

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 2

RUANGAN : DASAR & PENTADBIRAN

Ambil alih lebuh raya ikut kemampuan, berperingkat

➔ Kurangkan 30 peratus atau tol percuma pada masa tertentu bagi kos selenggara

Oleh M Hifzuddin Ikhsan dan Hamzah Osman
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► Langkawi

Proses mengambil alih semua lebuh raya di negara ini akan dilakukan secara berperingkat mengikut kemampuan kewangan kerajaan, kata Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Perdana Menteri berkata, sehingga ini, kerajaan bersetuju untuk mengambil alih empat lebuh raya di Lembah Klang terlebih dahulu melalui proses pembelian terus daripada pemiliknya.

Bagaimanapun, katanya, pembelian empat lebuh raya itu akan membabitkan kos yang besar menyebabkan kerajaan perlu mengenakan caj tertentu bagi tujuan penyelenggaraan lalu-laluan terbabit.

"Ini (pengambilalihan) bukan cadangan, tetapi sudah diperseetujui kerajaan bermula dengan beberapa tol yang akan ditutup.

"Bagaimanapun, kita masih perlu kenakan kutipan tol biasa, kurangkan 30 peratus atau tol percuma pada masa tertentu



Dr Mahathir melancarkan Program Kampungku Sihat peringkat Kebangsaan di Pusat Khidmat Anggota Parlimen Langkawi, semalam.

kerana perlu lakukan (kos) penyelenggaraan.

"Tol (kutipan caj) ini juga untuk kita memperbesar, memanjakan dan membina lebuh raya baharu pada masa hadapan," katanya pada sidang media selepas melancarkan Program Kampungku Sihat Kebangsaan di sini, semalam.

Kelmarin, Pejabat Perdana Menteri mengumumkan sudah memulakan proses rundingan dengan Gamuda Berhad untuk mengambil alih konsesi lebuh raya kendaliannya sebagai langkah pertama ke arah menghapuskan mekanisme kutipan tol.

Kenyataan itu menyebut proses pengambilalihan itu membabitkan Lebuhraya Damansara Puchong (LDP), Sistem Pe-

nyuraian Trafik KL Barat (SPRINT), Lebuhraya Shah Alam (KESAS) dan Terowong SMART.

Caj kesesakan akan diperkenalkan

Sebagai ganti, caj kesesakan akan diperkenalkan di mana pengguna lebuh raya akan dikenakan caj yang sama dengan kadar tol sedia ada pada waktu puncak selama enam jam sehari, manakala waktu luar puncak antara jam 11 malam hingga 5 pagi, tol adalah percuma.

Waktu biasa pula akan menyaksikan kadar diskaun tol sebanyak 30 peratus di lebuh raya berkenaan.

Mengulas lanjut, Dr Mahathir

berkata, sejak mengambil alih Kerajaan Persekutuan, pihaknya sudah memikirkan cara menunaikan segala janji pilihan raya termasuk membabitkan tol.

"Saya mengaku ketika kita buat janji sebelum menang (Pilihan Raya Umum Ke-14), kita tidak mendapat maklumat sepenuhnya.

"Sekarang kita sudah jadi kerajaan baru kita mendapat maklumat sepenuhnya berkaitan kos lebuh raya yang sangat tinggi," katanya.

Ditanya adakah pihak Gamuda Berhad sudah dimaklumkan mengenai pengambilalihan berkenaan, beliau berkata rundingan terbabit dilakukan Menteri Kewangan, Lim Guan Eng bersama syarikat terbabit.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 9

RUANGAN : ISU

5 lagi budak dijangkiti di Johor

➔ Jabatan kesihatan negeri kesan mangsa menerusi saringan 52 individu

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► Johor Bahru

Lima lagi kanak-kanak disyaki positif jangkitan difteria dan kini ditahan di wad isolasi pediatrik Hospital Sultanah Aminah (HSA), di sini.

Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Kesihatan, Alam Sekitar dan Pertanian negeri, Dr Sahrudin Jamal, berkata semua kanak-kanak berkenaan termasuk tiga perempuan berusia bawah empat tahun, dikesan positif jangkitan difteria susulan saringan terhadap 52 individu oleh Jabatan Kesihatan negeri.

Beliau berkata, seorang daripada mangsa yang positif adalah kakak kepada budak lelaki berusia dua tahun satu bulan yang meninggal dunia disyaki



[FOTO ZAIN AHMED/BH]

Dr Sahrudin memasuki bilik rawatan pengasingan untuk melihat perkembangan lima kanak-kanak dijangkiti difteria di HSA, Johor Bahru, semalam.

akibat jangkitan difteria, Selasa lalu.

“Daripada lima kanak-kanak disyaki positif, empat daripadanya didapati mengambil suntikan vaksin, manakala seorang lagi iaitu kakak kepada mangsa yang meninggal Selasa lalu, tidak mengambil suntikan vaksin.

