patient who lost all of her teeth except one tooth due to fake braces. The video, unfortunately, received only 145,000 views on Facebook and 945 views on YouTube. Not many people are aware of this impropriety. In Thailand, two deaths were reported due to the swallowing of fake braces.

"My first encounter with this case was on 2013, during my first year in government clinic in Kuantan. So far, I've handled 40 cases relating to fake braces," said **Dr Khairul Aizat Zamri, a dentist at Dr White Clinic, Meru, Ipoh.**

Fake braces (fixed orthodontic appliances) are fixed to the teeth. They look similar. However, they do not function like the real ones.



Dr Khairul Aizat Zamri

What are the Differences?

Genuine braces are prescribed and fixed by licensed dentists or orthodontists but fake braces can be bought online (Instagram, Facebook or Twitter). They are also sold illegally in salons and by unregistered dental clinics.

A thorough full mouth examination needs to be done to access the health of the teeth and other dental treatment will be done such as scaling, restoration, extraction if needed before fixing the braces. You should be suspicious when the 'fake' dentist asks you to have the extraction done at either government or private clinics.

For real braces, an X-ray needs to be taken to determine bone level or any abnormality which cannot be accessed during physical examination. Regular follow-up takes place



A patient with fake braces

once every six weeks for two months depending on the type of braces. Upon the completion of treatment, a retainer will be given to the patients to wear at least for six to 12 months to prevent relapse. For fake braces, no X-ray, follow up or retainer will be given.



RIDDING CABINET OF DEADWOOD

After five months on the job, it is becoming painfully clear that Maszlee does not have a clue as to what is bugging our education system and lacks the wisdom to correct it.

Nothing will irk you more when a supposedly learned guy comes up with a supposedly brilliant idea that not only sounds childish but downright amateurish. That is how I felt when not-so-newly-minted Education Minister Maszlee Malik suggested that hotels allow the use of their swimming pools to teach school children to swim.

I have all along thought that this multi-lingual, multi-talented and fortyish Member of Parliament for Simpang Renggam, Johor, was the right guy for the hyper-sensitive post of education minister. Prime Minister Dr Mahathir had chided that Malaysians, in general, need to be educated as many were still ill-informed about developments within the country. He cited the IMDB debacle as a case in point.

To overcome the problem he had offered himself as a candidate for the portfolio. He was forced to decline after considering the coalition's pledge that the prime minister should not hold other posts besides the one in hand. That is how a very obscure Maszlee came into the picture. All said and done, Malaysians missed a golden chance to be "better educated" due to this lingering election promise.

Maszlee is part Chinese and part Malay. Having the best of both cultures many opined that he would be the perfect candidate for the post. The performance of past education ministers, under Barisan Nasional, was nothing to shout about. They were merely stooges of a decadent ruling coalition and were apt at making the most out of their tenure as a federal minister.

The needs of the education ministry were more often sidelined for reasons best known to them. Rocking the boat was the last thing on their mind.

Nonetheless, there were attempts made to prepare an education masterplan plan to uplift the declining standards of education in the country. But, like all things else, it never got past the drawing board.

Education in Malaysia has been in the doldrums since the 1980s. We are regressing, not progressing, each passing day. Today with religious fanaticism slipping into the system, the heydays of the 1950s right to the 1980s, are nothing much but for the fortunate few to reflect upon. And those who missed that golden period have not the faintest idea how things were then.

Maszlee Malik defeated incumbent Datuk Liang Teck Meng, the Secretary General of the Malaysian People's Movement Party or Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia for the Chinese-majority seat of Simpang Renggam, Johor in the historical General Election 14 on May 9. Maszlee stood as a candidate for the Malaysian United Indigenous Party or Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia of which Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad is chairman and Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin is president.

The first gaffe Maszlee committed was suggesting that the standard white shoes worn by school-going children be changed to black shoes. His reason was simple – children need not spend time washing and whitening their shoes as they do now. Shoe manufacturers were up in arms. A change, they reasoned, would incur loss as old stocks are still plentiful. So the order was temporarily shelved and will only be implemented in 2021.

And not wanting to outdo the black shoes ruling he came up with a sock policy. The reason he proffered was the colour of the socks should complement the black shoes.

After five months on the job, it is becoming painfully clear that Maszlee does not have a clue as to what is bugging our education system and lacks the wisdom to correct it. While he made references to decreasing teachers' administrative burden, he has done nothing about the laughable national syllabus, overcrowding in classrooms and the shockingly low level of English proficiency of our graduates. And not forgetting the gradual "Islamisation" of national schools which is rather frightening, to say the least.

He would do well to start addressing the fundamental flaws of our education system and make efforts at bringing all of our universities, not the one he wanted to preside, to a global level of respectability. If he is not serious about setting our education system on the path of recovery, perhaps it is time for the prime minister to replace him with someone more capable. He is, by all reckoning, the numero uno deadwood in the Pakatan Harapan (PH) cabinet.

Initial euphoria felt by Malaysians following the May 9 defeat of Umno/BN at the polls is fading as reality sets in. Noises are getting louder amidst lower expectations of PH's election promises. Generally, Malaysians are thankful that Dr Mahathir has come out of retirement to lead the country once again and create a "New Malaysia".

Mahathir's move to introduce the International Standard Organisation (ISO) anti-corruption certification in all high-risk government agencies is laudable. The ISO 3700 certification for the Anti-Bribery Management System will be applied to all ministries, agencies, departments and government-linked companies to prevent corruption and develop a culture of integrity effective January 2019.

The overall performance of PH ministers to date is "mediocre", to quote one former Umno stalwart who described the Pakatan Harapan government as "chaotic" and "had failed to fulfil its election promises". Some ministers he said were still behaving like opposition politicians and are still adjusting themselves to their new-found roles.

While reviewing the cabinet Dr Mahathir had twice – in September and October – stated that he was not satisfied with the performance of his cabinet. "If possible I want something that had been directed to be settled yesterday not today," he said during a



media conference on September 7. On October 21 he was quoted as saying, "if I have to grade the cabinet members I would say their performance is between 40 and 50 per cent. But they are learning fast."

In spite of the gloom, there is light at the end of the tunnel. There are some very capable individuals in Mahathir's cabinet. I wish to single out Transport Minister Anthony Loke and Environment and Energy Minister Yeo Bin Yin as the most resourceful and proactive cabinet members. Hard on the heels are Finance Minister Lee Guan Eng, Labour Minister Kulasegaran, Communications and Multimedia Minister Gobind Singh Deo and Economic Affairs Minister Azmin Ali.

EYE HEALTH – BEWARE OF CHEAP CONTACT LENSES

Ipo Echo's EYE HEALTH series continues with Consultant Eye Surgeon Dr S.S. GILL talking to us about the hidden dangers of contact lenses.

Fashion-conscious young people often like to look cool and trendy by wearing unprescribed contact lenses that are coloured. Many are oblivious to the dangers that they expose their precious eyes to. In Malaysia, coloured contact lenses can be easily purchased from anywhere ranging from shops that sell ladies accessories, fashion vendors, internet retailers and even the 'pasar malam' these days. This is in contrast to countries like the US, where it is illegal there to sell contact lenses to any individual without a prescription.



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

PIGMENTED CONTACT LENSES



Cheap coloured contact lenses that are found in many retail shops are manufactured poorly because these colour pigments easily rub off the contact lenses.

The pigments are not securely embedded as in the more expensive reputable coloured contact lens. The loose pigments have harmful effects on the eyes.

CONTACT LENS FIT

All contact lenses must be properly fitted. In other words, a person desirous of wearing any contact lenses must be correctly assessed before they can be prescribed contact lenses. However, this is often an overlooked fact because the temptation of fashion and easy availability of such lenses lures the fashion conscious into buying a pair without a prescription. Most people do not realise that poorly fitted contact lenses can cause injury to the eyes (*corneae*).

INFECTION RISK

The surface colour pigments also allow bacteria to easily attach to the contact lens surface making the risk of serious eye infections including corneal ulcers far greater. Often, individuals have been known to take shortcuts and do not take the same precautions in handling their coloured contact lenses as their regular non-coloured contact lenses. This poses problems and encourages infections.

POINTERS:

1. Avoid purchasing contact lenses off the counter or over the internet without a proper prescription. Remember, one size does not fit all.
2. If you must wear coloured contact lenses, make sure they are of a good reputable brand.
3. Adhere to proper methods of cleaning and disinfecting.
4. Never share contact lenses.
5. Seek immediate eye care from a doctor if you have eye problems from contact lens wear.

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

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The Silent Cry of the Refugees

The story of the refugee is one which does not sell papers in Malaysia. We are so consumed with our lives and making money, or providing for our own families, that we ignore the plight of people who had to choose between survival and death.

Last June, Mohamad Ab Halim, the chairman of the Malaysian Social Research Institute (MSRI), which provides support for displaced people, wrote about the plight of refugee families in Malaysia.

Around 5000 people, from about 1900 refugee families, are registered with the MSRI, and Mohamad Ab has urged the Malaysian authorities to increase their efforts to reduce the suffering of the refugees, and push for a more active role in the international political arena. He said that crises affecting nation-states, as occurred in Myanmar and Palestine, will create refugees.

A few months later, in a speech at the 40th Malaysian Paediatric Association Congress at the Ipoh Convention Centre, the Sultanah of Perak, Zara Salim, echoed Mohamad Ab's call to help refugees.

She encouraged an increase in efforts, by the authorities, to alleviate the suffering of refugee children. She proposed that they be given fair and equal treatment, with respect to educational opportunities and the provision of health care.

In a report, by the Malay Mail, she said that children of refugees are the innocent victims of the actions of adults. She said, "The world is witnessing a crisis of refugees with millions of people forced to move and seek shelter in safer places, camps at the country's border or attempt to enter the border of a neighbouring country."

"Now, there are 150,000 refugees from Myanmar, Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Iran, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Afghanistan in this country, of which 25,000, or 17 per cent, were under the age of 18, and only 30 per cent of this group were able to obtain education at community learning centres."

MSRI dismisses the confusion that exists in Malaysia, about the term "refugee"; for many Malaysians, it is synonymous with the term illegal migrant. A refugee is NOT an "illegal," or an undocumented immigrant. An asylum seeker can only obtain refugee status after passing a vetting process which is defined by international law.

