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Your Voice In The Community

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ISSUE **96**

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A Foothold In Perak



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IPOH – A FEEDER AIRPORT FOR THE REGION



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IPOH'S SPROUTING FAME

Taugeh or bean sprouts is yet another Ipoh iconic product. It is as synonymous with the city as pomelo and Menglembu groundnuts. When served blanched, with a simple mixture of sesame oil, soya sauce and accompanying poached chicken, it is transformed into the one dish that most visitors to Ipoh clamour for – 'Nga Choy Kai'. This delectable dish, which some folks even claim as the most renowned dish in Ipoh, have become famous throughout the country and as far away as Singapore; and is usually the first dish that visitors will request. It is said that if you visited Ipoh and have not tasted the "chicken *taugeh*" then you have not been to the city. Although *taugeh* can be found everywhere in Malaysia, even in neighbouring countries, those grown in Ipoh are reputed to be the best. In fact, Ipoh's *taugeh* has a distinctive quality, a special taste that is not found elsewhere. They are shorter and thicker and are sweet, crunchy and juicy.

Continued on page 2



Photographs by Rosli Mansor



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IPOH'S TAUGEH Is Second To None

Underground Water

It is thought that the unique taste of the Ipoh *taugeh* is mainly due to the underground water from the limestone hills that contain traces of dissolved calcium carbonate.

What is interesting is that this highly sought after '*taugeh*' are being produced by just eight families located in the Buntong New Village, just within the city centre.

The families have been rolling out drums of the bean sprouts grown from their backyards daily for the last seven decades. Each family produces about 1,400 kg per day, mostly for local markets, restaurants and hawkers' stalls. The wholesale price per kilogramme supplied by the growers to the middlemen is often unstable, but the re-

tail price per kilogramme is between RM1.20 and RM1.60.

Due to stiff rivalry among the growers, facts and figures about the industry are being held close to their chests, with each one claiming that it is their "trade secret". Their lack of unity has also resulted in their inability to form an association to look after their common interests. Therefore, the middlemen often dictate the price of the *taugeh* supplied to them.

Taugeh Veterans

Eighty-two-year-old Toon Yow Pooi is one of the pioneers in the industry who is still working. He said that he took over the business from his grandfather and has been growing *taugeh* for the past 70 years.

He thinks that *taugeh* have been grown in the Buntong area for more than a hundred years. He still follows the same old method used by his grandfather. The only change made was to replace the wooden tub for growing *taugeh* with plastic drums.

Another producer Hong Pak Leong, 53, is a first generation *taugeh* grower and has been in the business for more than 30 years. He learnt to grow *taugeh* through trial and error. Hong added that all producers use the same method and grow *taugeh* in the same type of blue plastic drums.

Continuous Process

Taugeh growing requires plenty of water which is pumped from wells about ten metres deep. There is no shortage of underground water in the new village which is close to the Kledang Range and which also has a higher rate of rainfall in

to be watered five times daily. Toon has four employees to assist him. It is a continuous process and has to be done 365 days of the year. The *taugeh* cannot be exposed to sunlight and must always be under the shade.

The black mung beans required to grow *taugeh* are purchased from Myanmar. Toon said that as far as he can

holes in the bottom to drain excess water.

A circular mosquito net is placed on top of the beans. The bins are sometimes covered by gunny sacks. At the end of the first day, the beans start to germinate. There are several rows of drums containing *taugeh* in different stages of growth from the first

to the sixth day in the backyards of each

that many *taugeh* growers from other states do visit regularly to learn the technique and discover why the *taugeh* grown here are tastier.

Beans Price Increase

According to Toon the price of the bean has gone up from RM70 to RM110 for a 25-kg bag. He said that he cannot reveal the quantity he produces or the price. *Taugeh* is normally sold in drums of 60 kg each. He added that the eight families are not united and are very secretive as well as compete with each other. They sometimes undercut each other in pricing.

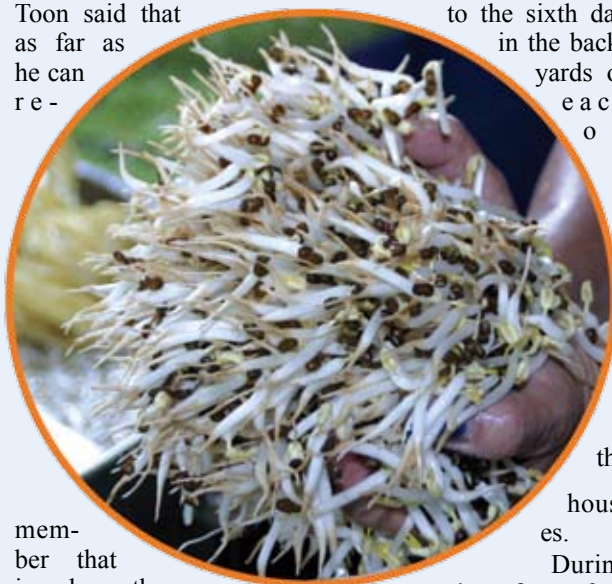
Asked about the export market, Toon said it was difficult to do so because *taugeh* must be moist and cannot be kept fresh for long. He is not aware whether any technology exists for packing and transporting *taugeh* in a fresh state.

Ipoh *taugeh* is famous and has potential for export, especially to Singapore where there is a great demand. However, the growers need to look into the availability of modern technology to expand their business rather than be contented with the old methods their parents or grandparents had adopted.

A. JEYARAJ



the city. All the work is done manually and the *taugeh* is grown in moist conditions and has



member that is where the

the first four days, the growth is within the drum. On the fifth day, the shoot of the *taugeh* protrudes the drum by up to five centimetres and on the sixth day when it is ready for delivery it protrudes about six to eight centimetres above the drum.

Six Days to Market

It takes six days of growing before the *taugeh* can be sent to the retailers. The process of growing *taugeh* starts first by cleaning the beans. The cleaned beans are then placed inside plastic drums with perforated

the houses.

When asked whether any foreign businessmen had come to Ipoh to find out about the method used, Toon replied in the negative. However, he added

the first four days, the growth is within the drum. On the fifth day, the shoot of the *taugeh* protrudes the drum by up to five centimetres and on the sixth day when it is ready for delivery it protrudes about six to eight centimetres above the drum.

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• by Fathol Zaman Bukhari

A trade exposition in June at Stadium Indera Mulia Ipoh will herald the entry of China into Malaysia, and Perak has, unwittingly, become the beneficiary. This marks the beginning of the long awaited ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) which was signed in Singapore on January 28, 1992.

Background

At the time of signing the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) had six members, namely Brunei, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia. Four other countries, Laos (1995), Vietnam and Myanmar (1997) and Cambodia (1999) joined subsequently making it ten in all. Signing the AFTA agreement was made conditional for the four countries to join the Association but they were given a longer time frame to meet the agreements' obligations.

The objectives of AFTA are two-fold:

- Increase ASEAN's competitive edge as a production base through the

elimination of tariffs and non-tariff barriers within member countries.

- Attract more foreign direct investment to ASEAN.

The mechanism for achieving the objectives above is the Common Effective Preferential Tariff scheme, which established a scheduled reduction of tariffs beginning in 1992. The other objective of AFTA, one which is more relevant, is to counter the growing economic prowess of China and India.

Tariffs Reduction

The free trade agreement reduced tariffs on 7,881 products or 90 per cent of imported goods to zero. This reduction took effect in China and the six original members of the Association. The remaining four countries will follow suit in 2015. The average tariff rate on Chinese goods sold in ASEAN countries decreased from 12.8 to 0.6 per cent on January 1, 2010, pending full implementation in the remaining countries by 2015. China offered similar privileges to goods imported from ASEAN countries.

