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Enforcement of green policies remains weak, says NGO

► 'Malaysia continues to rely on short-term development priorities but climate crisis requires broader structural changes'

■ BY KIRTINEE RAMESH
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PETALING JAYA: Malaysia's green policies are failing to translate into meaningful action on the ground, with experts saying weak implementation and short-term development priorities are leaving the country increasingly exposed to worsening floods, heatwaves and environmental degradation.

Pertubuhan Alam Sekitar Sejahtera Malaysia (Grass Malaysia) president Mohd Yusaimi Md Yusof said although Malaysia has introduced numerous green policies and environmental initiatives, execution remains inconsistent, particularly at the local government level.

"We continue to rely on short-term development priorities whereas the climate crisis requires broader structural changes, including in energy, transport, land use, food security and forest protection."

He emphasised that while natural factors contribute to environmental disasters, human activity in Malaysia often intensifies their impact.

He cited deforestation, peatland exploitation, development in environmentally sensitive zones, poor drainage systems and weak land-use planning as key drivers behind worsening floods and landslides.

He also referenced the Quranic reminder in *Surah Ar-Rum*, Verse 41, which highlights how environmental destruction is linked to human actions and negligence, serving as a call for reflection and reform.

"This is not merely a weather issue, but also a matter of policy and development management," he noted.

On development priorities, Mohd Yusaimi noted that economic growth continues to take precedence over environmental protection in many decision-making processes.

"There is a tendency to prioritise projects that generate rapid economic growth, even



Mohd Yusaimi called for a clearer national roadmap to reduce fossil fuel dependence, accelerate renewable energy adoption and strengthen forest conservation efforts. – ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN

when they have significant impacts on forests, water resources and local communities," he said, adding that environmental costs are often undervalued.

He noted that if long-term ecological and social impacts were properly accounted for, many development decisions would look very different.

Mohd Yusaimi said NGOs are increasingly concerned that Malaysia's climate response is not matching the urgency of the crisis.

He called for a clearer national roadmap to reduce fossil fuel dependence, accelerate renewable energy adoption and strengthen forest conservation efforts.

"Without stronger and more transparent commitments, green targets risk remaining promises that are difficult to measure and achieve," he stressed.

He also highlighted what he described as an under-appreciated issue, namely the direct link between environmental degradation and human wellbeing, including public health, safety and quality of life.

He pointed to global extreme heat conditions, including reported fatalities during the 2024 *haj* season, as an example of how

climate stress is already affecting human life and religious practices.

Mohd Yusaimi added that environmental degradation is closely tied to issues such as water security, mental health, agriculture and cost of living pressures.

A 2022 Health Ministry study found that around 30% of Malaysians experienced mental health issues, while environmental researcher Dr Qing Li, author of *Shinrin-Yoku: The Art and Science of Forest Bathing*, has warned that disconnection from nature could worsen both physical and psychological wellbeing.

Looking ahead, Mohd Yusaimi urged Malaysia to prioritise forest protection, flood adaptation, energy transition, sustainable agriculture, public transport improvements, mental health support as well as stricter environmental enforcement over the next five years.

"Malaysia does not lack green policies, but it still lacks sufficiently bold and consistent action," he highlighted.

"If we continue to prioritise short-term economic growth without accounting for environmental costs, we will simply pass this crisis on to future generations."

'Address **staff crisis** first before building more hospitals'

■ BY KIRTINEE RAMESH
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PETALING JAYA: Malaysia risks building hospitals it cannot staff unless the government urgently addresses a deepening healthcare workforce crisis, the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has warned, even as it welcomed plans for a new 500-bed public hospital in the city.

Cautioning that infrastructure investment alone will not resolve the country's healthcare woes, MMA president Datuk Dr Thirunavukarasu Rajoo said the nation faces a shortage of nearly 11,000 specialists, nursing vacancies of about 18% – or some 14,700 unfilled positions out of 84,000 – and a stark collapse in junior doctor uptake, with only 529 of the 5,000 positions recently offered to medical

► Nation faces severe shortage of specialists and nurses while only 529 of 5,000 positions offered to medical grads being accepted, says MMA president

graduates being accepted.

