



PENGURUSAN PEMANTAUAN KERATAN AKHBAR MBSJ
TARIKH: 17 MEI 2024 (JUMAAT)

LAIN-LAIN PBT

BIL	AKHBAR	PBT	TAJUK
1.	THE STAR	MBPJ MPS DBKL	- FATE OF PJ'S MAJESTIC MAHOGANY HANGS IN THE BALANCE - LOCALS SHOCKED BY SELAYANG ASSESSMENT RATE HIKE - HOW TO HANDLE OLD TREES - THE ROOT OF RESILIENT CITIES - LAW TO TRANSFORM CIITES ALMOST READY
2.	BERITA HARIAN	DBKL	GUBAL AKTA LANDSKAP JAMIN KUALITI BANDAR BERDAYA HUNI
3.	NEW STRAITS TIMES	MBPJ MBSA	PLIGHT OF KG BARU SG BULOH FOLK

UMUM

BIL	AKHBAR	TAJUK
1.	THE STAR	- DON'T GO ON TREE-FELLING SPREE, ECO WARRIORS TELL AUTHORITIES - COMMUNICATE AND EMBODY MADANI CONCEPT - TRAM ON TRIAL IN PUTRAJAYA - THE HEFTY BURDEN GETS HEAVIER - NCD TIDAL WAVE HAS HIT THE NATION - A MILLION DEPRESSED MALAYSIANS - ASTEER BILL OF HEALTH – MANY CANNOT AFFORD TREATMENT - BITTER PRICE OF SWEETNESS - POWER FEEDER PILLARS TO BE USED FOR STREETLIGHTS
2.	KOSMO	PENIAGA MULA 'LUPAKAN' MENU RAHMAH
3.	BERITA HARIAN	- SULTAN SELANGOR BERKENAN LANCAR INISIATIF PERTANIAN UNTUK RAKYAT - SEJUTA PENDUDUK MALAYSIA ALAMI KEMURUNGAN - KERAJAAN BELUM BERCADANG WAJIBKAN PASANG DASHCAM - TIGA PERKARA UTAMA PERLU DILIHAT SEBELUM LAKSANA SUBSIDI BERSASAR - GABUNG PENGGUNAAN PADU, AI LAKSANA SUBSIDI BERSASAR LEBIH SAKSAMA
4.	UTUSAN MALAYSIA	- SILIBUS AI KENAPA TUNGGU TIGA TAHUN LAGI? - AKTA KAWALAN PRODUK ROKOK DIKUAT KUASA SEPENUHNYA JUN INI
5.	NEW STRAITS TIMES	BETTER PAY WILL ATTRACT TALENT TO CIVIL SERVICE
6.	THE SUN	- MALAYSIA'S INFLATION IN 2023 SLOWS TO 2.5% - IDENTIFY TREES SUITABLE FOR URBAN AREAS, DEPT TOLD

Fate of PJ's majestic mahogany hangs in the balance

By AIDA AHMAD
aidaahmad@thestar.com.my

WHAT is believed to be the last remaining mahogany (*Khaya grandifoliola*) tree in Section 17, Petaling Jaya, Selangor has an uncertain fate.

The recent spate of falling trees in cities across the country, most of which involved big non-native trees, compounded by the current heavy rain and strong winds, has gotten the public concerned.

Some have been urging the local authority to act fast.

The mahogany is a much loved tree among residents in the neighbourhood.

This non-native mature shade tree, also known as an African mahogany, can grow up to 30m high.

Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) councillor Terence Tan, said there was no decision yet on the fate of the mahogany tree.

"Some residents have proposed that we carry out work to release the concrete surrounding the tree.

"As the tree grows, it could break the drain and affect the road next to it," he said.

A check by *StarMetro* yesterday



MBPJ Landscape Department will be consulted on ways to save the old mahogany tree.

revealed that the tree's invasive root system had cracked the surface of the concrete walkway.

Tan said they would consult the MBPJ Landscape Department on possible ways to save the tree. "It is a beautiful tree, easily 40 to 50 years old.

"There is periodic trimming, but we will also look at what we can do with the base (of the tree)," he added.

Tan said panic had struck residents in the neighbourhood after the sudden surge of falling trees in Kuala Lumpur.

"Some requested that trees up to 3m tall get chopped down, but we cannot go around felling trees; we need to find a balance to assure the public and manage safety," he said.

In February last year, in a *StarMetro* report titled "Stumped

by tree felling", some Section 17 residents shared how they stood for hours under the 275cm-circumference mahogany tree to save it from being felled.

They had called on MBPJ to enforce the Tree Preservation Order.

Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1976 (Act 172), the Order is to protect big and mature trees from being cut or

damaged if the girth of the trunk exceeded 0.8m.

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) Skudai asset management division's land planning and development unit head Dr Mohd Suhaizan Shamsuddin said non-native trees like mahogany were introduced into Malaysia during the British colonial era.

"The mahogany tree has grown in tropical and semi-tropical climates.

"Several studies have been carried out on trees planted before independence.

"Now, heritage trees over 20 years face increasing threats to their growth and pose risks to the public, particularly in urban areas," said Mohd Suhaizan, who was also a landscape architect.

He said the mahogany tree could still be saved, but this would involve funds to modify existing infrastructure to maintain its life and sustainability.

"An important consideration is soil characteristic, where the root space for the growth and spreading of large trees need to be stable.

"We must also understand the existing root functions to support the growing tree's canopy," he said.

THE STAR

Tarikh: 17 MAY 2024

By CY LEE
chenyoong@thestar.com.my

Locals shocked by Selayang assessment rate hike

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ASSESSMENT rate hikes in Selayang, Selangor have raised the ire of property owners who recently received their notices.

Selayang MCA division chairman Chan Wun Hoong said numerous complaints were received from locals about the property evaluation exercise.

"The rate increase is excessive," he said.

Citing one example, Chan said a homeowner in Kundang had

received a notice of a more than five-fold increase.

He added that the valuation process lacked standardisation, pointing out that residents in similar properties – two houses apart – were subject to varying increases.

"We have more than 100 residents and property owners from the low- to middle-income brackets expressing dissatisfaction with the increased financial bur-

den," he said after holding a meeting with the residents.

He said the Selayang MCA division would help residents appeal and compile data that would be highlighted to the Selayang Municipal Council.

"We urge residents who wish to protest or to appeal against the increase to contact us.

"They can come to the MCA Selayang division office in Taman Jati, Rawang between

9am and noon, or 2pm and 4pm, or they can contact our hotline at 019-339 1924 anytime.

"Once we have collected the necessary information, we will submit this to the council by May 31 together with our feedback and suggestions for something more equitable," he said.

Chan hoped the assessment tax hike in Selayang would be commensurate with an improvement of council services.

"There are still many infrastructure issues like poorly maintained roads, so we find it unreasonable to impose this burden on residents," he said.

Chan also questioned the timing and extent of the rate hikes, considering the recent increases in sales and services tax (SST) and water rates in Selangor.

"It is okay to increase the rates, but it has to be reasonable," he added.

THE STAR

Tarikh: 17 MAY 2024

> How to handle old trees

To prevent old raintrees from falling, Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) should take a cue from maintenance programmes conducted by the Taiping Town Council (MPT) on their heritage 130-year-old raintrees at historic Taiping Lake Gardens. Every three months, council staff conduct regular checks on raintrees that may be attacked by parasites. Trees that are in danger of falling down or have partially fallen down are supported by structural steel braces. In this way, the public can still enjoy the serene raintree-shaded surroundings without having their safety compromised. Kudos! – Lee Hui Seng, Sungai Buloh, Selangor

Is DBKL going to be planting trees to replace the old ones that are being chopped down? We need trees in urban areas to keep temperatures down! – Fredy

THE STAR

Tarikh: 17 MAY 2024

The root of resilient cities ^{simi} _{ale}

ON May 7, a 50-year-old tree fell in Jalan Sultan Ismail, Kuala Lumpur, due to sudden heavy rain and strong winds. Sadly, this led to a loss of life, several injuries, and significant property damage. WWF-Malaysia extends our heartfelt sympathy to the affected families and expresses profound sorrow over this event.

Following this incident, as well as a few others within the past week, Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) is enhancing its Shade Tree Management Plan and preparing new guidelines for managing old and high-risk trees, expected to be completed by July this year. Apparently 175 high-risk trees – mostly over 50 years old – have been identified, with 147 already cut down. Inspections by certified arborists have reportedly slated for removal. In response, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced that 100 trees must be planted for every one cut in Kuala Lumpur.

To prevent further tragedies, we urgently need to address the resilience of our cities and the underlying causes. WWF-Malaysia believes that applying nature-based solutions can enhance the safety and sustainability of our urban environments.

Trees play a crucial role in urban areas. Apart from being visually appealing, they mitigate



Shady: A photo from a decade ago of a road in Kuala Lumpur lined with beautiful shade trees – but are they a danger too? – Filepic/The Star

the urban heat island effect by providing shade and cooling the air. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, strategic placement of trees in urban areas can cool the air by up to 8°C and reduce air conditioning needs by 30%. Trees also improve the local climate, helping to save energy used for heating by 20% to 50%.

Additionally, trees play a part in removing harmful pollutants in the air and storing carbon which helps to mitigate the impacts of climate change. They also provide natural habitats for birds, squirrels and other fauna; also, their mere presence can help reduce

blood pressure and mental stress. As the climate crisis intensifies, incorporating greenery into our cities is a vital adaptation strategy to combat rising temperatures and improve overall urban living conditions.

Many experts believe that proper tree care – including regular maintenance – is often overlooked. In some cases, the roots of old trees, which are essential for their stability, are cut, compromising their ability to withstand storms. Ensuring that trees receive proper care is critical to preventing future incidents.

Additionally, planting the right indigenous trees around cities is

essential to promote cool spaces and green cover. These trees need to be resilient varieties that require less maintenance and are less vulnerable to disease, to ensure their growth and survival. Adequate space for root growth and healthy soil conditions are also crucial for the long-term stability and health of urban trees.

To build resilient cities, we need to rethink how we use space and interact with nature. By planting and maintaining trees in our cities, we can create urban environments where nature and human civilisation coexist harmoniously. Working with nature, rather than against it, will help mitigate the impacts of extreme weather and create healthier, more sustainable cities.

We support the call for an improved tree management plan and emphasise the importance of involving experts and stakeholders in its development. We urge interested parties including certified arborists, urban planners, environmental scientists, and communities to ensure the safety and well-being of our urban environments.

