

Ministry eyes digital push to help strained healthcare workers

KUALA LUMPUR: The Health Ministry is stepping up efforts to modernise Malaysia's healthcare system while easing the heavy workload faced by medical staff, says Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad (pic).

He acknowledged the strain on personnel at all levels, from senior consultants to nurses, medical officers and support staff.

To address this, he said the ministry is reviewing the distribution of human resources to ensure

a fairer and more efficient deployment.

"We need a clear picture of supply and demand across the system. Only by knowing the actual needs can we address shortages and maldistribution of doctors, nurses and other staff.

"The ministry is implementing a digital dashboard to manage staffing and workload more effec-



tively, with the aim of reducing administrative burden and improving clinical efficiency," he told Datuk Dr Alias Razak (PN-Kuala Nerus), who had asked about the ministry's plan to address hospital staffing needs and shortages.

Dzulkefly said the ministry's reform plans go beyond manpower, focusing on modernising service delivery across 150 hospitals

and more than 3,300 clinics nationwide.

A key initiative is the introduction of a national Electronic Medical Record system, part of the "One Citizen, One Record" policy.

"This will improve operational efficiency, reduce clinical workload, and ensure patient care is both faster and safer," he said.

Dzulkefly said the ministry is also exploring automation and artificial intelligence to further

support healthcare delivery.

He highlighted welfare measures as well, such as the increase in on-call allowances for medical and dental officers effective Oct 1.

"This is the first revision in 14 years and involves an estimated annual cost of RM120mil. It reflects the government's commitment to the welfare of our healthcare staff," he said.

A circular issued on Nov 4 allows eligible staff to claim the revised allowance for October.

KKM sedia pertimbang ambil jururawat luar negara jika ada permintaan

KUALA LUMPUR - Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) sedia mempertimbangkan pengambilan jururawat dari luar negara sekiranya ada permintaan terutama bagi mengisi kekurangan ketara di hospital awam.

Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad menjelaskan, namun terdapat beberapa syarat yang perlu diteliti khususnya berkaitan kemahiran, klinikal dan keselamatan sekiranya mahu membawa masuk jururawat asing.

"Kami di KKM tidak menolak akan usaha atau pilihan untuk mempertimbangkan kemasukan jururawat dari luar negara.

"Syaratnya adalah pastikan dari sudut keupayaan klinikal, kemahiran dan antara perkara paling mustahak adalah untuk pastikan standard, selain aspek keselamatan, kecekapan serta persoalan lain termasuk dari segi budaya dan bahasa.

"Ini semua akan kami pertimbang dan sedang pertimbang. Kalau ada permohonan yang jelas dan formal, pasti kita akan pertimbangkan segera, tetapi setakat ini belum ada," katanya pada sesi soal jawab lisan di Dewan Rakyat di



Dr Dzulkefly bercakap pada Mesyuarat Ketiga, Penggal Keempat Majlis Perilman ke-15 Dewan Rakyat di Bangunan Perilman pada Selasa.

sin pada Selasa.

Beliau menjawab soalan tambahan **Jimmy Puah (PH-Tebrau)** mengenai kesediaan KKM mengambil jururawat dari negara luar terutama Indonesia bagi mengisi kekosongan perjawatan itu di hospital awam.

Dalam pada itu Dr Dzulkefly memaklumkan, setakat ini KKM belum menerima sebarang permohonan rasmi dari mana-mana negara bagi tujuan itu.

"Sememangnya perkara ini jadi pertimbangan dan

keperluan atas kekurangan jumlah jururawat di seluruh negara.

"Angka paling mutakhir (jumlah jururawat seluruh negara) adalah 8,000 dan saya sangat sedar realiti ini dan bukan mudah untuk kita tingkatkannya.

"Ia memerlukan masa, misalnya dua tahun untuk program diploma (kejururawatan) dan sebagainya. Oleh itu, perlu ada cara untuk tangani jurang ini, segera (yang boleh)," ujarnya.

Reformasi sistem kesihatan perlu dilaksana

Kuala Lumpur: Kerajaan wajar melaksanakan reformasi sistem kesihatan bagi menangani peningkatan kos ubat-ubatan dan perkhidmatan perubatan yang diramalkan melonjak sehingga 16 peratus tahun depan.

Penstrukturkan semula sistem kesihatan itu akan mengurangkan tekanan keluarga kumpulan berpendapatan sederhana dan rendah.

Presiden Persatuan Farmasi Malaysia, Amrahi Buang, berkata faktor utama kenaikan harga ubat-ubatan ialah inflasi global yang berlaku satu atau dua kali setahun, selain kenaikan harga bahan aktif dan bahan resipien, kos logistik, perubahan cuaca serta kadar pertukaran mata wang asing, berbanding ringgit Malaysia.

"Kesan penghijrahan tenaga pakar perubatan juga menyumbang kepada peningkatan kos operasi fasiliti kesihatan swasta



Keratan akhbar BH, semalam.

apabila penyedia perkhidmatan terpaksa menawarkan gaji dan upah yang lebih tinggi, bagi mengekalkan tenaga kerja berkemahiran.