The MSRI fully supports the call for the government to ratify the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. Unless this convention is signed, the onus for the welfare falls on the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

This means that Palestinians and UNHCR-recognised refugees from other countries will continue to suffer in immigration detention, where

they, and their children, are locked up, whilst waiting for a country to resettle them, or they return to their country of origin.

One of the responsibilities of the MSRI is to provide aid, to the refugees, during their stay in Malaysia.

Aid comes in many forms, including refugee schools, adult education classes, health programmes, as well as livelihood and emergency support. Its objective is to make the refugees become more independent.

MSRI has also warned that without the implementation of new policies to reduce the suffering of the refugees, the families are denied access to legal representation, education, and affordable healthcare.

It has also suggested that all refugees, currently in Malaysia, be given the right to work legally with an IMM13 permit, in a process which has already existed for refugees from south Thailand, Aceh, and Bosnia. The Mahara programme made similar provisions for refugees from Syria, including Syrian Palestinians.

MSRI advises that allowing refugees to work, would reduce the burden on the authorities, and at the same time, enable them to help contribute to the Malaysian economy.

As everyone is aware, education empowers people, but currently, only 40 per cent of the refugee children in Malaysia, attend school. The majority are denied access to education.

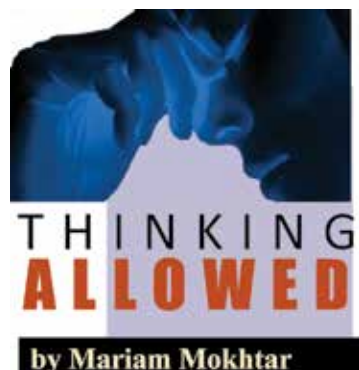
MSRI said that refugee children have the right to learn and become useful members of society, wherever they are. They have also urged the Malaysian government not to prevent any child from recognising its potential.

MSRI said that the signing of the 1951 Refugee Convention, would give refugees access to work, access to affordable healthcare, and ensure that all children in Malaysia, regardless of their immigration status, would receive an education.

So who are we to deny refugee children an opportunity to fulfil their aspirations, and have hope for the future?

Sources:

1. <https://www.malaymail.com/s/1670159/tuanku-zara-children-of-refugees-deserve-fair-and-equal-treatment#.W5GqYtRl3w0.twitter>
2. <https://www.malaymail.com/s/1644443/regarding-refugee-issues-in-malaysia-mohammed-ab-halim>



by Mariam Mokhtar

Heritage Building becoming Derelict

Istana Gahara, Kuala Kangsar. It was the home of the last Raja Bendahara of Perak, DYAM Raja Abdul Rashid ibni Almarhum Sultan Idris Murshidul Azzam Shah.



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SeeFoon is Torn between East and West

Ever had a group who have such divergent tastes that you tear your hair out wondering where to take them? Some want western while some prefer oriental. And for some, the restaurant needs to be *halal* to boot.

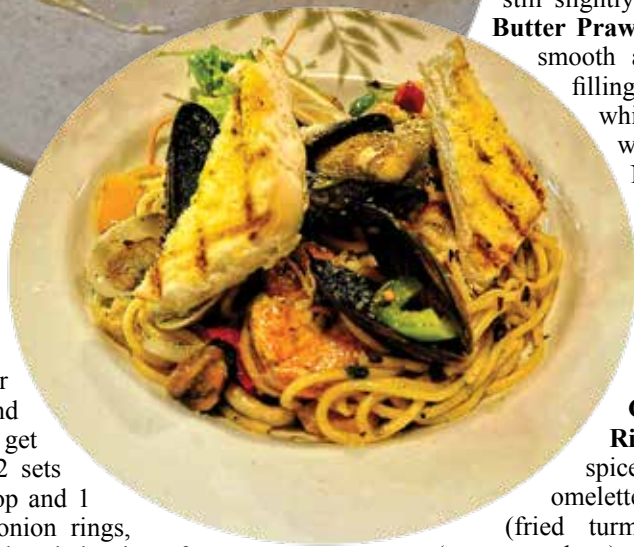
The dilemma is, very often, if the place serves oriental food and is *halal*, their western food leaves much to be desired. It is difficult to do both east and west with quality.

However, help is at hand for I have discovered a restaurant in Meru Raya which satisfies all of the above. Plus the chef has had 15 years of experience in the west.

Meet **Chef Am**, head chef and co-founder of **Cottage 75**. Chef Am who has spent 15 years working in Ireland, is from Selama Perak and together with a partner, opened Cottage 75, in Meru Raya, serving good wholesome dishes both western and oriental at prices that won't break the bank.

So for example, if you go with the whole family or a group of six for a meal, they have a special on their menu which is great on taste and satisfaction. For **RM120**, you get soup, 2 sets fish and chips; 2 sets chicken chop; 2 sets lamb chop and 1 steak set. Included also are onion rings, potato wedges, garlic bread, side salad, a jug of soft drink and dessert of the day. Now if that isn't value for money, I don't know what is. Certainly beats KFC and McDonald's hands down. And this is not fast food. You are served at your table with proper cutlery and napkins. And the dishes come artistically plated too.

We had their **Warm Duck Breast Salad**, **RM15**, and went on to sample a variety of their mains. The one issue I had with all their pasta dishes was that the pasta was too soft and not al dente (springy to the bite) as I and all Italians like it. I have often found this to be so in a lot of the cafes and restaurants I have patronised here in Ipoh. When asked if I could have my pasta *al dente*, I usually get the answer of "sorry but pasta is cooked ahead of time".



But it is how most Ipohites like their pasta. Some places where they serve pasta al dente, there are often complaints that the pasta is not cooked properly! So I reckon it's a question of pleasing the majority and when someone with a picky palate like me comes along, that's too bad.

So back to the pasta which is aplenty on the menu. Other than the pasta being too soft, the taste of the various sauces was good. The salmon on pasta was well done, the salmon still slightly pink on the inside. The **Butter Prawn Cream Spaghetti** was smooth and velvety and a very filling dish indeed; **RM19**; while the **Seafood Alio Olio** was chock full of green NZ mussels, large prawns and squid rings, again a very generous portion; **RM17.50**.

Moving onto the oriental dishes, there is a wide variety of rice and noodle dishes. The **Cottage Special Fried Rice** was interestingly spiced, served with an omelette, **Ayam Goreng Kunyit** (fried turmeric chicken), *keropok* (prawn crackers), *sambal* and served with a spicy soup; **RM18**. And if this is too pricey, then the **Nasi Goreng Kampungku** fried with *ikan bilis*, vegetables, a fried egg on top and served with *sambal belacan* gives more value at **RM7**.

The **Lamb Shoulder Chops Atok Kambing Bakar** came with a Soup Kambing, redolent of herbs and spices. 'Atok' which stands for grandfather implies that is an old traditional recipe; **RM25**.

Finally the **Chef Special Mee Rebus Tulang**, a meal in itself, had a creamy soup base made from sweet potato and prawns, spicy, with chunks of lamb leg bone-in and served with boiled egg, potato cubes topped with chillies on a bed of yellow noodles was yumilicious; **RM10**.

Pics by Yob Dabai



ON IPOH
FOOD



By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen
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Cottage 75 (Halal)
76 Jalan Meru Impian A1
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Chef Am: 011 2635 8305
Business hours: 5.30pm-12am; 5pm on weekends
Closed: Monday

"I often receive comments from my dear readers to the effect that some of the restaurants I have reviewed were disappointing. I do need to emphasize, which I have done on quite a few occasions, that all restaurants do some dishes well and some not so well. So I suggest that you follow my recommendations on the dishes that I write about. This way, you may have a better meal."

SeeFoon

If you would like SeeFoon to try your food, contact Vivien at **014 332 3859**.

Email: vivienlian@ipohecho.com.my

We do not promise a review but we're open to discovering new or interesting eating places.

Hawker Food

By Vivien Lian

Konlou Meen*

Our new breakfast spot, Hong Hin. Their Dry Noodles (*konlou meen*) has no lard, looks basic but the taste is explosively flavourful. Same goes for their *yeong liu*, no pork but all fish, blended with *sotong* paste. The fish balls are firm and bouncy, totally lip-smacking. One more thing to love, generous noodles and scallions. *Pork free.

Hong Hin

51 Jalan Sultan Yusuff, 30000 Ipoh. 7.30am-10am (go early or wait patiently).



Fake or Real: Can you Tell the Difference? . . .continued from page 2

What are the Effects

Fake braces may seem harmless but it can cause various complications to the patients in the long term.

The stain from the glue can erode the tooth surfaces. Dental cavities, bleeding gum and tooth decay can occur because there is no explanation on ways to take care of the teeth after the fitting. Oral hygiene instructions are not given to the fake braces buyers.

If care is not taken in the diagnosis, treatment planning and management of any orthodontic case, the patient may suffer dire consequences, such as damage to the teeth, gums and supporting bone, which may be irreversible.

The scariest part is a virus or bacterial infection. Since the instruments and materials used to fix the fake braces are not sterilised, cross infection can happen. Patients may contract Hepatitis B, HIV and Syphilis.



Gum inflammation and bleeding



Occlusion and tooth angulation

When there is a Demand

You must have wondered where they learn to be a “fake dentist”. Guess what? They learned it from YouTube.

Nur Farahanis Ezzaty Adli, 20, who was jailed after being convicted of offering unregulated dental services. She admitted she started fixing braces after helping a friend to fix her braces based on what she learned on YouTube. She operated her “dental” business from a hotel room.

Price is the common denominator. Genuine braces are priced between RM3500 and RM7000. Fake ones will only cost between RM300 and RM2000.

“However, there are patients who are willing to buy real braces but because of their eagerness and lack of information, they opt for the fake one. They don’t seek advice from dentists but either follow their instinct or listen to their friends,” Dr Khairul told Ipoh Echo.

Our Local Brands

Even local celebrity entrepreneurs such as Noor Neelofa Mohd Noor and Datin Vivy Sofinas Yusof got hoodwinked by counterfeit scarves and shawls. They lost significantly, as some of their customers were deceived by these products. They raised their concerns during a meeting with the Council of Eminent Persons on June 18 this year.

“Although we’ve worked closely with the Domestic Trade Cooperative and Consumerism Ministry and the Customs Department, the problem continues to bug us,” said Neelofa, television personality and founder of the much-sought-after scarf, Naelofar Hijab.