“Semalam (kelmarin) hasil pemantauan Jabatan Kesihatan negeri, lima kanak-kanak ini mengalami gejala dan semua positif jangkitan difteria.

“Semua kanak-kanak ini tinggal di kawasan perumahan yang sama dan terdapat juga

sebuah TASKA yang dikunjungi kelima-lima mereka,” katanya di HSA, semalam.

Yang turut hadir, Pengarah Kesihatan negeri, Dr Selahuddeen Abd Aziz.

Bagaimanapun, Dr Sahrudin berkata, tiga daripada kanak-kanak yang kini ditahan akan dibenarkan pulang esok, jika mereka tidak lagi menunjukkan gejala jangkitan.

“Kita akan berikan antibiotik khas dalam 14 hari sebelum pemantauan susulan dibuat bagi memastikan mereka benar-benar bebas daripada simptom.

“Tiga daripada mereka sudah

mendapatkan rawatan lebih awal pada 19 Februari lalu iaitu lebih 48 jam, manakala dua lagi akan terus menerima rawatan dan pemantauan susulan, bagaimanapun kedua-duanya dalam keadaan stabil,” katanya.

Katanya, jangkitan ini melibatkan satu komuniti kecil dan pihaknya yakin dapat mengawal ia daripada merebak ke tahap lebih buruk.

“Ini adalah jangkitan dalam kelompok kecil dan kita akan membuat pemantauan lanjut serta rapi bagi memastikan jangkitan ini dapat dikawal sepenuhnya,” tambahnya.

AKHBAR : KOSMO
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NEGARA

Lima kanak-kanak positif difteria

JOHOR BAHRU - Lima kanak-kanak yang mempunyai kontak dengan budak lelaki yang maut disyaki akibat difteria empat hari lalu ditempatkan di wad pengasingan di Hospital Sultanah Aminah (HSA) di sini selepas didapati positif penyakit itu.

Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Kesihatan, Alam Sekitar dan Pertanian Johor, Dr. Sahrudin Jamal berkata, kelima-lima mereka melibatkan tiga perempuan dan dua lelaki berumur empat tahun ke bawah termasuk seorang kakak kepada kanak-kanak lelaki berumur dua tahun sebulan yang maut itu.

"Kelima-lima mereka merupakan antara 52 individu menjalani ujian saringan difteria kerana mempunyai kontak dengan mangsa," katanya selepas melawat lima kanak-kanak berkenaan di HSA semalam.

Sahrudin memberitahu,

kelima kanak-kanak itu yang dimasukkan ke HSA sejak kelmarin kini stabil.

Katanya, tiga daripadanya melibatkan dua perempuan dan seorang lelaki akan dibenarkan pulang ke rumah hari ini manakala kakak mangsa yang tidak pernah mendapatkan sebarang suntikan imunisasi dan seorang lagi kanak-kanak lelaki masih memerlukan rawatan.

Kelmarin, Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Datuk Dr. Noor Hisham Abdullah memaklumkan seorang kanak-kanak lelaki berumur dua tahun sebulan meninggal dunia di sini, Khamis lalu akibat jangkitan difteria.

Mangsa tidak pernah menerima sebarang imunisasi sejak lahir dan mula mengalami demam, batuk dan bengkak tonsil pada 16 Februari lalu sebelum dibawa ke hospital.

Kanak-kanak itu meninggal dunia pada 21 Februari lalu.

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA

MUKA SURAT : 3

RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

Ambil alih konsesi secara berperingkat

LANGKAWI 24 Feb. - Kerajaan Pakatan Harapan (PH) akan mengambil alih konsesi lebuhraya lain secara berperingkat mengikut kemampuan kewangan negara.

Perdana Menteri, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad berkata, pada masa ini, kerajaan hanya berkemampuan untuk melaksanakan di empat lebuhraya terlebih dahulu.

Katanya, untuk memberhentikan kutipan tol kerajaan terpaksa berbelanja besar bagi mengambil alih konsesi lebuhraya di seluruh negara.

"Kita tidak mungkin dapat menghapuskan sepenuhnya kutipan tol tetapi kita buat mengikut fasa iaitu waktu-waktu tertentu tidak perlu bayar, ada masa kena bayar.

"Kos amat tinggi dan pada mula ini kita tumpu apa yang mampu di Kuala Lumpur dan akan diperluaskan di tempat-tempat lain mengikut kemam-

puan," katanya ketika ditemui selepas melancarkan Program Kampungku Sihat Peringkat Kebangsaan dan bertemu rakyat di Pusat Khidmat Ahli Parlimen Langkawi di sini, hari ini.

Turut hadir, Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr. Dzulkefly Ahmad.