Together, we can build cities that are not only resilient in the face of climate change but also offer a higher quality of life for the people of Malaysia.

WWF-MALAYSIA

THE STAR

Tarikh: 17 MAY 2024

Law to transform cities almost ready

Urban Redevelopment Bill targeted for tabling in Parliament in third quarter of 2024

By GERARD GIMINO
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: The Urban Redevelopment Bill is currently in its final stages and targeted for tabling in Parliament in the third quarter of this year, says Nga Kor Ming.

The Housing and Local Government Minister said the Bill, aiming to transform cities in Malaysia, especially those affected by aged buildings or slums, has been agreed to in principle by the Cabinet.

Additionally, he pointed out that the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) had already identified 139 potential sites spanning over 526ha, fit to be redeveloped, rejuvenated and regenerated.

Of the 139 sites, Nga said, 91 were "definitely fit" for residential purposes.

"We strongly believe that identified potential sites may generate as high as RM322.5bil worth of gross development value, thereby creating thousands of high-skilled job opportunities as well as investment prospects.

"This is the way forward and we are pushing for it (the Bill) to be tabled by the third quarter of this year.



Taking the podium: Nga speaking at the StarProperty Real Estate Developer Awards 2024 at One World Hotel in Petaling Jaya.
— IZZRAFIQ ALIAS/The Star

"We are working towards the final phase of drafting the Urban Redevelopment Bill 2024," he told *The Star* on the sidelines of the StarProperty Real Estate Developer Awards 2024 on Wednesday.

Nga emphasised that the proposed Urban Redevelopment Act would focus on four areas—urban redevelopment, urban regeneration, urban rejuvenation and urban conservation.

"We will preserve heritage buildings and transform them into more liveable (spaces) and high-value buildings," he said.

Nga also pointed out how every building had its life span, just like humans.

"Once certified by professionals that it is beyond redemption or no longer suitable for human inhabitants, it is time for us to decide what is next for that old building.

"Here, we have four options: whether to redevelop, regenerate, rejuvenate or conserve them, with all this well thought out," he said.

Nga gave the assurance that under the ministry's guidelines and laws, the owners' interests will be balanced with those of the developers and business opportunities. The ministry, he noted, practised an open policy, where they were ready to listen to constructive opinions.

"Views that serve the best interests of our country will be adopted as part of our policy," the minister said.

Nga added that they were also looking at amending the Housing Development (Controlling and Licensing) Act 1966.

He said the current Act only covered residential properties and did not protect buyers, owners or developers of commercial properties.

"At the same time, our property sector has experienced dynamic growth and changes.

"There are certain paradigm shifts with various property categories such as SoVo, SoHo, commercial properties, industrial parks and more, which are not covered by the old law.

"Once we have the new law ready, it will encompass all categories of properties under one umbrella," he said, pointing out how it matched the market in Australia and Dubai in the UAE.

Given the journey ahead, Nga urged all quarters to form strategic partnerships and work together with the Madani government.

"Our aim is to make Malaysia the centre of the Asean region and we urge investors to come and make Malaysia the gateway to the region," he said, adding that the region was poised to be the fastest-growing economic zone globally.

As the incoming Asean chairman, Nga said Malaysia was ready to be one of the epicentres for investment, education and tourism.

"We hope the property sector will continue contributing to this vision. Let us work together to fulfil this national mission, where making Malaysia great again is everybody's dream," he said.



THE STAR

rikh: 17 MAY 2024

Don't go on tree-felling spree, eco warriors tell authorities

By **TARRENCE TAN**
tarrence@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: The erratic weather has seen incidences of trees falling recently, but that does not grant the authorities a free pass to go on a "tree-felling" spree, say NGOs and environmentalists.

Instead, the authorities should plant types of trees according to the location as well as ensuring their timely maintenance, the groups said.

Malaysian Nature Society president Vincent Chow said suitability of trees should be considered for urban spaces and roadsides.

"Big trees like the *angsana* tree are not suitable at the roadside.

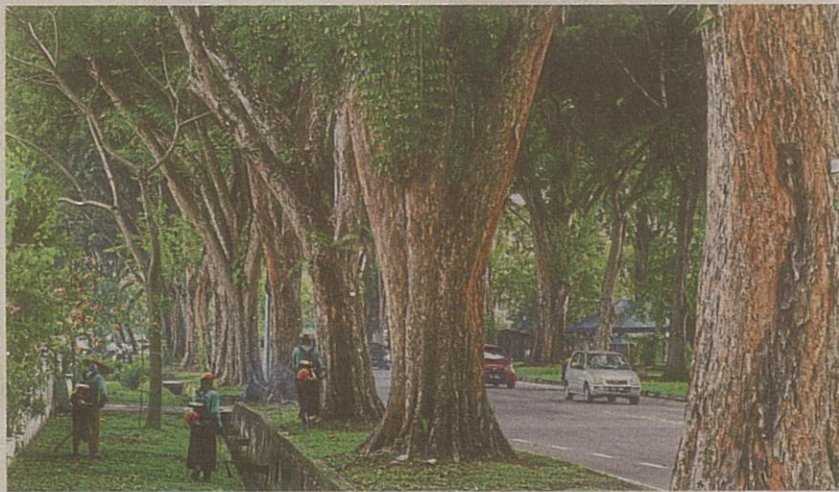
"Suitability of the species and the location are aspects that we should look into," he said.

According to Chow, the authorities should conduct a thorough study before planting trees at an area, and also ensure proper tree management procedures are in place.

"Trees not being maintained or pruned properly is happening across Malaysia. This neglect of trees is what we have to look into," he added.

Sahabat Alam Malaysia president Meenakshi Raman said while it backs Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's call to plant 100 trees for each felled in the city, it is also crucial to protect the trees by having proper management plans.

"We support the call by the PM but we are concerned that due to recent incidences, there would be a tree-cutting spree. It's important to protect the trees; they don't simply die or their roots become rotten. If in the course of con-



Think before acting: Several accidents involving trees tumbling down in inclement weather have been recorded in a few states since April 4. Despite that, eco warriors say the authorities should not go on a 'tree-felling' spree but should plant suitable trees according to the location instead. — Bernama

struction, the roots of the trees are affected, then this could affect the health of trees.

"Hence, it is vital to have proper plans to preserve the trees and not take short cuts which kill the trees," she said.

Meenakshi said the replanting of trees can be done with proper plans and consultations with experts and arborists, adding that under the Town and Country Planning Act 1976, there are provisions for the protection and preservation of trees by the local authorities.

The current approach of prioritising construction over "green

spaces" must stop as it is crucial to have more trees in cities due to extreme heat and rainfall, she noted.

"We need to heed the call made (by the PM) and ensure local authorities involve the public to make sure that the plans are implemented," she added.

Meenakshi also said it is important to educate construction companies and developers on how to protect and preserve trees.

The Consumers Association of Penang president Mohideen Abdul Kader said urban roadside trees are now mostly surrounded by impervious pavements, which

contribute to poor growth and health of tree roots.

"Mature trees require frequent monitoring by arborists and care by the local authorities," he said.

He also called on the authorities to determine suitable locations for planting new trees by considering factors such as space and soil quality.

"Species selection is also important by prioritising the native species that provide ecosystem benefits such as shade, carbon sequestration and air purification.

"Monitoring programmes need to be done to ensure the progress of tree-planting efforts and the

compliance with tree-planting requirements," he said.

Mohideen also proposed for local planning authorities to create a tree preservation order under the Act.

Anwar had made the "plant 100 trees" call after Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Dr Zaliha Mustafa, in the wake of yet another huge tree that toppled onto a road in the capital city, said the Kuala Lumpur City Council (DBKL) had been instructed to promptly fell trees at risk of falling down.

The incident was the latest in a spate of trees tumbling down in inclement weather.

On May 14, two stalls at a night market in Nilai, Negri Sembilan, were damaged when a tree was uprooted after heavy rain in the evening.

On May 13, several cars were struck by fallen trees in Kuala Lumpur following a heavy storm and one of the damaged cars was a police patrol car escorting Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Seri Ab Rauf Yusoh.

On May 8 in Penang, an 80-year-old man was injured after a tree fell on him at the Penang Botanic Gardens while another tree fell across Jalan Macalister in George Town on May 11, heavily damaging several cars.

On May 7, a 47-year-old man died after his car was among 17 vehicles hit when an over-half-century-old tree fell along Jalan Sultan Ismail, Kuala Lumpur.

On April 4, a 48-year-old man was killed after a tree fell on his car along Jalan Senawang-Paroi near Taman Rashidah Utama in Negri Sembilan.

THE STAR

Tarikh: 17 MAY 2024

'Communicate and embody Madani concept'

PUTRAJAYA: The Communications Ministry's personnel, especially Excellent Service Award (APC) recipients, need to carry out their tasks and duties in a manner that reflects the concept of Malaysia Madani, and act as informants about government initiatives for the people.

Emphasising the importance of this key role, Minister Fahmi Fadzil expressed confidence that as civil servants, all APC recipients would give their full commitment to every task entrusted to them.

"In a few months, there will be a new task for us. This is very important because, as APC recipients, we need to set an example.

"Hence, I call on all APC recipients to be catalysts and to embody the concept of Malaysia Madani that we want," he said at the ministry's 2023 APC ceremony for Peninsular Zone here yesterday.

A total of 522 of the ministry's personnel received the award in the form of certificates of appreciation and incentives worth RM1,000 at the event, including 63 staffers from the Malaysian National News Agency (Bernama).

Also present were Deputy Minister Teo Nie Ching, Communications Ministry secretary-general Datuk Mohamad Fauzi Md Isa and Bernama chief executive officer Nurul Afida Kamaludin.

As civil servants under a ministry that has the role of disseminating accurate information to the public, Fahmi urged all APC recipients to be well-informed about all initiatives announced by the government, namely the Madani Economy Framework: Empowering the People; the New Industrial Master Plan 2030 (NIMP 2030); the National Energy Transition Roadmap (NETR); and the review of the Public Service Remunera-



Do us proud: Fahmi and Teo (top row, centre) posing with Bernama staff who received the Excellent Service Award in Putrajaya. — Bernama

"You all are the strong foundation and basis for all these initiatives."

Fahmi Fadzil

tion System (SSPA), Bernama reported.

"If you don't know all these things, or cannot remember, how can you convey those information to the public? You all are the strong foundation and basis for all these initiatives," he said.