She hoped after lodging a report with the authorities, the Registrar of Companies will act on those selling imitation items.

Co-founder of FashionValet and the Duck Group, Datin Vivy Sofinas Yusof said that local brands are affected by counterfeits from Vietnam and China.

“We asked the Customs what they can do about it. Now anybody can bring imitation goods into the country,” said Vivy.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister, Datuk Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the selling of fake products is impacting the country’s revenue. All products should go through a registration process for purposes of authentication. Non-genuine products do not undergo such a process but they are available in the market.

Fake Drugs

The World of Health Organisation (WHO) defines counterfeit medicines as medicines that are deliberately and fraudulently mislabelled with respect to identity and/or source. Both branded and generic products are subject to counterfeiting. Counterfeit medicines may include products with the correct ingredients or with the wrong ingredients, without active ingredients, with insufficient or too many active ingredients or with fake packaging.

A fake drug can be identified when it has no/false registration number, registration number belonging to other products or has been cancelled, no safety label hologram Meditag or false hologram Meditag. Be careful of the products that have a mixture of two registered products. If you are unsure, confirm with the sellers. You have the right as a consumer to know of all these details.

National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agencies director, Dr Salmah Bahri stated that counterfeit medicines claimed about one million lives globally every year.

“The Pharmaceutical Association of Malaysia found that approximately five per cent of prescription medicines are fake, including eye drops, inhalers and medicines for erectile dysfunction,” she added.

Ane Meng Chuah, Retail Pharmacist Manager at Hovid Pharmacy said, “We always advise our customers to buy the innovator brand if they can afford it.”

What are the Solutions?

The problem can only be resolved if the authorities are prepared to nip the problem in the bud. The government should adopt a top-down approach. Actions must be consistent by the relevant enforcement agencies. There are laws to fall back on.

Trade Description Act 2011 provides a leeway called, “Trade description order” whereby the court can pronounce a specific offending mark as a false-trade description if it resembles the registered proprietor’s trademark. The Act enables the registered owner to lodge a complaint with the ministry.

Where an infringing mark is identical to a registered mark, the owner can file a complaint with the ministry, which is vested with the power of arrest and seizure without a warrant. The ministry can prosecute the suspected counterfeiters upon advice by the

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Seeking Contributions from our Readers

We are doing a story on the BEST and the
WORST (public) TOILETS in Ipoh. Share with
us your photo(s) with a caption.

Send to: editorial@ipohecho.com.my

We reserve the right to publish only the ones
we deem suitable.

attorney general.

Past cases involving fake sports shoes and electronic gadgets were acted upon by the Ministry of Domestic Trade, Cooperative and Consumerism. Unfortunately, action against other fake products is few and far between. And this is worrying, as consumers are exposed to irresponsible traders who care little for ethics and health.

For consumers, prevention is better than cure. Make a report if you have been affected by any fake products and be an informed consumer.

My Say

By Jerry Francis



Draw Visitors Not as a “Food Haven” Only, But With More Tourism-Related Activities

The city has been accorded various international recognition. Among them are the best city in Malaysia to visit and the best place to retire.

Can the authorities claim that it was through their efforts? Certainly not, just have a good look at the city. Apart from some improvements, there are still lots of uncollected rubbish and clogged drains. Attempts to beautify the city too have not been successful.

In fact, it has even failed to live up to its slogan of “Bersih, Hijau dan Maju (Clean, Green and Progressive). The credit should be given to the private sector, which has been injecting economic growth in the city.

Let us reflect back to the aftermath of the collapse of the tin mining industry and the unsuccessful industrial drive in Perak over two decades ago.

The once vibrant city was then on the brink of dying. About 20 per cent of shophouses had pulled down their shutters and stopped operating their businesses or moved out to other commercial areas.

Somehow a new breed of entrepreneurs emerged with the idea to rebrand the city as a “food haven” and within a few years, it was clear that it was working.

Many old buildings in the New and Old Town sectors were restored and painted with colours that brightened up the city. It even caused the price of the old properties, especially around Panglima Lane in the Old Town sector, to skyrocket.

Soon Ipoh saw an influx of visitors from all over the country and Singapore during weekends and holidays. They come not to see places of attraction, but for the well-known street food. Among them are the chicken tauge and the chicken hor fun, and an assortment of traditional Chinese biscuits.

The majority of those arriving by road would spend enough time to eat and leave for other destinations, while others coming by electric trains and express buses would probably stay overnight in some of the many budget hotels or homestays that have sprung up in the city.

Sadly this is largely confined to the Chinese community. What will happen when this urge of theirs fizzles out?

Well, with some foreign workers taking over the cooking, the quality and original tastes of the food will soon be compromised. Therefore those involved in promoting food need to be cautious by ensuring the quality of the cuisine and biscuits.

Already there have been many complaints about the food and soaring prices to the authorities.

Shouldn't the city authorities, as well as the state tourism committee, seriously look at how to promote attractions and activities to draw not only the Chinese community but also that of other communities as well as foreign tourists.

Ipoh, which is set within the scenic limestone hills, has so much potential to be developed into a popular tourist destination. What it needs are feasible ideas and plans, not imitating the successes of other countries, such as the floating market and river cruise.

The “Rancangan Kawasan Khas Pekan Ipoh – Bandar Warisan Bijih Timah 2020”, which was jointly prepared by the Ipoh City Council and Town and Rural Planning Department, will be a big boost to the city by turning it into a tourist hub based on its historical and cultural aspects. It is to showpiece on the history and diverse cultures of the Malaysian communities in forming a once riverine Malay kampong into a striving tin mining city.

Well, will this ‘rancangan’ ever materialise? Or will it just remain in the archive of the planners’ office? That is left to be seen.

At the moment the authorities appear to have failed. They do not seem to have the energy and desire to see that tourism in the city, and in the state as a whole, prosper.



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News

“Better and Brighter” for Perak



Tenaga Nasional Berhad's (TNB) wholly-owned subsidiary, TNB Janamanjung Sdn Bhd had fulfilled its corporate social responsibility programme for the year. The fulfilment came in the form of a cheque for the sum of RM6 million from the company's trust fund account.

The cheque was presented to Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu by its Managing Director, Datuk Shamsul Ahmad at the MB's office on Wednesday, November 7.

The money was for expenses to improve the wellbeing of Perakeans and the environment.

The utility company provides financial assistance to every state government for the welfare of the people, remaining true to its motto, “Better and Brighter”.

For instance, two years ago, TNB built and repaired 36 houses in Perak while another 191 homes were rewired.

TNB is into sports development too. The talented Anderson School hockey team, the Thunderbolts, comes under its wing. The annual cycling event, Janamanjung Fellowship Ride, is its other sponsored sporting event. The ride is well received by the state's cycling fraternity.

Its environmental agenda covers the conservation of fireflies in Kampung Dew, Taiping. The continued presence of the insects helps enhance the touristic potential of the village, which is under threat from over-development.

Luqman Hakim

Psychological Wellness

7 Things Not Helpful To Say To People With Depression – Part 2

6. You think you're the only one with problems? WHY NOT? We have different strength and weakness in coping with problems. It's not helpful to compare. Say: I also have issues (share your experience). We have different strength and weakness. We can help each other to solve issues.

7. Stop pretending to be depressed! WHY NOT? Nobody pretends to have cancer. The same applies to depression, an illness with neurobiological changes in the brain and body. Say: Perhaps you don't have to try so hard pretending to be happy. Sometimes, it's OK not to be fine. I know you've tried your best. It's a horrible illness.

8. You must be too free and thinking too much. WHY NOT? It's not an issue of too free. A person with depressive mood has biochemical abnormalities in the brain that cause them to have no strength to work. Say: Feeling restless and like you're wasting time is an awful experience. Let's start with doing the easy tasks.

9. Your family will be hurt if you die of suicide. WHY NOT? People with depression want to end their pain; not their lives. Don't add more pain by making them feel sorry for feeling suicidal. Say: Depression is painful. It's understandable that you wish to end the pain. Depression is treatable. Let's seek professional help for the pain.

10. Your depressive mood will become a form of negative energy to others. WHY NOT? A depressed person knows that being negative is unhealthy. We might make them feel guilty for burdening others. Say: It's unavoidable for a person suffering from depression to feel moody. Don't feel bad as people wouldn't blame you if they understand depression.

In brief, refrain from giving advice as it often makes things worse. Just listen with empathy and be supportive (e.g., offer tissue paper for crying, give a gentle pat on the shoulder). Let the mental health professionals offer advice. Your job is to listen and be patient with the patient.

*Online and expanded version of the article: <https://tinyurl.com/depression-no-say>



Dr. Phang Cheng Kar (M.D.)
Consultant Psychiatrist
& Mindfulness-Based Therapist,
Sunway Medical Centre.



For more information, please call Dr. Phang's Clinic,
Sunway Medical Centre 03 7491 6505 or email: pckar39011@gmail.com

Upcoming Event

Concert for Cancer Patients

Renowned rock singers, Datuk Ramli Sarip and Datuk Khadijah Ibrahim, will make a special appearance at the "Doa Buat Kekasih" charity concert on Friday, December 7 at Casuarina Hotel, Meru Raya.

According to People of Remarkable Talent (PORT) director, Dato' Zainol Fadzi Paharuddin the event is organised by the National Cancer Society (Perak Chapter) in collaboration with PORT and some other related agencies.

"The concert is aimed at spreading awareness among Perakeans besides providing moral and financial support to cancer patients," he said.

The tables for the concert are priced at RM50,000, RM20,000, RM15,000, RM10,000, RM5,000 and RM3,000. For those who just want to catch the show, tickets are available at RM150 (adult) and RM100 (child).

Singer Ramli Sarip would endeavour to give his best for the benefit of all his adoring fans in Perak.

"The show is expected to last for two and a half hours. We'll present 30 songs, including some crowd favourites, which will be given a fresh twist.

"The concert has a very pertinent message. We, the community, should not only encourage but inspire these cancer patients to continue their fight for life," he stressed.

For more information on the charity concert, contact the organisers at 05 241 2287.

Rosli Mansor



Education

Local College Going International

Kolej Vokasional Lebu Cator (KVLC) became the first training establishment to sign a Note of Understanding (NoU) with three vocational colleges from Beijing, China on Friday, November 2.