"A hospital is not its walls. It is the doctors, nurses and specialists inside it, and Malaysia has a problem that we cannot build our way out of," he said, following the Selangor government's decision to expedite land allocation for the proposed facility.

Thirunavukarasu pointed to Hospital Pasir Gudang as a cautionary tale, a completed facility that could not be fully operationalised due to insufficient doctors and nurses.

"That was not a failure of construction. It was a failure of workforce planning," he said.

"Our hospitals are not short of demand. They are short of staff."

While acknowledging that the Petaling district's population of more than 2.3 million, including over 800,000 in Petaling Jaya, warrants additional healthcare capacity, the MMA argued that existing resources, particularly in the private sector, remain underutilised.

Petaling Jaya alone has 12

private hospitals with more than 1,400 beds and over 450 registered private clinics.

Thirunavukarasu said the Health Ministry should expand programmes enabling public patients to receive treatment at private facilities, noting that nearly 100 private hospitals had already been shortlisted to provide services including cardiology, nephrology and radiology imaging.

"The capacity already exists. We should be using it," he said.

The MMA also pressed for stronger investment in healthcare digitalisation, arguing that patients were far more frustrated by long waiting times, misplaced records and repeated tests than by the absence of new buildings.

Thirunavukarasu highlighted the Health Ministry's plans to fully digitalise primary healthcare by 2027 and establish a single national health record accessible across both public and private facilities.

This system would allow patients on months-long public hospital waiting lists to be referred swiftly to private providers without losing continuity of care, he said.

"No new building. No new land. Just a faster solution for the patient," he said.

He further urged policymakers to address the root causes of the workforce shortage through sustained healthcare funding, improved recruitment and retention policies and the creation of an independent Health Service Commission – a body that would manage healthcare recruitment, postings and career progression outside the constraints of the broader civil service structure.

"Doctors are not leaving because others are taking them. They are leaving because the system pushes them out," he said.

Thirunavukarasu stressed that resolving the crisis required coordinated action from the Finance Ministry, Public Service Department and Higher Education Ministry, not just the Health Ministry.

"By all means build the hospital. But ensure the workforce is planned before the first brick is laid," he said.



Thirunavukarasu said policymakers need to address staff shortage woes through sustained healthcare funding, improved recruitment and retention policies and the creation of an independent Health Service Commission.

— AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THESUN

Nadma prepares cross-agency action for weather risks

PUTRAJAYA: The government, through the National Disaster Management Agency (Nadma), is strengthening the country's level of preparedness following forecasts of more challenging hot and dry weather conditions due to the El Nino phenomenon, which is expected to persist until early 2027.

This includes cross-agency cooperation to address disaster risks arising from the prolonged hot and dry conditions.

Nadma director-general Meor Ismail Meor Akim said that although the situation remains under control, the government is not taking it lightly and has instructed all relevant agencies to

enhance their preparedness and implement mitigation measures early to ensure public safety, the continuity of water supply and the nation's well-being.

"Three cloud-seeding operations have been scheduled to be carried out in the near future to help increase rainfall distribution and reservoir levels in affected areas.

"The Malaysian Meteorological Department (MetMalaysia) will continue to monitor the situation and issue updates on the El Nino phenomenon throughout the Southwest Monsoon period," Meor Ismail said in a statement yesterday.

MetMalaysia has also been

instructed to issue haze forecasts and provide forest fire prediction data generated through the Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS), with projections covering the next seven days, to the Fire and Rescue Department (JBPM).

According to Meor Ismail, the JBPM has been directed to work with the Department of Environment to continuously monitor 83 hotspots identified as being at high risk of open burning throughout the Southwest Monsoon period as part of early mitigation efforts.

"The Department of Irrigation and Drainage must identify dams requiring maintenance so that

the relevant parties can take immediate action, while the Mineral and Geoscience Department (JMG) must identify additional groundwater source locations for the construction of tube wells as a mitigation measure in water-stressed areas," he said.

On public health, he said the Health Ministry had been tasked with intensifying public awareness campaigns on the health effects of hot weather, particularly among high-risk groups, Bernama reported.