Fahmi also reminded all APC recipients not only to excel in their workplace but also to continue demonstrating excellence in their daily lives and be the best examples for their colleagues.

"You must be the best example to your peers so that they do not engage in corruption or turn away from their duties to serve the country.

"I wish the best for everyone. I hope those who have not yet received the APC will continue to work hard," he said.

Meanwhile, Fahmi once again reminded the public not to spread any unverified information through any platform as it could lead to slander.

"We know that with fast and

cheap Internet and 5G coverage, misinformation and inaccurate information spread faster.

"Do not share it in your neighbourhood, surau or office groups because it can cause slander," he said.

On an insult to Islam made on social media allegedly involving a receipt from a fast food operator in Penang, Fahmi said a police report had been made on the matter and that the ministry is also looking into it.

It is learnt that the insulting remark on the receipt was not made by the fast food operator, but was stated in the comment section for online customers to give specific instructions for their orders, he added. — Bernama

THE STAR

Tarikh:.....17 MAY 2024

By VIJENTHI NAIR
vijenthi@thestar.com.my

AN AUTOMATED Rapid Transit (ART) trackless tram is undergoing a trial run in Putrajaya until July 31.

If all goes well, the tram service is expected to kick off by year-end.

Putrajaya Corporation (PPJ) collaborated with the Transport Ministry and its agency, the Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research, in coordinating and evaluating the pilot project, aimed at supplementing the existing public transport system in the administrative capital.

PPJ engineering and maintenance department senior engineer Muhammad Masrizal Saad said the three-coach tram would operate in two routes.

"Route 1 will be for weekdays, starting from Putrajaya Sentral MRT station, heading towards Dataran Putra and Lingkarang, before heading back to the starting point.

"Route 2 will run on weekends, also starting from Putrajaya Sentral MRT station, heading towards IOI City Mall and back.

"Rides will be free throughout the trial period. The public are encouraged to try it out," he said.

Tram on trial in Putrajaya

Wheelchair-friendly service gets thumbs up from commuters



The Putrajaya tram service is free throughout the trial until July 31.

The tram will make three trips per day, starting from Putrajaya Sentral at 8.30am, 11.30am and 2.30pm.

"Passengers need to scan the QR code available in the tram to register their ride and complete a survey.

"The survey will also help us

collect data for improvement of the tram services," he told the media at Nadiputra depot in Precinct 9, where the tram will be parked and charged up.

Muhammad Masrizal said the electric vehicle could accommodate up to 307 passengers at a time.

"It is also accessible for wheelchair-users. The tram driver will help to attach a ramp when necessary," he said.

Many people are expected to try out the new public transport system.

The tram made its debut at the Putrajaya Open Day in February and was a hit among visitors.

It was learned that over 10,000 people took the free tram rides during the four-day event.

"We are delighted to be a part in making the proof of concept a success, and look forward to receiving feedback from the public during this phase to enhance the service," he added.

StarMetro checked out the tram on the trial run and spoke to some commuters.

Former government servant Nik Affida Nik Abdul Rahman, 62, from Bangi said she and her two friends decided to check out the tram service after reading about it on social media.

"We are retirees and we have

a lot of time on our hands.

"We learned about the tram service and decided to meet up and try the ride," she said.

The trio went around one full loop and got off at the MRT station, where they started.

Wheelchair-bound Abdul Hamid Junid, 60, from Ampang was also among the commuters.

He was waiting for a bus to take him to the Immigration Department when he saw the tram and decided to hop on.

"My wife and I always take the bus. We did not know about the tram until we saw it pull over at Putrajaya Sentral.

"I am glad that wheelchair users like me are also able to use the tram. It is a pleasant ride," he said.

Another retiree Zainol Awang, 69, came all the way from Karak, Pahang to try the ride.

He said the tram could become an attraction in the city, as it was a new mode of transportation for Malaysians.

THE STAR

Tarikh: 17 MAY 2024

The hefty burden gets heavier

PUTRAJAYA: There has been a surge in the number of overweight and obese Malaysians in the past decade, according to the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2023.

"A persistent rise in the prevalence of overweight and obesity was observed, which has surged by nearly 10 points over a decade from 44.5% in 2011 to 54.4% in 2023," the report stated.

The report said the trend of overweight and obesity was measured according to the Body Mass Index (BMI) of above or equivalent to 25kg/sq m.

Also noted in the report was that abdominal obesity among adults Malaysians also saw a surge to almost a 10-point rise, from 45.4% in 2011 to 54.5% in 2023.

Abdominal obesity is based on waist circumference for men with above or equivalent to a 90cm waist or 80cm for women.

The NHMS also noted that 95.1% of adult Malaysians do not consume adequate fruits and vegetables.

"On average, adults consume only two servings of fruits or vegetables instead of the recommended five servings (per day)," the report stated.

Based on the report, 13.5% of Malaysians above 60 have adequate fruit intake while it was 13.9% for those between 50 and 59.

The lowest intake was from those age between 18 and 19 (7.1%) followed by the 20-29 age group (9%), 30-39 (11.4%), and 40-49 (12.7%).

The NHMS 2023 also noted that one in five Malaysians do not drink enough plain water every day.

Between six and eight 250ml glasses of water is the proper daily intake.

The NHMS 2023 Report is based on data collection sessions conducted between July and September last year.

A total of 13,616 respondents participated in the survey, representing an overall response rate of 83.2%.

THE STAR

17 MAY 2024

Tarikh:.....



Tough situation: The NHMS 2023 found that 12.9% of Malaysians did not seek medical treatment due to financial factors over the past year.
— ART CHEN/The Star

NCD tidal wave has hit the nation

PETALING JAYA: Nearly three million Malaysian adults are afflicted with at least three of the four major non-communicable diseases (NCDs): diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol and obesity.

Malaysians living with these conditions are at major risk of a heart disease or stroke, as stated in the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2023 released yesterday.

The survey found that over half a million of adults in the country were suffering from diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol and obesity, which are collectively known as the "three plus one" diseases.

Another 2.3 million adults had three NCDs. For instance, about 5% of them had diabetes, hypertension and high cholesterol; while 2.9% had hypertension, high cholesterol and obesity.

Diabetes has been identified as one of the major killer diseases in Malaysia. There has been an upward trend in this disease between 2011 and 2023. Almost 3.6 million or one in six adults (15.6%) are diabetic.

And unfortunately, two in five people did not know they have

the disease. Young adults were affected as well.

"About 84% of adults aged 18-29 years with diabetes did not know that they have diabetes," the report said.

As for diabetic patients, two in five said they had a glucometer at home to check their blood sugar levels. However, 56% admitted that they did not have good blood sugar control.

Also, 6.7 million people or 29.2% of the population had hypertension.

About 17.3% knew they have the condition while 11.9% were unaware of it.

About 91% of the respondents are on blood pressure medication, while 48% have their blood pressure under control.

As for high cholesterol, an estimated 7.5 million adults or 33.3% of the population have the condition.

But one in two people who have the condition were unaware that they have it.

High cholesterol usually shows no symptoms but increases the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Aside from that, three in 10 adults (or 6.7million people) were living with metabolic dysfunction-

National Health and Morbidity Survey 2023: Non-Communicable Diseases and Healthcare Demand (NHMS)

ONE million people aged above 15 found to be depressed.

Number of people with depression has **DOUBLED** from 2019 to 2023.

Depression is higher among those aged between **16 and 29**.

Mental health problems among children have jumped from **7.9%** in 2019 to **16.5%** in 2023.

One in six children aged between five and 15 have mental health issues.

MENTAL HEALTH / DEPRESSION

NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NCDs)

Over half a million or 2.5% of adults live with four major NCDs.

Top four NCDs are **diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol and obesity**.

These conditions put those living with it at major risk of heart disease or stroke.

Almost **2.3 million** adults in the country live with three NCDs.

5.1%

have diabetes, hypertension and high cholesterol.

2.9%

have hypertension, high cholesterol and obesity.

1.2%

have diabetes, hypertension and obesity.

0.4%

have diabetes, high cholesterol and obesity.

Almost **3.6 million** or **one in six** adults are diabetic. **84%** of adults between **aged 18 and 29** do not know if they are diabetic.

TOBACCO USE according to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2023.

4.8 million adults in the country smoke tobacco.

Increase of **600%** in the number of cigarette users in the country over the past 12 years.

Prevalence of cigarette or vape use among those in the 15-24 age group increased from **1.1%** in 2011 to **8.6%** in 2023.

3.7 million (14.6%) adults smoke daily.

68.1% of adults had heard of e-cigarettes.

8.9% (10.5% of men and 0.8% of women) used them.

5.8% of adults currently use e-cigarette devices.

Exposure to tobacco smoke in homes, workplaces and public transportation significantly declined from 2011 to 2023.

TheStar graphics

associated fatty liver disease, which can lead to serious liver damage.

The survey also found that 1.4 million adults were asthmatic while almost half a million children aged between six and 17 had asthma.

"Three out of 10 asthmatics have not been diagnosed," it said.

Overall, one in seven people rated their health as not being in good condition.

Among them, 30% felt their health issues affected their daily activities.

A majority of those who were

sick sought medical attention (70.8%), 20.7% took medicines without consulting a healthcare practitioner, 15% sought advice from the media, while 11% turned to friends and family for advice.

Insufficient sleep, which refers to sleeping for less than seven hours within 24 hours, has also been linked to conditions such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, depression and even accidents.

The report found that two in five or 38% of adults were not getting enough sleep.

THE STAR

17 MAY 2024

Tarikh:.....



A million ^{Sam} depressed Malaysians

PUTRAJAYA: Some one million individuals aged 15 and older were found to be suffering from depression, according to the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2023: Non-Communicable Diseases and Healthcare Demand (NHMS).

The survey found that the number of people with depression had doubled from 2019 to 2023, and was prevalent among younger age groups, specifically those aged 16 to 29.

"A total of 4.6% (one million) of adults in Malaysia were found to be suffering from depression," it said.

The survey is an annual research activity aimed at gathering information on health and to determine the prevalence of diseases and related risk factors among Malaysians.

The data collection sessions were conducted from July to September last year, across all walks of life in urban and rural areas nationwide.

As for children afflicted by mental health problems, the findings showed that the number had jumped from 7.9% in 2019 to 16.5% in 2023.

"One in six children aged five to 15 in Malaysia have been affected," it added.

THE STAR

Tarikh: ...1...7...MAY...2024..