KVLC Deputy Academic Director, Mohamad Dahlan explained that the NoU was part of the college's effort in creating a two-way collaboration in the technical field. "We've to make use of this opportunity to exchange knowledge and to enhance vocational and technical training in Malaysia and worldwide," he said after signing the NoU with his opposite number, the Deputy President of Beijing People Foreign Friendly Association, Liu Yuhong at the Malaysian Embassy.

The understanding involved these three Chinese establishments namely, Beijing Vocational College of Agriculture, Beijing Traffic Technical College and Beijing Changping Vocational College.

Organised by KVLC, the signing ceremony was attended by lecturers and students from KVLC plus officials from the Chinese institutions numbering some 62 people.

According to Liu Yuhong, the selected institutions for the collaboration were among the best technical institutions in China. "The Technical Vocational Education Training Programme will not only motivate students, it'll create a generation of highly-skilled workforce. It'll also help strengthen relationships between the participating colleges, both in Ipoh and Beijing," he added.

KVLC took the opportunity to showcase two of its innovative projects, which had won top honours at exhibitions, locally and abroad. Both are car anti-theft devices with location tracker and a biomass dry cell.

Rosli Mansor



Medical

Diabetes Symposium

A Diabetes Symposium was jointly organised by Perak Community Specialist Hospital (PCSH) and Lee Eye Centre (LEC) recently. The symposium was launched by the Deputy Minister of Health Malaysia Dr Lee Boon Chye, recently.

Speaking at the symposium, Dr Lee said that statistics for 2015 revealed about 17.5 per cent of Malaysians had diabetes and 9.4 per cent of them did not even know they had it. Hence, Dr Lee urged the public to undergo a yearly checkup in order to stay in shape.

The main objective of the symposium was to enhance the knowledge of participating General Practitioners regarding the Multidisciplinary Approach to the Management of Diabetic Complications. The response was good with about 100 General Practitioners attending.

The symposium also saw informative talks given by five different Specialist Consultants from PCSH: namely Dr Loo Chin Sum (Consultant Nephrologist & Physician), Dr Muhd Mikhail Joseph (Consultant Physician), Dr Ng Seng Loong (Consultant Interventional Cardiologist & Physician), Dr Letchuman Ramanathan (Sessional Consultant Physician & Endocrinologist) and Dr Lee Mun Wai (Sessional Consultant Vitreoretinal Surgeon).

At the symposium, PCSH Medical Superintendent, Dr Y.C. Lee shared that many diabetes sufferers did not know how to control their sugar levels through what they consumed. They were unaware that food containing carbohydrates could spike blood sugar levels. He emphasised that people with diabetes Type I & II should create a food plan, make smart nutritional choices and watch their carbohydrates.

The symposium was officially closed by the Honorary Secretary of the Malaysian Medical Association Perak cum Consultant Otolaryngologist, Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun, Dr Meenakshi Adaikappan.



History

100 Years of Remembrance



Cenotaph at Esplanade

James Jeremiah (centre)

The reveille permeated the breezy morning air around the cenotaph at the Esplanade in Georgetown, Penang. Guests stood to attention as the haunting bugle hit a crescendo, acknowledging the many who had sacrificed their lives protecting mankind against the destruction of war.

While this sombre scene unfolded, the 4-man catafalque party from 19th Squadron Royal Australian Air Force, Butterworth bowed in reverence at their post around the monument erected in March 1922.

The morning service was to mark the centennial of Armistice Day signalling the end of World War 1. The end of the “War to end all wars” came into force at the 11th hour, the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918.

Held on Sunday, November 18, the momentous event was organised by Persatuan Veteran Keselamatan Pulau Pinang (PVKPP).

“Fallen heroes are human beings like you and I. They had dreams, aspirations, love, family and a great desire to live. They had fear too but their love for their King, country and the loved ones they left behind surmounted their fear, creating a heroism within to defend them even if it meant losing their own life,” said Major Sivarajan Ramanathan (Rtd), President of PVKPP.

“Let us remember them by ending all wars of violence. Let us declare war instead on ignorance, poverty, discrimination, racism, hatred, extremism and corruption,” added Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow, the guest of honour.

Present were British High Commissioner HE Vicki Treadell, Ambassador of the Republic of Fiji HE Kolinio Gata Takali, Charge De Affaires of Embassy of Nepal HE Kumar Raj Kharel and Consul of Royal Thai Consulate-General HE Rittichai Tubswan.

“In the First World War, the scale of the sacrifice was unimaginable as we sit here a hundred years later to think of the millions of lives lost on both sides. Sixteen million people both in the armed services and civilians across Europe and other parts of the world where the war touched. Indeed here in Penang, just off the coast, one of the first acts of war in this region was the downing of a French and Russian naval vessel by the German ship. These two ships saw the loss of life, something like a hundred and thirty crew and many were injured,” said Vicki in her speech.

Ipo Echo spoke to James Jeremiah, 94, the only surviving veteran from the volunteer Eurasian Company Penang which saw action during the Japanese invasion of Penang between December 9 and 19, 1941.

“I joined the volunteer force in 1940 when I was about 18 and fresh out of school. I was guarding the airport during the Japanese bombing. I helped carry dead bodies to a safe area. We also guarded banks and big British companies. While the Japanese were bombing, they machine-gunned us from their planes. They could have killed me,” James recalled.

The sight of the nonagenarian struggling up and down the steps, with the help of a walking stick and a family member in tow, to lay a wreath was warmly applauded by everyone present.

“War is the worst thing that can ever happen. You live in fear. Nobody wins the war, all lose. War is not the answer,” he lamented.

Mei Kuan



Connexion

By Joachim Ng

Litter and the rise of cancer

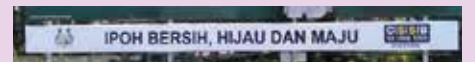
If ever there is a Grammy Award for the most littered nation, Malaysia stands a credible chance of reaching the final round. It isn't just Kinta Valley that is colourfully adorned with throwaways; Klang Valley shares the accolade. Drive along one of KL's most politically famous suburban roads travelled daily by a senior Cabinet Minister. Along the roadside, a British teacher picks up rubbish strewn around a garbage bin. She plans on getting students to assist her.

Japanese should make the best volunteers. From the earliest year in school, all students in Japan learn clean habits. It's hands-on stuff as they sweep classrooms, assembly halls and corridors, wash the toilets, and inspect the open spaces for any litter. High school kids go one step further by maintaining cleanliness in the perimeter areas around their schools. Ask any tourists returning from Japan whether they spotted litter anywhere.

Contrastingly, Malaysians learn the habit of littering. From schooldays we throw stuff freely into the open environment — the universal big bin. Very quickly the garbage we discard trap rain water that breeds the killer Aedes mosquito. If you don't know at least five persons in your contact list who have ended up in the hospital dengue ward, you are probably Japan-hopping most of the year.

Perhaps you will never get dengue. But there is another consequence of litter that you can't escape from: food chain poisoning. The most abundant type of litter is the plastic carrier bag and bottle. In a recent tour of five Ipoh suburbs, this columnist counted more than a hundred discarded plastic containers in just one short stretch of walkway. Mosquito larvae breeding in plastic containers are known to ingest microplastics along with food particles. These mosquitoes, with microplastics in their bellies, may then be eaten by predators that may be eaten by larger animals until the microplastics end up on your lunch plate.

The littered roadside plastics eventually get washed by rain into the monsoon drains, which carry them into rivers and the sea. Tiny pieces of plastic, mistaken for food, are then consumed by marine creatures. Small fish are eaten by larger fish that may end up as ikan bakar or pricey dinner seafood. If we eat the wrong fish, the price will be fatally higher than stated in the bill. A high 80% of microplastics in the ocean come from land-based trash and urban runoff. In the 1950s cancer was relatively unknown in Malaysia. Today, 1 in 4 Malaysians are at risk. Litter is cancerous.



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.

Heritage Buildings Missed Out

Currently, the Perak state government is actively promoting Ipoh's tourist attractions. In the midst of these tourist promotions, the government has completely neglected the heritage buildings at Ipoh Old Town.

Take a stroll around the notable heritage buildings in Old Town and one can easily identify that these buildings are suffering from neglect, decay and pressure from development.

A cursory glance at the Majestic Station Hotel, Ipoh Town Hall, Birch Memorial and others, easily reveals chipped walls, water seepage, and broken pieces fallen from structures are visible but these are clear signs that Ipoh's pride is under siege.

A closer look at the ceilings of the Majestic Station Hotel and the Ipoh Town Hall shows heavy leaks and damaged roofs and plants growing, further damaging these iconic buildings. The biggest problem is when you start seeing algae and plants growing on the wall, it's a sign that the building has been left unattended for a long while.

We have a number of historical buildings that aren't designated as national heritage and therefore, are in danger of being neglected forever.

To increase the number of UNESCO heritage sites in the country under the National Heritage Act 2005, we need to focus on Ipoh Old Town. Hence, I suggest that the state government's Tourism and Arts committee take steps to identify UNESCO heritage sites in Ipoh under the National Heritage Act 2005.

Empowered by the National Heritage Act, the Commissioner of Heritage can designate sites and objects as national heritage, as well as to ensure the conservation, preservation and rehabilitation works are implemented at these iconic buildings.

Furthermore, I wish to suggest that the state government set up a Heritage Risk Committee to identify these endangered heritage buildings and raise awareness of them and help secure their future. Set up a “Preservation Trust” to raise funds for these neglected heritage buildings.

To quote Konrad Smigielski, “A city without old buildings is like a man without a memory”. Thus it reflects, that these heritage buildings are part of the fabric of our society, holding stories about our past. As such, it's only right that we protect these monuments, to cherish our history and remember from where we came.

S. Sundralingam

Community

World Toilet Day

World Toilet day has come and gone. November 19 of each year is the designated World Toilet Day by the World Toilet Organisation in 2001 and was duly sanctioned by the United Nations.

So what is the significance of World Toilet Day?

Based on available statistics, a thousand children died daily from diarrhoea due to poor sanitation in 2013. These deaths are preventable. Clean and safe toilets keep more children in school and increase attendance rates. Thus its importance cannot be ignored.

Open defecation is still rampant in underdeveloped countries. Incidentally, some 15 per cent of the world population (1 billion) still practices open defecation. The organisation's goal to halve the number of people without proper sanitation is running behind schedule.

Now, where does Ipoh stand in so far as proper sanitation is concerned?