Pejabat Perdana Menteri semalam dalam kenyataan menjelaskan kerajaan telah melakukan proses rundingan dengan Gamuda Bhd. (Gamuda) untuk mengambil alih konsesi empat lebuhraya yang dikuasai syarikat tersebut.

Lebuhraya berkenaan ialah Lebuhraya Damansara Puchong (LDP), Sistem Penyuratan Trafik KL Barat (Sprint), Lebuhraya Shah Alam (Kesas) dan Terowong Smart.

Mengikut cadangan pengambilalihan, kadar tol akan dihapuskan pada waktu bukan puncak antara pukul 11 malam hingga 5 pagi.



DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD diiringi Dr. Dzulkefly Ahmad (kiri) memotong riben bagi melancarkan Program Kampungku Sihat Peringkat Kebangsaan di Langkawi, Kedah, semalam. - BERNAMA

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 3

RUANGAN : STORY OF THE DAY/NEWS



Siti Hasmah: Educate parents on vaccination

LANGKAWI: Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali, the wife of Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, yesterday urged medical practitioners and nurses to give parents the best advice on vaccination for their children.

Dr Siti Hasmah said she was aware that some parents refused to allow their children to be vaccinated.

"There are parents who do not think that there is a need for vaccination because their children will develop natural immunity.

"We do not want to see something happen to our children because they are not vaccinated, like paralysis and so on," she said when delivering a mandate to the staff and nurses at Ayer Hangat Health Clinic here.

She was responding to a question on how to advise parents who rejected vaccination for their children, especially newborns.

She said most parents rejected vaccination based on inaccurate information.

"There are claims that the vaccines are 'haram' and there are possible side effects. When a child has a fever after immunisation, that is not a side effect because the vaccine prevents more harmful diseases," Bernama

VACCINATION: FACTS AND FIGURES

FAST FACTS

Vaccines protect against **30** diseases

Vaccines have eradicated smallpox for the past **60** years

Immunisation prevents **2-3 million** deaths worldwide from diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTaP) and measles every year.

Global immunisation for children stalled at 86% since 2010. The target is **90%** by 2020.

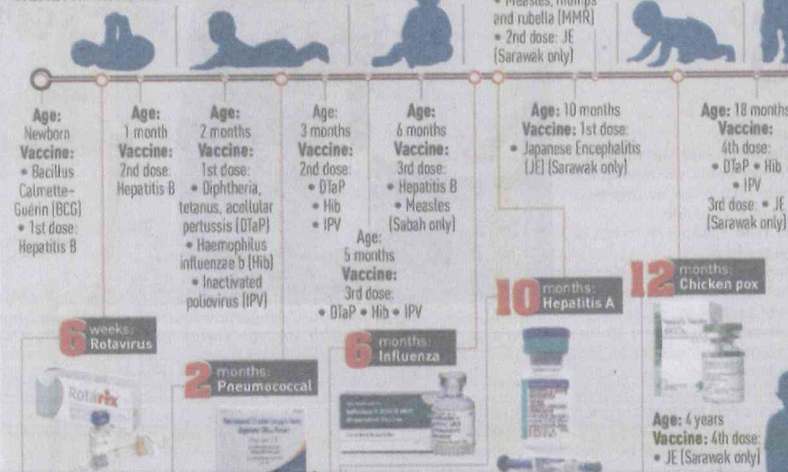
IN 2016, **1 in 10** infants worldwide was not vaccinated.

60% of children do not receive 3 doses of DTaP in Congo, Ethiopia, Uganda, South Africa, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan and the Philippines.

IN 2015, **1.5m** children died worldwide from pneumonia, diarrhoea and measles.

Measles kills **400 children** each day, mainly in Africa and Asia.

VACCINATION SCHEDULE BY THE HEALTH MINISTRY



OPTIONAL VACCINES IN MALAYSIA

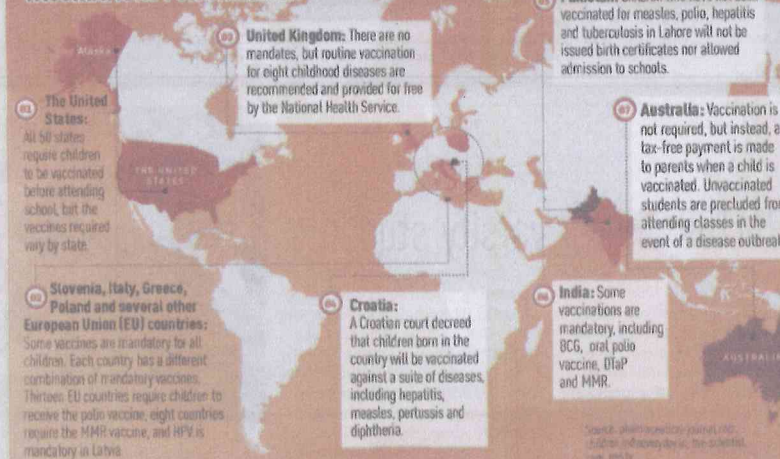
Most paediatricians will recommend additional or optional vaccinations in addition to the ones mandated by the Health Ministry. Parents can choose to administer them to their children based on their doctor's advice.