"Sistem kesihatan dwi yang diamalkan ketika ini antara sektor awam dan swasta tidak lagi sesuai. Ini perlu dirombak dan diintegrasikan di bawah satu skim insurans sosial nasional yang dikawal sepenuhnya oleh kerajaan, bagi memastikan semua rakyat mendapat akses saksama terhadap perkhidmatan

kesihatan," katanya, semalam.

Amrahi berkata, langkah itu bukan sesuatu yang baharu kerana negara jiran seperti Singapura, Indonesia, Filipina dan Thailand sudah melaksanakan sistem itu dengan berkesan.

Melalui reformasi itu kata-nya, kawalan harga ubat dapat dilakukan dengan lebih berkesan menerusi penetapan formulari ubat nasional (daftar atau senarai) di bawah skim insurans kesihatan kebangsaan yang dikawal kerajaan.

"Persatuan Farmasi Malaysia sebagai badan relevan dalam sektor farmaseutikal sudah lama terbabit dalam sesi libat urus berkaitan Dasar Ubat Nasional dan Kertas Putih Kesihatan, terutama dalam aspek akses rakyat kepada ubat-ubatan berkualiti dan mampu milik.

"Kerajaan perlu melaksanakan dasar ubat generik secara

menyeluruh dan memastikan harga ubat dikawal dalam julat munasabah agar tidak membebankan rakyat, selain mempertimbang subsidi bersasar yang lebih terkawal," katanya.

Beliau berkata, pengguna dinasihatkan untuk mendapatkan ubat di farmasi komuniti berdaftar di seluruh negara kerana semua produk kesihatan di situ sah berdaftar dan dijamin dari segi kualiti, keselamatan serta keberkesanannya, selain dinasihat oleh ahli farmasi profesional.

Jadi 'tampanan berganda'

Sementara itu, Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif Gabungan Persatuan Pengguna Malaysia (FOMCA), T Saravanan, berkata kadar inflasi perubatan yang dijangka meningkat sehingga 16 peratus tahun depan akan menjadi 'tampanan berganda' kepada rakyat berpendapatan rendah yang se-

makin tertekan dengan kenaikan kos sara hidup.

"Golongan B40 dan ramai daripada M40 kini berada pada tahap cukup-cukup makan. Apabila kos kesihatan meningkat lebih pantas daripada kenaikan gaji. Mereka berisiko menangguh rawatan, mengurangkan dos ubat sendiri atau mengelak terus daripada mendapatkan rawatan.

"Menurut laporan antarabangsa, kadar inflasi perubatan di Malaysia kini sekitar 15 peratus, jauh mengatasi purata rantau Asia Pasifik sekitar 11 peratus," katanya.

Menurut Saravanan, penghijrahan doktor, jururawat dan pakar perubatan ke luar negara yang menawarkan gaji lebih tinggi menyebabkan kos operasi hospital swasta meningkat dan akhirnya beban itu dipindahkan kepada pesakit tempatan.

KKM sedia kaji ambil jururawat luar negara

Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) sedia mempertimbangkan pengambilan jururawat dari luar negara jika terdapat permintaan khususnya bagi mengisi kekurangan ketara di hospital awam.

Bagaimanapun, Menterinya, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, berkata terdapat syarat yang perlu diteliti, khususnya berkaitan kemahiran, klinikal dan keselamatan untuk membawa masuk jururawat asing ke negara ini.

“Kami di KKM tidak menolak akan usaha atau pilihan untuk mempertimbangkan kemasukan jururawat dari luar negara.

“Syaratnya adalah pastikan dari sudut keupayaan dan klinikal, kemahiran mereka antara perkara paling mustahak untuk pastikan standard, selain aspek keselamatan, kecekapan dan persoalan lain misalnya dari segi budaya dan bahasa,” katanya.

Kes denggi di Kelantan turun 52.5 peratus

Kota Bharu: Penyakit demam denggi di Kelantan dilaporkan menurun sebanyak 52.5 peratus iaitu sebanyak 1,192 kes sehingga 4 Oktober tahun ini berbanding 2,510 kes bagi tempoh yang sama tahun lalu.

Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Kerajaan Tempatan, Perumahan, Kesihatan dan Alam Sekitar negeri Hilmi Abdullah berkata, tiada kematian akibat

denggi dilaporkan tahun ini, berbanding dua kematian tahun lalu.

Katanya, sebanyak 87 wabak denggi dilaporkan dalam tempoh itu, berbanding 161 wabak pada tempoh yang sama tahun lalu dan menunjukkan penurunan sebanyak 46 peratus.

“Kesemua wabak berkenaan sudah tamat dan tiada wabak aktif pada masa ini,” katanya.



The move comes alongside a 33% to 43% hike in the On-Call Duty Allowance for medical and dental officers, effective Oct 1. - **SUNPIC**

Pledge to overhaul healthcare personnel allocation

PETALING JAYA: Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad has pledged to overhaul the allocation of healthcare personnel nationwide, promising major reforms over the next year to ensure hospitals and clinics are staffed more efficiently.

