



# Doctor breaks new ground in research

▶ Heart specialist becomes first Malaysian woman to earn PhD in cardiac electrophysiology

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The National Heart Institute (IJN) has announced a historic academic milestone achieved by one of its specialists, who has been recognised as the first Malaysian woman to obtain a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in cardiac electrophysiology.

In a statement, IJN said specialist Dr Suraya Hani Kamsani (*pic*) was awarded the credential from the University of Adelaide, Australia, marking a significant milestone in the field for Malaysia.

Cardiac electrophysiology is a highly specialised branch of cardiology focusing on the diagnosis and treatment of heart rhythm disorders, an area of growing importance as cardiovascular diseases continue to rise globally.

"Dr Suraya's achievement reflects years of dedication, research and academic contribution to advancing knowledge in cardiac electrophysiology and represents an important step forward for Malaysia's cardiovascular research and



academic community."

IJN chief executive officer Prof Datuk Seri Dr Mohamed Ezani Md Taib said the achievement highlights the institute's commitment to advancing cardiovascular care not only through clinical excellence but also through research, education and innovation, Bernama reported.

"At IJN, we believe that the future of cardiovascular medicine is shaped not only through clinical care and advanced cardiac procedures but also through research, education and knowledge creation that improves patient care for generations to come.

"Dr Suraya's achievement reflects the environment we are building at IJN, one where clinicians are encouraged not only to treat patients

but also to conduct research, contribute to scientific knowledge and help shape the future of cardiovascular medicine," he said.

He added that IJN has long served not only as Malaysia's national heart centre but also as a leading training, research and academic institution, contributing to the development of cardiovascular specialists and the advancement of medical knowledge locally and across the region.

Suraya's achievement also marks a significant milestone for women in cardiology and cardiovascular research in Malaysia, highlighting the expanding role of female specialists in advancing highly specialised areas of medicine and scientific research.

## Utar Hospital expands integrative healthcare model

**KAMPAR:** Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (Utar) Hospital continues to strengthen its role as a provider of health services based on integrative medicine by combining modern treatment with traditional and complementary medicine (T&CM), with the aim of becoming a teaching hospital in the coming years.

Utar Hospital Board chairman Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Dr Chuah Hean Teik said the integrative approach is not merely complementary but seeks to fully integrate modern treatment and T&CM, in line with Health Ministry guidelines.

He added that since its establishment four years ago, the hospital's T&CM unit has recorded more than 167,000 patient visits, not only from Kampong but also from areas such as Cameron Highlands, Pahang and Kelantan.

"The T&CM services here include not only traditional Chinese medicine, but also Ayurveda from India and traditional Malay medicine.

"This makes this hospital unique in offering various comprehensive treatment approaches, especially in traditional medicine, which is also part



Tuanku Zara Salim (second from right) being briefed on the operations of Utar Hospital during her visit on Thursday. - PIC COURTESY OF UTAR HOSPITAL

of integrative healthcare," he said when speaking at the Utar Hospital World Health Day ceremony in conjunction with the fourth anniversary celebration of the Utar T&CM Medical Centre on Thursday.

The event was graced by the Raja

Permaisuri of Perak Tuanku Zara Salim.

Chuah said the hospital has expanded its expertise in fields that include orthopaedics and paediatrics, as well as introducing flexible operating hours at night and on weekends to meet the needs of

patients from outside the area.

"Our aim is to provide access to quality healthcare at an affordable cost, while not turning away patients who cannot afford treatment through initiatives such as 'Care Now, Pay Later'.

"In addition to clinical services, our

hospital is also active in research in collaboration with local and international institutions, including universities in China, India and Singapore, particularly in evaluating the effectiveness of combined physiotherapy and T&CM treatments," he said.

He added that in efforts to strengthen training and education, the hospital has accepted trainees from China, Hong Kong and the United Kingdom for the T&CM clinical placement programme.

"Currently, we have started a short-term Ayurveda training course with the support of the Indian government and plan to introduce a degree programme in the field in the future.

"Utar Hospital is currently in the process of acquiring the first digital PET scan facility in Perak to improve cancer detection capabilities with lower radiation exposure.

"We aim to become a national reference model in the implementation of integrative medicine, thus contributing to the development of a more inclusive and sustainable health system in Malaysia," he said. - Bernama

# Disaster scene in real life

## Medical personnel recount how they sprung into action

By **TARRENCE TAN** and **GERARD GIMINO**  
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**CYBERJAYA:** It was the second day of Hari Raya, many people were on leave and all seemed quiet at Hospital Cyberjaya.