Age: 15 years
Vaccine: Tetanus (TT)

Age: 13 years
Vaccine: • Human papillomavirus (HPV) with 3 doses within 6 months (2nd dose 1 month after 1st dose, 3rd dose 6 months after 1st dose)

Age: 7 years
Vaccine: • BCG (optional — only if no scar found)
• Diphtheria, tetanus (DT booster) • 2nd dose of MMR

AMONG THE COUNTRIES THAT REQUIRE VACCINATIONS FOR CHILDREN



MALAYSIA

The National Immunisation Programme (NIP) started in the

1950s

The NIP protects against major childhood diseases

Childhood vaccination is recommended until **15** years old

Polio was eradicated in **2000**

5 optional vaccines for rotavirus, pneumococcal, influenza, chicken pox and Hepatitis A

In 2015, pertussis cases increased to **655** from 497 in 2014

The anti-vaccination movement has led to an increase of measles cases by **340%** in 2016 to 873

In 2016, **5** children under **10** years old died from diphtheria.

In 2016, **1,600** children were not vaccinated

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 2

RUANGAN : STORY OF THE DAY/NEWS

2 | NEWS / *Story of the day*

GAINING MOMENTUM

MANDATORY
VACCINATION
FOR CHILDREN?Health Ministry to table
suggestions, policiesTASNIM LOKMAN
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THE move to make vaccination compulsory for children is gaining momentum, with the Health Ministry set to initiate measures to tackle the country's anti-vaccination movement.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said the ministry would table suggestions and policies to ensure that vaccination was made compulsory.

He said the ministry received support from various quarters following the refusal by some parents to vaccinate their children, which had resulted in deaths.

"I will bring this up at the post-cabinet meeting. If we get the support, we will bring it up to the cabinet level.

"There will be supporting and dissenting views. The ministry will evaluate all perspectives."

He said although the situation had not reached a worrying level, some parents who rejected vaccinations did so without evidence.

"We will table this soon. There is a need for consultation with all stakeholders.

"If we want to tackle this issue

effectively, there has to be engagement, such as town hall sessions," Dr Dzulkefly said here yesterday.

His deputy, Dr Lee Boon Chye, believed that the introduction of new laws was the best solution.

Such a measure, he said, would allow the government to take action against those who did not vaccinate their children.

Dr Lee said currently, the government was limited to conducting educational campaigns on vaccination and working with religious departments.

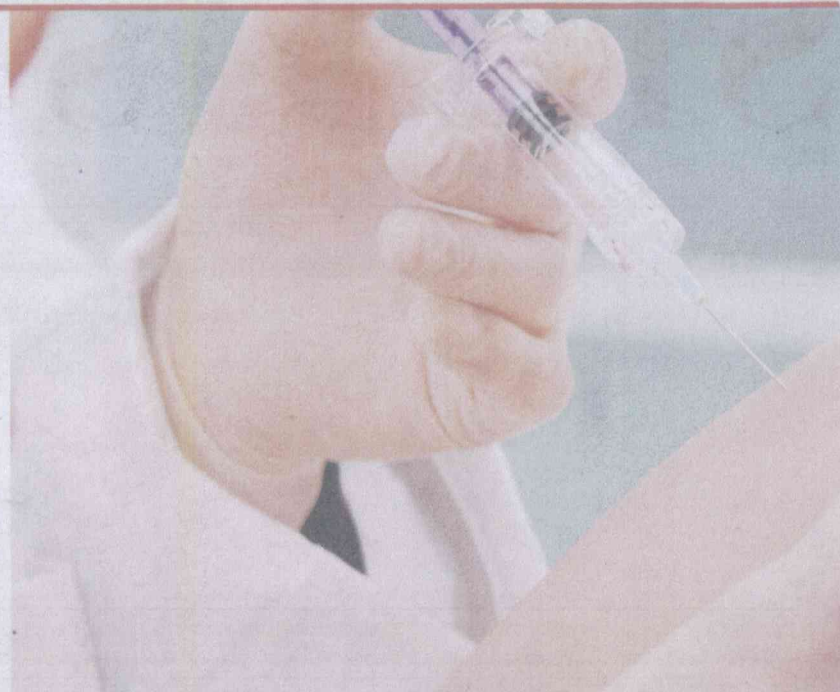
He said feedback from the religious authorities was positive as they continue to educate people that vaccination was vital.