The move comes alongside a morale boosting shake-up for medical workers, including a 33% to 43% hike in the On-Call Duty Allowance for medical and dental officers, the first increase in 14 years, estimated to cost RM120 million annually.

Speaking at the Dewan Rakyat yesterday, Dzulkefly acknowledged the heavy demands on Malaysia's medical workforce, from senior consultants and specialists to medical officers, nurses and support staff, and said the ministry is leveraging real-time data on staffing needs, supply and demand to respond more accurately to workforce gaps.

"Even when positions are open, personnel may not be available, and contract doctors are sometimes brought in to fill gaps.

"Identifying the baseline is crucial to determine shortages and supply-side solutions."

He added that maldistribution of staff and specialists remains a challenge but is being

actively addressed to ensure fairer placement across healthcare facilities.

"If it is not equal, it must at least be equitable – that is the challenge we are tackling.

"I believe that over the next year, we would be able to address this comprehensively through the efforts of our development, planning and digital readiness divisions," he said, adding that boosting morale and staff welfare would continue alongside the allowance increase.

He said the hike, effective Oct 1, recognises the vital role of medical and dental officers.

"We would like to express our highest appreciation to the prime minister for this increase. The ministry has also issued a circular dated Nov 4 allowing eligible healthcare personnel to claim the new allowance rate for October 2025."

Regarding on-call duties, he said staffing and scheduling decisions are determined by service needs, workload and case complexity.

"Regular monitoring ensures staffing levels are sufficient while prioritising the welfare of medical personnel.

"On-call duties may be active or passive depending on operational needs, workload

and case complexity."

Dzulkefly added that the move is part of ongoing efforts to improve working conditions and support for frontliners, reinforcing the government's commitment to a motivated and well-compensated healthcare workforce.

He also highlighted broader reforms in healthcare service delivery.

"We are developing the national healthcare system to truly give it meaning, what could be termed as modernising our system and healthcare delivery.

"We are enhancing and streamlining the system across all facilities, including 150 hospitals and more than 3,300 clinics nationwide."

He said a key part of the reform is digitalisation, adding that the National Electronic Medical Record system under the "One Citizen, One Record" policy would improve operational efficiency, reduce the workload for specialists and doctors and enhance clinical accuracy.

"This ensures clinical decisions are not only faster but also accurate and safe, which is a central focus of the ministry."

- By **Qiranna Nabilla Mohd Rashidi**

Reports by CHARLES RAMENDRAN

Watch your heart, not your wrist

Not every alert from a wearable actually means danger, says doc

PETALING JAYA: Marketing executive Jac Lim is a 38-year-old fitness freak who works out regularly at a gym.

One day, her smartwatch sent her a message that shocked her.

The watch's sensors detected an "irregular heart rhythm", a possible symptom of a cardiac episode. An hour later, Lim was at a cardiologist's clinic – but it was a false alarm.

With health consciousness trending and smartwatches having features that monitor heart health, more patients like Lim are showing up at their doctor's room concerned about signals their devices pick up.

Occasional palpitations or missed beats are common even among healthy individuals and can occur during emotional situations, after exercise, during pregnancy, and from consuming caffeine or nicotine use, says consultant electrophysiologist Dr



Sathvinder Singh Gian Singh (pic).

Smartwatches, he said, can be a double-edged sword as they cause undue concern when they detect irregular pulses, which are no health threat.

"Missed heartbeats occur when there is a misfire in the heart's electrical system. While these wearable devices have helped detect more arrhythmias early, it is also making some people monitor themselves obsessively."

"Not every alert means danger.

Sometimes what the smartwatch picks up is just a skipped beat from the effects of caffeine or nicotine. These are usually benign. Some people treat every missed beat as a crisis.

"The wisest thing to do is to be assessed by a doctor to rule out arrhythmias that could be life-threatening," he said.

Palpitations that persist or are accompanied by shortness of breath, chest tightness or fainting should never be ignored, he said.

"That is when you must see a doctor immediately or head to the nearest emergency room. Smartwatches have become useful diagnostic tools when patients bring ECG tracings captured during an episode but interpretations of the reading should always be left to a healthcare professional."

"Use them as a guide, not a diagnosis," he said.

Sathvinder, an intervention cardiologist, said that while

smoking, diabetes and high cholesterol remain the main culprits behind heart disease, there is a growing trend of stress-related issues as well.

"There is a rise in stress due to workplace pressure and modern lifestyles. When this is combined with poor diet, lack of exercise and sleep deprivation, it starts affecting the heart's electrical system," he said.

Interventional cardiologists are the "heart plumbers" who treat and unclog blocked arteries, while electrophysiologists are "cardio-electricians" who specialise in fixing heart rhythm disorders.

Sathvinder said sleep apnea, a condition where breathing repeatedly stops during sleep is a major but often overlooked trigger of atrial fibrillation, a common form of irregular heartbeat that can be life-threatening if left untreated.

"Alcohol consumption is a

known trigger of atrial fibrillation and can lead to strokes and heart failure."

He said the heart's health also mirrors the body's overall condition as infections such as Covid-19 can also set off cardiac rhythm disturbances.

