

Senior Citizens Bill **urgently needed**: Academic

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PETALING JAYA: Malaysians may be living longer but not necessarily ageing better, and experts are warning that the country's window to prepare for an ageing society is closing fast.

Universiti Teknologi Mara gerontologist and senior lecturer Dr Nur Amalina Aziz said more than a decade after the National Policy for Older Persons was introduced in 2011, Malaysia still lacks a dedicated law to protect seniors, making long-delayed reforms such as the Senior Citizens Bill increasingly urgent.

She said Malaysia could no longer afford to delay the proposed legislation as the population is ageing fast, with only 14.7% of old persons considered to be ageing well.

"This is critical as Malaysia faces numerous challenges, including poor health outcomes, limited economic opportunities, vulnerability to climate change and the absence of specific legislation to protect old persons from neglect and abuse."

Amalina said the 14.7% figure for those ageing well paints a worrying picture of the health trajectory of senior Malaysians, especially as more people are living beyond their 60s, with many expected to live at least another 10 years.

"Drawing on our previous work with the Asem Ageing Global Centre, a human rights-based approach should form the

➤ Malaysia can no longer afford to delay proposed legislation as population ageing fast, with only 14.7% of elderly individuals considered to be in good stead

foundation of the proposed Senior Citizens Bill.

"The approach, based on a framework developed by elder law expert Bridget Lewis and the UN Principles for Older Persons, provides clear standards for protecting the rights and wellbeing of old persons while improving coordination across ageing-related policies."

She said while implementation is important, it must be accompanied by comprehensive measures to address existing gaps that have resulted in the inadequate protection of human rights of elderly persons.

"Without such measures, the law may not fully meet the basic needs of old persons, including their health, economic and social needs.

"Lessons can be learned from Japan, which became a super-ageing society in 2006, where various initiatives have been introduced to ensure that the basic needs of old persons are met."

She said the Senior Citizens Bill is now more urgent than ever, with aged persons expected to make up over 14% of the population by 2043.

Amalina said the 13th Malaysia Plan

(2026–2030) reflects the government's commitment to improving the wellbeing of the elderly through healthcare, social protection reforms, retirement planning and expanded community participation via senior citizens activity centres.

She said the plan also strengthens housing support, including improved social protection, affordable and sustainable housing schemes as well as greener living environments.

"When the voices of old persons are not heard and their rights are overlooked, they risk losing the opportunity to live a dignified, secure and meaningful life."

In May, the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry said it was aiming to table the Senior Citizens Bill at the next Parliament sitting, with Minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri saying its progress is subject to final procedural approval and further review by the Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC).

She had said the draft legislation was in place but required inter-ministerial coordination and additional input from the AGC, with tabling expected within the next six months if all processes are completed.

Centre aims to boost blood donation rate

SHAH ALAM: The National Blood Centre is aiming to increase Malaysia's blood donation rate to at least 3% of the current population to ensure a stable blood supply capable of meeting growing demand.

Its deputy director Dr Tun Maizura Mohd Fathullah said the country's blood donation rate stands at 2.3%, equivalent to 23 donors for every 1,000 people.

"We need to raise public awareness so that this rate can reach at least 3%, or 30 donors for every 1,000 people.

"This increase is important to meet the needs of thalassaemia patients, surgical cases, women in childbirth and crash victims who require an immediate blood supply."

She was speaking after receiving a contribution of 2,250 blood bags through the UITM Cares Grand Blood Donation Campaign at Dewan Agung Tuanku Canselor, Universiti Teknologi Mara here on Tuesday.

Maizura said blood stocks at the National Blood Centre remain sufficient at present, but collections must be carried out continuously due to consistent demand and the limited shelf life of blood components.

"Platelets can only be stored for five days while red blood cells have a storage period of between 35 and



Maizura said blood stocks at the National Blood Centre remain sufficient, but collections must be carried out continuously due to consistent demand and the limited shelf life of blood components. – **ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN**

42 days."

She said efforts to recruit new donors must be intensified to replace existing donors who will eventually reach the maximum blood donation age limit of 70.

According to her, the need is driven by the increasing number of government hospitals, which has led to higher demand for blood supplies and greater medical workloads, Bernama reported.

She encouraged the public to become regular donors by donating blood every three months rather than only coming forward during emergencies or periods of blood shortages.