And then all hell broke loose. A gas pipeline was on fire in Putra Heights and at least two dozen people were rushed to the hospital, all needing emergency treatment.

Ambulances were going back and forth, and people were walking into the hospital in a daze, with severe burns on their bodies.

The hospital staff, working with a skeleton crew due to the holidays, were pushed to the limit.

Recalling the incident on April 1 last year, Dr R. Periyanyaki R.M. Ramanathan, an emergency physician at the hospital, said she was expecting a quiet morning shift.

"Once we heard 'gas explosion', we immediately knew there would be an influx of people.

"I was at home in Putrajaya but

on call. I immediately rushed to the hospital," she told *The Star* yesterday.

"My staff informed me they were activating ambulances to pick up victims of a gas explosion."

She arrived to find the hospital in chaos, with victims being brought in by ambulances operated by both government and private agencies.

"Some were brought in by private responders and vehicles from community philanthropist Uncle Kentang," she said, adding that she also recalled some victims walking through the emergency doors despite their injuries.

In total, the hospital tended to 25 victims from the inferno that morning.

Dr Periyanyaki also recounted the harrowing nature of the victims' injuries caused by the intense heat of the explosion and fire.

"I initially anticipated chemical injuries. But when we saw the wounds, it was purely from the intense heat," she said.

"People were walking in despite



**Dream team:** Hospital Cyberjaya staff (from left) security officer Mohd Riza Mohd Sirat, assistant medical officer Wan Nadzeri Mohd Mohiadin, emergency department head nurse Nordiana Kholil, healthcare assistant Shamunah Siva, Dr Periyanyaki, nurse Nur Khalilah Ahmad Nawawi, assistant medical officer Muhammad Syafiq and ambulance driver Mohd Razieman recalling the Putra Heights incident. — IZZRAFQ ALIAS/The Star

having extensive injuries on the soles of their feet."

Many victims were fully conscious despite suffering second and third-degree burns, she added.

Besides treating the "semi-critical" cases, she said three victims with severe burns were transferred to the specialised burn unit at Hospital Kuala Lumpur (HKL).

"As emergency physicians, we are trained to stay calm and we remained composed on the outside, even if on the inside we were not," she said with a slight smile.

She also recalled the hospital's psychiatric team being on hand to provide immediate psychological support to the victims.

Another emergency physician, Dr Timothy Lau Qingshinn, was on his regular duties at Hospital Serdang when the emergency call came in.

He and his colleague Dr Pamela Siow Soek Wuen rushed to the scene and immediately swung into action to lead the medical efforts at ground zero in Putra Heights.

Despite all his training in medical field work, the devastation at the scene caught him off guard.

"Nothing prepares you for the real disaster itself. The scale of what happened shocked us."

Dr Lau, who is now based at Hospital Cyberjaya, said that, in addition to burns and blisters,

several victims also suffered fractures from falls while trying to escape the fire and heat.

He lauded the close teamwork between different agencies and volunteer groups that helped provide assistance to the victims.

The massive gas pipeline explosion, which happened at around 8am, saw a fire which shot over 30m high with heat reaching up to 1,000°C. It took almost eight hours to be extinguished.

Over 500 residents were evacuated to relief centres and 81 houses suffered structural damage exceeding 40%.

Another 81 were partially damaged, and 57 were affected but not burned.

# Third life saved by Cecil Market defibrillator

By **LAI KHAN HOONG**  
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**GEORGE TOWN:** What is usually seen as just another fixture on the wall at Lebuh Cecil Market proved its worth when it was used to revive a tourist who collapsed suddenly among the crowds.

Since its installation in early 2024, the automated external defibrillator (AED) at the market – popular for its wide variety of Penang food – has been used three times to rescue victims of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA).

The latest was 64-year-old Indonesian tourist Tumin, who collapsed while moving through the crowd in December last year.

Passers-by Koay Hean Wei and Ong Cheong Pin rushed to check on him and began cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), while others retrieved the AED – a device that analyses heart rhythm and delivers an electric shock if needed to restore it.

Tumin's pulse soon returned. The incident prompted Zoll Medical Corporation to donate a new unit under its Heroes for Life initiative, in which the company provides an AED each time one is used to save a life.



**Technical support:** AED consultant specialist Ong Swee Jin (seated) explaining the functions of an AED to a local at the Lebuh Cecil Market in George Town. — CHAN BOON KAI/The Star

The device was handed over to St John Ambulance Malaysia on Thursday to support ongoing emergency response efforts.

At the ceremony, Tumin – accompanied by his wife Ernalisia and son Windy Wijaya – reunited with his rescuers.

They shook hands and embraced in a brief but emotional meeting, marked by quiet gratitude and light conversation.