Sathvinder Singh said those with existing heart disease, hypertension, heart failure or older adults are at higher risk of arrhythmias and should always seek medical attention if symptoms appear.

"Some arrhythmias can strike without warning and can be deadly especially in those who have underlying heart diseases such as cardiomyopathy or ischemic heart diseases."

"In such cases, immediate medical attention should be sought or access to an automated external defibrillator (AED) can make a difference in the survival of the person," he said.

Fake smartwatches can detect a heartbeat on a cucumber

PETALING JAYA: Smartwatches and wearable devices do nudge people about health irregularities, but these are just reminders to seek professional medical advice and not medical verdicts.

These prompts should not be treated as a diagnosis, says the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA).

Its president Datuk Dr Thirunavukarasu Rajoo said movement, poor skin contact, signal interference or other non-medical factors can trigger false alerts.

"Do not ignore such notifications, but do not rely on them alone, either," he said.

If you receive a health alert from your smartwatch, consult a doctor who can use clinical tools like a proper electrocardiogram (ECG) machine."

As wearable devices gain popularity, notifications of "irregular heartbeat" or "abnormal ECG" are pushing their users to consult their doctors for further checks.

Dr Thirunavukarasu also cautioned that not all smartwatch health features are approved for use in Malaysia.

Many carry disclaimers that state that the ECG or blood pressure functions are only approved in selected countries.



Advising caution: Dr Thirunavukarasu (left) and Eizuwani.

users to check whether the device or feature is listed in the Medical Device Authority (MDA) registry at mdar.mda.gov.my and whether the manufacturer supports its use in Malaysia for health monitoring.

Tech analyst and influencer Eizuwani Eizuddin, who reviews electronic gadgets, said fake or cloned smartwatches sold at a fraction of the price of branded models are often the main culprits behind false health readings that unnecessarily alarm users.

He said the accuracy of most smartwatches and fitness trackers depends heavily on build quality and sensor technology.

"In many of these counterfeit models, the readings are preset or simply made up, which can cause

unnecessary panic among users," he said, adding that some of the dud devices would produce a "heart reading" even if they were strapped to a cucumber.

Eizuwani, who holds a degree in sports science, said many of these fake devices are widely sold on online platforms at a fraction of the price of genuine models.

He added that beyond tracking heart rate, electrocardiac activity and oxygen levels, the latest high-end smartwatches are also capable of providing blood pressure readings through inflatable wrist straps and ECG functions.

"It is just a guide and can serve as a first layer of alert. The data can also be shared with a doctor to help assess the user's condition, but it is unwise to rely entirely on



these readings.

"Smartwatches can produce inaccurate readings if they are worn loosely, or even if the user

has excessive hair or a tattoo on the wrist, which can prevent proper skin contact with the sensors," he said.

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Aid for knee surgeries

MAWAR Medical Centre in Seremban, Negri Sembilan, has set aside RM300,000 to support 30 patients in need of robotic-assisted total knee replacement surgery or angioplasty procedures.

The hospital's welfare committee deputy chairman Lau Chee Boon said 15 slots were being offered for each procedure, with each eligible patient set to receive RM10,000 in medical subsidy.

"To ensure patients, especially those facing financial hardship, can undergo timely treatment, we have allocated these funds to ease their burden and help them recover mobility and a healthier life.

"This is our way of helping out as there has been a growing prevalence of knee and heart diseases, which severely impact patients' quality of life," he said during the hospital's World Heart Day 2025 celebration.

Addressing the rise in sudden cardiac death cases, Lau said heart health awareness had never been more crucial.

The public, he added, needed to be educated about the importance of early health screening to raise awareness about preventing cardiovascular diseases.

Applications for the aid are open until March 31, 2026.

Those interested can contact welfare officers Tan (012-604 0577) or Shahira (016-852 0646).

New hospital on trial run, eases JB load via referrals

Pasir Gudang facility set for full launch next year, with staffing being expedited as specialist clinics, emergency dept start receiving patients

By YEE XIANG YUN
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JOHOR government is in active talks with Health Ministry (MOH) to expedite filling of vacancies at Hospital Pasir Gudang (HPG) to ensure it will be fully operational early next year.

State health and environment committee chairman Ling Tian Soon said MOH was deploying doctors, nurses and support staff in stages but the quota had yet to be achieved.

"Since the hospital's construction was completed in July, preparations have been progressing steadily to ensure a smooth opening and quality services to the public.

"Several specialist clinics at HPG have already begun receiving patients referred from Hospital Sultanah Aminah and Hospital Sultan Ismail."

Ling said this helped ease the patient load at the two main hospitals in Johor Baru and also benefitted residents in and around Pasir Gudang by reduc-



Ling (middle) chatting with patients referred to Hospital Pasir Gudang (HPG). — Courtesy photo

ing travel time and transportation costs.

He added that HPG was now on a trial run to make sure all systems, workflows and equipment function well before full operation in about two months.

Ling said various medical equipment and supplies had arrived at the hospital, while

nearby government clinics had also started referring cases.