He said parents or guardians who refused to vaccinate their children could be reported to the Health Ministry, where they would be referred to specialists for advice.

Dr Lee noted that there might be challenges ahead in implementing mandatory vaccination.

"Some parents are against vaccination due to religious reasons, others due to beliefs and human rights and so on. It is hard to fight them.

"But we will find ways to address this. There may be cases where exemptions need to be



The Health Ministry is set to initiate measures to address the anti-vaccination movement FILE PIC

given.

"These are among the challenges we observe in countries that have made vaccination mandatory," he said.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Mujahid Yusof Rawa yesterday urged anti-vaccination groups to stop debating the importance and halal status of vaccines for children.

"Vaccines produced in the country are not haram and are (medically) approved. There should be no issues.

"Those who started the debate should stop it as it will affect the effort to build resilience in children," he said.

Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society president Amrahi Buang called for pharmacists to be included in the National Immunisation Programme as vaccination advocates and providers.

He said immunisation vaccina-

tion services should not be limited to government health facilities, private health clinics and hospitals.

Such a move, he said, would not only ease the burden of other health service providers, including the government, but also increase vaccination coverage by providing more access to people to get their shots.

Amrahi said making vaccination compulsory was more pressing today as anti-vaccination groups continued to spread misleading information about vaccination safety to the public.

"If Malaysia had made vaccination mandatory in 2016, we could have reduced the number of cases involving preventable diseases, including measles," he said.

"It is evident that there is poor health literacy in urban and non-urban communities."

He urged the authorities to

change their approach to combating vaccination hesitancy to achieve the Measles Elimination Programme's target by 2022, which the country missed last year.

Among the countries that have made it compulsory for children to be vaccinated are the United States, Italy and Singapore.

Malaysia does not have any legislation on mandatory vaccination for children.

The usual practice in schools is that the students are automatically included in the vaccination programmes unless their parents opt to take them out of it.

Talk of making vaccination legally required began in 2017, when the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry said it was looking at making it an offence under the Child Act 2001 if a child is not vaccinated.

>> See also Page 8

Ministry plans to set up electronic medical record database

KUALA LUMPUR: The Health Ministry plans to set up an electronic medical record system in the next one to two years, which, among others, could help schools identify students who are vaccinated or otherwise.

Deputy Health Minister Dr Lee Boon Chye said the government was looking at implementing the

system soon as there was a need for it.

He said the database would allow specific people to access a person's medical record.

"You can access the medical record from anywhere, but, of course, there will be limitations as to who and what the person has access to.

"For example, a doctor may get the full medical information, while a manager or administrator will get only the details they need.

"This can be used when enrolling children in schools, where the school administrator or Health Ministry officials can check their vaccination information to verify whether they have

been vaccinated or have health issues that excluded them from getting it," he told the *New Straits Times*.

Lee said the ministry had continuously carried out health programmes in schools, where nurses from the ministry carried out vaccination in schools.

He said if an integrated system

was established, the nurses would have access to students' vaccination records to determine whether the students had been immunised or otherwise.

Lee said now, ministry representatives in schools relied on students' vaccination card or medical history provided by parents.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NATION

ACQUISITION

'HIGHWAY TAKEOVER TO BE DONE IN STAGES'

It will be carried out based on govt's capability, says Dr M

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THE takeover of highways will be carried out in stages and based on the government's financial capability, said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said talks with Gamuda Bhd to takeover the four highway concessions in the Klang Valley was the first step by the government to fulfil Pakatan Harapan's 14th General Election (GE14) manifesto pledge.

He said the takeover of the highways would involve a huge cost.

"We are focusing on what we can do, namely the highways in Kuala Lumpur, but we will be expanding to other tolls in other areas."

"We are doing it according to

our capability."

Dr Mahathir said the takeover of highways would see a need for a specific charge to be imposed for their maintenance.

"This (the takeover) is not a mere suggestion."

"It had been agreed to by the government and will involve the closure of several tolls."

"However, we still need to impose ordinary toll collection, reduce tolls by 30 per cent or make them toll-free at certain periods due to the need for maintenance work."

"The tolls collected will be used to expand, lengthen and construct new highways in the future."

Dr Mahathir said this after launching the national-level "Kampungku Sihat" programme at the Langkawi parliamentary constituency service centre here yesterday.

Since taking over the government, he said PH had been thinking about how to fulfil its promises.

"I admit that when we made the (election) promises, we did not possess all the relevant information."

"Now that we are the govern-



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad launching the 'Kampungku Sihat' programme in Langkawi yesterday. With him is Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad (left). BERNAMA PIC

ment, only now we possess the full information on the cost involving highway construction, which is quite huge."

On whether Gamuda had been informed of the takeover involving the four highways, Dr Mahathir said the negotiations involving the matter were undertaken by Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng.