Poor sanitation is the cause of many diseases. The most prolific is Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease. Almost 40,000 cases were recorded between January 1 and July 30 this year, with Selangor recording the highest number at 11,669 followed by Kuala Lumpur (4552) and Sarawak (4551). Perak had only 3002 cases within the said period.

In conjunction with this year's World Toilet Day, Ipoh Echo did a cursory survey of the city's toilets. Our finding is mixed. There are good and clean toilets and there are the bad ones.

The toilets at the Perak Stadium food court are relatively clean. Perhaps it is attributable to the recently-concluded Sukma Games held in September. Money was well spent to upgrade the facility. But the fear is whether it will remain clean for years to come.

Next is the Dato' Tahwil Food Court at Taman Kanak Kanak in town. This too is well maintained and is manned round-the-clock which is a welcome move. Then there is the Dato' Sagor Food Court next to the state mosque. This once run-down complex was renovated between September 2014 and August 2016 at a cost of RM3.1 million. The food court is a major tourist attraction considering its proximity to iconic Old Town. The toilets here are well maintained.



No lid and seat



Dead cockroach



Mould on floor and slippery

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Nonetheless, there are still many premises that are not up to scratch. Most, if not all handicapped toilets in shopping malls are locked as in the case of Aeon in Station 18 and a lot of them, don't flush. Such facilities are a huge turn off to visitors and often the smells that greet them are equally repellent. If, and until remedial actions are taken by the authorities, they will remain a big blot for Ipohites.

The public too needs to be educated on good etiquette for public toilet usage. As in flushing after, trying not to wet the whole floor in their ablutions, and being mindful in using the sanitary bins provided. Care of public washrooms includes fixing non-flushing WCs, disinfecting wash basins, providing toilet paper, etc. And 24 hour manning is essential.

This scribe spoke to Syahriza Azmi, PRO of Ipoh City Council and this was what transpired.

"Efforts at educating property owners on cleanliness are ongoing. The council had conducted many campaigns in the past. We don't target public toilets alone but the cleanliness of housing estates, parks and entertainment centres. But once the campaign is over, it's back to normal again. It's an attitude problem, one which Ipohites have to tackle," he lamented.

Question is, can we be as clean and discerning as the Japanese are? The answer lies in education. The Japanese start young. Clean habits are instilled when they are still in kindergarten. We definitely have a lot of catching up to do.

Qistina Izfarina

Mochi-tsuki Festival

The Japan Club of Ipoh and Malaysian-Japanese Friendship Society recently organised 'Mochitsuki' Festival at Shen Jai School which was graced by His Excellency, Mr Shinichiro Kanoya, Consul-General of Japan in Penang. The custom of Mochitsuki which means "rice cake making" is always performed at end of the year in Japan. A cornucopia of food like, Mochi in various styles, soup, fried noodle/rice, Takoyaki, etc., was eaten while Japanese dances and Tai Ji were demonstrated to more than 150 people.



Summer Fun for Autistic Children

A joint venture between New Horizons Society and Yayasan Sultan Idris Shah (YSIS), a fun learning camp for children with autism was held from November 10 to 11 at YSIS centre. A total of 19 campers participated in the two-day camp aimed to improve confidence, increase self-esteem and establish important communication skills and friendships for children and teens with autism spectrum disorder and other special needs.

Present were Michelle Lai, Principal of New Horizons Society and Dato' Dr Ramanathan Ramiah, Chief Executive Officer of YSIS.

The campers had fun with games, craft making and slide presentations. After a lunch break, they were presented with goodie bags and certificates of attendance.

Both YSIS and Persatuan Pemulihan Sultan Azlan

Shah Bercham are located at Lot 158413, Lorong Bercham 11, Bercham, 31400 Ipoh. It offers physiotherapy and pain management services for the public at a minimal fee. It opens from 8am till 5pm for Mondays to Fridays and 8am till 1pm on Saturdays.

Dr Ramanathan also runs a free orthopaedic consultation clinic (by telephone appointment only) at the institution in which one can opt to donate any amount to YSIS.

Being a non-profit community centre, any surplus of the revenues will go towards equipment upgrade. Readers who would like to donate to YSIS can channel their contribution to CIMB account number **80-0504634-2** (Yayasan Sultan Idris Shah). YSIS accepts volunteers too. Call **05 548 1905** or visit ysis.org.my for more details.

Mei Kuan



Community

Sultan's Birthday Run

Over 7000 Perakeans took part in the 8th Sultan Nazrin Shah Run to celebrate the Sultan's birthday which fell on November 2. The annual event was held at Pavilion Square, Kuala Kangsar on Sunday, November 11. It began at 6.45am and ended at 8.30am.

HRH Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah, Raja Permaisuri Perak Tuanku Zara Salim, Raja Kecil Besar Datuk Seri Azlan Muzzaffar Shah and Puteri Sultan Perak Raja Nazira Safiya graced the occasion.

In attendance were Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu and his wife Datin Seri Dr Nomee Ashikin, State Secretary Zainal Azman and State Executive Councillors.

Sultan Nazrin flagged off the runners for all categories – 15km, 10km and 7km. The Sultan's sister, Raja Datuk Seri Yong Sofia flagged off the 2.8-km VVIP category.

In conjunction with the celebration, Perakeans got to watch the Malaysia Cup finals between Perak and Terengganu at Perak Stadium Ipoh. The home team defeated Terengganu with a 4-1 score line 4-1 based on penalty kicks after both teams were tied at 3-3 after extra time.

Luqman Hakim



Promoting Social Enterprise

In September 2016 Ipoh was declared the first “Social Business City” in Asean and second in Asia after Fukuoka, Japan, by Mayor Zamri Man. However, after two years nothing much has been done to affirm the declaration.

In order to revitalise the commitment, Sharpened Word organised a talk running on the topic “Social Enterprise” on Saturday, November 17. It was held at the iconic 22 Hale Street. The **speakers** for the day were Datuk Omar Adam Hon, Datin Zarina Ismail Tom, Christopher Tan and Stanley JC Lim.

Omar Adam Hon, a lawyer by profession since 1997, and **Zarina Ismail Tom**, a litigation lawyer since 1998, are **founders of Drop & Wash**.

Drop & Wash is a new eco-friendly alternative to traditional dry cleaning systems. It is a water-based **ecological wet cleaning technology that uses no toxic chemicals**. It has been rated as **top 10 Global Best Practice Awards in Frankfurt 2016** by International Committee for Professional Textile Care (CINET).

Christopher Tan is a successful **capitalist entrepreneur** from Singapore. His journey to Bhutan has opened his eyes to how children struggle to study in a harsh and difficult environment. Thus, he started a company named MAD, probably the only travel company with the primary objective of helping less privileged children in rural Bhutan. Profits generated from tours in Bhutan will be channeled to projects that will benefit the rural school children.

Third speaker was **Stanley JC Lim**. Stanley, is a **committee member of Daybreak Association** since 2003. Daybreak Association is no stranger to Ipoh residents as it was set up way back in 1992 by the Canning Garden Methodist Church. Through their concerted efforts, which is to help the handicapped get back on their feet and live a normal life, over 1000 disabled people have benefited from their many programmes.

The speakers shared the challenges faced in social business. For Drop & Wash, the biggest challenge is to educate people on how important an eco-friendly laundry is to



preserve the condition of our clothes and also the environment. One of the benefits is that it does not use toxic or ozone-depleting chemicals.

For Christopher, his aim is to help the youngsters in Bhutan. According to him, people keep asking for discount for his travel tour and tend to ignore the goal of the business.

Meanwhile, Stanley explained that most employers doubt the capability of disabled people and they often take advantage by paying lower wages.

The three entrepreneurs realise that earning profit is not easy. However, they hold on to their social business goals and spread the awareness to their clients.

Qistina Izfarina

Movie Inspired Ghouls

“Mirror mirror on the wall, who is the ghouldest of them all”



Held at Kellie's Castle, the programme was organised by the Department of Polytechnic Education, Malaysia Community College in collaboration with People of Remarkable Talent (PORT).

The Malaysia community college category saw a total of 28 participants consisting of students from Taiping, Kok Lanas, Batu Gajah, Pasir Gudang, Tampin, Muar and Kota Melaka branches. The open category received 10 participants.

The open category was won by Nur Zahierah Athirah Kamarudin, 27. She took home RM500, a certificate and a plaque. Second-placed Nurul Athirah Anuar Wajdi, 17, received RM300 while third-placed winner, Qiadah Safiyyah Ibrahim, 30, obtained RM150.

General Manager of PORT, Zamari Muhyi said that the contest was appropriate for the annual Halloween celebration in October. “It helps promote Kellie's Castle, as well. And in the process, we get to unearth new talent in the field of make-up and modelling. The programme combines the elements of art and history to produce something unique that we can be proud of,” he concluded.

Rosli Mansor

“I didn't expect to win at all,” said Siti Nur Ezuani Hamizax, 18, winner of the Special Effects Make-Up Challenge themed “Movie Inspired” for her creation of Chucky on Saturday, October 27, just before Halloween celebrations.

Siti Nur Ezuani Hamizax, who attended a beauty therapy and spa course at the Batu Gajah Community College, won RM500, a certificate and a plaque. “This competition is pretty challenging as participants have to experiment with illusion and creativity. A lot of patience is needed to create the work of horror. Before taking up the challenge, I researched on the Chucky character thus enabling me to do my best,” she stated.

Second placing went to Nuradilah Zaida Mohamad Razai another student from Batu Gajah Community College with her creation of ‘Kuntilanak’. Nour Natasha Ilya Ibrahim, 20, from Kok Lanas Community College took third spot.

Community

One-arm Biker on a Mission

“I was involved in a motor accident in 1999. It happened while I was on my way to Kuala Lumpur from Taiping after celebrating Raya Puasa with my family. I was in a coma for three months. On regaining consciousness I found I had lost my left arm. I dreaded to look in the mirror,” said Mohd Yusnizal Mohd Yussof.

Yusnizal was devastated. He felt life had dealt him a cruel blow and everything around him was falling apart. It took him six months to recover fully. But that was only the physical part, the mental part took him a further six months. Life, he felt, had no meaning as without a limb he was useless. His late father had to accompany him back and forth for consultation at Hospital Bahagia in Tanjung Rambutan.

Over time he regained his composure and courage, as he placed his fate in the Almighty.