"The hospital's emergency and trauma department is in trial stage, and some emergency cases have already been treated."

He also said that two inpatient wards (one each for men and women) had opened with

37 beds.

"This marks an important milestone in ensuring that Johoreans, especially residents of Pasir Gudang and its surrounding areas, receive comprehensive healthcare.

"This reflects our efforts in improving healthcare facilities in Johor so that every resident can enjoy high-quality, comfortable and safe medical services in line with the Maju Johor 2030 development agenda," he added.

In June, the hospital appointed people to key positions such as director and deputy director, and was in the midst of filling more than 1,800 vacancies.

Originally scheduled to open in phases from Aug 1, the opening of the 304-bed HPG has been pushed back until next year due to technical issues, including the lack of healthcare workers.

At the time, the state government and MOH agreed to delay the hospital's operations to avoid complications.

Located in Bandar Seri Alam, the hospital is set to eventually have 14 specialist clinics.

Sibu offers refuge for domestic violence victims

By ANDY CHUA

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VICTIMS of domestic violence can seek temporary refuge at the newly established Community Social Support Centre (CSSC) in Sibu, Sarawak.

The centre, located on Jalan Awang Ramli Amit, used to be the Sri Rajang Resthouse.

This is not a permanent shelter but a temporary place where individuals can stay while awaiting court orders or (making) other necessary arrangements.

"It provides a safe option for those who may face danger if they return home," said Sarawak Women, Children and Community Wellbeing Development Minister Datuk Seri Fatimah Abdullah during the opening ceremony.

The centre also has three activity rooms and two meeting rooms which can be used for free by community-based organisations, government departments and agencies, as well as health support groups.

"During our benchmarking visits, we observed that elsewhere, governments provide venues for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to run their activities," said Fatimah.

"We are adopting the same concept here so that workshops and community programmes can be conducted.

"We know many NGOs struggle to find affordable venues.



Fatimah signing a plaque to open the Community Social Support Centre Sibu (right), which used to be the Sri Rajang Resthouse.



"Simply inform the centre operator, state the date, session length and number of participants, and the rooms will be reserved."

She said the centre could also be used to host women's economic empowerment courses, including cooking, handicraft, spa and massage therapy, and elderly care, with applications made through the Women's Department.

The Sarawak Women and Family Department's "Gold Family Care" programme will also be available, offering practical skills for families caring for elderly members.

The centre includes a food bank following the lead of the one in Kuching which has been highly effective and operating

like a small supermarket.

"For example, a single mother once approached us saying she could no longer afford food for her children, and we were able to provide assistance.

"The aim is to support families experiencing hardship with essentials such as rice and cooking oil," said Fatimah.

"During Ramadan, food distribution activities may be carried out for those who are reluctant to ask for help openly."

In other news, Sarawak recorded 136 cases of homelessness through 74 operations and integrated surveillance conducted across the state last year.

According to the breakdown of cases, Sibu had the highest number with 48 individuals, followed by Bintulu (24).



Kuching (22) and Miri (16).

Fatimah said her ministry continued to step up efforts for the homeless.

"Our main focus is to ensure that each rescued individual does not return to life on the streets.

"We want them to have shelter, employment and community support so that they can begin their lives anew," she said after an operation which saw 17 homeless individuals rescued.

Fatimah highlighted the ministry's commitment to helping the homeless rebuild their lives through various social assistance programmes, skills training and job placement.

She said the state government has two fully operational temporary transit centre (TTGs) in

Kuching and Sibu, while similar facilities were being developed in Miri and Bintulu.

"TTGs are not merely temporary shelters. They are social rehabilitation centres where individuals can receive food, take a shower, change into clean clothing and sleep safely, while also helped to secure employment or be reunited with their family," she elaborated.

The Sibu operation involved 152 personnel from various agencies, including the Resident's Office and Sibu District Office, the police, Welfare Department, National Anti-Drug Agency, Sibu Health Office, Hospital Sibu, National Registration Department, Immigration Department and welfare volunteers.

Facing breast cancer as a couple

ABREAST cancer diagnosis can put any marriage under stress, not only because of health and financial worries but also because of changes in intimacy and confidence.

When a wife faces breast cancer, her husband's role becomes especially meaningful, offering not only emotional comfort but also practical help, communication and long-term care.

Good support from a husband helps the wife cope better with the challenges of treatment, reduces emotional distress and improves her quality of life, says Columbia Asia Hospital Klang general surgeon and breast surgery specialist Dr Kiran Kaur.

It also strengthens the couple's relationship, creating a sense of resilience and teamwork that helps both partners face what's ahead.

Conversely, a lack of support can lead to emotional strain, frustration and depression, which can affect both recovery and the relationship.

"Emotional presence, patience and understanding go a long way in helping her stay positive," says Dr Kiran.

HOW HUSBANDS CAN HELP

Let your wife express her fears, frustrations and confusion. Acknowledge what she's going through, even if you don't fully understand it.

"During medical appointments, take an active role. Ask questions, take notes and learn about available treatment options and side effects. This shows her that she's not going through this alone."

Approach every decision as a team and let her know that her feelings matter just as much as the medical details.