A FOOTHOLD IN PERAK

The six original ASEAN members also reduced tariffs on 99 per cent of goods traded between them to zero and this too became effective in January 2010. However, things seem good on paper only, as Malaysia continues to impose taxes on imported cars to protect its infantile car industry. The controversial APs (Approved Permits) are still given to crony companies to enable them to bring in luxury cars without taxation. Revenue in excess of RM100 million is lost annually because of these permits, which the government promised to terminate by 2015.

Reducing tariffs and taxes have its downside. Such action will have a negative impact on local producers when it comes to open competition. Economies of scales decide the competitiveness of goods manufactured and since local producers do not necessarily have the capacity to compete on an even keel, they seek protection from the government. Protection comes in the form of tariffs which invariably make imported



goods more expensive than the local alternatives. Protectionism is a mechanism to keep local products saleable within the country. But it is another thing when the goods are sold abroad. The difference in price of a similar Proton model in the country and in Dubai is a case in point.

Trade Exposition

The upcoming trade exposition in June will see Chinese-made goods being exhibited for viewing by the general public. The expo will provide a window of opportunities for local businessmen to participate in joint-ventures with their Chinese partners. Among the manufactured items to go on show are men's and women's footwear, electrical appliances, furniture, apparels, etc. They are among the 29 items identified for display. All of these products are from the many individually-owned and private enterprises of Wenzhou, a major city in

south-eastern Zhejiang province of the People's Republic of China.

A dedicated team was established early this year to undertake the responsibility of organising the trade fair. The Wenzhou (M) Trade City Group Sdn Bhd is essentially a liaison team consisting of officers from the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (Wenzhou Sub-Council) and officials from the Perak State government who act as interpreters and co-coordinators. Jhang Xiao Qun or Charlie, as he prefers to be called, is the liaison team's chief.

Litmus Test

Ipoh Echo met up with Charlie at Towers Regency Ipoh recently, where the team is currently located, and was briefed on the pending exhibition.

"Planning for the fair was initiated in January in conjunction with the easing of trade restrictions between China and Malaysia",

he said. "Response from the Wenzhou manufacturers has been good. Our target of 300 exhibitors was oversubscribed." The overwhelming response is indicative of the Wenzhou business community's faith in the fair. "Only quality products will be on display", Charlie remarked, mindful of the perception the world has on Chinese-made goods.

"We've no desire to retail these goods in Malaysia but to establish a manufacturing hub in Perak", Charlie revealed, dismissing fears of Perak being made a dumping ground for Chinese-made products. "We'll manufacture the goods locally, mark them as 'Made in Malaysia' before exporting overseas", he quipped. Ipoh was picked as the team's base over Penang and Kuala Lumpur because it is less hectic.

The Wenzhou Brand-name and Quality Products Exposition at Stadium Indera Mulia from June 24 to 27 will be a litmus test for the effectiveness of AFTA. So far there has been too much talk but little action. Many have doubted its viability believing the worse would befall our local manufacturers. But the die is cast. We shall now wait for the outcome with bated breath.

SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY

• by Peter Lee

Chong, Tan and Ng are directors and equal shareholders of a private limited company which manufactures condoms for the local and overseas market for the past 20 years. Due to their hard work combined with the trust, tolerance and understanding for each other all these years, the business is now worth RM10 Million. The operation of the business was running smoothly until Tan died suddenly in a road accident. Soon after Tan's funeral was over, his family found out that he did not have a Will. So his family applied for the Letter of Administration (L.A.) to unlock his frozen assets and one of his assets is the shares held by Tan in this private limited company.

Under L.A., as Tan is survived by his wife and son, one-third of his assets, including the company shares, would be given to his wife and two-thirds to his son. However, Tan's wife informed Chong and Ng that she would renounce her one-third entitlement and give it to her son Jerry who has just graduated from university. At the same time she also told Chong and Ng that it was always Tan's wish that Jerry can join the business if anything were to happen to him. Upon hearing this, Chong and Ng accepted Jerry as the new Director of the Company as a form of gratitude to Tan's contribution. After all, they were also thinking on the lines of injecting new blood into the business. Not long after this was settled, Jerry became very aggressive and nasty towards Chong and Ng. There were endless quarrels between them over every aspect of management matters in the Company; so much so that Chong and Ng felt like they were sleeping with the enemy. Due to this, the company's business began to deteriorate. At this point, Chong and Ng regretted not having put in place some form of business protection plan to avoid such problems.

To solve the above problems, shareholders like Chong, Tan and Ng could set up a business value protection plan by first preparing a Buy-Sell or Cross Option Agreement where the terms of the agreement covers the agreed price to buy and sell the shares, events where a sale between themselves is to take place, arrangement to fund the purchase and mode of payment. The common triggering events in such an arrangement are death and total permanent disability. To ensure that this agreement is executed quickly and effectively, it includes the usage of Power of Attorney, Trust Deeds and life insurance policies to provide funding for the purchase. The Power of Attorney authorises Rockwills Trustee Bhd, being the trustee of the arrangement, to transfer the shares to the purchasing shareholders when a sale and purchase is to be made in the future. The Trust Deeds by all shareholders provide instructions to Rockwills Trustee Bhd on the distribution instruction of the sale proceeds received by the exiting shareholder. The usage of life insurance policy provides the cheapest form of funding to purchase the shares of exiting shareholders. The idea of this plan is to transfer the shares of the deceased shareholder to the surviving shareholder without any hassle and at the same time the family of the exiting shareholder receives a fair and reasonable value for the shares as agreed upon in the agreement. This would avoid interference from third party in the business. The reason for choosing a Trustee company like Rockwills Trustee Bhd to be the Trustee is because it has the expertise, impartiality, professionalism and perpetual existence.

Peter Lee is an Associate Estate Planning Practitioner (Wills & Trust) with Rockwills International Group. He is also an Islamic Estate Planner providing Wills & Trust services for Muslims. He is based in Ipoh and can be reached at: 012-5078825/05-2554853 or excelsec@streamyx.com.



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No 1 Jalan Lasam
30450 Ipoh Perak Darul
Ridzuan
Tel: (605) 249 5936
Fax: (605) 255 2181
Email: editorial@ipohecho.com.my

EDITORIAL

Fathol Zaman Bukhari
G. Sivapragasam
Jerry Francis

REPORTER

James Gough

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Rosli Mansor Ahd Razali

MARKETING & DISTRIBUTION

MANAGER
Ramesh Kumar

WEB ADMINISTRATOR

Titus Raj

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PRINTER

Konway Industries Sdn Bhd
Plot 78, Lebuhraya
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11900 Bayan Baru,
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Tel: (604) 644 7507

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THINKING ALOUD

● By Jerry Francis

IPOH – A FEEDER AIRPORT FOR THE REGION



The need for a good viable commercial airport in Ipoh has been felt ever since Air Asia abandoned the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport in 2006, citing unsuitable runway as the reason.

Now that plans for a RM60 million extension of the runway have been approved by the Federal Government, there are talks to turn the airport into a feeder airport in the region.

Being a big state, Perak needs a strategically located functional airport to boost economic development. This is generally the view of the people, particularly those in the business and manufacturing industry, who have made various appeals to the state government for the revival of the Sultan Azlan Shah

Airport.

The question is when can the much publicised extension of the runway, which has been an off-and-on topic for years, be carried out?

Runway Extension A Priority Project

Even the Menteri Besar Dato' Seri Zambry Abdul Kadir could not firmly state when the construction would begin.