A steep bill of health – many cannot afford treatment

PETALING JAYA: Over the past year, 12.9% of Malaysians did not seek medical treatment due to financial factors, according to the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2023.

The NHMS 2023 had polled 9,177 persons with a response rate of 26.5% from July 21 to Oct 13 last year.

"Among the respondents who refrained from seeking treatment from healthcare practitioners for their health problems, despite recognising the need for care,

12.9% reported that it was because treatment was too expensive or unaffordable," said the survey.

The survey also noted that there were many public complaints regarding congestion and long waiting times at public hospitals.

According to the NHMS 2023, there was a decline in government facility utilisation from 64.2% in 2019 to 48.9% last year.

"This suggests a notable increase in the utilisation of pri-

vate outpatient services among Malaysians compared with four years ago," said the report.

At the same time, the NHMS 2023 said there was an increase in outpatient utilisation from 8.1% in 2019 to 12.5% last year.

According to the survey, 61.5% of outpatient visits were paid by the patients or their family members.

Some 18.2% of patients had funded their medical expenses through insurance, said the report, while 11.8% of Malaysians

were exempted from medical fees, such as senior citizens and blood donors, among others.

Meanwhile, the NHMS 2023 also said only one in four, or 8.6 million Malaysians, had sought oral healthcare services.

"On average, there were 33 visits per 100 population to a dentist per year in 2023.

"Compared to other countries, the average visits to a dentist reported in a year range from 47 to 160 visits per 100 population," said the NHMS 2023.

THE STAR

17 MAY 2024

Tarikh:.....

Reports by MARTIN CARVALHO, RAHIMY RAHIM, RAGANANTHINI VETHASALAM and TARRENCE TAN

Bitter price of sweetness

War against sugar soon in bid to curb NCDs among Malaysians

PUTRAJAYA: A war against excessive consumption of sugar will be launched soon aimed at preventing the rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) among Malaysians, says Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad.

The Health Minister said several measures were necessary despite reports showing that there have been a decrease in NCDs such as diabetes, hypertension and cholesterol since 2019.

"We will be introducing a grading system on sweetened beverages and premixed drinks ... based on the sugar the drink contains. This is similar to what is being done across the Causeway, where the level of sugar in drinks is graded A, B or C.

"These are the measures we are taking in the war against sugar which is coming soon," he told a press conference after launching of the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2023 and the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) Malaysia 2023 here yesterday.

Although the prevalence of diabetes had dropped by 2.7% between 2019 and 2023 while hypertension dropped by 0.8%, cholesterol decreased 4.8% within the same period, Dr Dzulkefly pointed out that the prevalence of Malaysians being overweight and obese was on the rise.

"Based on our study, one out of two Malaysians are either overweight or obese.

"We will be introducing a grading system on sweetened beverages and premixed drinks ... based on the sugar the drink contains."

Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad

17/5
star



"We are aware that being obese and overweight carry a higher risk with those affected prone to Type 2 Diabetes.

"Also, being obese and overweight carries the higher risk of developing cancer and also fatty liver," he added.

Obesity and being overweight could drag down our success in reducing NCDs in the coming years, he said.

Dr Dzulkefly said the Health Ministry is also currently engaging with stakeholders including industry players on such strategies on the war against sugar.

He said the sugar grading system for sweetened beverages is a continuation of the government's effort to reduce the consumption of excessive sugar by the public.

However, Dr Dzulkefly did not specify a timeline for the implementation of the sugar grading system.

In 2019, the government introduced a tax on sugary drinks, imposing a 40 sen levy per litre for beverages containing more than five grams of sugar per 100ml and fruit juices with 12 grams of sugar per 100ml.

According to the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2023, there has been a surge in the prevalence of overweight and obesity by nearly 10% between 2011 and last year.

Abdominal obesity among adults also saw an increase of almost 10% for the same period, the survey found.

Meanwhile, speaking on the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2023, the Health Minister expressed serious concern on the rise of the prevalence in the use of ecigarettes or vapes among young adults, especially those below the age of 50 years old.

"It is a serious and worrying

matter and requires a quick and comprehensive solution," he added.

The Health Ministry's effort to gazette the Smoking Products Control Act for Public Health 2024 (Act 852) since Feb 2 this year are in line with the key articles outlined under the World Health Organisation Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) in efforts to curb the use of tobacco products and reduce the harm caused by smoking and the use of other tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes or vapes.

"We plan to fully enforce Act 852 along with the regulations and orders under it starting from June this year," he said.

FORMORE:

See page 4

THE STAR

17 MAY 2024

arih:.....

Power feeder pillars to be used for streetlights

SUNGAI BULOH: The installation of new low-voltage feeder pillars to supply electricity to street lights along a 4km stretch of Jalan Kepong-Kuala Selangor is set to commence in June and is expected to be completed within 16 weeks.

Works Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi said RM500,000 has been allocated for the feeder pillars, which will be installed in well-lit public areas to prevent acts of vandalism, such as cable theft and damage.

"I have been informed there have been four incidents of vandalism and theft in the past two years.

"We will instal and reinforce additional locked metal boxes because despite the fences, it was easy for the vandals to cut through and gain access."

Nanta said police will also increase surveillance in the area and consider the installation of CCTV cameras.

He expressed hope that the community would also play its part by reporting any suspicious activities to the authorities to safeguard public property for the benefit and well-being of everyone. - Bernama

THE STAR

Tarikh: 17 MAY 2024

Kurang sambutan; tidak mampu tanggung kos antara faktor jualan dihentikan

Peniaga mula 'lupakan' Menu Rahmah

Oleh NOOR HASLIZA NUSI,
LUQMAN RIDHWAN MOHD. NOR,
DIYANATUL ATIAH ZAKARYA dan
NUR AMEERA ABDUL RASID

PETALING JAYA – Menu Rahmah yang dijual bagi membantu meringankan beban orang ramai terutama golongan B40 ketika ini dilihat semakin sukar didapati selepas sebilangan peniaga mengambil keputusan menghentikan penjualan hidangan berharga RM5 berkenaan.

Tinjauan Kosmo! mendapati, banyak peniaga memilih untuk tidak meneruskan lagi inisiatif tersebut berikutan kurang mendapat sambutan selain tidak mampu menanggung kos bahan mentah yang tinggi ketika ini.

Rata-rata peniaga tersebut mendakwa, harga set makanan yang diperkenalkan serendah RM5 itu cuma mampu bertahan tiga hingga enam bulan sahaja.

Di George Town, peniaga nasi campur, Saiful Yahaya berkata, dia hanya menjual Menu Rahmah kira-kira enam bulan sebelum penjualannya dihentikan penghujung tahun lalu.

Akuinya, selain berdepan dengan kenaikan harga kos bahan mentah yang mendadak dan tidak menentu terutama bawang, gula, beras import, sos, ayam serta sayur-sayuran, sambutan pelanggan terhadap pelaksanaan-nya juga turut berkurangan.

"Cuma 10 hingga 20 peratus pelanggan sahaja yang datang membeli set Menu Rahmah iaitu nasi putih, ayam dan sayur sejak ia diperkenalkan. Kadang-kadang hanya seorang sahaja yang meminta membelinya.

"Memang tak bawa balik modal pun, untung pun kurang RM1 berbanding menu nasi campur dengan 50 jenis lauk-pauk yang sedia ada dijual di gerai ini.

"Pemilihan nasi dengan aneka lauk ini juga sudah boleh didapati pada harga berpatutan, lebih daripada Menu Rahmah iaitu sekitar RM2.50 hingga RM4.50.



ATAS: Menu Rahmah sebelum ini membantu orang ramai menikmati makanan pada harga murah iaitu RM5. – GAMBAR HIASAN

KANAN: Kenaikan kos bahan mentah menjadi antara punca golongan peniaga tidak dapat meneruskan Menu Rahmah. – GAMBAR HIASAN

Semuanya terpulang pada bajet dan kemampuan pelanggan itu sendiri," katanya kepada Kosmo!.

Sementara itu, penyelia sebuah restoran nasi kandar di George Town yang hanya mahu dikenali sebagai Ali berkata, Menu Rahmah yang diperkenalkan di premis itu juga hanya bertahan selama tiga bulan.

"Mula-mula diperkenalkan memang ada sambutan tetapi dalam kelompok pelanggan terdiri pekerja warga asing dan kumpulan pelajar.

"Bagaimanapun pada bulan seterusnya, permintaan semakin berkurangan dan pelanggan yang

sama dilihat memilih lauk atau makanan lain, pada harga kurang RM10," katanya.

Seorang lagi pengusaha gerai nasi campur di Sungai Ara, Bayan Lepas berkata, dia amat mengharapkan agar kerajaan serius mengawal harga barangan mentah supaya tidak membebankan para peniaga makanan.

"Kenaikan harga bawang merah antara RM45 hingga RM48

bagi setiap tujuh kilogram, beras import, minyak masak, ayam dan sayur-sayuran amat memberi kesan kepada kami ketika ini.

"Bagaimana hendak kami teruskan Menu Rahmah jika harga barangan mentah yang berada di pasaran terus naik.

"Kami tiada pilihan melainkan menghentikan Menu Rahmah yang diperkenalkan bagi tujuan meringankan beban dan kos sara

Hidangan berharga RM5 sangat baik penerangan
15,000 kedai makan sertai Menu Rahmah

KERATAN Kosmo! 1 Februari 2023.

hidup rakyat selepas berdepan krisis kewangan," tambahnya.

Di Ipoh, seorang peniaga Mohd. Hamdan Rasidi berkata dia terpaksa menghentikan penjualan Menu Rahmah selepas pelanggan tidak mahu menikmati hidangan merangkumi lauk pauk seperti ayam masak merah ayam masak kicap, kari ikan sert sayur-sayuran berharga RM5 itu.

"Ia merupakan satu per baziran apabila lauk yang say asingkan bagi Menu Rahmah tidak habis dijual.

"Selain itu, dengan peningkatan kos barangan mentah dan lain-lain menjadikan sukar untuk kami menyerap kos operasi bagi Menu Rahmah," katanya.

Sementara itu di Melaka, promosi Menu Rahmah yang kurang didakwa menjadi punca rata-rata peniaga tidak lagi terdorong untuk meneruskan program itu sejak hujung tahun lalu.

Pemilik restoran Asam Pedas Selera Kampung, Saharudin Mohd. Nor, 57, berkata, keadaan itu diburukkan lagi dengan situasi di mana peniaga berdepan masalah bekalan beras, minyak dan gula.