What everyday actions can make the biggest difference?

Expect to take over some of her daily responsibilities, especially as treatment begins.

Simple gestures like cooking, cleaning or helping with the children can ease her stress and allow her to focus on healing.

Try to anticipate her needs and step in before she asks for them. It could be as small as preparing her favourite meal or making sure she gets enough rest.

It also helps to update family and friends about her progress as it can be demoralising for her to repeat the same information to everyone.

Intimacy may need to be approached differently, so take time to get reacquainted with each other, says Dr Kiran.

Breast cancer doesn't mean that the emotional or physical closeness in a marriage is gone, she adds. Communication is key.

Many women, especially those who have undergone a mastectomy, may feel insecure about their femininity or experience a loss of libido during treatment.

Dr Kiran says if a woman isn't ready for intimacy, small gestures like a hug or a simple back rub can still help maintain connection and reassurance.

Remind her often that she is loved,



For a woman, having that her partner accepts and cherishes her can be one of the most powerful sources of healing.
Dr Kiran Kaur, general surgeon, Columbia Asia Hospital Klang

beautiful and not alone. Knowing that her partner accepts and cherishes her can be one of the most powerful sources of healing."

What lifestyle adjustments can couples do together during treatment?

There are still ways to keep your connection strong. Watch a movie together, cook simple meals, go for walks, or do gentle exercises as a team. These shared moments offer comfort and a sense of normalcy amid uncertainty.

It's also important to have conversations about your fears, hopes and emotions. Open, honest communication allows both partners to process what's happening and face the future with more strength and unity.

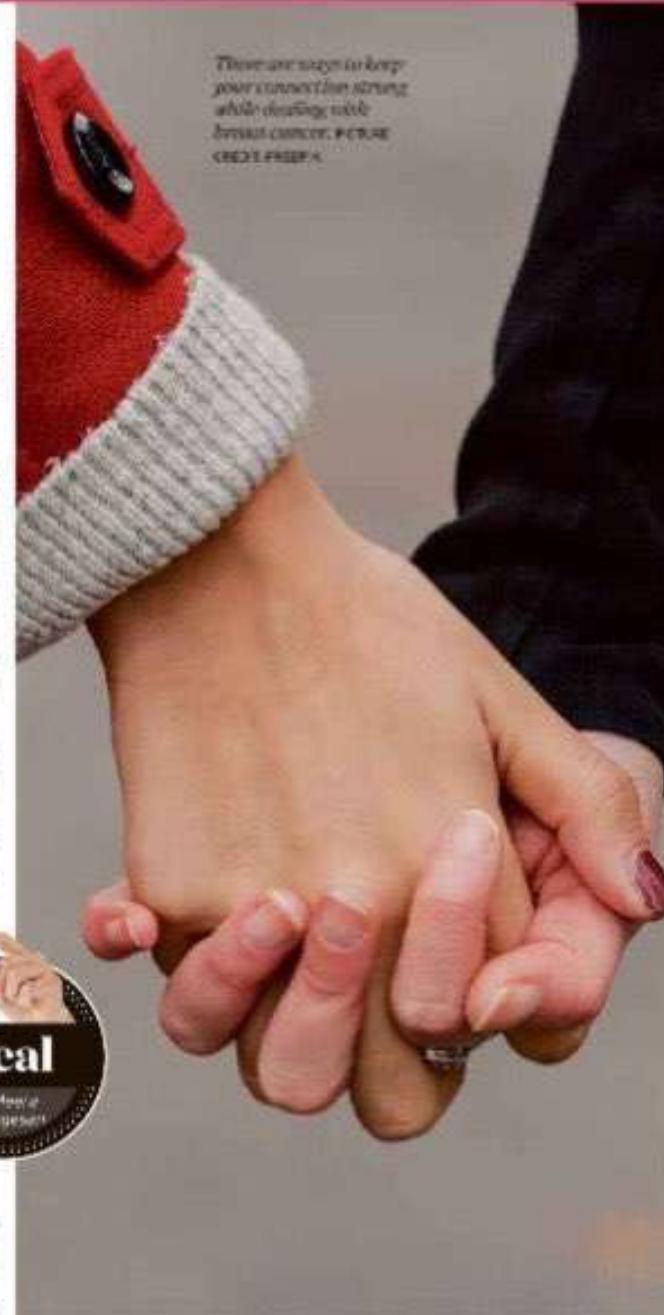
Breast cancer is never just one person's battle, says Dr Kiran.

Husbands should be ready to adapt and take on different roles as their wife moves from diagnosis to treatment, recovery and beyond. There will be good days and bad days, but she needs to know that you're walking beside her every step of the way.

"You don't have to have all the answers or know exactly what to do. Just being present can mean more than you realise."

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There are ways to keep your connection strong while dealing with breast cancer. Picture: GETTY IMAGES





Trade hits over RM2.2 trillion, ringgit on strong run

► Reforms under Madani framework drive growth, cut deficit and boost investor confidence, says Anwar

BY QIRANA NABILLA
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PETALING JAYA: Despite global economic headwinds, Malaysia's total trade rose 4.4% from January to September this year to RM2.24 trillion, while the ringgit strengthened to RM4.16 against the US dollar, making it the best-performing currency in Asia, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"Previously, the ringgit was heavily attacked and depreciated. Now that it has strengthened, not a word is said about it."