“Let everyone leave but I’ll always be here for you. You’re my son,” his mother’s reassuring words resonated in his mind. It was like a breath of fresh air.

It took him a year to regain his confidence. He started by scuba diving, despite people having doubts. No one was keen to teach him. It did not deter him. “There has to be someone out there who is prepared to help me,” he told himself. And that someone did eventually turn up.

This person’s teaching method was totally different from others. Yusnizal communicated well with his instructor and that was comforting enough. He placed his trust completely in the man.

“I can’t do things like a normal person. Thus, I’ve to find ways to do something, even like putting on my clothes,” he shared. Yusnizal works at MATRADE (Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation).

In 2017 his perseverance finally got him into the Malaysia Book of Records for the “Longest Underwater Human Chain by Scuba Divers in Malaysia”. But he didn’t stop there. He tried harder and become a free diver and a freelance underwater photographer, to boot.

Now he is aiming for his second Malaysia Book of Record attempt as “The Fastest One-Arm Biker to Complete Thailand’s 1000 Corners” beginning on December 13 till 27.

“I learnt to ride a motorcycle when I was 15. Since then biking has been my passion,” said Yusnizal. He is also known as Sony Silverian to his biking buddies.

“I ride with my friends to Thailand. They’re the ones who support and encourage me. Nothing can stop me in spite of my handicap. I am proud of my achievement so



far. But I want to be a role model for the younger generation,” said the 43-year-old biker from Kamunting, Taiping.

The Thailand feat requires him to manoeuvre past 1864 sharp bends from Chiang Mai, Mae Hong Son, Pai, Golden Triangle, Maesai and then back to Chiang Mai. He will try to complete the gruelling journey within the shortest possible time. Hopefully, the weather will be on his side throughout the journey. The cost of the adventure is estimated at RM40,000.

“He was our crew member during outdoor events in Kuala Lumpur. His presence had inspired many youngsters. I am impressed by his determination. And I’ll do anything to help realise his dreams. For his Thailand adventure we’ll handle the promotional part (posters and video teasers),” said Zamari Muhyi, General Manager of People of Remarkable Talents.

Readers can contact **012 231 5831** (Zamari) for details. Donations can also be deposited into Maybank account **558284317299** in favour of Persatuan Pengusaha Pelancongan Bumiputra.

Qistina Izfarina & Rosli Mansor



Happy Meal with Ayam Brand

Four homes in Ipoh received two months supply of goods from Ayam Brand as part of their Healthy Kids Food Festival. They received the aid at STG Restaurant at Old Town recently.

Children from Rumah Anak Yatim dan Warga Miskin Budi Mulia Nurul Huda, Praise Girls and Boys Home Ipoh, Rumah Anak Yatim Yayasan Amanah An-Nur Maisarah and the Salvation Army Ipoh Children’s Home received various Ayam Brand products including sardines, mackerel, tuna and coconut milk.

“We are grateful for the generous donation and thank Ayam Brand for always inviting us to join the event. We will be running some of the workshop activities held today at our home soon because from what we observed, these activities can help the kids pick up healthy eating habits,” said Vijaya Muniandy, the representative from Praise Girls and Boys Home Ipoh.

During the affair, children from all homes were treated with fun games and workshop including making their own balanced nasi lemak with tuna using the information they had learnt.

“Children learn better through games and Ayam Brand developed the festival with games crafted especially for them so they can have fun while still learning how to make informed food choices,” said Nathat Deverre, the representative from Ayam Brand.

Ili Aqilah

Cancer Survivors’ Stories

This year’s cancer awareness rally under Pantai Hospital Ipoh was themed ‘Pink of Health – We Can’. I Can. This initiative, with the collaboration of Perak Chinese Assembly Hall, Women’s section, Lions Club Ipoh Mandarin Prudential agency PruSoldier, encompasses breast cancer and other cancer-related conditions.

The campaign is headlined by two record-breaking attempts. Beginning in mid October and lasting through to November, Perak’s largest installation in the shape of the symbolic pink ribbon will stand at the Centre Court of AEON Mall Klebang. A thousand roses envelope the 15-foot structure consisting of roses through pledges of RM10 per flower. The pledges will help NCSM’s (National Cancer Society Malaysia) initiatives to provide free breast and cervical screening for the marginalised. Deputy Health Minister Dr Lee Boon Chye officiated the launch alongside NCSM Youth Ambassador Dr Choo Mei Sze. A cancer survivor herself, Dr Choo keenly shared her journey back to wellness and inspires fellow patients in her role as NCSM Youth Ambassador. A total of RM11,000 was collected and presented to NCSM.

The event had a sharing session on cancer awareness, initiatives done in the community and the public’s role. A makeover was held for cancer survivors, inspiring many on beauty within and also without. The biggest charity Zumba was held later with 300 benevolent fitness enthusiasts participating.



Property

Meru Valley EcoVillage Wins Best Northern Development

Meru Valley EcoVillage was honoured as the **Best Northern Development** at the **iProperty Development Excellence Awards (IDEA)** held at Majestic Hotel, Kuala Lumpur on Thursday, November 15.

The evening was a celebration of all the very best homes and developments the industry has to offer across Malaysia, with guest of honour **Minister of Housing and Local Government, Zuraida Kamaruddin**.

Meru Valley EcoVillage offers three main types of residences, single storey villa, townhouse and low-rise apartments, all completed and attracting an internationally diverse group of Malaysians, expats and long-stay tourists.

Among the many benefits of living in **Meru Valley EcoVillage** are having a **27-hole championship golf course** on your doorstep, access to **healthcare**, wellness spa, **restaurants**, **security** and a host of green credentials.

The homes have been designed in keeping with environment and making life easier. The sustainable-focused village features rainwater harvesting systems that recycles rain for external use; high level windows that allow natural sunlight and ventilation; and solar heater systems that save energy. Sunscreen louvres and deep roof eaves are used to block the sun.

Collecting the award was Meru Valley Resort **Executive Director, Edwin Tan**. He said, "This award is a great endorsement for the team, the residents and the future buyers of the limited homes that remain."

"We are proud to showcase Meru Valley EcoVillage, a mixed development that is



The Meru team

built on a philosophy that a place should be designed for everyone with everything you need to live well. Residents enjoy the relaxed and safe lifestyle, open spaces, convenience of amenities and they always comment on the friendliness of the staff and the supportive community.

"There's access to a wide range of wellbeing and health facilities, a medical centre with GP, specialist gym, spa rooms, hairdresser, restaurants, 27-hole golf course and driving range.

"This is a place for young families and older people. This vibrant village is about challenging the segregation of old and young people, providing a new living option and creating a new attitude to ageing and wellbeing in Malaysia. Government statistics show that Perak is the oldest state in Malaysia, with

14.9 per cent of its population aged 60 and above. With people living longer, property developers have an opportunity to make a difference and activate communities.

"When it comes to the environment, well being and making life easier, Meru Valley EcoVillage has it covered," Edwin shared.

The village is designed to provide a comfortable and quality lifestyle that is close to nature, overlooking the Kledang Saiong Mountain Range and located only 10 minutes from Ipoh city.

There is still a limited selection of homes available, with show homes open daily from 10am to 6pm. **To request a brochure, call 05 529 3300 or visit meruvalley.com.my**

Mei Kuan

Arts and Culture

By SeeFoon Chan-Koppen

SII Raises 100K for Disadvantaged Children

Being Different, Being Loved was a huge success judging by the enthusiasm from the audience and the full auditorium for all performances. Produced by **Datin Rosalina Ooi-Thong**, and presented by **City Ballet and Soroptimist International Ipoh (SII)**, all nett proceeds went to SII for their various projects.

The spirit of charity was in full evidence as the four shows of two matinees and two evening performances at Taman Budaya raised almost RM100,000 with donations coming from as far away as Australia. Most of these funds raised will go towards SII's **Edufun project** and other future projects that would benefit underprivileged women and children in our society.

The **Edufun Centre**, started by SII in 2012 is an ongoing project to help disadvantaged children from broken and problematic homes in Buntong. Its aim is to make a difference in the lives of some of the underprivileged children who were first seen loitering around the flats after school. Today the centre with two full-time teachers costing around RM32K a year, in addition to running expenses and food, provides a safe haven where they can come and be encouraged socially, academically and morally. They are also provided with a nutritious meal every weekday.

SII is the Ipoh branch of a global volunteer movement working to transform the lives of women and children through education, empowerment and enabling opportunities for women and girls. This organisation, which began in 1921, has 15 clubs in Malaysia. SII



Birthday cake for City Ballet's 35th anniversary



was chartered on February 12, 2009.

Speaking to Datin Rosalina, who began rehearsals in September in a gruelling schedule, who said, "the ability to tell a story through performing arts has been my passion. Through the years of City Ballet productions, it is our mission to enable our students to tell stories through dance and song while contributing to a worthy cause of aiding the underprivileged. Our competent partners of this show, the lovely ladies of Soroptimist International Ipoh have made this possible and will benefit students from disadvantaged backgrounds giving them opportunities for a brighter future".

City Ballet, under the auspices of the **Performing Arts Academy**, which began as Rosalina's Studio 001 in 1983, today celebrates its 35th anniversary as an education space for nurturing creativity and talent with love and passion.

Ipoh Mali Theatre Society

Established just July this year, **Ipoh Mali Theatre Society** is a heritage theatre company dedicated to the cultivation and promotion of Ipoh's local performing arts talent.

Society chairman **Paul Seow**, who also directs and produces, explained the inspiration behind the society's name, "Arts usually have a connotation of being highbrow and high class which we deliberately wanted to avoid. Since we want to work with Ipoh talents, we used the colloquial term of 'Ipoh Mali' to create the connotation that arts are common and easily accessible to people".

"We want to tell heritage stories. This drives us. It started when we noticed Ipoh has had a little bit of revival with a lot of tourists coming in. When we looked at the Old Town areas, we realised there are a lot of Ipoh stories," the amiable Paul, who was involved in theatre in Singapore, added.

His journey in theatre started off at the age of 16 when the ACS boy was involved in his school theatre. He is a trained musician who studied at Yamaha Higher Academy of Learning in Japan and used to work with Yamaha.

