

AKHBAR : KOSMO
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NEGARA

+ 403

4 **Negara!**

Kosmo! JUMAAT 10 MEI 2024

Kenyataan mengenai isu AstraZeneca dikeluarkan waktu terdekat

KUALA LUMPUR - Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) akan mengeluarkan kenyataan berkaitan isu AstraZeneca dalam masa terdekat.

Menterinya, Datuk Seri Dr. Dzulkefly Ahmad berkata, sehubungan itu semua pihak diharapkan bersabar, namun beliau tidak menjelaskan lebih lanjut

mengenai perkara tersebut.

"KKM akan mengeluarkan kenyataan terkait AstraZeneca dalam waktu terdekat, harap bersabar," katanya ringkas kepada pemberita pada selepas Persidangan Clinical Research Malaysia (CRM) Trial Connect 2024 di sini semalam.

Terdahulu, syarikat farma-

seutikal, AstraZeneca menarik balik vaksin Covid-19 di seluruh dunia, beberapa bulan selepas mengakui vaksin tersebut mempunyai kesan sampingan yang berbahaya, lapor akhbar *Daily Mail*.

Suntikan yang dibangunkan oleh Universiti Oxford itu tidak lagi boleh digunakan di Kesatu-

an Eropah selepas syarikat berkenaan secara sukarela menarik balik kebenaran pemasarannya.

Permohonan serupa untuk menarik balik vaksin akan dibuat di negara lain yang telah meluluskannya sebelum ini.

Sebelum ini, Dr. Dzulkefly dilaporkan berkata, KKM akan meminta penjelasan daripada

Firma Farmaseutikal AstraZeneca berhubung pengeluaran vaksin Covid-19 yang memberi kesan sampingan.

Beliau dipetik berkata, pihaknya akan meminta wakil daripada firma itu untuk membuat penjelasan lebih teliti dan terus kepada semua pihak di negara ini.



DR. DZULKEFLY (dua dari kiri) menyerahkan anugerah kepimpinan CRM kepada Timbalan Premier Sarawak, Datuk Amar Sim Kui Hian (dua dari kanan) pada Persidangan CRM Trial Connect 2024 di Kuala Lumpur semalam.

PM mahu urusan dipermudah, kekal berdaya saing Kurangkan birokrasi penyelidikan klinikal

Oleh SITI A'ISYAH SUKAIMI

KUALA LUMPUR - Malaysia perlu merebut peluang, berusaha meneroka pembaharuan dan menghapuskan halangan dalam memastikan penyelidikan klinikal negara lebih maju dan berkembang jauh.

Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim berkata, langkah itu juga penting supaya penyelidikan klinikal negara kekal berdaya saing dalam perkembangan global.

"Usaha tersebut mesti dicerminkan dengan memudahkan perniagaan melalui penambahbaikan garis masa, selain mengurangkan proses birokrasi yang tidak perlu, seterusnya mengekalkan kualiti dan standard."

"Selain itu, peluang pelaburan dalam industri penyelidikan klinikal juga mesti dipermudahkan, manakala peraturan dan dasar juga dikemas kini supaya kekal relevan dengan keperluan pasaran semasa," katanya.

Teks ucapan beliau dibacakan Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr. Dzulkefly Ahmad pada Persidangan Clinical Research Malaysia (CRM) Trial Connect 2024 di sini semalam.

Anwar berkata, kerajaan mengiktiraf nilai cadangan dalam menjadikan negara sebagai hab percubaan klinikal global serta kualitatif sumbangannya kepada penjagaan kesihatan.

"Bagaimanapun, banyak yang perlu dilakukan di rantau ini. Jadi saya berharap, persidangan ini akan mencetuskan perbincangan dan idea," ujarnya.

Mengulas lanjut, beliau berkata, pasaran percubaan klinikal global bernilai lebih AS\$80 bilion pada tahun lalu, dengan unjuran 6.5 peratus setiap tahun.

"Separuh jumlah ini kini banyak tertumpu di rantau Asia Pasifik terutamanya di China, Korea, Selatan, Jepun dan Australia. Saya percaya negara-negara Asia Tenggara kini adalah gergasi yang sedang tidur."

"Hal ini kerana secara keselu-

ruhan, ia adalah salah satu lokasi paling pelbagai dengan dilengkapi tenaga kerja mahir dan infrastruktur sokongan.

"Apabila industri penyelidikan klinikal berkembang, perkhidmatan sokongan seperti organisasi penyelidikan kontrak (CRO), makmal, kilang pembuatan dan perkhidmatan logistik juga akan berkembang pesat," jelasnya.

Sementara itu, Anwar berkata, perkara ini dapat dilihat di PAREXEL Malaysia, yang menyaksikan Pusat Pengurusan Datanya ditubuhkan untuk menyokong rantau ini.