In Kuala Lumpur, Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Azmin Ali gave his assurance that the government's move to take over the concessions of four highways will not affect other projects involving the people's interests.

"This is our commitment in GE14, but negotiations and discussions are being carried out so that the acquisition can be made in stages."

"We have to ensure that it will not affect other economic developments."

Azmin said this after accompanying Sultan of Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah and Tengku Permaisuri Selangor Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin, who visited Tamu Hotel and Suites in Kampung Baru.

Azmin said the expected takeover costs were in the negotiation stage and the ministry concerned would issue a statement as soon as an agreement was reached.

"Our commitment is clear... but all cases need to be refined as we do not want this to affect other matters."

The government, on Saturday, had said it would commence negotiations with Gamuda to take

over the concessions of the Damansara-Puchong Expressway (LDP), Sistem Penyuraian Trafik KL Barat (Sprint), Shah Alam Expressway (Keses) and the Stormwater Management and Road Tunnel (SMART).

The Prime Minister's Office, in a statement, said the government had begun negotiations with Gamuda to take over the four highways in which the company had a majority stake.

It said the government aimed to abolish toll collection in stages after it took over the four expressways.

However, it said a congestion charge would be introduced, where commuters would pay only a fee equivalent to the existing tolls for six hours of "peak" period a day.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 8

RUANGAN : NATION

SYMPTOMS

5 MORE JOHOR KIDS TEST POSITIVE FOR DIPHTHERIA

The children, all aged below 4, are among 52 people who had contact with or met the victim

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ANOTHER five children in the state tested positive for diphtheria, including the sister of the 2-year-old boy who died from the bacterial infection last Thursday. Johor Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee chairman Dr Sahrudin Jamal

said the five children, all aged below 4, were among 52 individuals who had contact with or met the victim, following screenings done by the Johor Health Department.

"Five children, including the victim's 4-year-old sister, were screened as they had direct contact with the victim, or had been around him.

"They were admitted to Sultanah Aminah Hospital yesterday (Saturday) to be isolated after showing symptoms of the infection," said Dr Sahrudin at the hospital here yesterday.

He said a course of 14-day antibiotics was being administered to each child since Feb 19 and if it worked, three of the children — one boy and two girls — would be allowed to return home.

However, the other two children — the sister of the victim and another boy — are still under quarantine. Checks revealed that of the five

children, only the sister of the dead boy has not been vaccinated.

Dr Sahrudin said the children lived in the same vicinity.

"We need to understand that the infection can spread to others through saliva and sweat, especially to those who have direct contact with a patient.

"We are conducting screenings for people who have visited the area where the children live and the places they went to, including private clinics, hospital and

kindergarten."

He said the children were reported to be in a stable condition and steps had been taken to ensure they would not infect others.

"When a case has been reported, we will look for others who are at risk of being infected so that immediate treatment can be given. We will also carry out an awareness programme," he said.

Diphtheria is an acute and highly contagious bacterial disease.



Johor Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee chairman Dr Sahrudin Jamal (second from left) visiting the children's ward at Sultanah Aminah Hospital in Johor Baru yesterday. PIC BY ZAIN AHMED

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NATION

Reports by RAZAK AHMAD, VENESA DEVI, ZAKIAH KOYA, IVAN LOH, HANIS ZAINAL and LOH FOON FONG

'Vaccination compulsory for all kids'

Docs: Start with immunisation against diphtheria, measles as they are most serious

PETALING JAYA: Doctors have called for all children in Malaysia to be first immunised against diphtheria and measles as a practical way of kickstarting a compulsory policy on vaccination as suggested by the Health Ministry.

This is because both the diseases – especially diphtheria, which is believed to have been the cause of death of a two-year-old unvaccinated child in Johor Baru – are the most serious.

Asia Pacific Pediatric Association secretary-general Datuk Dr Zulkifli Ismail said there was no need for a blanket ruling mandating vaccination for all 12 major childhood diseases.

"We can start by making diphtheria and measles vaccination compulsory in order to enrol the child in schools and later expand this requirement to enrolment in kindergartens and nurseries where groups of children gather.

"This would protect all children in schools, kindergartens and nurseries," said Dr Zulkifli, who is also the technical committee chairman of Immunise4Life, an expert-driven community education initiative to promote immunisation.

Dr Zulkifli said at present, it was not mandatory for children to be immunised before being allowed to enrol in school.

"However, most schools take it upon themselves to check. There is already an awareness so we just have to go a step further and actually state this as policy," he said.

While it is mandatory to show a child's health card during enrolment, it is not compulsory for the

child to have received immunisation before being allowed schooling.

He was responding to a statement by Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad on Saturday that it would be tabling a proposal and a policy to make immunisation vaccination compulsory.

