

Bakri's Visit

I received a WhatsApp message from my old friend Bakri last Friday morning, asking what I would be doing for the day. He was in Penang to visit his son and would leave for Kuala Lumpur later. He was thinking of dropping in my house in Ipoh to see my parents. I told him that I would be just doing my normal routines and would be available after settling my parents' lunch and before going to Perak Shooting Association to play table-tennis at 4pm. Bakri is my former staff in Politeknik Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (POLIMAS), Jitra and is presently the Deputy Director for Academic Affair.

Bakri messaged me after exited from the Ipoh (North) Toll Plaza. When I realised that it was already close to 4pm, I informed my table-tennis buddies Chuah and Tang that I would be late for the game. Chuah has been my faithful table-tennis partner for the last 10 years on every Friday afternoon at Perak Shooting Association. The last time Bakri visited me was in 2010, also on a Friday afternoon when I was playing table-tennis with Chuah. On that afternoon he came with POLIMAS staff Zul, Teo, Azimah and driver Zaini and they went to the Perak Shooting Association to look for me. Many years have passed since my retirement but my friendship with my former staff remains deep.

I was surprised when Bakri arrived at my house in Ipoh Garden on his Kawasaki 900 superbike with his wife at the pillion, he has not lost his adventurous spirit and "out of the box" thinking. We used to share our personal philosophies, insights and humours when we were together at POLIMAS in 1998 to 2005.

My dad was very pleased to see Bakri and seized the opportunity to practice his Malay even though I told him that Bakri could speak English very well. I was very happy to see my dad in such high spirit as he was lying in bed so helplessly a few months ago. Bakri got back to his Kawasaki 900 with his wife after the short visit. I told him to be very careful on the road.

I could still arrive at the Perak Shooting Association before Chuah and Tang called it a day, and played a table-tennis game with Chuah. I thought Chuah would be an easy meat after his exhausting session with Tang, but I was soundly beaten!

Bakri sent me a message with a picture of him arriving at his daughter's house in Setia Alam, Shah Alam quite late at night. I was moved by his thoughtfulness.

*Gan Chee Kuan
Sunday, 16 July 2017*