"Promosi menu ini pun sura dan tidak dipromosikan sepele sebelumnya," ujarnya.

Bagi pemilik Restoran Asa Pedas Lagenda, Mohd. Rasydi Ramli, pihaknya masih menawarkan Menu Rahmah setiap hari tetapi jumlah permintaan semakin berkurangan berbanding pertengahan tahun lalu.

"Setiap hari kira-kira 10 bungkus akan terjual, tidaklah sebanyak tahun lepas kita jual lebih 30 bungkus," ujarnya.

KOSMO

Tarikh: 17 MAY 2024

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PBT
17/5
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Gubal akta landskap jamin kualiti bandar berdaya huni



Profesor Jabatan Senibina Landskap, Kulliyah Seni Bina dan Reka Bentuk Alam Sekitar (KAED), Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM)

Oleh Dr Mohd Ramzi Mohd Hussain
bhrencana@bh.com.my

Kejadian berasingan pokok berusia tumbang di ibu negara, baru-baru ini sehingga meragut nyawa adalah amat serius dan memerlukan tindakan segera Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (DBKL) dan pihak berkuasa tempatan (PBT) untuk merangka tindakan jangka panjang lebih baik bagi menangani permasalahan ini.

Pokok yang tumbuh dan hidup melebihi 50 tahun dalam bandar berstatus bersejarah atau warisan. Pokok bersejarah mempunyai impak besar pada landskap bandar, secara visual dan alam sekitar. Pokok ini ditanam, dibiarkan tumbuh dan membesar sehingga menjadi identiti kawasan terbabit. Namun, hakikatnya, pokok di bandar terhimpit dengan pembangunan pesat. Tiada lagi ruang hijau menjadi ruang udara untuk pokok ini. Ruang hijau sekeliling pokok perlu dibiarkan supaya berlaku proses penyerapan air, pelepasan udara dan perkembangan akar.

Di samping itu, aktiviti pembinaan dan jumlah kenderaan yang banyak kadangkala merosakkan akar, batang dan dahan pokok manakala kerja pembangunan boleh mengurangkan ruang tumbuh pokok sedia ada. Aktiviti pemangkasan pokok tidak teratur juga boleh menyumbang kepada ketidakseimbangan pokok ini.

Bermakna, sudah sampai masa Malaysia sebagai

sebuah negara Khatulistiwa yang memiliki hutan hujan tropika, mewujudkan akta khusus berkaitan perancangan dan reka bentuk landskap atau akta landskap. Akta ini memainkan peranan penting dalam perancangan, pembangunan dan pengurusan landskap di Malaysia.

Dalam akta ini, pokok dan tumbuhan adalah teras dan paksi utama kepada keseluruhan perancangan serta reka bentuk landskap, terutama dalam bandar. Ia juga perlu dimasukkan dengan proses pemuliharaan dan penjagaan pokok serta tumbuhan berstatus sejarah serta warisan.

Akta landskap mempunyai kaitan erat dengan penjagaan pokok warisan dalam bandar kerana menyediakan kerangka undang-undang untuk melindungi, memulihara dan mengurus pokok bersejarah serta bernilai tinggi. Pokok warisan, biasanya berusia 50 atau ratusan tahun, mempunyai nilai sejarah, budaya atau ekologi penting, memerlukan perlindungan khusus untuk memastikan kelangsungan 'hidup' mereka.

Sedia peraturan ketat

Melalui akta landskap, kerajaan dan PBT dapat menetapkan garis panduan dan peraturan ketat mengenai penanaman, pemangkasan dan penjagaan pokok warisan. Ini termasuk langkah mengelak penebangan haram, memberikan rawatan khusus kepada pokok sakit dan memastikan kawasan sekitar pokok warisan tidak terganggu sehingga merosakkan akarnya.

Akta ini harus mampu mengawal selia peran-

cangan dan pembangunan landskap membabitkan penanaman pokok dan tumbuhan berkaitan serta bersesuaian di bandar, perumahan dan kawasan lain, di samping membentuk kesejahteraan bandar yang berdaya huni dan lestari dengan menengahkan infrastruktur hijau dan biru.

Antara kepentingan utama akta landskap adalah memelihara keindahan alam semula jadi dan warisan landskap. Ini termasuk melindungi kawasan hijau, taman awam dan elemen landskap penting dari segi ekologi dan budaya, sekali gus membantu mencegah pencerobohan dan kemusnahan alam semula jadi akibat pembangunan tidak terkawal.

Akta landskap juga patut berfungsi meningkatkan kualiti hidup penduduk, menyediakan ruang rekreasi sihat, mengurangkan tekanan kehidupan bandar dan memperbaiki kesejahteraan mental dan fizikal masyarakat.

Dari segi ekonomi, akta landskap membawa kepentingan besar kepada pembangunan lestari, membantu mengurangkan kos jangka panjang berkaitan pengurusan alam sekitar dan infrastruktur, mengurangkan risiko bencana alam seperti banjir dan tanah runtuh serta mengurangkan kos penyelenggaraan bandar.

Oleh itu, Kementerian Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan (KPKT) bersama Jabatan Landskap Negara wajar melihat kepentingan untuk mewujudkan akta landskap sebagai garis panduan membentuk kualiti bandar berdaya huni dan menjamin kelangsungan kehidupan lebih lestari.

BERITA HARIAN
Tarikh.....1..7..MAY...2024.....

Sultan Selangor berkenan lancar inisiatif Pertanian Untuk Rakyat

PUTRA lambang sumbangan penting, komitmen UPM perkasa bidang pertanian

Oleh Norzamira Che Noh
bhnews@bh.com.my

Klang: Sultan Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah berkenan melancarkan penjenamaan semua aktiviti pengembangan pertanian dan keterjaminan makanan Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) di bawah jenama Pertanian Untuk Rakyat (PUTRA).

Pelancaran PUTRA oleh baginda yang juga Canselor UPM dilaksanakan dengan menandatangani plak perasmian yang dibawa masuk oleh sebuah robot di Istana Alam Shah dekat sini, semalam.

Naib Canselor UPM, Datuk Prof Dr Ahmad Farhan Mohd Sallah, berkata pelancaran PUTRA melambangkan sumbangan penting UPM dalam memperkasa bidang pertanian serta komitmen universiti berkenaan dalam memajukan pertanian untuk kepentingan masyarakat.

"Penjenamaan ini memberikan pendedahan kepada masya-

rakat bahawa UPM bersama agensi terbabit menyediakan pelbagai program latihan, pendidikan dan penyelidikan kepada petani tempatan yang boleh menyumbang kepada peningkatan sara hidup dan pembangunan ekonomi masyarakat.

"Dalam usaha ini, UPM giat bekerjasama dengan agensi luar seperti projek Inisiatif Pendapatan Rakyat Inisiatif Usahawan Tani (IPR-INTAN @ UPM), program pengembangan PUTRA oleh Pusat Transformasi Komuniti Universiti (UCTC) dan persidangan ilmu membincangkan agenda keterjaminan makanan," katanya.

Beliau berkata, pertanian bandar adalah antara kerjasama dengan komuniti bandar yang sering dijalankan bagi menyebarkan ilmu pertanian dalam kalangan masyarakat setempat.

Manfaat teknologi AI

Katanya, terbaharu sekumpulan penyelidik Institut Pertanian Tropika dan Sekuriti Makanan (ITFoS) dan Fakulti Pertanian (FP) sudah menuai rintis padi varieti baharu rintang kemarau dan berkualiti tinggi yang dinamakan benih Climate Ready (CR) berskala besar di bendang Kampung Muring, Kota Bharu, Kelantan.

"Usaha ini disokong dengan perkembangan teknologi digital



Sultan Sharafuddin menandatangani plak perasmian pada majlis pelancaran PUTRA di Istana Alam Shah, semalam. Turut hadir, Menteri Besar Selangor, Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari (kanan) dan Ahmad Farhan (tiga dari kanan). (Foto BERNAMA)

mudah dan terbaru melalui teknologi kecerdasan buatan (AI).

"Antara kajian yang telah dipelopori seperti pengesanan tekanan tumbuhan menggunakan aplikasi DEEP-NDVI Model.

"Ini termasuk juga pertanian pintar menggunakan data tepat AI, pertanian digital berkembar oleh Putra Science Park (PSP) serta sistem sensor pemantauan

kualiti air bagi penternakan ikan siakap oleh Institut Antarabangsa Akuakultur dan Sains Akuatik UPM," katanya.

Mengulas lanjut, Ahmad Farhan berkata, inisiatif itu selari dengan Dasar Agromakanan Negara 2012-2030 (DAN 2.0) untuk meningkatkan kesedaran masyarakat akan pentingnya keterjaminan makanan serta mene-

gaskan peranan penting UPM sebagai institusi pendidikan yang berkait rapat dengan pertanian.

Jelasnya, turut dilaksanakan Kolaborasi Perbadanan Hal Ehwal Bekas Angkatan Tentera (Perhebat) menerusi program Usahawantani Putra-Perhebat dalam memartabatkan sosioekonomi bakal pesara sertaveteran Angkatan Tentera Malaysia (ATM).

BERITA HARIAN
17 MAY 2024
Tarikh.....

Tinjauan Kebangsaan Kesihatan dan Morbiditi (NHMS) 2023

Sejuta penduduk Malaysia alami kemurungan

Seramai 3.6 juta pula hidup penyakit tidak berjangkit

Oleh Mohd Iskandar Ibrahim
bhnews@bh.com.my

Putrajaya: Tinjauan Kebangsaan Kesihatan dan Morbiditi (NHMS) 2023 mendedahkan sejuta atau bersamaan 4.6 peratus penduduk Malaysia berusia lebih 15 tahun mengalami kemurungan.

Menerusi penemuan utama daripada tinjauan dilakukan, jumlah itu menunjukkan peningkatan dua kali ganda berbanding 2019 dengan masalah terbabit lebih tinggi dalam kalangan mereka yang berusia 16 hingga 29 tahun.

Tinjauan juga menunjukkan hampir separuh daripada jumlah itu berfikir untuk mencederakan diri sendiri atau membunuh diri.

Masalah kesihatan mental dalam kalangan kanak-kanak pula menyaksikan peningkatan daripada 7.9 peratus pada 2019 kepada 16.5 peratus pada 2023 dengan satu daripada enam kanak-kanak mengalami masalah berkenaan.

NHMS 2023 turut mendedahkan 46 peratus kanak-kanak terbabit mengalami masalah dengan rakan sebaya, masalah tingkah laku (25 peratus), masalah



Dr Dzulkefly melawat pameran selepas melancarkan NHMS 2023, di Putrajaya, semalam.