"This was achieved amid an uncertain global economy, particularly due to tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump, yet trade still increased to approximately RM2.24 trillion," Anwar said during Minister's Question Time in Parliament yesterday.

He said the recognition was based on international assessments, not domestic claims.

"This measure is not determined by us, but by international credit ratings, which remain positive. S&P Global Ratings and Moody's have both maintained Malaysia's credit ratings at A- and A3 respectively, indicating a stable and strong outlook."

Anwar said Malaysia recorded 4.4% economic growth in the first half of 2025 and 5.2% in the third quarter, with full-year growth expected to

exceed earlier projections.

Per capita income also rose to RM54,793, higher than the previous year.

He emphasised that the fiscal deficit had been reduced from 5.5% in 2022 to 5% in 2023 and further narrowed in 2024, with a target of 3.8% for 2025 and 3.5% for 2026.

"From a fiscal policy standpoint, a growing deficit would burden the economy and discourage investment. That's why we are committed to reducing it," he said.

On national debt, Anwar noted that new borrowings had decreased from RM100 billion in 2022 to RM77 billion, even as the government continued investing in essential infrastructure, flood mitigation, healthcare and education.

"We are still borrowing, but not excessively because we do not want to compromise basic infrastructure programmes, flood mitigation - including in Kelantan and Terengganu - healthcare and education."

He said Malaysia achieved a record RM384.2 billion in investments in 2024, while the nation's global competitiveness ranking climbed 11 places, its best performance in a decade.

Anwar said these achievements reflected the strength and resilience of the national economy, supported by a series of reforms under the Madani Economic Framework introduced in July 2023.

"More importantly, there is the issue of subsidy nationalisation, which has been discussed for decades but requires political will. *Allahuakbar*, it was successfully implemented, resulting in national savings exceeding RM15 billion."

On employment, Anwar said the unemployment rate fell to 3% in August, the lowest in 10 years.

He also noted that the minimum wage had been raised from RM1,200 to RM1,700 despite opposition from some business groups, while 153,000 employees under government-linked

investment companies now earn a minimum living wage of RM3,100 per month.

"This was not easy because many companies opposed it but this is the strength and political will we have, to face the large corporate cartels that they themselves could not confront when they were in power."

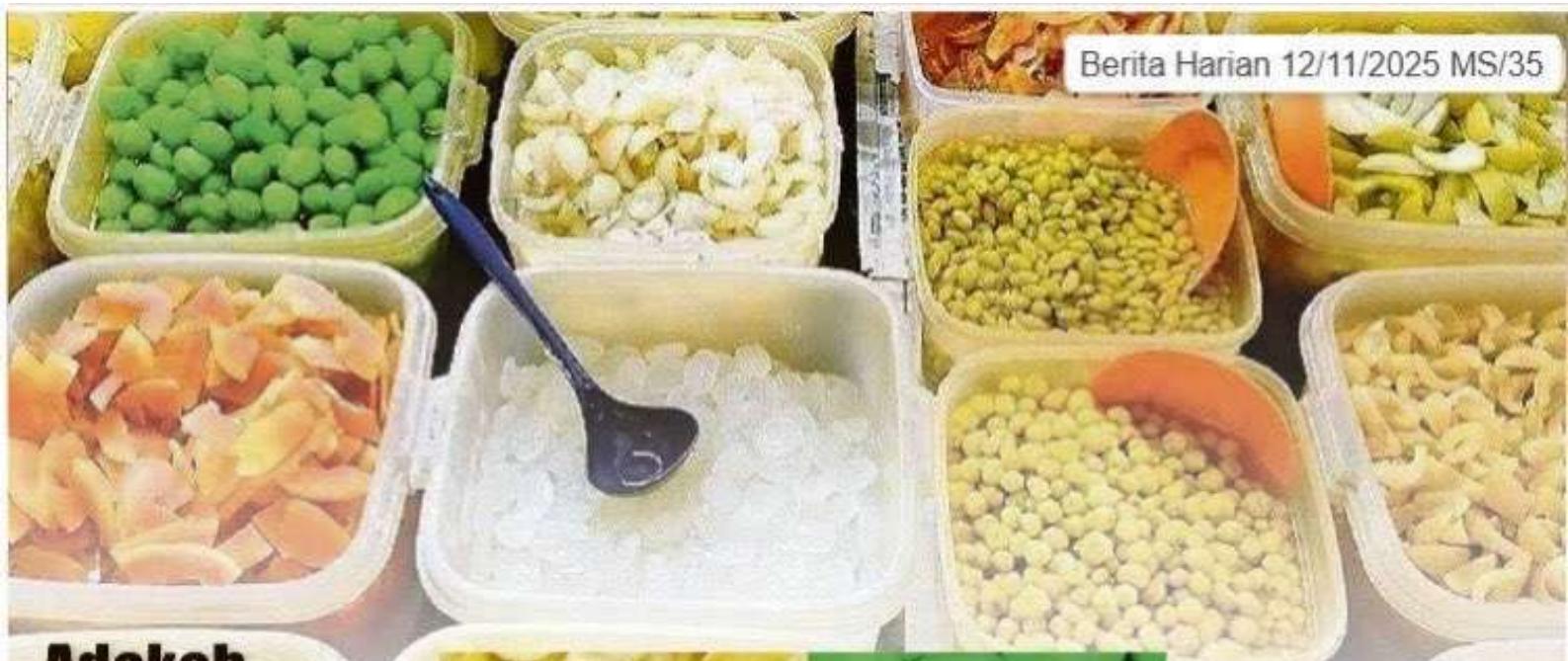
For farmers, the government raised the floor price for paddy twice to RM1,500, increased the paddy price subsidy by RM500, and doubled the rubber production incentive to RM3.