"I've spoken to Transport Minister Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat to speed up the work on the extension of the runway at the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport. I do not know when work will start but it is a priority project for the State", he was quoted at the recent launching of Silver Fly, a budget airline, at the air-

"We have to re-define our strategy... not competing, but as a feeder airport to link to other airports in the country and region to attract visitors and investors", he added.

The state government also signed a five-year collaboration agreement with Firefly, which now flies daily between Ipoh and Singapore.

Zambry said Firefly's cooperation with the state was in line with the vision to make the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport a feeder air-

port. However, can it materialise? Having seen a number of projects fail to take off in Perak, we cannot blame anyone for expressing doubt.

Humanitarian Airport

And let's not forget that

alternative international air terminal in Perak. The cost, estimated at RM1 billion, is to be provided through a foreign humanitarian fund.

A memorandum of understanding was said to have been signed with the State Development Corporation and that the Civil Aviation Department had approved it. Just as fast as a flash flood emerges and subsides, the news about the proposed airport too suddenly fizzled out. What surprises me is how so much was said to have been done and achieved since 2006 and yet, a curtain could suddenly be drawn over the project.

Peak in 2003

Sultan Azlan Shah Airport, at its peak in 2003, handled about 116,000 passengers and 500 metric tonnes of cargo with 1,572 aircraft movements. It was then interlinked with major towns in the country, including Kuala Lumpur and Penang. International flights from Singapore and Sumatra also arrived on a frequent basis. As such the airport was fully supported by various facilities, including customs and immigration. It started to slide in 2005 when the North-South Expressway was completed and travelling times by road to the Penang and Kuala Lumpur were sliced. The Malaysian Airline System (MAS) began to reduce the number of its daily flights schedule and eventually it stopped. The final blow was when Air Asia too terminated its Senai-Ipoh route.

Other Activities Pick Up

The airport's statistics began to gradually decline and by 2007 only 814 passengers went through the airport and 10 metric tonnes of cargo were handled. Fortunately, other activities at the airport began to pick up. Its role began to switch from being a passengers' airport to a hub for light aircraft. There was an increase of aviation activities at the airport. There are currently a flying academy, a police air wing's base and aircraft maintenance facilities at the hangars. As a result, the number of aircraft movements took a sharp climb to 32,462 in 2008 from just 954 in 2006.

State Involvement Needed

However, having a viable commercial airport alone is insufficient to attract investors and tourists to the state. There must be good investment environment and good tourist attractions. Otherwise, such an airport will only serve outgoing tourists from the state and not the other way round. Who would want to come to the state if there are no ideal investment opportunities or renowned tourist attractions? Therefore, the state needs to improve and develop business and tourism aspects, commensurate with the development of the airport so that it would not merely facilitate transportation but be an avenue for economic development.



Light aircraft maintenance activities at the hangars of the airport

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just before the General Election in 2008, there had been much publicity on the proposal to establish a first airport in the world to be dedicated to humanitarian efforts, at Bandar Seri Iskandar in Perak Tengah District.

The airport, about 50 km west of Ipoh, would provide emergency medical care for the Asia-Pacific region – described as one of the most disaster prone areas on the planet, with earthquakes, volcanic explosions, tsunami and floods occurring regularly. Perak Government was to allocate 800ha of land for the transit hub of the global relief operations. It will include at 500-bed hospital and a 3,760-metre-long runway to accommodate aircraft, such as Boeing 747, and other related facilities.

Apart from accommodating rescue aircraft and helicopters for deployment to disaster areas, the airport will also host commercial airlines' facilities – thereby becoming an

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MUSINGS ON FOOD



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By See Foon Chan-Koppen

I have to admit to a secret of why I fell in love with Ipoh. Oh yes the majestic limestone formations took my breath away and the friendliness of Ipohites cemented the bonds of attachment but I have to confess that the first time I was served Tualang prawns, the Foodie devil in me planted the seeds for my relocation, whispering admonitions for me to move from the chaos of Kuala Lumpur where I was then living and settle in Ipoh. That was 14 years ago and many Tualang prawn feasts later.

Tanjung Tualang

Ask any Ipohite worth his foodie salt where these prawns come from and where to get the best ones and the answer will always be Tanjung Tualang. Legend has it that these prawns were found in the ponds and lakes left by the mining industry although they are now commercially cultivated. I recently took a trip down memory lane and made a visit to Tanjung Tualang itself, the location for the freshest of these freshwater prawns or Udang Galah as they are known in Bahasa. For the scientifically minded the name is *Macrobrachium rosenbergii*, although commonly mistaken for the other giant Tiger prawn, *Penaeus monodon*.

Luen Fong

A half-hour drive took us to Tanjung Tualang, past the Herb Garden and Kellie's Castle, the must-see tourist sites on any tour, to crowded Market Street housing a few of the restaurants specialising in these freshwater prawns. Cars with KL number plates occupied many of the available parking spaces, a testimony to the fame and quality of these

prawns for people to drive all the way from there and back just for them. We settled for the corner restaurant Luen Fong, reputed to be one of the original and oldest one on that street.

Luen Fong was opened more than 80 years ago by Mr. Cheong Kin Chong's grandfather and today is in the hands of the fourth generation, who helms the kitchen as head chef while his father mans the front.

Tanks with the prawns of various sizes stand



outside the restaurant, a source of entertainment for the children as well as tourists. Inside the air-conditioned smallish restaurant, we ask for recommendations and placed our orders.

Bigger not Better

We opted for the small- to medium-sized prawns as we believe they tend to be sweeter, done two separate ways, some steamed and some fried. Usually in Ipoh when I eat these at some restaurants I will have the head steamed and the tail fried but only for the extra large prawns which can easily run to RM30 or more per piece. Here in Luen Fong, we paid by the kilo which was about RM75 for large, RM60 for small and medium, and

SEEFOON GOES DOWN MEMORY LANE



RM70 for the slightly smaller than large ones. Prices vary according to season.

The steamed prawns arrived first and we polished these off with gusto, juicy and succulent, the right degree of 'done-ness', dipped in

their home-made chilli sauce which was to my taste – not too sweet and just tangy enough. The fried prawns followed, fried in soya sauce and served on a bed of scallions.

Hot to Trot and the Deep Fried Devils

My hosts had pre-ordered (a must-have and must-do) the braised pig's trotters which arrived in a thick gravy, chewy yet tender – RM12 (small) and RM25 (large). This was followed by one of their signature dishes; *Yau Cha Kwai* or Deep Fried Devils (Chinese crullers) stuffed with fish paste and



deep fried a second time. This was served with a salad sauce as a dip. Crispy, delectable and a dieter's nightmare! RM10 (small) and RM15 (large).

Next on the table was their pig's-cauls-wrapped spring roll. Essentially a fried Chinese sausage, the cauls serves as the 'skin' holding the stuffing together instead of the traditional pastry wrap. The cauls produce a lighter crisp to the spring roll and creates a smoother mouth feel – RM6 per piece.

Irresistible Charcoal

The final crème-de-la-crème to the meal was definitely their best signature dish, their Fried Rice which I know some of my Ipoh friends will drive out there just to eat this. The rice arrived with that special tang and aroma that only frying over charcoal can produce and Foodies like myself swear by this unsurpass-

able flavour. Added to this was the texture of the rice, each grain separate, just the right degree of fluffiness and not in the least bit oily....unlike some other fried rice I have had the misfortune to encounter elsewhere – RM6 (small), RM10 (medium) and RM15 (large).

Fully sated, our group reluctantly dragged ourselves to our respective cars, only stopping to buy still some more food from the stalls lining the streets outside. An unforgettable Tualang Sunday!

