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Feature-Doctor

## KUANTAN LASS MAKES WAVES IN INDIAN MEDICAL HISTORY

By: Halim Taib

KUALA LUMPUR: Almost unknown by most Malaysians, a comely 25-year-old lass from Kuantan not only earned her medical degree but also created history in India by bagging the most number of awards ever.

Dr Chan Pek Lui, a government scholar, stole the limelight at the 34th annual convocation of Bangalore University on Feb 23 this year when she had to go up the stage 19 times to receive 13 gold medals and six awards for her academic achievements in the MBBS course!

Pek Lui, who is now serving as a medical officer at Tengku Ampuan Afzan Hospital in Kuantan, drew the biggest round of applause at the function when it was announced that she had won the highest number of medals and awards in the history of the university, and probably in the world second most populous nation.

Her extraordinary achievement was not only highlighted and widely covered by most of the local daily newspapers either in English or Kannada, the Karnataka state dialect, but also prompted Bangalore University to create an award of academic excellence in the form of a gold medal named after her.

Asked about the secret behind her success, she said, "I wanted to be a doctor since my childhood days and thank God, I made it after all.

"I always work hard and I give my best in whatever I do," said Pek Lui, who was also the first foreigner to secure the first class in MBBS in Bangalore University.

The 13 gold medals and six awards were sponsored by different individuals and organisations for the highest marks in the MBBS examinations and in various subjects.

The gold medals and awards were the Bangalore Gold Medal; the Sri.S.L.Bhatia Gold Medal; the Mysore Medical Education Gold Medal; the Dr. (Smt.) C.V Shankarambal Gold Medal; the Rajasevasakthi Dr.S.P Nayarana Rao Memorial Gold Medal; the Victoria Hospital Golden Jubilee Commemoration Gold Medal; the Dr. (Mrs) Kamala Menon Gold Medal; the Dr. Authi Keshvalu Memorial Gold Medal.

The Smt. Muniyamma & Thimmaiah Gold Medal; the Ms. Suma Jayamm Memorial Gold Medal; the Sri Dodda Manlegowda & Smt. Parvathamma Cash Prize; the Sri.B.K.Garudachar Centenary Commemoration Prize; the Smt. T.Rajamma Cash Prize; the Sri.T.R.Shamanna Prize; the Sri.Agrahara Chowdappa Gold Medal; the Sri.R.Gundura Gold Medal; the National Congress of India Association of Medical Microbiologist Award; the Smt. Meenakshanma Kaverappa Gold Medal and the XXth Joint Annual Conference of Physicians Prize.

These medals and awards were for excellence in subjects like "Medicine, Surgery, Physiology and Pathology", "Preventive and Social Medicine", "Microbiology" "Dermatology" and "Anatomy".

In recognition of her brilliant performance, the Pahang state government awarded her with a medal at a special ceremony in Kuantan on March 4. The state government was represented by Deputy Menteri Besar Datuk Hassan Ariffin.

A Malaysian father, Ali Mamat, who was there to witness the convocation of his daughter Ruzila at the same university, said he could not help but feel proud of Pek Lui for the glory she brought to the country.

"I felt particularly proud because Pek Lui was my daughter's house mate and I can tell you that she meant business when it came to studying," said Ali.

Pek Lui was one of the 120 medical students sponsored by the Malaysian government to pursue medical studies in India. She was among the 50 students offered scholarships by the Public Services Department to further her studies in medicine in Bangalore for seven years beginning in 1991.

Together with several of her Malaysian colleagues, she enrolled in M. S. Ramaiah Medical College, one of the private institutions of higher learning in Bangalore.

Pek Lui said, "My profession as a doctor more or less has something to do with the great achievements of our Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"I always admire and appreciate what Dr Mahathir has done either in his career in medicine or in leadership and this has spurred me in my quest for success," said the former student of Sekolah Menengah Tengku Afzan, Kuantan.

Another reason, she said, "I always realise that the people of Malaysia, especially the tax-payers, were sponsoring my studies and so I don't want to disappoint them."

The only daughter of businessman Chan Kim Hoon, 54, Pek Lui is also the only doctor in the family. Her mother, Tey Chin Hwa, 51, is a housewife.

Her only elder brother is working as a chef in Tangling Club, Singapore.

Pek Lui said she still wants to further her studies later, but at the moment she has yet to decide on the specialisation.

Asked on why she chose to work in Kuantan Hospital, she said, "I have been away from home for too long (seven years) and now is the time for me to be together with my family."

"I have to learn a lot of new things in Kuantan Hospital from my specialist seniors, nurses and patients," said Pek Lui.

"No doubt I may be good in studies but I know I will have to work hard in my job," she said.

Asked whether she would go into politics later like Dr Mahathir, she said, "It is something very hard to comment on."

According to her mother Tey, Pek Lui was a very hardworking and a dedicated girl since she was a child.

She said Pek Lui seemed to succeed in whatever she did, and she achieved 9As in her SPM results in 1990.

"I never asked my daughter or my son to choose their profession, everything is at their own choice and interest," Tey said.

She said since her daughter liked to be a doctor, the whole family had supported and encouraged her in her career.

Tey also thanked the government for the scholarship and she hoped her daughter could serve the public and the nation as expected. -- Bernama

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