

NEWS

Get hooked on nasi kandar

ADDICTIVE: Some drive up north just for nasi kandar, but the one in Jalan Yang Kalthom, Ipoh, is simply irresistible, as Raja Khalidatul Asrin finds out

WHEN Kassim Mohd and family left the village of Irumeni, Tamil Nadu, India, for Malaysia in the 1960s, little did they know that they were heading towards success.

He started a *nasi kandar* business in Ipoh after a short stint in Penang. It was a small stall by the roadside of Jalan Yang Kalthom, Ipoh, near a bus station, considered a good location.

With not much money in hand, he began his business with two chickens and a recipe handed down by his ancestors in India.

It became a hit. Meanwhile, the Yong Suan Coffee Shop had just started business there, and that's how Kassim met the owner of the coffee shop and forged a lasting friendship.

Kassim then shifted his food business to the restaurant, naming it "Persiaran Nasi Kandar Ayam Merah" and the rest, as they say, is history.

When he died in 1986, his son, Abdul Rahman, took over. In 2002, Rahman died and the business was handed over to his son, Kamal Nazeer.

New Sunday Times spoke to Kamal's brother-in-law, Mohd Nihmathullah Syed Mustafa, 51, who is the brother-in-law of Kamal. Mohd is running the *nasi kandar* business while the rest of the family helps out.

"Some people say that they get addicted to the rice and the *sambal kelapa*," Nihmathullah said laughing.

Their secret recipe will never be shared with anyone. But according to most customers, their speciality is the *ayam masak merah* (spicy chicken).

The person in charge of the kitchen is Kamal's son, Thamin. His day begins at 4.30am and food will be ready by 10am.

Every day, Thamin, with 16 staff, cooks 80 chickens and everything will be finished by 6pm, banking on the sole outlet without any branch.

"Even the Perak menteri besar buys my nasi kandar," declares Nihmathullah with pride.

The success was something to be proud of because they managed to hold on to their traditional recipe.

"But we will not move to a bigger place as my family is very close to the owner of the restaurant, Ang Kuang Ngah, 65."

The outlet has been very popular

in Malaysia for more than 50 years.

It has become a tourist attraction too. Now, even foreigners visit the restaurant to taste the special rice.

The rice is cooked in a traditional brass pot. In fact all the food are cooked in such pots.

Maybe that is the reason for its unique taste.

For those who happen to pass by Ipoh, do drop by Jalan Yang Kalthom for a good meal at the Yong Suan Coffee Shop.

It opens at 10am daily and closes at 6pm.



Yong Suan Coffee Shop.

Mohd Nihmathullah Syed Mustafa in the kitchen



Best friends Mohd Nihmathullah Syed Mustafa and Ang Kuang Ngah.



Spicy crabs

Rice cooked in brass pots

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