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By MARGARITA LEE

HAINANESE STYLE CHICKEN RICE

Ingredients:

- 1 chicken
- 10 slightly crushed pips of garlic
- 5 slightly crushed shallots
- 3-inch piece ginger
- 1 tbsp salt
- 4-5 tbsp cooking oil
- Chicken fat (optional)
- 3 cups rice
- 1 sprig coriander, root removed
- 1 cucumber
- 1-2 tbsp fried garlic

Preparation:

- Bring a pot of water to the boil, put in chicken and immediately switch off the heat. Soak for about 45 minutes.
- Remove chicken from pot and soak in ice cold water for 10 minutes.
- Cut chicken into bite sized pieces. Garnish with coriander.
- Strain the broth for later use.
- Wash rice and allow to soak for a while.
- Heat oil in frying pan and add chicken fat, garlic, small onion and ginger, fry till light brown.
- Remove garlic and small onion.
- Add rice and fry for 3-5 minutes.
- Transfer rice to a rice cooker, add 4½ cups chicken broth, and cook until rice is done.



Chilli Sauce:

- 15 red chillies, 5 *cili padi*, 3 cm young ginger – pounded
- 1 tbsp chicken oil (scoop from the chicken stock)
- 2 tbsp lime juice
- Dash of sesame oil or garlic oil
- Mix the above ingredients, add in salt and sugar to taste.

To Serve:

- Fluff up rice, press rice into a rice bowl and invert it onto a serving plate.
- Garnish chicken with cucumber or tomatoes.
- Serve with chilli sauce and dark soya sauce if desired.



LETTER FROM ULU KINTA

THE BEAUTY OF BUKIT LARUT



Isabella Bird, the Victorian lady, described in 'The Golden Chersonese' the beautiful Perak countryside when she visited Malaya in 1879. She was on an expedition and stayed with the Assistant Resident of Perak, William Edward Maxwell in Taiping. Maxwell Hill, or Bukit Larut as it is now called, was named after him.

Isabella Bird wrote about the 'bracing air' and 'the cool nights'. She was fascinated by the trees and plants in the jungle. She was excited that in a day's journey she counted one hundred and twenty-six different trees and

shrubs, fifty-three trailers, seventeen epiphytes and twenty-eight ferns. She described the butterflies, colourful birds, orchids and flowers. She was enthralled by the colour schemes of the flora and fauna as well as the swirling mists and multi-coloured hues of the sky above the jungle.

Her journey through the hills of Taiping and the surrounding countryside was undertaken over 130 years ago. We are proud that Malaysia is blessed with an abundance of natural attractions. We have locations that are so wild and barren, or extensive in their spread, or simply



awesome in their isolation. For those who have visited these places, all are affected in one way or another. Very few are unmoved by their beauty. The vast majority leave with greater respect for God's power and the



frailty of man.

News of a cable car project up Bukit Larut is the latest

announcement for Perak. Should we treat this disclosure as a masterpiece, or a misguided act?

A constant stream of day-trippers will have dire consequences on the fragile ecosystem. We may not feel directly involved in the destruction of the natural beauty, but have we not heard or even experienced ourselves, how other hill stations have lost their charm? They have become too commercialised, polluted, congested, too big and too warm.

Litter is another problem. We want progress, but ignore its downside. And we are only too aware of the state's 'tight restrictions' and 'strict requirements', or rather their lack of regulating these.

Once Bukit Larut has been 'modernised', with food outlets and other amenities for our instant entertainment and gratification, the destruction will be hastened. Sadly, our children and grandchildren will never fully enjoy nor appreciate what was once a heaven on earth.

Why can't the existing facilities be smartened up? Begonias, thumbergias, daisies and ferns all of which Isabella mentions, or other native flowers could be grown in abundance. Why not make the hill a focal point for gardeners with terraced and landscaped gardens and the sale of seeds or cultivated bulbs as a crowd puller? Preserve the beauty but provide jobs, too.

Another attraction is to serve English teas, as it should be, with scones and

strawberry jam, a delightful array of cakes and delicate sandwiches, served with favourite English teas such as Earl Grey or Assam. Not *mee goreng* or *cucur bawang* or *pisang goreng*! Maxwell Hill was a retreat for the expatriate community and still is a haven for nature lovers. Don't destroy the reasons which made it famous but instead work on improving these positive points.

Taiping is the wettest place in Peninsular Malaysia. The hills above it are constantly shrouded in mist and cloud. Similarly, the reasons for championing this cable car project up Bukit Larut are also unclear.

Isabella Bird marvelled at our magical countryside. Between then and now, who knows how many species of flora and fauna have been destroyed? Sadly, at the rate we are going, it is possible that much of that richness and beauty may not be around for our grandchildren to enjoy.

YAM

PARENTING

HOLY HANNAH
HOMEWORK HELL

What is the magic ingredient that most parents, if not all, wish their kids possessed when it came to homework time?

At 7 years old, I was not expected to read full sentences in Math of what would happen if Sumathi had 27 apples and 15 oranges in her basket and while running home at 3.6 km an hour, she fell and sent 2/3rds flying into a pond. At that age, I was running alongside Sumathi and falling beside her and laughing our heads off, after we climbed some Rambutan trees trying to add to our fruit collection adventure.

So, the burning question again is: what is the magic ingredient? Some missing chromosome, some gene x that did not meet some gene y? More importantly, how do I get some for my kids?

When it was just my first-born, and I was a stay-at-home mother, it was a natural progression from learning the ABC's to additions and subtractions. Then things started to get complicated when fractions and decimal points came into play, ahem! I am referring to myself and not the child.... told you I was out climbing trees that day. Sometimes, I wish I still possessed some of my Std 1 books so that I have an AB comparison. Nowadays, the poor little drooly kid next door, who is barely out of diapers, is learning the multiplication tables. All right, I could be exaggerating a tad, but is it really very far from the truth?

Look at all the tui-



tion centres here in Ipoh. Math, Bahasa Malaysia, Moral, Chinese, Science, English, and Art? Mind you, that is only the primary school we're talking about. Correct me if I am wrong. I thought Art is a creative subject, and it is something from within and not taught? Yes, some guidelines here and there, but have you seen some of the artwork on display by some of the students from an art school? It reminds me of a production line in some factory.

So, there you go tuition, tuition and more tuition. How did education become so competitive?

It is obvious that I have a bone to pick with the education system here, but that's another can of worms I do not care to open at the moment. What irritates me is the fact that my kids have a ton of homework and most of the time, I need to send them to tuition for extra help. Why can't I help them myself you might

ask? Very honestly, simply because I do not have the patience to go through all their homework and still remain poised and composed at the end of it all, and I cannot guarantee that my kids will not end up in tears and hate me for life for trying to help them understand the benefits of homework.

At the end of the day, I am saying that as far as I remember, school used to be a lot more fun, where students had a good balance of school work, tuition and a healthy social life. So there is no magic gene, no special chromosomes that will take away the homework blues, just plain old fashioned bump and grind, put your back into it and do your homework, please.

As a parent, what can I do? Be patient, be understanding and finally, be the best cheerleader I can be for my kids. That is the least I can do!!

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DIRT VIGILANTES

• By James Gough



Standing tall (l-r): Bernard Wong, Ooi Eng Huat and Loke Hooi Hong, during evening maintenance



A PROUD NEIGHBOURHOOD



Anyone passing Jalan Wu Lean Teh in Hock Lee Garden will not fail to notice a beautiful landscaped garden around a children's playground and on the road shoulder in front of the houses.