At the same time, the Education Ministry has been asked to roll out a nationwide awareness programme on coping with hot

weather for school students to enhance awareness and reduce the risks associated with the Southwest Monsoon.

Meor Ismail stressed that the whole-of-government approach remains a key pillar of the Madani Government's efforts to ensure that all relevant agencies maintain an optimum level of preparedness to address any disaster risks arising from hot and dry weather conditions.

"Nadma will continue to monitor developments and coordinate the actions of all relevant agencies to ensure that the safety, well-being and interests of the people remain the top priority," he said.

StarMetro M/S 5

Rain, heat fuel spike in Johor dengue infections

State records year-high of 268 cases between May 10 and 16

By **MOHD FARHAAN SHAH**
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HOT weather and sudden downpours have heightened the risk of dengue transmission in Johor, prompting authorities to urge residents to keep their surroundings free of stagnant water.

Caretaker state health and environment committee chairman Ling Tian Soon said there had been a surge in dengue infections in Johor, with the state recording a year-high of 268 cases between May 10 and 16.

"The figures marked the highest weekly dengue tally recorded in Johor so far this year," he said.

He added that the recent weather patterns had created favourable conditions for Aedes mosquitoes to breed, increasing the risk of dengue transmission across the state.



Ling recommends that 'gotong-royong' sessions be carried out at least once a week.

Ling, who is also Yong Peng assemblyman, added that Johor Baru remained the main hotspot, recording 217 cases or 81% of the total infections reported

during the week.

He said Kulai recorded the second-highest number of cases with 27, followed by Klang with 12 and Pontian with six.

Ling added that despite the increase in infections, no dengue-related deaths were reported in Johor during the week under review.

However, he said the cumulative number of dengue fatalities in the state this year stood at two cases.

Ling urged the public to remain vigilant and play an active role in preventing the spread of the disease.

"Maintaining cleanliness in residential areas and surrounding neighbourhoods is crucial in eliminating mosquito-breeding sites.

"Residents should ensure that no stagnant water accumulates in containers, drains, flower pots

and other places that could facilitate Aedes mosquito breeding."

Ling also encouraged communities to organise regular *gotong-royong* activities to clean up their surroundings.

He said such efforts should be carried out at least once a week to reduce the risk of mosquito breeding and dengue.

"The cooperation of the people is essential in our efforts to curb dengue cases, especially in areas that continue to record high numbers of infections," he said.

Ling also advised those experiencing symptoms associated with dengue fever to seek immediate medical attention.

He said individuals suffering from fever, body weakness or joint pain should undergo a medical examination at the nearest health facility to ensure early detection and treatment of the disease.

AIDS Council: PrEP a public health tool to prevent HIV

KUALA LUMPUR: Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) should be recognised as an important public health intervention aimed at reducing the risk of HIV infection, particularly among individuals who are at higher risk of contracting the virus, according to the Malaysian AIDS Council (MAC).

In a statement, MAC explained that PrEP is a preventive medication taken by HIV-negative individuals to significantly lower their risk of becoming infected with HIV.

"PrEP is not a licence to engage in risky behaviour, nor is it a substitute for moral education or family values.

Rather, it serves as an additional layer of protection that helps prevent HIV infection and reduces the long-term

health and social impacts of the disease," it said.

According to the council, scientific studies have shown that when taken consistently as prescribed, PrEP can reduce the risk of acquiring HIV through sexual transmission by approximately 99 per cent.

It stressed that effective HIV prevention requires a comprehensive and balanced approach that includes health education, the strengthening of family institutions, moral and religious guidance, faithfulness in relationships, avoidance of high-risk behaviours, condom use, HIV testing, early treatment, and community support.

MAC said the use of PrEP should also be accompanied by counselling services, regular HIV screening, sexual health

check-ups and continuous health education to ensure that prevention efforts are implemented responsibly and effectively.

"This makes PrEP more than just a preventive medication. It also serves as an entry point to broader and more comprehensive healthcare services.

"MAC continues to work closely with the Ministry of Health to ensure that positive values remain a priority, including education on abstinence," it added.