There were attempts by the previous Barisan Nasional government to make vaccination compulsory for preschoolers as a condition for school enrolment after a spate of child deaths from diphtheria in 2016.

However, it met with resistance and the then Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said the ministry would instead try to persuade parents to immunise their children.

In IPOH, Deputy Health Minister Dr Lee Boon Chye said such a policy had been considered "but it would be difficult to impose".

"It will be hard when parents use belief and religion (as reasons) if we want to enforce it," he said after launching an anti-Aedes mosquito campaign.

According to the Health Ministry, misinformation about vaccination had led to a huge jump in the number of vaccine-preventable diseases, with cases of measles jumping over ten-fold from 125 in 2013 to 1,467 last year.

A lack of immunisation was detected last year in all six measles deaths recorded and in 19 of the 22 deaths from whooping cough (pertussis).

Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Mohamed Namazie

Ibrahim said vaccination could and should be made compulsory for certain types of childhood diseases for which vaccines were available and found to be safe.

"For it to be made compulsory, there must be adequate counselling of the patients or the parents.

"The advantages and disadvantages must be disclosed in a manner that could be understood by the lay public," he said.

Dr Mohamed Namazie said there would be objections from "anti-vaxxers" who were against vaccination or who objected on ethical, political, medical safety and religious grounds.

He said countries that had made immunisation for certain diseases mandatory included France, Belgium and Italy.

"In countries that have legislation for compulsory immunisation, unvaccinated children are not allowed in nurseries, preschool and kindergartens," said Dr Mohamed Namazie.













Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Mujahid Yusof said the Federal Territory Mufti had issued a fatwa stating that vaccines made in Malaysia were halal (permissible).

Mujahid urged sceptics debating whether immunisation vaccination was allowed in Islam to stop, adding that this was affecting children's health.

"In Islam, we are clear that based on the fatwa, it is encouraged for Muslims to vaccinate their children but it can be compulsory if this (non-vaccination) affects the health of the children," he said.

National Immunisation Programme

Under the government's National Immunisation Programme (NIP), vaccinations are given free at all government clinics for 12 preventable major childhood diseases.

-  **Diphtheria** - An infectious disease caused by bacteria that live in the **mouth and throat** of the infected person.
-  **Haemophilus influenzae type B (HIB)** - A serious infection that mainly affects **children under 5 years**.
-  **Hepatitis B** - Infection of the **liver** by the Hepatitis B virus.
-  **Human papillomavirus (HPV)** - Most common sexually transmitted infection (STI) that causes **cervical cancer** which is the third most common cancer in women.
-  **Japanese encephalitis (JE)** - Infection of the **brain** caused by JE virus.
-  **Measles** - A highly **contagious** viral disease.
-  **Mumps** - A viral infection that is the most common cause of **inflammation of the brain (encephalitis)**.
-  **Pertussis (Whooping Cough)** - Highly contagious, with violent and persistent **coughing** that may cause a child to struggle to breathe and turn blue (cyanosis).
-  **Poliomyelitis (Polio)** - An infectious and incurable viral disease that attacks the **nervous system**.
-  **Rubella** - Also known as German measles that may cause **abnormalities to the foetus**.
-  **Tetanus** - Also known as lockjaw, it is caused by bacteria toxins that attack the body's **nervous system**.
-  **Tuberculosis (TB)** - A disease that commonly infects the **lungs**, but can also attack other parts such as the kidney, spine, skin, intestines and brain.

Source: <https://immunise4life.my/>

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Five kids test positive for diphtheria

JOHOR BARU: Five children have tested positive for diphtheria after coming into contact with the two-year-old toddler believed to have died from the disease last week.

Johor Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee chairman Dr Sahrudin Jamal said the children, aged four and below, were among 52 people tested for the disease.

"They tested positive, including the deceased's four-year-old sister, who also did not receive immunisation for diphtheria.

"Four of the children, who are neighbours of the toddler, were immunised," he told reporters at Sultanah Aminah Hospital here yesterday.

The infected children, he said, had been placed in an isolation ward and were receiving medical care.

Dr Sahrudin said their condition was stable, adding that three were expected to be discharged today if they showed no symptoms.

According to the World Health Organisation, no vaccine is 100% effective and not all vaccinated develop immunity. However, vaccinations significantly lower the risk of getting infected.

Dr Sahrudin said there were four diphtheria cases reported in Johor since last October, including three children between 10 months and two years old.

"Two of them died and all three were not vaccinated," he said, adding that some 7% of children in Johor did not receive vaccinations despite counselling.

The state government, said Dr Sahrudin, supported the Health Ministry's proposal to make immunisation vaccination compulsory.

"I am in full support of the proposal as there have been rare cases resurfacing in Johor such as diphtheria due to the refusal of certain parents to vaccinate their children.