The place could be just another neglected playground found in most housing estates in Ipoh, but a group of elderly residents have painstakingly and creatively transformed it.

They laid rocks and grew shrubs and flowering plants. The result is a well-maintained and colourful rock garden in a neighbourhood which the residents can proudly claim to be their home.

It is a testimony of how residents can work as a team to contribute towards keeping the city clean and beautiful.

It started when Chong Hon Kee began a small vegetable patch at the playground in front of his house. Passers-by, who are

in the habit of throwing rubbish there on the way to work daily, subsequently shifted to throwing them at the adjoining roads.

Taking this as a cue, Bernard Wong, 67, and other residents promptly organised a gotong-royong to beautify the area. That was more than eight years ago.

Another resident Loke Hooi Hong has literally gone further by landscaping the road shoulder leading towards the playground.

Since then the playground and the road around it has been continually developed and maintained.

Its aesthetic environment has caught the attention of the authorities and politicians who have provided the residents with garden chairs, footpaths, a reflexology walk and recently a lawn mower.

So what started off as a preventive action against 'casual dumping' has blossomed into a beautiful

garden that is appreciated by all who pass by. Hopefully this report will spur other residents to begin to beautify their own neighbourhood.

A common cause of an untidy neighbourhood is due to residents from other areas 'casually' dumping their domestic wastes wherever convenient, while on their way to work. This is a fact which Ipoh Mayor Dato' Roshidi Hashim had highlighted during his 'turun padang' sessions.

'Casual dumping' is about the motorcyclist 'dropping off' a plastic bag of rubbish at a spot where most of the residents place their garbage awaiting collection by the MBI dumpster. The habit becomes a problem resulting in heaps of rubbish building up along roadsides or open spaces.

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ANAK PERAK

Colin Poh (*electro.pup*) has lived a life that most of us would have only dreamt of. A man of many hats, he is a producer, composer, musician, multimedia designer and an actor.

His musical influences range from heavy metal to rap to pop to hard electro and progressive trance; including and not limited to, Chemical Brothers, Motorcycle, Dash Berlin, Tiesto, Mr. Oizo, Toby Emerson, The Prodigy, Chicane, ATB, Yoji Biomehanika, Metallica, Killswitch Engage, Machine Head, Slipknot, Marilyn Manson, Chimaira, Linkin Park, Madonna, Michael Jackson, and Eminem.

Amélange of Chinese, Indian, Dutch and English descent, Colin channels his ancestry of different cultures for inspiration.



The Early Years

Born and bred in the sleepy tin mining capital of the world, Ipoh, he received his early formal music education through classical piano training at the age of 10. Music has always flowed through his veins ever since he was mesmerized by the insanely addictive tunes from Sesame Street.

Wanting to live a life

immersed in music, he taught himself how to play the guitar in high school with hopes of becoming a rock-star. His efforts paid off during his college years when he was accepted as a replacement guitarist for local underground rock band – *Stone Angelina*, which he played with for a year before everyone went their separate ways.

Initially trying his hand at multimedia design, Colin enrolled himself at Limkokwing University and majored in Multimedia Design. He eventually worked minor stints in Malaysian TV, theatre, event and advertising industries.

A few years down the road, after enduring some

of the most turbulent times of his life, Colin had an epiphany, deciding to finally make his musical dreams a reality, again.

Having once sampled life as a raver, discovering the addictive, emotional and somewhat spiritual qualities of electronica music, he noticed the lack of local electronica productions and dived head-first into producing. He has not looked back since.

Colin has also dabbled in the world of acting, landing a role on Astro's 'Suatu Ketika: Apa Dosa Ku?' The Sybil Kathigasu Story' produced by Red Films, a subsidiary of Red Communications, to be aired mid-2010.

Forming *electro.pup*

Forming his own forte via *electro.pup* while drawing inspiration from genres varying from heavy metal

to progressive trance, he's determined to conquer and challenge the local and international music industry with his own brand of face-scrunching, head-banging, foot-shuffling, fist-pounding electro sound.

electro.pup produces with Propellerhead's Reason 4 and DigiDesign ProTools 8 in his private studio. The name *electro.pup* is derived from his love for electronic music and dogs.

Awards & Nominations

electro.pup was nominated for Best Dance Act at VIMA 2010 (VOICE Independent Music Awards) in December 2009. Garnering votes from fans across the globe, as well as impressing the international panel of judges with his doggedness, *electro.pup* went on to win



the title at the awards event held at Mist, Bangsar, on January 17. VIMA was a local independent music awards event organized by voice.my.

electro.pup has recently been nominated for Best Electro/Dance Act at AVIMA 2010 (Asia Pacific VOICE Independent Music Awards) representing Malaysia alongside acts from Japan, Indonesia, Philippines, Iran, and India.

To hear *electro.pup*'s music, log on to www.colinpoh.com.

COMMUNITY NEWS

SPORTS CARNIVAL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES



A sports carnival for persons with disabilities was organised by Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Ipoh at Kampung Teluk Kurin 'A' on a Sunday morning recently.

Members of the organising committee included officials from Persatuan Pemulihan Dalam Komuniti (Association for Community Based Rehabilitation, Buntong). Its objectives are to present wheelchairs under the SAI CARE project, to provide members of the Sathya Sai Baba Centres an opportunity to serve persons with disabilities and to celebrate disabled persons' day.

Thirty-five persons with disabilities took part in the sports carnival. Among the sports were "Tortoise Walk" race, filling water into bottles, hitting targets and wheelchair race.

Organising chairman Mr. L. Alageswaran thanked various organisations, including Jusco, Tesco Extra, Fraser & Neave, Gardenia and McDonalds, for their contributions.

Wheelchairs were presented to four people with disabilities. They were Mr Prakash Rao, Miss

Nilavani, Mr Lee Kok Seng and Mdm Choo Kim Lan.

PANTAI HOSPITAL Family Day



Pantai Hospital celebrated its Family Day on Sunday, April 18 at the Lost World of Tambun. Over 1,200 staff and their family members were in attendance. Dr. Dilshaad Ali,

CEO of Pantai Hospital, Dr Ruslan Razak, MDAC Chairman, Mohd Aiyob, GM Human Capital Management Pantai Holdings, Yean Wing Cheong, HR Consultant

and Beh Yen San, Director of Paloh Medical Centre were among the VIP guests present. Dr. Dilshaad, in his address, attributed the growth of Pantai Hospital to the diligence shown by the consultants and staff.

The "Yes I Can" theme for this year's Family Day

is aimed at motivating the staff to strive for greater heights.

Guests present were treated to a video presentation, which showcased the hospital's commitment as a responsible corporate player in the state.

To date it has organised more than 40 Corporate Social Responsibility events and 44 health programmes throughout Perak. After the presentation, Dr. Dilshaad flagged off the first sports event marking the beginning of an eventful day for the revellers at Ipoh's only water theme park.

DINESH KUMAR

IPOH IN BRIEF

EMPRESS JANET'S ROYAL BANQUET



Seated: Michelle (l), father (middle) & mother Datin Janet Yeoh (r) with other family members

It was a night of glamour and revelry as some of Ipoh's glitterati dressed up to celebrate Datin Janet Yeoh's 70th birthday at the Tower Regency Hotel. Themed 'Empress Janet's Royal Banquet' guests were invited to come dressed as Princes and Princesses of the world. Datuk Michelle

Yeoh graced the occasion to celebrate with her mother but her poor fiancé Datuk Jean Todt was grounded by the ash cloud in Europe. Datuk Jimmy Choo of designer shoe fame also came by, albeit for a brief appearance. Caroline Wong was selected best dressed Princess of the evening in

Caroline (right) with Datuk Jimmy Choo

her captivating red gown and Cheng Hao Nam the best dressed Prince. A live band entertained as guests danced and 'karaoke'd' through the evening.