The council noted that harm reduction strategies are not intended to encourage certain behaviours but rather to minimise risks and adverse consequences where such risks continue to exist within

society.

Malaysia has previously achieved significant success through harm reduction programmes such as the Needle and Syringe Exchange Programme (NSEP) and Opioid Substitution Therapy (OST), both of which have contributed substantially to reducing HIV transmission among people who inject drugs.

MAC emphasised that public health measures and prevention initiatives should not be viewed as conflicting with religious principles, family values or moral education.

Instead, it said these approaches can complement one another in preserving lives, preventing disease, and reducing harm within the community.
— Bernama

Indonesia sedia bekul 15,000 jururawat

Langkah bantu Malaysia atasi isu kekurangan tenaga sektor kesihatan

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Kuala Lumpur: Indonesia bersedia membekalkan seramai 15,000 jururawat dari negara itu ke Malaysia, bagi memenuhi krisis kekurangan tenaga kerja terbahut dalam sektor kesihatan negara ini.

Duta Besar Indonesia ke Malaysia, Raden Datuk Mohammad Iman Hascarya Kusumo, berkata negara itu kini menghasilkan kira-kira 65,000 jururawat setiap tahun, sekali gus mempunyai bekalan tenaga kerja itu yang mencukupi untuk dihantar ke sini.

"Indonesia bersedia untuk menghantar berapa pun (jumlah) cuma yang pasti sekarang ini kita mempunyai kira-kira 65,000 jururawat.

"Kita bersedia (jika diperlukan 15,000) untuk memenuhi permintaan Malaysia," katanya kepada BH dalam temu bual eksklusif sempena lawatannya ke Balai Berita di sini, semalam.

Terdahulu, kehadiran beliau di Balai Berita disambut Pengerusi Kumpulan Media Prima Berhad, Datuk Seri Dr Syed Hussian Aljunied; Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif, Media Prima Audio, Nazri Noran; Timbalan Pengarang Urusan Kumpulan, Berita & Hal Ehwal Semasa (NCA) Media Prima yang juga Pengarang Kumpulan New Straits Times (NST), Farrah Naz Karim dan Pengarang Kumpulan BH, Zulkifli Jalil.

Turut sama menyambut Mohammad Iman ialah Pengarang Kumpulan Harian Metro, Husain Jahit dan Timbalan Pengarang Kumpulan NST, Sharanjit Singh serta pengurusan kanan Editorial BH.

Selain sesi temu bual, Mohammad Iman meluahkan masa hampir dua jam di Balai Berita bagi bertemu pihak pengurusan kanan Media Prima sambil meninjau operasi bersepadu Kumpulan Media Prima Berhad dan studio penyiaran moden, termasuk studio bagi rangkaian televisyen seperti TV3.

Sebelum ini, Menteri Luar, Datuk Seri Mohammad Hasan, dilaporkan berkata Malaysia mempertimbangkan cadangan Indonesia untuk memperluas penempatan pekerja migran Indonesia (PMI) ke sektor kesihatan, khususnya tenaga kejururawatan.



Mohammad Iman menerima cenderahati daripada Syed Hussian (empat dari kanan) ketika melawat Balai Berita Bangsar, semalam. Hadir sama, Farrah Naz, Nazri (dua dari kanan), Zulkifli (tiga dari kanan), Husain (kanan) dan Sharanjit (kiri).
(Foto Asyraf Hamzah/BH)

susunya tenaga kejururawatan. Mohammad Iman menyatakan perkara itu selepas pertemuan bilateral bersama Menteri Luar Indonesia, Sugiono, ketika menghadiri sidang Suruhanjaya Bersama Kerjasama Dua Hala JCBC Ke-17 di Gedung Pancasila, Kementerian Luar Indonesia, minggu lalu.

Kekosongan 18 peratus

Media melaporkan Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) berdepan jurang kritikal dengan kekurangan hampir 15,000 jururawat bertauliah.

Kadar kekosongan kira-kira 18 peratus itu didorong oleh penghijrahan tenaga kerja ke luar negara, peningkatan bebanan tugas dan penuaan populasi.