(Foto Mohd Fadli Hamzah/BH)

emosi (17 peratus) dan hiperaktif (8 peratus).

Mengenai penyakit tidak berjangkit (NCD), NHMS 2023 menunjukkan hampir 3.6 juta penduduk negara ini atau bersamaan 15.6 peratus menghidap kencing manis, tekanan darah tinggi (6.7 juta) dan kolesterol tinggi (7.5 juta).

Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, berkata tinjauan mendapati sebahagian besar daripada mereka yang menghidap penyakit kencing manis, tekanan darah tinggi dan kolesterol tinggi yang tidak didiagnosis tergolong dalam golongan berusia lebih muda.

"Penemuan itu amat membimbangkan kerana penyakit tidak

berjangkit yang tidak didiagnosis boleh menyebabkan komplikasi kesihatan yang lebih cepat kepada golongan berkenaan," katanya pada majlis pelancaran NHMS 2023, di sini, semalam.

Trend obesiti berterusan

Selain itu, lebih 500,000 dewasa atau merangkumi 2.5 peratus dewasa di Malaysia menghidap empat penyakit tidak berjangkit iaitu kencing manis, tekanan darah tinggi, kolesterol tinggi dan obesiti.

Malah, ada peningkatan berterusan dalam trend berat badan berlebihan dan obesiti dalam kalangan dewasa, melonjak hampir 10 peratus dalam tempoh satu de-

kad, daripada 44.5 peratus pada 2011 kepada 54.4 peratus pada 2023.

Mengenai penggunaan jagaan pesakit luar, dapatan tinjauan NHMS 2023 menunjukkan trend peningkatan daripada 8.1 peratus pada 2019 kepada 12.5 peratus pada tahun lalu.

Bagaimanapun, trend penggunaan perkhidmatan jagaan pesakit luar di fasiliti kerajaan merekodkan penurunan daripada 64.2 peratus pada 2019 kepada 48.9 peratus pada 2023.

Ini menunjukkan peningkatan dalam penggunaan perkhidmatan jagaan pesakit luar swasta dalam kalangan penduduk Malaysia berbanding empat tahun lalu.

BERITA HARIAN

Tarikh.....17 MAY 2024



Loke pada program sesi libat urus Menteri Pengangkutan Bersama Editor Media di Kuala Lumpur, semalam.

(Foto ihsan FB Kementerian Pengangkutan)

Kerajaan belum bercadang wajibkan pasang dashcam

**Kementerian
kaji pelbagai
aspek termasuk
kos ditanggung**

Kuala Lumpur: Tiada perancangan untuk mewajibkan pemasangan 'dashcam' atau kamera papan muka bagi semua kenderaan di negara ini.

Menteri Pengangkutan, Anthony Loke, berkata walaupun Kementerian ada menerima beberapa cadangan mengenainya, pihaknya perlu mempertimbangkan pelbagai aspek, termasuk kos yang perlu ditanggung rakyat

sekiranya ia diwajibkan.

"Akan tetapi, kita menggalakkan pemasangan dashcam, terutama pada kenderaan daripada pengilang.

"Kalau mereka boleh pasang (dashcam) bersekali dengan kereta baharu, itu amat kita galakkan, tetapi setakat ini kita belum mewajibkan lagi," katanya selepas menghadiri program sesi libat urus Menteri Pengangkutan Bersama Editor Media, semalam.

Yang turut hadir, Timbalan Ketua Setiausaha Dasar Kementerian Pengangkutan, Datuk Normah Osman; Timbalan Ketua Pengarah (Perancangan dan Operasi) Jabatan Pengangkutan Jalan, Aedy Fadly Ramli; Ketua Pengarang Pertubuhan Berita Nasional Malaysia (BERNAMA)

Arul Rajoo Durar Raj; Editor Eksekutif Perkhidmatan Berita BERNAMA, Mohd Haikal Isa dan Pengarang Urusan Kumpulan The New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) Berhad (NSTP), Datuk Ahmad Zaini Kamaruzzaman.

**Galak syarikat pengusaha
bas pasang peranti**

Selain itu, Loke turut menggalakkan syarikat pengusaha bas untuk memasang peranti tersebut agar dapat merakam dan dijadikan bahan bukti sekiranya terbabit kemalangan jalan raya.

"Pemasangan dashcam ini satu bukti sekiranya berlaku kemalangan untuk mengetahui siapa yang bersalah atau yang patut bertanggungjawab," katanya.

Sementara itu, Loke berkata, statistik kemalangan jalan raya

pada tahun lalu mencatatkan 600,000 kemalangan, manakala jumlah kematian adalah lebih 6,500 orang.

"Kalau kita lihat statistik, puratanya adalah 15 hingga 17 orang meninggal setiap hari dan jumlah ini satu angka yang besar.

"Setiap orang yang meninggal, bagi kita (kementerian) ini adalah satu tragedi yang tidak perlu berlaku kerana kemalangan jalan raya ini boleh dielakkan jika setiap pemandu mengambil sikap berhati-hati dan mematuhi peraturan jalan raya," katanya.

Justeru, Loke berharap orang ramai dapat menjadi pemandu berhemah, sentiasa peka dan berhati-hati bagi mengurangkan risiko kemalangan jalan raya.

BERNAMA

BERITA HARIAN
Tarikh.....1..7...MAY...2024.....

Tiga perkara utama perlu dilihat sebelum laksana subsidi bersasar

Saranan ahli ekonomi, pakar perburuhan agar tiada golongan tercicir bantuan

Oleh Farah Marshita Abdul Patah
farahmarshita@bh.com.my

Kuala Lumpur: Kerajaan disyorkan memastikan sistem kebajikan dan bantuan sosial negara diperkukuh dan terangkum sebelum mengambil langkah melaksanakan subsidi secara bersasar.

Ahli ekonomi dan pakar perburuhan berpendapat, ia antara tiga perkara utama yang perlu dilihat dalam menentukan masa terbaik untuk memperkenalkan rasionalisasi subsidi agar mereka yang terkesan dapat dibantu tanpa ada mana-mana pihak yang tertinggal.

Ketua Ekonomi Pasaran Buruh di Kementerian Sumber Manusia dan Emiratisasi Emiriah Arab Bersatu (UAE), Prof Madya Dr Mohd Yusof Saari, berkata perkara kedua yang perlu diambil

kira ialah melihat kepada ambang pendapatan rakyat terutama mereka bergaji rendah dan sederhana.

"Pendapatan mereka ini perlu melepasi tahap yang membolehkan mereka bertahan dalam keadaan ekonomi di mana kos sara hidup yang tinggi.

"Jika berlaku peningkatan harga bahan api apabila subsidi dikurangkan, mereka bukan sahaja terkesan akibat peningkatan harga bahan api, malah harga barangan lain turut meningkat kerana bahan api digunakan dalam proses pengeluaran," katanya kepada BH, semalam.

Beliau diminta mengulas kenyataan Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, kelmarin bahawa subsidi bersasar bukan untuk menghukum rakyat miskin dan ia hanya akan dilaksanakan apabila kerajaan sudah bersedia sepenuhnya.

Dr Mohd Yusof adalah bekas pensyarah kanan di Jabatan Ekonomi, Fakulti Ekonomi dan Pengurusan Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) dan penerima Anugerah Akademik Negara 2017.

Beliau pernah terbabit dalam 14 projek penyelidikan dan 16 projek perundingan, termasuk Perbadanan Kuasa Nuklear Malaysia

(MNPC), Institut Penyelidikan Khazanah (KRI) dan Agensi Tenaga Atom Antarabangsa (IAEA).

Persekitaran ekonomi terkawal

Dr Mohd Yusof menambah, perkara ketiga ialah memastikan persekitaran ekonomi perlu kondusif dan terkawal dengan salah satu indikator utama ketika ini adalah prestasi ringgit.

"Sekiranya ringgit tidak mengukuh dan terus berada di paras melepasi RM4 bagi setiap dolar Amerika Syarikat, ini akan memberi tekanan kos pengeluaran dan harga barangan.

"Ini tiada kaitan dengan subsidi, namun sekiranya subsidi dikurangkan dengan ringgit yang lemah, kesan berganda akan dirasakan rakyat," katanya.

Beliau turut menekankan langkah pengurusan subsidi juga perlu dilakukan berperingkat berbanding pemotongan mengejut.

Katanya, ia bagi membolehkan masyarakat dan perniagaan menyesuaikan diri dengan perubahan dan mengurangkan seba-

rang 'kejutan tiba-tiba' kepada ekonomi.

"Jangan lakukan secara mendadak, beri tempoh masa sesuai supaya pengguna dan pemain industri bersedia sepenuhnya.

"Lakukan secara berperingkat dan dalam tempoh masa yang wajar supaya impak kepada rakyat dapat dikurangkan.

"Gunakan pendekatan *Behaviorial Insight* (pendekatan inklusif bagi gubal dasar), untuk menilai situasi kerana isu subsidi adalah isu sensitif, justeru, komunikasi dan strategi kerajaan perlu bijak," katanya.

Dr Mohd Yusof juga menekankan ketelusan subsidi perlu dipertingkatkan bagi membantu orang ramai memahami ke mana subsidi itu pergi dan siapa yang mendapat manfaat daripadanya.

Katanya, perkara itu boleh membantu kerajaan memperoleh sokongan awam untuk usaha pemurnian subsidi.

"Kerajaan juga boleh melaksanakan pelan diversifikasi program subsidi sebagai gantian kepada kebergantungan satu jenis

subsidi, contohnya bahan bakar.

"Kepelbagaian program subsidi akan menutup pelbagai keperluan seperti subsidi makanan, kesihatan, pendidikan atau perumahan. Ini boleh membantu memastikan keperluan asas masih terpenuhi sementara mengurangkan beban subsidi secara keseluruhan," katanya.

Bagi Ketua Ahli Ekonomi Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd, Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid, subsidi sedia ada, terutama bahan api banyak beri manfaat kepada golongan berpendapatan tinggi.

Katanya, mereka yang berpendapatan tinggi banyak menggunakan kenderaan mewah dan merekahal yang banyak menggunakan bahan api berbanding kenderaan digunakan golongan berpendapatan rendah yang kapasiti enjinnya adalah kecil.

"Justeru, perkara ini adalah suatu bentuk ketirisan perlu diperbaiki supaya subsidi diberikan adil dan menepati golongan sasaran," katanya.