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IPOH IN BRIEF

CAKES FOR THE SULTAN



In conjunction with HRH Sultan of Perak's 82nd birthday, a cake-presentation ceremony was held at the reception hall of Istana Kinta, Ipoh, on Saturday, April 15. Cakes in various shapes, sizes and designs were presented to the royal couple. They were from well-wishers which included corporations, individuals and organisations. Among them were Impiana Hotel, Heritage Hotel, Tower Regency, Syuen, Pantai Hospital and one from Commander 2 Brigade, Brig-Gen Dato' Pahlawan Zulkiffi Mansor. "Our hotel chef has baked a special cake for a very special occasion for the Sultan", said Shamsihdar Khirudin of Heritage Hotel to Ipoh Echo. This brief but formal ceremony is an annual event in the state calendar. **RM**

A PEACEFUL PROTEST



A peaceful protest denouncing the pact between the Federal Government and media consultant, Apco Worldwide Sdn Bhd, was held in front of the state mosque on Friday, April 15. The protesters, numbering some 100-odd, were led by Perak PAS Youth Information head, Mohd Akmal Kamarudin and Perak PAS liaison chief, Nor Azli Musa. The object of the protesters' grouse was aimed at Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak for engaging Apco Worldwide, a public relations company with Jewish links, to promote and improve the country's and his image abroad. "We'll organise road-shows around the country until the government terminates the contract with Apco and accounts for the USD24-million fee paid", said Azli to Ipoh Echo. The protest began after Friday prayers and ended half an hour later. **RM**

CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN 1MALAYSIA COLOURING COMPETITION



More than 50 children participated in a 1Malaysia's Art colouring competition held at the YMCA Ipoh recently. The children, age between four to fifteen years, were divided into three age groups. They included children from Hannah Home for underprivileged children and Sikh Single Mothers Association Ipoh (SIKHMAI). The parents were seen to be more excited and restless than the children who were drawing. The event was organised by Y's Men's Club of Ipoh under their community service project. Charanjit Kaur, organising chairman, said that the event was an annual affair. All participants were given prizes and lunch packs. **AJ**

DATO' BROTHER VINCENT



(DPMP), on behalf of the La Salle Brothers and St Michael's Institution. "It will be greeted with joy amongst

the thousands of our ever faithful alumni", he said. Brother Vincent J. Corkery, Director of La Salle Centre in Ipoh, described the datukship conferred on him in conjunction with the Sultan of Perak's 82nd birthday as "a signal" of recognition for St Michael's Institution as a long established beacon of excellence, where young people without distinction are prepared to take their place in society and serve with honesty and dedication.

He is happy to receive the award, Dato' Paduka Mahkota Perak

the thousands of our ever faithful alumni", he said. Brother Vincent, who was dressed in the ceremonial costume of Perak's *Dato*, received the award at an investiture ceremony in the throne room of Istana Iskandariah in Kuala Kangsar on April 19. A total of 912 people, including the Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, were conferred with awards and medals in the birthday's honour list.

Brother Vincent was born in Ireland in 1928 and came to Malaysia in 1948. He served in St Michael's Institution as vice-principal from 1957 and retired as principal in 1988. He had also served as supervisor for Oral English for Perak, secretary for the Conference of Heads of Secondary Schools, secretary for the La Salle Brothers in Asia-Pacific Region and a founding member of the Perak Historical Society.

Ipoh Echo congratulates Brother Vincent on being conferred the Datukship. We sincerely hope it is indeed "a signal" of recognition to those like Brother Vincent, who had given years of dedicated service to the nation.

JAG

A CENTRE FOR THE DISABLED



It took over two decades for Manjung's Association for the Physically Handicapped to have a dedicated centre to manage its activities. The Association was formed following a survey by Yayasan Raja Azlan Shah, the social welfare department, Rotary Club Sitiawan and members of the public. Dr. Manjit Singh, the Chairman of Administration, there was no community-based organisation which catered for the needs of the physically handi-

capped in the district.

Since its opening in March 1988, the centre had been deluged by patients, especially infants and children, brought by parents who learned of the centre's existence. A larger premise had to be sought to accommodate the growing demand. The centre then occupied a rented bungalow lot in Jalan Menon, Sitiawan, where it remained for nearly 20 years until recently. Upon receipt of a piece of state land (in Jalan Menon), the association started work on a new centre immediately. Funding was provided by well wishers and individuals.

Presently, there are over a thousand patients registered with the centre. Beside therapy treatments, vocational, job-placement and pre-school trainings are also provided. Those requiring corrective surgeries are referred to the appropriate medical authorities, *pro bono*. The staff consists of a senior and an assistant physiotherapist, a rehabilitation officer, a clerk, a driver and a housekeeper.

Annual grants from both state and federal governments help keep the centre afloat. Although the amount is substantial it is still insufficient. Donations from well-wishers, individuals and money from events organised by the association make up the RM150, 000 needed to maintain the centre annually. **SN**

GIRL GUIDES TO THE FORE



The Perak Girl Guides Association took time off to interact with the Orang Asli community in Kampong Lata Kinjang recently. Led by its president, DYAM Raja Perempuan Muda Perak, Raja Nor Mahani, the 100-odd contingent, consisting of guides from all over the state, acquainted themselves with the villagers. It was part of the World Thinking Day celebration which falls on February 22 of each year. The date marks the birthday of Lord and Lady Baden Powell, founders of the world Boy Scouts and Girl Guides movements. The visit provided the guides an opportunity to see the Orang Asli community at close quarters and to appreciate their way of life. The visitors arrived bearing gifts and foodstuffs for the villagers. A medical team from GH Ipoh provided free health screening while the guides set up education booths for the benefit of the 49 Orang Asli families living in the kampong. The event, in essence, complements this year's World Thinking Day's theme, "together we can end extreme poverty and hunger". Executive Councillor and Adun for Chenderiang, Dato' Dr Mah Hang Soon, was in attendance. **RM**

GST FORUM



The Perak Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCCI) recently held a briefing for its members to put all necessary internal procedures in place early to ensure they are GST (Goods and Services Tax) ready.

In his opening address to the members, the Chairman of the Chamber's commerce committee Dato' Chin Lean Choong said, "Although the government in recent months had deferred the tabling of the GST bill for a second reading, nevertheless it would be a matter of time before the new tax would be implemented".

The GST is to replace the current Sales and Service Tax. The standard rate of GST is 4%, lower than the Sales and Service Tax rate. However the reporting of GST returns need to be accurate. Businesses will have to ensure their billing and accounting systems can be tracked to ensure compliance with GST registration.

The introduction of the GST will affect all businesses whether supplying goods or services, or both.

To assist its members understand the details of GST, PCCCI invited the Executive Director of PricewaterhouseCoopers Taxation Services, Mr Fan Kah Seong, to brief them.

Over 230 members attended the briefing. The notes of the briefing have been posted on the Chambers website www.pccci.org.my for referencing. **JAG**



•By DINESH K

ROTARY DEBATE FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS



ACS I



IIS

Held annually, the Rotary Debate returned for the 45th time. SMK St Michael's hosted the preliminary rounds with 14 schools participating in two categories – A and B. In Category A, SMK ACS Ipoh was adjudged the champion for the third year running defeating SMK Convent Ipoh. Speakers Pravinan Lai, Wong Kah Woh, Angaindran Gnanasgaran and Gulraj Singh battled their wits defending the motion that "Education is for life not employment". The best speaker award went to Angaindran of

ACS. The winning ACS team was led and coached by Ms Josephine Chong. In Category B, Ipoh International School (IIS) thrashed SMK Gunung Rapat. Looi Kian Seng, Michael Broom, Jasmine Eleanor and Sean Mark

Wilson from IIS were vociferous in supporting the motion that "Advertising has a negative effect on society". Looi Kian Seng of IIS won the best speaker award in the B Category. The team was coached by Mr. Louis Rozario.