Pada masa sama, Mohammad Iman berkata, usaha bagi membawa masuk jururawat Indonesia ke sini boleh direalisasikan melalui pendekatan kerajaan de-

ngan kerajaan (G2G), dimulakan melalui rundingan di antara Lembaga Jururawat Malaysia dengan Lembaga Jururawat Indonesia.

Beliau berkata, rundingan itu penting bagi menentukan standard yang ditetapkan termasuk kriteria yang diperlukan bagi seseorang jururawat dari Indonesia untuk berkhidmat di sini.

"Setelah standard itu diselaraskan, maka Nursing Board Malaysia (Lembaga Jururawat Malaysia) akan memberitahu kepada KKM beberapa keperluan.

"Selepas itu, KKM akan memberitahu kepada kami di kementerian atau Kementerian Kesihatan Indonesia supaya kita boleh menyediakan jururawat untuk dikirimkan dan berkhidmat di Malaysia," katanya.

Beliau berkata, usaha sedang dilakukan Indonesia melalui Kementerian Pelindungan Pekerja Migran Indonesia untuk meningkatkan standard jururawat di negara itu.

Katanya, antara pendekatan

yang dibuat ialah memastikan jururawat dapat berkhidmat di industri ketika sedang belajar bagi memastikan mereka lebih bersedia ke alam pekerjaan.

"Sekurang-kurangnya mereka tahu keperluan (majikan), ia juga bagi mengelakkan mereka terkejut sekiranya tidak didedahkan dengan alam pekerjaan lebih awal," katanya.

Beliau menyuarakan keyakinan memasuki jururawat Indonesia ke sini juga berupaya menarik lebih ramai pelancong dari negara jiran itu dalam aspek pelancongan kesihatan.

Katanya, apatah lagi Malaysia turut menerima jumlah kedatangan pesakit dari Indonesia yang tinggi dan ia sekali gus boleh melonjakkan sektor itu.

Sebelum ini, sebuah analisis mendapati Indonesia menjadi pasaran terbesar bagi pelancongan perubatan Malaysia dengan pesakit dari negara jiran itu menyumbang 64.9 peratus daripada jumlah keseluruhan pelancongan perubatan pada 2023.

Isu pengiktirafan program PharmD Universiti Alexandria dijangka selesai

Kota Samarahan: Isu pengiktirafan kelayakan program Doktor Farmasi (PharmD) di Universiti Alexandria, Mesir, dijangka dapat diselesaikan kerana ia hanya membabitkan perkara teknikal berkaitan pertukaran nama program pengajian.

Menteri Pendidikan Tinggi, Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir, berkata perkara itu bukan isu baharu dan hanya membabitkan empat pelajar institusi swasta yang kini berada pada tahun akhir pengajian.

Beliau berkata, pelajar terbabit asalnya mengikuti program farmasi ditawarkan universiti berkenaan, namun nama program itu kemudian ditukar kepada Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD).

"Dari segi nama, ia menimbulkan kekeliruan kepada pihak Lembaga Farmasi Malaysia (LFM) kerana program yang asal ialah farmasi, tetapi kemudiannya ditukar kepada PharmD.

"Bagaimanapun, silibus dan bidang pengajian diikuti berkaitan farmasi, cuma berlaku pertukaran nama program," katanya selepas Majlis Peluncuran MySISWA@Job On Campus Universiti Awam Malaysia di Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) di sini, semalam.

MySISWA@Job On Campus (MySISWA@JoC) adalah program Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi (KPT) bersama universiti awam yang menyediakan peluang pekerjaan sambilan di da-

lam kampus kepada mahasiswa sepanjang tempoh pengajian.

Ia bagi membantu pelajar menambah pendapatan, mengurangkan beban kos sara hidup, serta memperoleh pengalaman kerja dan kemahiran insaniah sebelum tamatkan pengajian.

Mengulas lanjut, Zambry berkata, isu berkenaan tidak membabitkan Agensi Kelayakan Malaysia (MQA) kerana pengiktirafan profesion farmasi terletak di bawah bidang kuasa Lembaga Farmasi Malaysia (LFM) yang berada di bawah Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM).