"If the federal government wants to make immunisation vaccination compulsory or impose a fine for those refusing to comply, we will give our fullest support," he said.

Diphtheria is caused by the infection of the *Corynebacterium diphtheriae* bacteria with symptoms ranging from fever and sore throat to thick covering at the back of the throat and swollen tonsils.

The disease can lead to organ failure as well as blood and heart infections, resulting in death.

In Kota Kinabalu, Sabah Health and Wellbeing Minister Datuk Stephen Wong said it would discuss with the ministry on a programme

to vaccinate all babies and children in the state as part of efforts to prevent the spread of measles from an outbreak in the Philippines.

It was reported that over 11,000 people had contracted measles in the Philippines in less than two months, with 189 deaths.

The immunisation programme will see every baby and child in Sabah, including those from the stateless communities, get vaccinated.

As at Feb 9, there were three measles cases reported in Sabah involving non-immunised children aged between one and six, including two non-citizens.

Last year, Sabah recorded 73 cases of measles with one death.

The district with the highest number of cases was Kudat, followed by Semporna, Kota Kinabalu and Tawau.

'Tell parents why it is important to vaccinate'

PETALING JAYA: Many parents have voiced their support for the Health Minister's announcement to make vaccination compulsory, describing this as a public health measure.

Supporting the proposal, Sheikh Abdul Rahman Zainal Abidin said he wanted to ensure the well-being of his own five-year-old child as well as other children.

However, he said there was a need for a study on the ease of access to vaccination for all Malaysians before these could be

made mandatory.

The ministry, he said, also needed to increase its efforts to educate Malaysians on vaccinations at the same time.

Lending her voice is Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali who urged medical practitioners and nurses to give parents the best advice on the importance of vaccination for their children.

The Prime Minister's wife said she was aware of anti-vaccine parents who refused to allow their children to be vaccinated due to

various factors and beliefs.

"There are parents who do not think that there is a need for vaccine because their children will grow up and develop natural immunity but parents cannot wait until their children develop natural immunity.

"We do not want to see something happen to our children because they are not being vaccinated (for example) like paralysis and so on," she told staff and nurses at the Ayer Hangan Health Clinic in Langkawi yesterday.

She was responding to a question

from a nurse on tips to advise parents who rejected vaccinations for their children, especially newborn babies.

Dr Siti Hasmah said most parents who chose to reject vaccinations for their children did so based on inaccurate information.

"There are claims that the vaccines are 'haram' (forbidden) and there are possible side effects.

"When a child develops fever after immunisation, that is not the side effect because the vaccine is to prevent more harmful diseases."

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Dengue cases set to rise

Deputy minister: Spike mainly due to changes in weather

IPOH: Dengue cases are expected to increase this year due to the changes in weather and its strains, says Deputy Health Minister Dr Lee Boon Chye.

He said the increase was also because of the lack of immunity to the changes in the dengue virus type among Malaysians.

"There are four strains, from Type One to Type Four and these would rotate.

"Last year, we had Type One and now we have Type Two," he said, adding that both were different viruses.

Speaking to reporters after launching an anti-Aedes mosquito campaign at the Greentown Health Clinic here, Dr Lee said with such changes, the people did not have the immunity and it would lead to more cases, including the mortality rate.

"More awareness on dengue must be created to educate the people.

"We will also beef up our efforts and mobilise the community behavioural impact team to control dengue by fogging.

"There will also be teams using

larvicide to kill the pest," he said, adding that the dengue outbreak was expected to peak between December and February.

"We also need the involvement of the people, which is important to ensure the cleanliness in the surroundings of their homes."

On the recent Chikungunya outbreak in Tanjung Sepat, Dr Lee said it started after a group of people returned from Haadyai, Thailand.

"The outbreak first started near the Thai-Kedah border.

"But it's under control now," he said.

“

We also need the involvement of the people, which is important to ensure the cleanliness in the surroundings of their homes.

Dr Lee Boon Chye

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AKHBAR : THE STAR

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RUANGAN : NATION

Typhoid outbreak declared in Kudat

KUDAT: A typhoid fever outbreak has been declared in the district after five people were confirmed to have contracted the illness.

District health officer Dr Omar Kwang Kugan said the cases were confirmed by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital's pathology department.

A circular from the district Health Department has gone viral on social media after the cases were confirmed by the hospital.

Dr Omar said the hospital has been on alert for the disease since Thursday. He said an operation centre was activated the following day to deal with the outbreak.

Kudat district officer Sapdin Ibrahim meanwhile said the situation was still under control.

"The district office will raise the awareness on the outbreak," he said adding that the outbreak was brought in by those coming in from the Philippines.

Typhoid is a bacterial infection that can lead to a high fever, diarrhea, and vomiting. It can be fatal.

The infection is often passed on through contaminated food and drinking water.