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Kinta District Secondary Schools English Drama Competition



SMK Methodist ACS Ipoh hosted the district-level English drama competition for secondary schools recently. A total of five schools competed each with a team of 15, inclusive of cast and crew. The District Education Department was represented by Mohd Ramli bin Mohd Baki, the officer in-charge of Co-curriculum who was also the guest of honour. The competition was judged by Charles Pooley (chief), Xavier Fong U-Shin and Foo

Nyuk Yong. Each team was given a 20-minute time frame to present their play. Methodist Girls School Ipoh team gained top honours with their insightful yet hilarious drama entitled "Freedom". Host Methodist ACS Ipoh came in second with the timeless, "The Merchant of Venice" while SMK Gunung Rapat got third placing with their version of "Pak Belalang". Consolation prizes went to SMJK Poi Lam and SMK Pinji. The best actor award was won by J. Karthikeyan

from Team ACS for his role as Portia. Mohd Ramli gave away the prizes and thanked the students for their enthusiasm and showmanship.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements must be sent by fax: 05-2552181; 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.

Ipoh City Watch Get-together Dinner. Date and Time: Saturday, May 1 commencing at 8 pm. Venue: Old Andersonians' Club. Open to all (members and non-members). Please call Kundan Lal at 012-5293913 or Ms Chong at 012-5089753 for details/reservations.

Malaysian Karst Society (MKS): Cave exploration at Gua Kandu, Gopeng. May 8 (Saturday) at 9.30 a.m., Gopeng Town roundabout. Fee: members free; non-members RM30/pax with 1 year membership. Confirmation by May 1. Contact: Bernard Lee at 017-5659313, C M Chan at 012-5028478, or David Foon at 012-5107555. Website: www.mykarst.org/.

9th Malaysian Hospice Congress entitled, "Communication for Better Care" on May 7-9, Impiana Hotel Ipoh. Contact: Perak Palliative Care Society, 14 Lebuh Woods, Canning Gdn, 31400 Ipoh, Tel./Fax: 05-5469021, email: ppcs95@streamyx.com.

St. Peter's Church Ipoh Diocesan Children's Carnival at YMCA Ipoh on May 8 (Saturday). There will be food and game stalls, fancy dress and colouring competition. For more information, call: Caroline at 016-5371298 (Colouring Contest) and Sulin at 012-5394670 (Fancy Dress).

Ipoh Fine Arts Society presents Odissi by renowned dancer and exponent of Odissi, Guru Geetha Shankaran Lam. May 8 at 6 p.m., Dewan Serbaguna, Bangunan Perak Darul Ridzuan, Jalan Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab. For further details contact: 016-5904420, 012-5712671 and 016-5321087.

"Path To A Happy Mind" by Kyabgon Phakchok Rinpoche. Date and Time: Sunday, May 9 at 7.30 p.m. Venue: Excelsior Hotel, Ipoh. Admission: Free. Rinpoche will advise, from the Buddhist point of view, how to tame negative emotions in order to live harmoniously regardless of what is happening in the external world. Call Mike (012-5070104) or Fay (017-5790303) for details/reservations or visit website: www.rymalaysia.org.

Sathya Sai Organisation (Perak Chapter) Walk for Values. June 12 (Saturday) 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Taman DR Seenivasagam Ipoh. Organ pledge campaign, free goody bags, colouring contest, educational booth, cultural show, etc. Free entrance. Contact: Thiru – 012-5020704, Alages – 012-5155520 or Dr Elan – 012-5263293.

SMJK (I) BAGAN SERAI, PERAK-FORM THREE 1975 GATHERING

Class of Form 3-1975, SMJK (I) Bagan Serai, Perak, will be holding a grand gathering on the 12-06-2010 at SYUEN HOTEL, in Ipoh, Perak.

For more details kindly contact:-

Ganesan: 016 551 9486 Mat Said: 016 019 413 5774 or Lau Chin An: 012 518 1318



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KAMPONG TALES

Art for AIDS



By Yusuf Martin

The severity of the AIDS pandemic remains a prime concern across the world. Although statistics from major monitoring organisations, including UNICEF, UNAIDS and the World Health Organisation report some significant major changes in the virulence of the pandemic in Malaysia, there still remains a great need for awareness of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), particularly among the young.

In Malaysia, where there are more than 80,000 reported cases of HIV infection, and nearly 14,000 reported cases of AIDS, official international and national organisations – like the Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC) spearhead the fight against AIDS. MAC is seen to be in the vanguard of authorities spreading awareness

and education concerning the pandemic, within Malaysia, but there also local, non-profit organisations, engaging in the devastating war against HIV/AIDS.

In between film making and music making, last year local artist/musician/academic Kamal Sabran teamed up with a project worker – Dr Ismail bin Lasa, president of Prostar Malaysia (programme for healthy adolescents) – a club raising awareness of HIV/AIDS among youth, to engage in the spreading of awareness about HIV/AIDS. Together, doctor and artist initiated Art for AIDS (*Seni untuk AIDS*), and successfully engaged in bringing the anti-HIV/AIDS message home to younger people.

The concept of Art for AIDS may have begun in San Francisco (USA) some fourteen years ago, when a few local artists got together and decided to sell art to help their friends suffering from HIV and AIDS, but it continues worldwide with Malaysia also making its mark.

In 2009, *Seni untuk AIDS* started in Malaysia as a network of artists, scholars and social activists

pooling together ideas and resources to bring AIDS awareness to the general public's view. Their intent was to raise consciousness, as well as funds, to continue the fight against one of the world's most crippling virulent diseases – the HIV/AIDS virus.

Known as Fighting AIDS with Art – an online visual art competition and exhibition, the Malaysian Art for AIDS initiative (*Seni untuk AIDS*) founded a web based art competition which evolved into an exhibition with over two hundred stunning entries. A website poll enabled visitors to vote for their favourite image, or the most effect/striking image and closed with 1,693 votes being registered on the website meter. Prizes were awarded for the top three artworks at a ceremony including the national poet A. Samad Said in Shah Alam, February this year.

Nur Suria Mansor won RM1,000 for her evocative expressionistic work 'Fading Away' – a powerful piece full of emotive command, and obviously popular with the website voters. M. Syazwan gained RM500 for the nostalgically resonant image 'Mangsa'

and Ammin received third, but not least, prize of RM250 for demonstrating, pictorially, 'How HIV cannot be Spread'. All the artists and collaborators involved, as well as those who voted, deserve praise for just being involved in this initial project.

However, all art is in a way subjective, and the one work that caught my eye is – *Jerit* (scream), by Abdullah Hamdan (number 116 on the website). This is a poignant digital artwork, for me saying all there needs to be said about the fight against AIDS, the pain and suffering this disease brings not only to the individual whose body has been invaded by the virus, but for those connected to that individual, friends and family. The top 30 artworks can still be seen online, at <http://seniuntukaids.blogspot.com>.

That was merely a beginning. On March 28, Perak witnessed the launching of a second initiative concerning art against AIDS. At the Prostar convention, in Bukit Merah, Perak, YB Datuk Rosnah Shirlin bt Hj Abdul Rashid Shirlin helped launch 'Drop the Hate', the fresh



Seni untuk AIDS

project initiative for this new year, concentrating specifically on photography.