Penang health committee chairman Daniel Gooi Zi Sen said the incident showed the importance of early intervention.

"In these critical moments, it is not a doctor or paramedic who responds first, but people around the victims. Through swift action and the immediate use of CPR and an AED, lives are saved."

He added that Penang recorded the highest SCA survival rate in the

country at about 8%, compared with the national average of 1%.

As of December 2025, the state has installed 277 AED units, with plans to add another 71 this year.

Datuk Seri Dr Yee Thiam Sun, state commander of St John Ambulance Malaysia (Penang), welcomed the donation, saying it would strengthen community preparedness and response by providing essential resources.

# Peninsula-based companies eyeing prospects in S'wak



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**KUCHING:** Peninsula-based companies engaged in healthcare, urban development, semiconductors and other related sectors are exploring collaboration and investment opportunities in Sarawak.

This was indicated during a follow-up visit on Thursday hosted by InvestSarawak, following the earlier facilitation of a Collaborative Research in Engineering, Science and Technology (CREST) Penang visit in January.

The programme brought together former national health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, as well as CREST leadership and senior industry figures from Peninsular Malaysia, for strategic discussions with Sarawak ministries, agencies and ecosystem players.

"The visit reflected continued interest in Sarawak's strategic growth sectors, particularly healthcare and digital health, urban regeneration, semiconductors and electronics, advanced manufacturing, connected technologies, automotive electronics, IC (integrated circuit) design, food security and industrial connectivity," said InvestSarawak in a statement.

The participating organisations also included UCSI Healthcare, Cnergenz Berhad, Communication 21, Think City, Clarion Malaysia, ACO Tech, Filpal and Oppstar Berhad, alongside senior semiconductor industry representatives.

They had engagements with Deputy Premier and state Minister for Public Health, Housing and Local Government Datuk Amar Dr Sim Kui Hian, as well as Deputy Premier and state Minister for International Trade, Industry and Investment Datuk Amar Awang Tengah Ali Hasan.

Agencies and institutions relevant to healthcare, urban planning, digital economy, semiconductors, agriculture and investment facilitation also participated in the engagements.

Areas of interest discussed included the semiconductor value chain, food security and agriculture technology, high-value timber and downstream forestry applications, artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technologies, as well as broader high-technology industries requiring long-term talent development and ecosystem



Awang Tengah (right) and Dr Noor Hisham seen during the presentation of memento.

support.

The delegation also attended sessions involving the Sarawak Infectious Disease Centre and the Clinical Research Centre, Institute for Clinical Research (NIH), before joining a 'Think City'-related engagement chaired by Dr Sim with participation from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Urban Development, the Sarawak Natural Resources and Environment Board, and local authorities including Kuching North City Commission, Kuching South City Council, Miri City Council, Bintulu Development Authority, Padawan Municipal Council, Sibul Municipal Council and Kota Samarahan Municipal Council.

A session at Wisma Sumber Alam here brought together the teams from the Economic Planning Unit Sarawak, Malaysian Investment Development Authority Sarawak, Sarawak Multimedia Authority, Sarawak Digital Economy Corporation, SMD Semiconductor, X-FAB, Melexis, the Department of Agriculture Sarawak, the Ministry of Food Industry, Commodity and Regional Development Sarawak, and also InvestSarawak.

"Sarawak welcomes serious, long-term partnerships that create value, build capabilities and support sustainable growth," said Awang Tengah in a statement.

"This visit reflected the growing interest from Peninsular Malaysia's industry players in Sarawak's opportunities across healthcare, urban development,

semiconductors, digital technologies and advanced manufacturing.

"It also highlighted the importance of collaboration between industry, academia and government in building the skilled workforce needed to support future investments in high-value sectors and strengthen Sarawak's long-term competitiveness."

Meanwhile, Dr Sim said Sarawak would always welcome serious collaborations that could contribute to the state's priorities in healthcare, liveable cities, innovation and long-term development.

"The range of expertise represented in this delegation is relevant to where Sarawak wants to go. Our values guide Sarawak's growth and policy making. It is important to pass on the right values to the next generation, in pursuit of nation building."

CREST chief executive officer Jaffri Ibrahim remarked: "This visit is a useful platform to connect capabilities from Peninsular Malaysia with Sarawak's priorities in high-value sectors.

"There is clear room for collaboration, particularly in areas where technology, industrial development and ecosystem-building come together."

Adding on, InvestSarawak chief executive officer Timothy Ong said: "InvestSarawak is pleased to support these discussions and help connect companies and ecosystem players with the relevant stakeholders in Sarawak."