For a Malaysian residing in Perak, there are two categories of membership: ordinary member (21 years old and above) and junior member (between 12 to 20 years old). A yearly membership fee is priced at RM100 for ordinary member and RM50 for a junior member. Other than performance platforms, members get discounted fees for workshops in acting, singing, scriptwriting among others which are organised throughout the year. Plus, members obtain discounted tickets for society's productions.

"We are also interested to raise interest in the young because we notice those who

watch concerts and musicals are usually older adults. If we continue this way, there will come a time when the young audience will be no more. Eventually, we want to do theatre especially for children and youth in order to expose them to theatre," Paul shared. Other forms of theatre to be explored are playback theatre and forum theatre which is very suitable for young people to open up issues that they face such as pressure, depression and bullying.

The society's **first showcase** is the upcoming **'It's Christmas on Broadway!'** concert in aid of charity featuring a diverse selection of holiday favourites followed by a journey through eight decades of Broadway highlights. Part of the proceeds will go to **Perak Association for Intellectually Disabled**. It will be held on **Saturday, December 8** at the auditorium of **St Andrew's Presbyterian Church at 8pm**. Readers can contact **Dominic at 016 888 4258** to obtain the invitations.

For more info about the NGO, do swing by the Ipoh Mali Theatre Society's Facebook page.



Mei Kuan

Heritage

by Ian Anderson

A Death Knell for Ipoh's Heritage

For many months there have been rumours of a new 15-storey hotel to be built in Ipoh's Old Town on the site (now a private car park) of what used to house the Sun Cinema. Like most rumours, there was a lot of truth behind this particular gossip as there was indeed a planning proposal put into the last government for such a building by developer **PK Lee Sdn Bhd**. Heritage buffs breathed a sigh of relief when the proposal was rejected (three times we understand) by the former state government.

Special Heritage Area

However, in April this year, the developer, a persistent fellow, came in with a new proposal that met some of the criticisms levelled against the previous plan. This new application was for a 14-storey hotel with a basement and a reduced density ratio. Presumably, he either did not understand (or chose to ignore) the **Ipoh Heritage Tin City Special Area Plan 2020**, gazetted by the City Council. This plan restricts all new buildings in the designated heritage zone to a maximum of five storeys and limits the density ratio. The proposed hotel breaks both of these restrictions.

Nonetheless, the council took the application seriously, advised those who had objected to the previous plan that there was a new application. **Ipoh World** was one of the original dissenters and we, therefore, attended the planning meeting in the MBI building in the afternoon of Wednesday, November 14. Apart from the developer, there was only one supporter for the application and we understand he is another developer who has a plan for a 10-storey hotel, also in the heritage area. There were five who spoke against the plan.

The next stage is for the state government to consider the application, weigh up the pros and cons and make the decision. Should they approve the building of this hotel it will open the floodgates to all other developers by setting a precedent.

Objection to Proposed Development

It was here that the citizens took the matters in their own hands. Led by **Puan Sri Sandra Lee, owner of 22 Hale Street**, adjacent to the proposed development, a press conference was called for Tuesday, November 20 with the aim of presenting a memorandum, to the City Council, demonstrating why the application should be rejected. The memorandum covered three main points which can be summarised as:

1. **Old Town is heavily promoted as a heritage tourism experience and any development should be sensitive to the existing heritage buildings.**
2. **The building plot is next to the Kinta River and sensitive buildings that are over 100 years old. Piling works will destroy those buildings.**
3. **Approval of the hotel sets a disastrous precedent for the future of Ipoh's heritage.**

Around 100 people attended the Press Conference and the memorandum received 500 signatures in less than 24 hours. The citizens of Ipoh had spoken!

Apart from the press and public, the conference was attended by **Puan Sri Sandra, Perak State Legislative Assemblyman for Kepayang Dr Ko Chung Sen, State representative for Simpang Pulai and State Tourism, Arts and Culture Committee Chairman Tan Kar Hing, and project executive of 22 Hale Street Lim Yi Wen**. The memorandum was accepted by Tan Kar Hing on behalf of the Menteri Besar of Perak.

The conference was well organised and ran smoothly. The YBs were introduced by



Proposed hotel dwarfing the heritage buildings



The proposed site

Puan Sri who then made a brief speech about her concerns for her century-old building. The memorandum was read by Lim who proposed that the authorities engage in an **extensive heritage impact assessment** on this project in order to integrate modern development within the historical landscape of Ipoh Old Town. This would be vitally important as the surrounding heritage buildings sit on easily damaged, sensitive foundations.

Then, it was time for the representatives of local and State Government to have their say. Of course, they had to be non-committal as in the end, the decision does not lie with them. Despite that, it was clear they were sympathetic to the idea of maintaining building height and density as it is gazetted in the 2020 plan.

Questions or comments were then opened to the floor, but typically in Malaysia, there did not appear to be anyone who wished to speak. Consequently, your author found it necessary to get on his feet and say something which he felt needed to be said: There were three points:

1. As the planning application clearly is not in accordance with the government's plan for Old Town, it should never have reached this stage but should have been rejected out of hand.
2. **No one seems to recognise the traffic congestion that this hotel will cause.** Its exit will lead on to a narrow one-way street (Jalan Bandar Timah) which is already congested. Hotel traffic will be forced to drive further into Old Town, already suffers severely from traffic.
3. **Does Ipoh really need any more hotels in the city?** Currently, there are 10 establishments in Old Town alone, where accommodation is available. Surely enough is enough!

Final Decision

The conference closed with Tan Kar Hing saying it would be discussed at the State Exco meeting the following day. Lunch was served.

Let us hope that the government will listen to the people, who made their views clear, by rejecting this application. Any other decision will sound the death knell for Ipoh's heritage.

During the lunch break, the new 2035 local plan was discussed and the following points were raised:

- No mention of heritage as a consideration for the new plan
- MBI should engage people who know the history
- How will MBI enforce the plan?



iSpeak

By A. Jeyaraj

Reflections on Deepavali in New Malaysia

The Indian community was interested to see how the new government will be celebrating Deepavali. The issues, comments and questions raised are not new; it is only that in the past people could not comment. Now they are exercising their rights. I visited the functions to give an overview.

Deepavali Carnival in Little India is the biggest celebration and previously was organised by MIC Ipoh Barat division. This year it was jointly organised by Persatuan Kebudayaan India Kaki Tangan Kerajaan Ipoh and staff of non-Islamic affairs department in Perak. I noticed that the backdrop on the stage and all the banners put up were photos of politicians, giving an impression that it was a political function rather than a Deepavali carnival.

I also attended the opening and closing ceremonies and the programme organised by the Hindu Sangam. I was disappointed at the choice of the first song on the opening day; instead of singing 'Unnai kandu naan aada', the theme song of Deepavali for past 60 years, another song was sung. Consolation came from the nathaswaram musicians who accompanied Assemblyman for Buntong A. Sivasubramaniam to the stage who played this song.

The songs and dances presented by Hindu Sangam were of a religious nature and students spoke on the significance of Deepavali. The MC kept on repeating that we should follow our culture and tradition, but their lead male singer was sporting a ponytail which I found ironic.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu was the guest of honour at the



closing ceremony and was entertained by folk dances. Special songs were sung to please him.

I was shocked to see the male MC appearing in a suit to celebrate Deepavali, a Hindu festival of tradition. Is this Hindu traditional dress? Are we giving our MB the impression that in spite of our civilisation going back thousands of years, we do not have a traditional dress and have to wear an outfit from a foreign culture? Other communities are proud to wear their traditional dress. Why must we feel inferior? Why did the cultural association organising the function allow this? We invite others to let them know our custom and tradition. If we ape others it defeats the purpose.

Questions were raised whether it is justifiable for the state government to spend RM100,000 on one entertainment programme? The money could have been spent on a better cause. Was there value for money in the programme presented? These questions are not new, but in the past people had no right to ask.

We must remember that the cultural show is held in conjunction with Deepavali, a religious festival that stresses culture and tradition. As such there must be a dress code for the artistes who perform on stage; women should wear saree and men veshti. Performers who do not comply with the dress code must not be allowed to go on stage. At least once a year we should wear traditional dress. When other communities can do it why can't we?

We invite dignitaries to see our culture and tradition. There is no point to sing and dance just to please them; it defeats the purpose of inviting them. Invite the MB for a special party to entertain him.

Public opinion of the carnival was, "it is same old drama with new players".

Fond Memories of Ipoh

Contributions from readers on their memories of Ipoh

My 'Adopted' Hometown

Heartiest congratulations to Ipoh Echo for your genius idea of introducing a new column for the readers to write about the fond memories of Ipoh for the start.

Actually, I am not from Ipoh. However, as a government servant, I was transferred to Ipoh from Johor Bahru in 1975 and served in this beautiful city of Ipoh till my retirement on 3.6.1994 as the Immigration Chief in Perak. I was fortunate to stay in the government quarters at Jalan Padang Tembak, just in the heart of the town – the Immigration Department was housed in the government buildings at Jalan Panglima Bukit Gantang.

During that time, the State Secretary was our late Dato' Seri Mohd Khalil Bin Hj. Hussein who happened to be my boss as the Director General of Immigration Malaysia.

As time went on, my family and I began to like this town and we decided to stay put in Ipoh until today. Although I am from Kluang, Johor, Ipoh has all the requirements for a peaceful living including the people of all walks of life. If a study is made about the population of Ipoh, the majority of them are outsiders (from other States) including retired government servants like me. Why is this so? It is because Ipoh has so many attractions and it is famous for the variety of foods available.

During my career in the government service and till today, we enjoy the many mouth-watering foods available here.

In Ipoh itself, there are many Chinese restaurants like Overseas, Lee How Fook, Wan Chai Kok, Up and Up; Muslim restaurant – “Nasi Kandar Restaurant” in Jalan Yang

Kalsom Ipoh. Still thriving today, you can see people of all walks of life lined up to purchase nasi bungkus and the coffee shop is always full of customers. Everyone is fond of the delicious food prepared by this restaurant.

Those days when we talked about Indian food, the most famous one was Gopal's Corner situated under the tree in Jalan Sungai Pari. Here, the food is so good, people of all walks of life flooded into this outlet for their lunch sessions. Then, there is a well-known restaurant in Chemor known as Samy Restaurant. Although it is out of town, people travel all the way to eat their crab curry, chicken varuval, etc. Those days, it was considered cheap to lunch on our favourite food in the above restaurants. Nowadays, it is a different scenario. To enjoy the variety of foods, we can also go to Old Town and here there are many stalls, restaurants like Banana Leaf Restaurant, Krishna Bhavan Restaurant, etc., in Little India. People of all walks of life travel to these food outlets for their meals.