Seni untuk AIDS, in this fresh venture, asks everyone, beginner, amateur and professional to send in their best photographic shots for the photography exhibition which closes 12 noon May 31. As last year, there will be cash prizes and certificates available to the winners, and there will be an online exhibition of the received photographs. Entrants are asked to send their photographic images to seniuntukaids@gmail.com by May 31.

As well as a second website – [\[kaid2.blogspot.com\]\(http://kaid2.blogspot.com\), *Seni untuk AIDS* can be reached through a Facebook page. Links to Facebook and to the web pages of Kamal Sabran and Dr Ismail Lasa can be found on the aforementioned website if further information is sought regarding both the *Seni untuk AIDS* project itself, or this year's initiative.](http://seniuntu-</p>
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These initiatives are most important to draw attention to the AIDS pandemic, to facilitate spreading awareness of the disease, promoting ways in which sufferers may be assisted, and helping prevent fresh people from becoming infected in the future.

BEHIND THE STREET NAMES

By Yeun Yin Fong



WHICH STREET?

Jalan Panglima

(one of the streets in the middle of Old Town)

Who was Panglima?

Datoh Panglima Kinta Muhammad Yusuff was the territorial chief of Kinta. He was the tenth Datoh Panglima Kinta. Datoh Panglima Kinta Muhammad Yusuff transformed Ipoh from a small village into the largest town in Kinta Valley throughout his career from 1884 until his death in 1903.

He left a great legacy of his life in Ipoh by erecting the Panglima Mosque, by the river.

Mohd Eusoff bin Mohd. Yusuff was born in Ipoh in 1897. He received his early education in Anderson School (Ipoh). He had served as an as-

sistant collector of land revenue in Kinta, an Ipoh magistrate and the assistant commissioner for cooperative development. He was also installed as the fourteenth Datoh Panglima Kinta in 1951.

Mohd Eusoff was closely involved with the administration of Ipoh and Perak in various capacities, such as, Perak State Council member in 1952 and a member of Ipoh Town Board in 1953. Besides that, he was the President of the All-Malaya Muslim Missionary Society and was nominated as the first representative of the Orang Asli in the Malayan government. By shunning politics, he devoted him-



self into public service organisations, of which he held no less than 56 appointments by the time of his death, just before Merdeka (Independence) in August 1957.

Did You Know?

Mohd Eusoff was the first Malay to be made President of the Ipoh Rotary Club and elected District Governor of Rotary International, District 330, for 1951/52.



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PERAK GOVERNMENT WAIVES PREMIUM CHARGE

The Perak Government has decided to waive the premium charge imposed by the Land Office on those who failed to convert their land from 99-year-lease to freehold.

State chairman for Local Government, Public Transport and Non-Muslim Affairs Dato' Dr. Mah Hang Soon said that however the RM100 for the application form and processing fee paid initially would not be refunded.

Dr. Mah was commenting on a complaint from a woman who had inherited a plot of land at Menglembu New Village from her grandparents which had a 60-year lease.

On expiry of her lease in 2003, she applied for renewal of her lease to 99 years and her application was subsequently approved in 2006.

When the Pakatan Rakyat came into power in 2008 they initiated a rule allowing residents to convert their leasehold title to freehold status, but before she could get it approved the Barisan Nasional had wrestled back the power and put a freeze to the conversion of leasehold title to freehold.

In February, she received a notice from the Ipoh District and Land Office informing her that her application had been approved for 99 years lease but not for freehold status as requested. Additionally, she would have to pay RM670 for additional premium and processing fee.

The resident, who prefers to be known only as Ms. Ng, approached Ipoh Echo to highlight her plight and provided all her related documents. She stated that she already had a 99-year lease which she surrendered to have it converted to freehold status. Having to pay an additional cost for another 4 years of a 99 year leasehold title was unacceptable.

A check with related quarters revealed that this was a common grievance by several others who had also applied to convert their titles to freehold status. Dr. Mah said in February the State was aware of this issue whereby 99-year leaseholders were required to pay additional charges.

According to him there were not many of these cases. The state has since agreed to return to the owners their earlier title and not charge the additional costs and subsequently notified the respective Land Office of its decision.

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ENVIRONMENT

CALL FOR CLARIFICATION ON WATER EXTRACTION PROJECT

The Perak Government has been urged to clarify some of the issues connected with the Batang Padang underground water extraction project.

A report on the Sime Darby's EIA on the project by a group comprising of Federation of Malaysian Consumers Association (FOMCA), Water and Energy Consumer Association Malaysia (WECAM) and Forum Air Malaysia, has questioned the issues that are not covered in the EIA and in total rejects the project.

Following the report, Persatuan Alam Sekitar Perak (Perak Environment Association), sent a letter to the Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Zambry Abdul Kadir last December to reply to the issues raised by the group report.

The association also wanted to know how the underground water extraction project in Batang Padang would benefit Perak and how is it difference from the Sarawak model.

The project aims to supply raw water to the Klang Valley and when it is fully operational by 2013, it would extract 500 million litres of



Abdul Rahman Said Alli, President, Persatuan Alam Sekitar Perak

groundwater daily.

Association's president Abdul Rahman Said Alli said the clarification requested is on the impact the project would have on river flow and surface water which includes wetlands, lakes and springs, living organisms on groundwater, intrusion of sea water through seepage to fresh water area such as swamps and seaside ecosystems, and on soil stability.

Instead of replying the letter, MB forwarded it to Jabatan Alam Sekitar Negeri Perak (JAS) which sent an unsatisfactory reply to the questions raised on the approved Sime

Darby's EIA.

Rahman reiterated that since the letter was sent to the MB, he must reply. The MB must arrange for a meeting with the association and other interested groups to explain everything about the project.

As a last resort, the association plans to get the support of Orang Asli, NGOs, community leaders and residents of Batang Padang on the negative implications of the project and how they would be affected, and garner their support to oppose the project.

A. JEYARAJ

SPORT

CHESS GRAND PRIX

The 2nd and 3rd legs of the Tan Sri Lee Loy Seng Grand Prix Chess Championship 2010 was held at Taiping on April 11 and Kerian on April 25 respectively.

Participation at both locations was healthy with 192 entrants participating in Taiping and 154 at Kerian. The breakdown of participants for Taiping and Kerian respectively is as follows: 56/32 in the open category, 62/31 boys and 29/12 girls in the under-16 category and 37/56 boys and 8/23 girls in the under-12 category.

The mode of play had the participants playing against each other without being separated into categories.

The top three winners by category are as follows:

Open category (Taiping):
1) Fong Yit San, 2) Liong



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Ing Kiat, 3) Fadzil Nayan.

Open category (Kerian):
1) Liong Ing Kiat, 2) Fong Yit San, 3) Tan Khai Boon.

Under 16 (Taiping):
1) Tang Kar Khei, 2) Nur Afizan Amir, 3) Ee Kong Yun.

Under 16 (Kerian):
1) Muhd Hafizi Muhamad, 2) Ahmad Adib Abd Malik, 3) Tang Wei Kit.

Under 12 (Taiping):
1) Nuril Syifa' natul Afife, 2) Tang Wei Kit, 3) Chee

Kit Win.
Under 12 (Kerian):
1) Muhd Izzat Irfan Che Mut, 2) Wan Muhd Adam Dani, 3) Amir Hamzah.

The contest at Kerian was very close. With the top 10 players earning 6 points each the standings had to be decided by a tie break system.

The 4th leg of the tournament will be held at SMK Methodist (ACS) Sitiawan on May 16.

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