Anwar said targeted aid initiatives, including STB and i-SARA worth RM15 billion, had helped reduce hardcore poverty, while the upcoming civil service salary adjustment in January 2026 is expected to cost RM18 billion.

"Hardcore poverty can be eradicated, and we have the capacity to achieve this. That is why we can see that all state governments have given their cooperation and I express my gratitude for their support."



Anwar posing for a photograph with students from Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Teratai Pulai, Bachok, Kelantan. — BERNAMAPIC



Adakah JERUK SIHAT

Menilai Nilai Nutrisi dan Risiko Kesihatan

JERUK merupakan makanan yang amat digemari oleh masyarakat Malaysia. Ia hadir dalam pelbagai jenis buah seperti jeruk mangga, jeruk betik, jeruk kedondong, dan jeruk cili, dengan rasa masam, manis, atau masin yang mampu membangkitkan setera. Namun, di sebalik keenakan rasanya, timbul persoalan sama ada jeruk sebenarnya sihat untuk dimakan atau boleh memberi kesan buruk kepada kesihatan jika diambil berlebihan.

Dari segi asasnya, jeruk masihlah merupakan buah dengan kulit yang tebal dan berlapisan dengan daging buah yang lembut. Kulit jeruk mengandungi pelbagai senyawa yang boleh memberi manfaat kepada kesihatan, seperti antioksidan, vitamin C, dan mineral. Namun, dalam beberapa jenam, jeruk juga boleh mengandungi zat-zat yang tidak sihat, seperti gula dan lemak.



Malah, beberapa jenam jeruk juga mengandungi zat-zat yang boleh merosakkan sel-sel dalam tubuh, seperti zat-zat kimia yang boleh menyebabkan keracuan.

Macam mana jenam jeruk

Walau bagaimanapun, tidak semua jenam jeruk merupakan berbahaya. Beberapa jenam jeruk yang boleh memberi manfaat kepada kesihatan, seperti jeruk mangga, jeruk kedondong, dan jeruk cili.

Untuk pengawet, pewarna buah, serta kandungan gula dan garam yang sangat tinggi. Pengambilan jenam jeruk boleh meningkatkan risiko penyakit, seperti diabetes, obesiti, dan keracunan gigi, manakala pengambilan garam yang tinggi boleh menyebabkan tekanan darah tinggi dan pencegat jantung. Jika seseorang mengambil jeruk setiap hari dalam kuantiti yang banyak, ia boleh memberi kesan negatif terhadap kesihatan jangka panjang.

Selain itu, jeruk yang menggunakan pewarna dan berlebihan boleh merendahgaikan kesan buah kepada kesihatan batu dan buah pinggang. Seteringgi pewarna makanan tidak diluluskan untuk penggunaan makanan dan boleh menyebabkan reaksi alergi atau gangguan kesihatan tertentu. Oleh itu, pengguna harus berhati-hati dan memilih jeruk yang menggunakan bahan semula jadi tanpa pewarna atau pengawet berlebihan.

Namun, tidak dapat dielakkan bahawa jeruk masih boleh diambil sebagai sumber asas penambah rasa dan vitamin. Pengguna boleh lakukan membaca label pembungkusan sebelum membeli. Memilih jeruk yang menggunakan bahan semula jadi, dan menggunakan teknik yang tidak merosakkan buah semula jadi yang menggunakan buah segar dan cukup semula jadi juga adalah pilihan yang lebih sehat berbanding jeruk komersial.

Kesimpulannya, jeruk tidak boleh dianggap sebagai sumber makanan satat semestinya, tetapi ia juga masih berbanyak dan diambil dengan jumlah yang seterusnya. Nilai kesihatannya bergantung pada cara pembuatan dan kandungan bahan yang digunakan. Oleh itu, analisis pihak upah sederhana dan bijak memilih jeruk yang berkualiti bagi memastikan kesimbangan antara senyawa dan zat-zat dalam kesihatan tubuh. Seperti kata pepatah, 'yang sedar akan itu, lebih baik,' dan prinsip ini atau sesuatu apabila kita memikerti sebenarnya jeruk dalam kehidupan sehari-hari.