Katanya, pihak Universiti Alexandria sepatutnya memaklumkan perubahan nama program itu kepada pihak berkuasa

berkaitan di Malaysia, termasuk MQA dan LFM bagi mengelakkan kekeliruan dalam proses pengiktirafan.

"Farmasi mempunyai badan profesional yang memberikan pengiktirafan dan KPT tidak dapat campur tangan secara langsung dalam urusan itu kerana ia di bawah bidang kuasa lembaga profesional berkaitan.

"Namun, saya berharap perkara ini dapat diselesaikan kerana ia hanya isu teknikal yang membabitkan pertukaran nama program," katanya.

Zambry menjelaskan beliau sudah memaklumkan perkara itu kepada Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad dan berharap kerjasama antara ke-



menterian serta pihak berkaitan dapat membantu menyelesaikan isu dihadapi pelajar terbabit.

Sebelum ini, pelajar Malaysia yang mengikuti pengajian farmasi di Universiti Alexandria dilaporkan berdepan masalah apabila program PharmD yang diikuti tidak diiktiraf LFM untuk membolehkan mereka menduduki peperiksaan Poison Law, iaitu antara syarat yang perlu dipenuhi sebelum berkhidmat sebagai ahli farmasi di Malaysia.

Pengajian yang ditawarkan kepada mereka melalui surat rasmi Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi adalah program farmasi, namun program itu dinaik taraf kepada PharmD pada 2019.

Kuala Lumpur: Lebih 8,500 perusahaan kecil dan sederhana (PKS) dalam sektor penjagaan kesihatan di seluruh rangkaian Pharmaniaga Bhd dijangka mendapat manfaat daripada kerjasama strategiknya bersama CrediBill Sdn Bhd yang menawarkan fleksibiliti pembayaran bagi pembelian produk farmaseutikal dan penjagaan kesihatan.

Credibill adalah platform Beli Sekarang Bayar Kemudian (BNPL) B2B Malaysia yang dikuasakan oleh CapBay.

Kerjasama ini bertujuan menangani tekanan aliran tunai yang berterusan dihadapi oleh PKS penjagaan kesihatan dalam sektor penjagaan kesihatan primer swasta Malaysia.

"Di bawah kerjasama ini, lebih daripada 8,500 penyedia perkhidmatan kesihatan

KERJASAMA PHARMANIAGA, CREDIBILL

Tangani tekanan aliran tunai PKS penjagaan kesihatan

dalam rangkaian Pharmaniaga akan mendapat manfaat daripada tempoh pembayaran lanjutan sehingga 90 hari bagi pembelian produk farmaseutikal dan penjagaan kesihatan mereka tanpa sebarang kos tambahan.

"Pembeli yang menyertai program ini juga mempunyai pilihan untuk melanjutkan tempoh kredit mereka melebihi 90 hari melalui platform BNPL CrediBill pada kadar yang berpatutan," katanya dalam satu kenyataan bersama di sini, semalam.

Sebagai penyedia perkhid-

matan penjagaan kesihatan bersepadu terbesar di Malaysia, Pharmaniaga memainkan peranan penting dalam memastikan ketersediaan dan pengedaran ubat-ubatan serta produk penjagaan kesihatan di seluruh negara.

Menurut Persatuan Perubatan Malaysia (MMA), lebih 70 peratus daripada 10,000 klinik swasta di negara ini menjana pendapatan kurang daripada RM60,000 sebulan, dengan ramai yang bergelut untuk mengekalkan operasi berikutan peningkatan kos serta ketidakpadanan antara pembelian stok secara pendahuluan

dan pembayaran balik insurans yang tertangguh.

Pengarah CrediBill merangkap Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif Kumpulan CapBay Ang Xing Xian berkata, kerjasama ini permulaan mereka dalam misi membina ekosistem penjagaan kesihatan yang lebih berdaya tahan dari segi kewangan di Malaysia.

"Kami berharap dapat memperluaskan lagi penyelesaian kami bagi memberi manfaat kepada lebih ramai pemilik perniagaan penjagaan kesihatan pada tahun-tahun akan datang," katanya.