"To balance the high demand, the National Blood Centre continuously monitors stock levels of all blood groups, particularly Group O, as nearly 50% of Malaysians belong to this blood group."

Integriti 'dijual' bersama MC



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Penahanan lima individu termasuk seorang wanita dipercayai terlibat dalam kegiatan menjual dan memalsukan sijil cuti sakit (MC) di Pekan, Pahang bukan sekadar kes jenayah biasa.

Sebaliknya, ia membuka ruang perbincangan dan pelbagai persoalan mengenai isu integriti, penyalahgunaan dokumen rasmi kerajaan dan kesan terhadap sistem kesihatan dan sektor pekerjaan negara.

Sijil cuti sakit merupakan dokumen penting yang oleh perubatan bagi mengesahkan seseorang pekerja tidak berupaya menjalankan tugas atas faktor kesihatan.

Dokumen tersebut bukan sahaja menjadi asas kepada majikan meluluskan cuti bergaji, malah berfungsi sebagai instrumen menjaga kebajikan pekerja dan keselamatan tempat kerja.

Oleh itu, sebarang usaha memalsukan atau memperdagangkan sijil tersebut merupakan satu pengkhianatan terhadap sistem dibina atas dasar kepercayaan dan profesionalisme.

Pendedahan kegiatan itu dipercayai menggunakan dokumen rasmi kerajaan bagi tujuan mendapatkan keuntungan menunjukkan betapa seriusnya isu berkenaan.

Suspek masing-masing bekerja sebagai pemilik bengkel, mekanik dan pencuci serta dipercayai bertindak sebagai orang tengah dalam kegiatan berkenaan.

MC pula dipercayai dijual pada harga RM50 hingga RM200 sekeping.

Selain itu, siasatan awal mendapati kegiatan itu dipercayai dijalankan secara terancang dengan melibatkan individu berperanan mencari pelanggan dan menjual MC.

Lebih membimbangkan jika sijil tersebut mungkin diperoleh melalui individu yang mempunyai akses kepada kemudahan kesihatan awam.

Jika benar, perkara tersebut mencerminkan kelemahan yang perlu diberi perhatian segera.

Dalam konteks dunia pekerjaan, penggunaan MC palsu memberi kesan langsung hubungan antara majikan dan pekerja.

Tindakan segelintir individu menyalahgunakan MC boleh menyebabkan majikan menjadi lebih curiga terhadap pekerja yang benar-benar perlu bercuti atas faktor kesihatan.

Akibatnya, pekerja yang sah berdepan kesukaran mendapatkan kepercayaan dan kelulusan sewajarnya, sekali gus menjejaskan suasana kerja sihat.

Nilai integriti merosot

Selain itu, budaya mendapatkan MC palsu turut mencerminkan kemerosotan nilai integriti sebagai jalan mudah bercuti tanpa perlu menggunakan cuti tahunan.

Apabila pekerja tidak hadir tanpa alasan sah, operasi sesebuah organisasi boleh terganggu terutama dalam sektor memerlukan tenaga kerja secara

berterusan seperti kesihatan, perkilangan dan perkhidmatan.

Kesan pemalsuan MC juga boleh menjejaskan reputasi institusi kesihatan bertanggungjawab yang mengeluarkan dokumen tersebut.

Keadaan tersebut bukan sahaja memberi tekanan kepada petugas kesihatan, malah menimbulkan persepsi negatif terhadap proses pengeluaran

sijil cuti sakit yang sebenarnya dikawal oleh prosedur profesional ketat.

Dari sudut perundangan, pemalsuan dokumen rasmi adalah kesalahan serius.

Langkah penguatkuasaan tegas perlu diteruskan bagi memberi mesej jelas kegiatan seperti ini tiada kompromi.

Penggunaan teknologi digital seperti rekod perubatan elektronik dan sistem pengesahan sijil cuti sakit secara dalam talian boleh membantu mengurangkan risiko pemalsuan.

Kesimpulannya, penahanan beberapa individu dalam kes ini perlu dijadikan pengajaran apabila cubaan memalsukan atau menjual dokumen rasmi bukan sahaja melanggar undang-undang, malah merosakkan kepercayaan institusi perubatan.

Justeru, tindakan tegas, pemantauan berkesan dan kesedaran masyarakat perlu bergerak seiring bagi memastikan isu seperti ini dapat dibendung daripada terus berulang.

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