Berdasarkan laporan Ketua Audit Negara, subsidi pada 2022 berjumlah RM55 bilion, di mana 82 peratus daripadanya diperuntukkan bagi menampung subsidi bahan api seperti RON95, diesel dan gas petroleum cecair (LPG).



Mohd Afzanizam

BERITA HARIAN
Tarikh.....1.7 MAY 2024.....

Gabung penggunaan PADU, AI laksana subsidi bersasar lebih saksama

Subsidi bersasar yang bakal dilaksanakan kerajaan bertujuan bantuan dapat disalurkan dengan lebih efektif kepada golongan benar-benar memerlukan, sambil mengurangkan beban kewangan kerajaan. Langkah ini diharap memberi kesan positif kepada ekonomi negara dengan mengurangkan ketirisan dan penyalahgunaan subsidi.

Bagaimanapun, subsidi bersasar memerlukan penstrukturan semula sistem pengagihan bantuan untuk menjamin keadilan. Dalam hal ini, Perdana Menteri merangkap Menteri Kewangan, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim memberi jaminan pelaksanaan tidak menjejaskan orang miskin.

Bermakna, rakyat juga perlu memahami tujuan dan manfaat pelaksanaan subsidi bersasar. Setakat ini, kerajaan dilaporkan bersedia melaksanakan program subsidi bersasar selepas data dalam sistem Pangkalan Data Utama (PADU) dilaporkan boleh 'dihidupkan' pada bila-bila masa.

Namun, dua senario perlu menjadi pertimbangan kerajaan sebelum mengambil keputusan melaksanakan program subsidi bersasar supaya negara tidak berdepan tekanan inflasi mengejut. Matlamat program subsidi bersasar amat baik bagi mengurangkan ketirisan, namun aspek keadilan dan memenuhi obligasi sosial, termasuk golongan M40 dan T20 wajar dipertimbang.

Dua golongan ini adalah pembayar cukai konsisten, namun realitinya sering tidak dapat menikmati banyak faedah berbanding golongan B40 dan ke bawah bersandarkan alasan M40 dan T20 lebih berkemampuan.

Hakikatnya, kehidupan golongan berkemampuan ini, terutama M40 turut terkesan akibat kenaikan kos sara hidup. Pelarasan tarif elektrik dan penetapan Kadar Dasar Semalaman (OPR) pada paras 3.0 peratus sebenarnya meningkatkan kos sara hidup golongan terbabit.

Justeru, penggunaan frasa 'M40 dan T20 golongan berkemampuan' bagi menjustifikasikan golongan B40 dan ke bawah layak menerima segala bantuan kerajaan sewajarnya diperhalus semula untuk keadilan semua pihak dan rakyat. Atas faktor ini, PADU akan digunakan memastikan subsidi bersasar dapat dilaksanakan.

Dalam hal ini, kerajaan wajar mempelbagaikan kaedah menyalurkan subsidi bersasar dan mewujudkan keadilan kepada rakyat, termasuk menggunakan teknologi kepintaran buatan (AI) untuk mengumpul dan menganalisis data sosioekonomi bagi menentukan kelayakan penerima subsidi.

Berdasarkan data diperolehi, AI dapat membantu mengenal pasti golongan paling memerlukan bantuan. Data daripada sumber seperti pendaftaran kebajikan, data bank dan rekod cukai boleh digabungkan untuk memberikan gambaran tepat mengenai keadaan kewangan penerima.

AI boleh memberikan maklum balas kepada kerajaan mengenai sejauh mana program itu mencapai matlamatnya dan di mana terdapat ruang untuk penambahbaikan. AI membantu mengenal pasti bantuan secara tepat, memantau dan mengesan penipuan dalam pengagihan subsidi, manakala setiap penerima boleh mendapat bantuan disesuaikan dengan keperluan spesifik mereka.

Langkah ini bukan sahaja meningkatkan keadilan dalam pengagihan bantuan, tetapi membantu memperkukuh ekonomi negara.

BERITA HARIAN
Tarikh..... 17 MAY 2024

Silibus AI kenapa tunggu tiga tahun lagi?

KECERDASAN Pintar (AI) semakin menjadi kebiasaan dalam kehidupan rakyat di negara-negara maju di Amerika Syarikat (AS), Eropah, China manakala yang terdekat dengan Malaysia ialah Singapura.

Kerana pentingnya AI negara kota singa itu sudah memasukkan silibus AI kepada rakyatnya di peringkat sekolah tadika.

Berbanding dengan Malaysia buat masa ini masih di peringkat merancang silibus untuk dilaksanakan pada tahun 2027.

Kenapa terlalu lewat walaupun selepas Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim menekankan Malaysia perlu mengekalkan ekosistem AI sepantas mungkin manakala Menteri Pendidikan, Fadhlina Sidek pada sambutan Hari Guru semalam merancang untuk mendigitalkan guru dan memperkasakan AI. Menerusi gerakan dan pengumuman kerajaan, AI diakui penting.

Keperluan AI bukan sahaja bagi memenuhi keperluan pelaburan sebaliknya lebih penting untuk menganjak rakyat lebih celik teknologi yang sedang dimanfaatkan di seluruh dunia. Pelabur Malaysia yang rata-ratanya syarikat dari negara-negara maju sudah tentu mengharapkan prasarana negara ini seiring dengan teknologi bagi membangunkan bisnes mereka agar lebih pantas, jimat dan berkualiti.

Justeru, ada pakar akademik memberi amaran kelewatan melaksanakan silibus AI di sekolah sangat bahaya kerana negara akan terus ketinggalan.

Bukan sahaja untuk memenuhi keperluan syarikat pelabur tetapi lebih parah generasi baharu negara akan terkebil-kebil kerana tidak memahami, menguasai apa lagi mengejar perkembangan teknologi seperti negara-negara lain.

Lihat sahaja bagaimana Vietnam, Filipina dan Indonesia yang sebelum ini di belakang Malaysia semakin pantas membangunkan negara masing-masing.

Sedangkan Malaysia dilihat hanya bercakap mengenai AI tetapi gerak kerja ke arah itu tidak pantas. Mengenali AI, teknologi itu berkembang setiap saat. China dan AS berterusan membuat pelaburan besar untuk meningkat keupayaan AI.

Sebut sahaja bidang apa dari restoran, perubatan, pertanian dan perbankan, AI sedang membantu negara-negara berkenaan beroperasi lebih pantas, menjimatkan masa, menukar sumber manusia dan lebih mengujakan apabila hasil kerjanya lebih berkualiti lagi jitu berbanding dihasilkan manual oleh manusia.

Pernah muncul pertimbangan mungkin suatu hari kelak AI bakal menjadi hakim yang akan mengikuti perbicaraan sehingga menjatuhkan hukuman. Dalam bidang perubatan bantuan AI untuk mengesan pelbagai jenis penyakit mahupun pembedahan sedang berlaku.

Malah Premier Sarawak baru-baru ini sangat mengharapkan sistem perubatan negara akan diterapkan dengan teknologi AI. Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg yakin menerusi AI lebih banyak penyakit mampu dirawat.

Seperti Singapura, hospital di republik itu menggunakan khidmat AI untuk menyaring dan memilih pesakit yang perlu didahulukan untuk diberi rawatan.

Melihat betapa hebatnya peranan AI maka silibus teknologi itu perlu dilaksanakan segera bukannya menunggu sehingga 2027. Tanpa AI, Malaysia dikhuatiri dijauhi pelabur manakala penduduknya pula dikelaskan sebagai 'mundur' kerana tidak sepadan dengan penduduk dunia lain yang dilingkari AI.

Jadi, ayuh Malaysia termasuk ibu bapa tolong buka minda dan bebaskan emosi bagi memberi laluan kepada perkembangan AI dan bukan lagi terlalu fokus di WhatsApp hanya untuk berdiskusi mengenai gelagat anak-anak di sekolah seperti isu berebut pensil, tarik rambut dan siapa budak itu atau kenapa budak itu ambil buku anak saya. Sekarang bukan zaman melayan perkara-perkara yang tidak memberi pulangan.

Teon Eg ialah Pengarang Berita Utusan Malaysia

UTUSAN MALAYSIA

Tarikh:1.7 MAY 2024

Akta kawalan produk rokok dikuat kuasa sepenuhnya Jun ini

Oleh KAMARIAH KHALIDI
utusannews@mediamulla.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) akan menguatkuasakan Akta Kawalan Produk Merokok Demi Kesihatan Awam 2024 (Akta 852) sepenuhnya mulai bulan depan.

Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr. Dzulkefly Ahmad, Akta 852 yang diwartakan pada Februari lalu adalah antara usaha kerajaan mengekang penggunaan produk tembakau serta mengurangkan kemudaran akibat merokok dan produk tembakau termasuk rokok elektronik dan vape.

"Kita harapkan dengan perintah dan peraturan ini kita akan dapat menangani peningkatan rokok elektronik atau vape dalam kalangan orang muda," katanya selepas melancarkan Hasil Penyelidikan Tinjauan Ke-

bangsaan Kesihatan dan Morbiditi (NHMS) 2023: Penyakit Tidak Berjangkit (NCD) dan Permintaan Jagaan Kesihatan serta Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) Malaysia 2023.

Dr. Dzulkefly berkata, kajian GATS 2023 menunjukkan peningkatan peratus pengguna rokok elektronik atau vape yang amat ketara terutama dalam kalangan orang dewasa yang berusia kurang 50 tahun.

Menurut kajian itu, penggunaan rokok elektronik di Malaysia meningkat sehingga 600 peratus dengan 5.8 peratus pengguna pada tahun lalu berbanding hanya 0.8 peratus pada tahun 2011.

Pengguna rokok elektronik berumur 15 hingga 24 tahun menunjukkan peningkatan drastik daripada 1.1 peratus pada tahun 2011 kepada 8.6 peratus pada tahun lalu.

Selain itu, dwipengguna (tembakau dan rokok elektronik) turut meningkat daripada 0.8 peratus pada 2011 kepada 3.9 peratus pada 2023 iaitu peningkatan hampir 400 peratus.

"Tiga alasan utama penggunaan rokok elektronik kerana ia tersedia dalam perisa yang digemari, persepsi bahawa kurang memudaratkan berbanding menghisap rokok dan mudah dinikmati," menurut kajian itu.

Dapatan GATS 2023 menunjukkan seramai 4.8 juta atau 19 peratus orang dewasa di negara ini adalah perokok tembakau dengan 3.7 juta orang merokok setiap hari.