Another food outlet is chicken-taugeh which is always a favourite with both local as well as foreign tourists. This is one outlet that cannot be found elsewhere in this country. The food served is cooked rice with bean sprouts and cooked chicken. It is a great attraction for the tourists.

People all over flock to Ipoh to experience the delicious food available in Ipoh.

K. Letchimanan
Taman Perak

Fashion

Qipao for all Ages

United Association of Malaysia Perak Branch, in collaboration with World Chinese Cheongsam Alliance Southeast Asian Federation of Malaysia, held the Malaysia open qualification round for the Fifth World Cheongsam Final 2018.

A total of 17 contestants from the ages of 24 to 72 participated in the pageant which unfolded on Tuesday, November 20 at the Kinta Riverfront Hotel with guest of honour, Tengku Puteri Puan Sri Rosmawani.

Performances galore including the special appearance of Bui Thi Phuong Dai from Vietnam, Miss Graceful Category Champion for Blue & White International Qipao Pageant Singapore, who did a catwalk.

Three pieces of exquisite qipao from Baisi International Fashion Group were auctioned off for charity. The proceeds of the evening went to SJK (C) Pasir Pinji 2 Ipoh (RM3000), SJK (C) Phui Ying Simpang Pulai (RM1000), Ipoh Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RM1000), Perak Association for Intellectually Disabled (RM2500) and Yayasan Latihan Insan Istimewa Ipoh, a foundation offering training and home for those with special needs (RM1000).

“Qipao is well known as one of the finest traditional costumes of the Chinese nation. It enhances the elegance of the oriental lady and its charm comes from it being exquisitely matched from head to toe. Qipao also reflects the personality of the wearer,” Datin Caroline Wong, Honorary Advisor Chairlady of the pageant explained.

Twelve pieces of handmade, embroidered qipao from Caroline's own collection in over ten years were displayed at the foyer of the hotel ballroom for the day.

“Age is not a problem,” enthused 72-year-old Pun Moy when asked what motivated



her to join the competition. Pun belted out a song with her powerful vocals during the talent show.

Jenny Chong Ja Ni, 37, was crowned champion followed by 41-year-old Mavis Wong Sook Whai in second spot and 52-year-old May Liew Mee Mui in third placing. Jenny will represent Malaysia in the Fifth World Cheongsam Final 2018 in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday, December 20 where contestants from 16 countries will gather to share their stories of qipao.

Mei Kuan

HAPPENINGS

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

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

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

ARTS & CULTURE

IT'S CHRISTMAS ON BROADWAY! DECEMBER 8 (Saturday), 8pm at the Auditorium of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 47 Jalan Golf Club, 30350 Ipoh. A concert in aid of charity. Further details, contact: Dominic **016 888 4258**.

PSPA SINGERS: THE CHIMES OF LOVE VOL. 2. DECEMBER 15 (Saturday), 8pm-10pm at Wesley Methodist Church, 121 Jalan Lahat, 30200 Ipoh. Entry pass FREE!! Entry pass holders are encouraged to donate in kind, as printed on the recommended list by the organiser. Limited seats. Get your entry passes now from PSPA Office. Call **05 545 0350** or visit website **www.pspaipoh.org** for more details.

COMMUNITY

SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB PERAK 41ST ANNIVERSARY DINNER AND DANCE. DECEMBER 7 (Friday) at Super HLT Restaurant (formerly Hee Lai Ton Restaurant), Jalan Sultan Iskandar, Ipoh. Music, songs, dance performances and lucky draws. Open to the public. For more information and dinner tickets, contact: Mervin Anthony **05 547 0387/012 508 2946** or Shirley Lim **017 573 0416**.

KPI IPOH SPECIALIST HOSPITAL PUBLIC FORUM – HEARING AWARENESS CAMPAIGN. DECEMBER 8 (Saturday), 1.30pm-5pm at Dewan Anugerah, 5th Floor, KPI Ipoh Specialist Hospital, Jalan Raja DiHilir, Ipoh. Free entry. Open to public. Goodie bags and promotion vouchers for first 100 participants! For further information, contact Customer Service counter at **05 240 8777 ext. 8111** or Ms Sylvia **012 558 5633**.

PERAK WOMEN FOR WOMEN SOCIETY (PWW) will be commencing an English Language Communication Skills Classes for Disadvantaged Women from January 2019, kindly sponsored by ILTI (Ipoh Language Training Institute). This Course is suitable for women who can speak, read and write some simple English. Application forms can also be obtained from the PWW office at: The PWW Shop, 15 Market Street, 30000 Ipoh. Contact: **05 246 9715** or email: **perakwomenforwomen@gmail.com** for a copy of the application form. Completed application forms should be submitted to PWW by **DECEMBER 16**.

ALPHA @ CGMC (For Non-Muslims only). FEBRUARY 24 to MAY 26, 2019 (every Sunday), 1pm-3pm at Canning Garden Methodist Church, 23 Jalan Keliling, Canning Garden, 31400 Ipoh. An opportunity to explore the meaning of life and faith through a series of talks in an open and friendly setting. Starts with lunch. For further information, call **05 546 2023** or email: **cgmcipoh@gmail.com**.

FREE YOGA CLASSES. Wednesdays 7pm-8.15pm: meditation & talk on Vethathiri Philosophy by Dr R.M. Muthiah (Asst. Prof. in Yoga for Human Excellence); Fridays 6pm-7pm: Vethathiri simplified holistic exercises in Tamil & English; 7.15pm-8.15pm: Vethathiri Simplified holistic exercises in English; Saturdays 4.30pm-6pm: Hatha Yoga classes for children (7-15 years old) with Mr Yoganathan Periyasamy. **At R.M. YOGA & MEDITATION CENTRE, 68 Jalan Tun Abdul Razak, 30100 Ipoh.** For further enquiry, contact Ms Yoges Muthiah **016 544 6855** or Dr Muthiah **012 591 4493**. Preferably via WhatsApp.

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

EDUCATION

UTP ANNUAL CAREER FAIR 2019. JANUARY 29 & 30, 2019, from 9am onwards at Chancellor Complex, Universiti Teknologi Petronas, 32610 Seri Iskandar, Perak. The major objective of TEC is to provide exposure of corporate companies to students. Students will be able to submit their resume and attend walk-in interviews. Open to the public of all ages. For more information, go to website: **tec.utp.edu.my**; Facebook: **tecutp**; Instagram: **@tecutp**; Twitter: **@tecutp**.

SUNWAY COLLEGE IPOH WEEKEND COUNSELLING SESSION. Calling all SPM, STPM, O-Level & UEC school leavers. Come and learn more about various Diploma programmes ranging from Business, Information System, Entrepreneurship, Graphic design and Interior design. A pathway to own your dual degree with our Foundation in Arts programme. Fast track to earn your Professional Accounting Qualifications (CAT/ACCA) with us, ACCA Platinum Approved Learning Partner. We are open every day from Monday to Friday (8.30am-5.30pm) and every Saturday (10am-4pm). Alternatively you can email: **infoipoh@sunway.edu.my** or Whatsapp us at **019 368 1096**.

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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Sport

Perak Wins Big at China Taekwondo Tournament

Led by the president Khoo Bu Leong and secretary Lee Wei Kean, 20 participants from Martial Arts Taekwon-Do Association of Perak participated in the 4th ITF China Taekwondo Tournament in Hong Kong and came back with 21 gold medals, 24 silver medals and 16 bronze medals recently.

Ling Chi Yan from SMJK Poi Lam put up an excellent performance winning five gold medals (individual sparring, team pattern, team sparring, pre-free sparring and breaking events) and two silver medals (individual pattern and special technique event).

Meanwhile, Lim Pui Yee and Chan Kai Tong won two gold medals in individual pattern and individual sparring.

Chan Ze Yen displayed commendable athlete's spirit as she was injured before she got to compete. She managed to finish her events and obtained one gold medal, two silver medals and three bronze medals.

Khoo said, "Students can improve their taekwondo skills by learning from one another from different centres. They can also experience the local customs instead of being fixated on their mobile phones. Although this competition is based on a point deduction system, the students from our state have not been defeated by the different systems of competition and they play to their strengths."

"Pre-arranged sparring is a new challenge for the students, fortunately they can still do well in this event. No arrogance in victory, no despair in defeat, I hope students train harder and get well prepared for the next competition," Lee Wei Kean added.

Mei Kuan



Ipoh Boy to Represent Asia

Fresh from his twofold win in singles and doubles at the recent LTAM Juniors U-16 Malaysia tennis tournament held in Ipoh, 14-year-old Mitsuki Leong from SMJK Poi Lam, Ipoh, is now preparing for two of the biggest tournaments in his tennis career.

The Ipoh boy has been selected, together with a Korean female player, as the Asian representatives fully sponsored by the International Tennis Federation to participate in the Eddie Herr and Orange Bowl Super Junior ITF Tennis Tournament in Florida, USA. The sponsorship is funded by the ITF grand slam development fund which selects only two players from Asia each year, a boy and a girl, to attend the renowned international junior tournaments.

The sponsorship selection was made based on Mitsuki's excellent results achieved in the World Juniors in Sri Lanka in March, and two ITF Division 1 tournaments held in Bangkok this year.

"This is truly a dream come true for me. I will be playing against the best junior players in the world and we will also be training together in the world-renowned IMG tennis academy in Florida prior to the tournaments."

Mitsuki's father, tennis coach Jeff Leong said that this will be the start of many more international tournaments in the future for his older boy. Mitsuki's 11-year-old sister Shihomi is equally talented and has won many tournaments beating older players.

"We are very lucky that this trip to USA is fully sponsored by ITF," explained Jeff. "Tennis is a very expensive sport and the way forward for Mitsuki in his future development would be to expose himself to more international tournaments."

"We are currently looking for corporate sponsors to come alongside us in Mitsuki's tennis journey for 2019. We also look forward to the support of our Malaysian sports council, Perak state government and other well wishers."

Corporations and sponsors who would like to help our homegrown tennis star achieve his dreams of becoming a professional tennis player can contact Jeff Leong at 012 562 0351.

We wish the young athlete all the best in his upcoming tournaments. Perak boleh!