Jumlah wang yang dibelanjakan secara purata sebulan untuk produk merokok adalah RM178.

Seramai 4,269 responden termasuk di luar bandar mengambil bahagian dalam tinjauan itu.

UTUSAN MALAYSIA
Tarikh:1.7 MAY 2024

MBSA, MBPJ MUST ACT

PLIGHT OF KG BARU SG BULOH FOLK

THE Shah Alam City Council (MBSA) must look into the complaints of Kampung Baru Sg Buloh residents.

The car park and the market areas are riddled with crater-like potholes that are dangerous to road users and the public. Despite complaints lodged via the Public Complaints Management System, no action has been taken to fix the problem.

The car park can be converted into a paid parking area if MBSA is unable to resurface it regularly. The area around the football field and the outdoor gym is littered with rubbish, and MBSA appointed contractors are not doing their tasks properly.

Trees, whose branches are a danger and blocking streetlights, are not

being pruned properly as contractors are not monitoring them.

There are too few municipal workers for such a large village and this explains the lack of cleanliness in the village. MBSA needs to allocate more funds for the development and maintenance of the village, which hosts a large number of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Selangor.

Many road signs are faded and need to be replaced while many streetlights in the Megamas commercial area have been faulty for months and need to be repaired.

MBSA needs to install more streetlights around the market and also repair the faulty/damaged ones around the public hall, the car park,

Jalan Perkhidmatan and Jalan Market.

MBSA and the Petaling Public Works Department need to solve the terrible traffic jam on the narrow Jalan Welfare, which is presently the only access road. Reopening the Jalan Baru junction should be considered or a flyover needs to be built at the spot.

MBSA also needs to fix the dangerously leaning telephone poles and drooping heavy cables as they are an eyesore and a threat to house owners, residents and road users.

Additionally, MBSA should coordinate with the Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) to reduce the volume of runoff from Sungai Hampar that floods Jalan Baru and the surrounding SME areas in Kg Baru Sg Buloh,

whenever it rains heavily.

Sg Hampar originates in Bandar Sri Damansara and Damansara Damai and flows under the North-South Expressway near the Overhead Bridge Restaurant, and into Kg Baru Sg Buloh.

MBPJ needs to ensure that the vast runoff from these housing estates is diverted into a retention pond to reduce flooding downstream in Kg Baru Sg Buloh.

This is a very serious problem and the two local authorities must find a solution as there is no way to widen the concrete storm drain running parallel to the road.

V. THOMAS
Sg Buloh, Selangor

NEW STRAITS TIMES
Tarikh:17 MAY 2024....

SALARY HIKE

Better pay will attract talent to civil service

THIS year's Labour Day celebration in Putrajaya would be remembered by the 1.3 million civil servants for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's announcement of a 13 per cent salary hike starting from December.

This civil service salary review comes after the last one 12 years ago, and sends a signal to the private sector that it should take its cue from the Madani government in addressing the rising cost of living.

Increasing the salaries of civil servants, many of whom are meagrely compensated, will stimulate the economy by encouraging consumer

spending. This will spur growth by adding more money to the economy.

The higher spending power of civil servants can have a multiplier effect by helping businesses and industries in many sectors.

Additionally, the pay hike can improve public services by attracting and retaining competent staff, incentivise experienced civil servants to improve output and results.

In the end, the public benefits from better services, which raises satisfaction and confidence in governmental institutions.

Raising pay can improve social justice and inequality. Civil service

jobs in education, the military, and healthcare are essential. Low pay, however, can discourage talented people from pursuing professions in these sectors, thus widening the social divide.

By increasing their pay, the government shows that it values these occupations and gives those who work with the most vulnerable members of society a road to financial independence.

The government also lessens the financial incentives for corruption by providing competitive pay, which promotes honesty and accountability in the public sector.

Investing in the welfare of civil servants assists public administration in the long run. Better compensation may draw applicants from a wider range of backgrounds, fostering inclusion and representation in government organisations.

Better pay can also increase job satisfaction and morale, which will reduce attrition and increase staff retention.

KESHAVAN KUMAR SUKUMAR

Training Consultant
National Institute of Public
Administration (Intan)
Kuala Lumpur



Better pay will enhance job satisfaction and morale, while reducing stress and increasing staff retention in the civil service. FILE PIC

NEW STRAITS TIMES
Tarikh:17 MAY 2024

Malaysia's inflation in 2023 slows to 2.5%

► Main groups show rises, except for communication subsector

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia's inflation in 2023 recorded a slower increase of 2.5% (2022: 3.3%) with the price index at 130.4 points as against 127.2 points in the previous year, according to the Department of Statistics Malaysia.

Inflation for the main groups showed an increase except for communication (-3%). The highest increase was recorded by restaurants & hotels at 5.6%. This was followed by food & beverages (4.8%); miscellaneous goods & services (2.4%); furnishings, household equipment & routine household maintenance (2.3%); health (2.2%); education (1.9%); housing, water, electricity, gas & other fuels (1.7%); recreation services & culture (1.5%); transport (1.1%); alcoholic beverages & tobacco (0.6%); and clothing & footwear (0.3%).

In a statement yesterday, Chief Statistician Malaysia Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said, "The slower increase of inflation in 2023 was in tandem with the decline in most global commodity prices, the easing of supply disruptions, price controls and the provision of subsidies for selected goods. Despite a decrease in energy commodity prices in 2023 (-29.9%) compared to 2022 (60.0%), the price of this commodity is still higher compared to pre-pandemic levels."

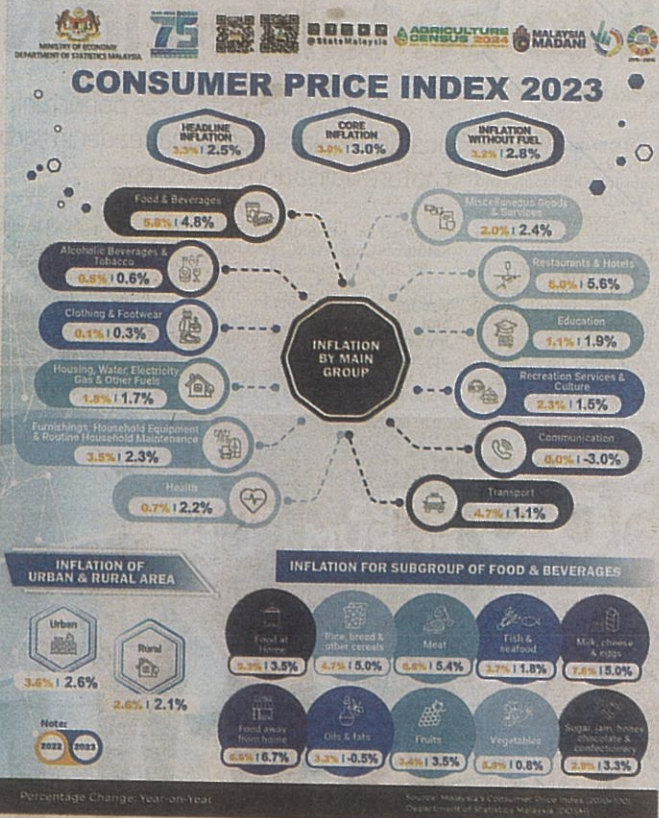
He added that the increase in fuel costs and dependence on imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) has prompted the government to adjust electricity tariffs under the implementation of the Imbalance Cost Pass-Through mechanism for users in Peninsular Malaysia for the period of July 1, 2023, to Dec 31, 2023.

Domestic users with electricity consumption units exceeding 1,500kWh will be imposed a surcharge of 10 sen/kWh, he said.

Other initiatives provided by the government can be directly seen through the *Payung Rahmah* initiative which includes *Menu Rahmah*, *Jualan Rahmah*, *Bakul Rahmah*, *Pakej Rahmah* and *Menu Siswa Rahmah*. These initiatives target the low-income group and the hardcore poor. Other than that, the government has spent almost RM8 billion on *Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah*, which has benefited 8.7 million Malaysians.

The initiatives contributed to easing the burden of the lower-income group in dealing with the rising cost of living.

Mohd Uzir said the food & beverages



group which is the largest component of household spending in Malaysia with a contribution of 29.5% of total Consumer Price Index weight started to ease to 4.8% compared with 5.8% in the preceding year.

The slower increase of this group is largely due to a slower rise in the food at home component which went up 3.5% compared with 5.3% recorded in 2022. Food away from home increased of 6.7% compared with the previous year (6.6%).

Inflation of restaurants & hotels recorded an increase of 5.6% in 2023 against 5% in 2022. The subgroup for expenditure in restaurants & cafés increased by 5.5% compared with 5.3% in 2022.

In addition, the subgroup of accommodation

services recorded a significant increase of 5.5% in 2023 compared with 3.7% in 2022. Inflation of hotels increased to 5.8% as against 4.1% recorded in 2022.

However, inflation of transport recorded a slower increase of 1.1% in 2023 compared with 2022 (4.7%), mainly due to the subgroup of operation of personal transport equipment which moderated to 0.8% compared with 5.8% in 2022.

The average price of unleaded petrol RON97 declined to RM3.39 per litre from RM3.97 per litre in 2022, in tandem with the drop in the average price of world Brent crude oil. The average prices of unleaded petrol RON95 and diesel remained at RM2.05 per litre and RM2.15 per litre respectively.

THE SUN
17 MAY 2024

Tarikh:

Identify trees suitable for urban areas, dept told

PUTRAJAYA: The National Landscape Department has been instructed to identify tree species suitable for planting in urban areas and not hazardous to the public, said Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming.

"We discussed the issue during Wednesday's Cabinet meeting and that the department need to take the relevant steps soon, Nga said after the pre-launch ceremony of National Landscape Day 2024 on Wednesday.

The media reported that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had ordered the planting of 100 trees for every unnecessary tree felled in Kuala Lumpur.

An incident on May 7 on Jalan Sultan Ismail, Kuala Lumpur, resulted in one death and one injured after a falling tree struck them following heavy rain and strong winds.

Nga said for the first time the King would grace the National Landscape Day.

Nga said His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia, has consented to officiate at the opening of the National Landscape Day 2024 on May 25 at Taman Tasik Shah Alam in Selangor.

Nga added that the event, from May 24 to June 2, would serve as a platform for landscape industry players to promote and market their products.
- Bernama

THE SUN

Tarikh:

17 MAY 2024