"Malah, dengan penubuhan Hematogenix iaitu makmal onkologi pusat dengan Malaysia sebagai satu daripada hanya empat lokasi global, telah menyumbang kepada pengambilan saintis dan bioinformatika di negara ini."

"Seterusnya, nilai sosioekonomi dibawa penyelidikan klinikal juga memberi kesan positif, dengan lebih 2,700 pekerjaan mahir direkodkan dalam bidang berkenaan pada tahun lalu," ujarnya.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 10
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Kenyataan KKM masa terdekat

Susulan penarikan
balik vaksin Covid-19
AstraZeneca

KUALA LUMPUR

Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) akan mengeluarkan kenyataan berhubung isu penarikan balik vaksin Covid-19 keluaran gergasi biofarmaseutikal Britain-Sweden, AstraZeneca dalam masa terdekat, kata Menteriinya, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad.

"KKM akan mengeluarkan kenyataan berkaitan AstraZeneca dalam masa terdekat, harap bersabar," katanya ringkas

kepada pemberita selepas merasmikan Persidangan Clinical Research Malaysia (CRM) Trial Connect 2024 di sini pada Khamis.

Sebelum ini, Agensi Ubat Eropah (EMA) dalam kenyataan awamnya pada 27 Mac 2024 memaklumkan Suruhanjaya Eropah (EC) menarik balik kebenaran pemasaran untuk vaksin dinamakan Vaxzevria, keluaran AstraZeneca di Kesatuan Eropah (EU) pada tarikh yang sama.

Menurut EMA, penarikan balik itu adalah atas permintaan pemegang kebenaran pemasaran, AstraZeneca AB yang memberitahu suruhanjaya berkenaan tentang keputusannya untuk menghentikan pemasaran produk secara kekal atas sebab-sebab komersial.

Vaxzevria telah diberikan kebenaran pemasaran bersyarat di EU pada 29 Januari 2021 untuk imunisasi aktif terhadap Covid-19. - *Bernama*



Syarikat farmaseutikal berpusat di Britain, AstraZeneca (AZ) pada Selasa menarik semula vaksin Covid-19 di seluruh dunia.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 12
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

12

NASIONAL

SINAR HARIAN • JUMPAAT 10 MEI 2024

TELUS & TULUS
Sinar
Harian

TELUS & TULUS • TIDAK DICENGKAM OLEH TANGAN GHAIB • MATA DAN TELINGA RAKYAT • PEMACU PERUBAHAN

Rebut peluang lakukan pembaharuan penyelidikan klinikal - PM

KUALA LUMPUR - Malaysia perlu merebut peluang, berusaha untuk melakukan pembaharuan dan menghapuskan halangan kepada penyelidikan klinikal, kata Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Menurutnya, ia adalah cara untuk menjadikan penyelidikan klinikal negara terus bergerak maju, dan ia mesti diterjemahkan dalam bentuk kemudahan menjalankan perniagaan, dengan menambah baik garis masa dan mengurangkan proses birokrasi yang tidak perlu, dan pada masa yang sama mengekalkan kualiti dan standard.

"Peluang pelaburan untuk industri penyelidikan klinikal mesti dipermudahkan dan peraturan serta dasar dikemas kini untuk kekal relevan dengan keperluan pasaran semasa.

"Kerajaan Malaysia mengiktiraf perkadaran nilai untuk menjadikan negara ini hab percubaan klinikal global, serta kualitatif sumbangannya kepada pen-

jagaan kesihatan," katanya.

Anwar berkata demikian dalam teks ucapannya yang dibacakan Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad pada majlis perasmian persidangan CRM Trial Connect 2024 anjuran Penyelidikan Klinikal Malaysia (CRM) di sini pada Khamis.

Anwar berkata, kerajaan menghargai pelaburan yang dibuat dan sentiasa berusaha untuk memberikan faedah nilai tambah kepada pelabur dalam industri penyelidikan klinikal.

"Pasaran percubaan klinikal global bernilai lebih AS\$80 bilion pada tahun 2023, dengan unjuran pertumbuhan 6.5 peratus setiap tahun. Separuh daripada jumlah ini kini sangat tertumpu di rantau Asia-Pasifik, terutamanya di China, Korea Selatan, Jepun dan Australia.

"Sehubungan itu saya percaya bahawa



ANWAR

negara-negara Asia Tenggara kini adalah gergasi yang sedang tidur; kerana secara keseluruhannya, ia adalah salah satu lokasi yang paling pelbagai, dilengkapi dengan tenaga kerja mahir dan infrastruktur sokongan," katanya.

Tambahnya, apabila industri penyelidikan klinikal berkembang, perkhidmatan sokongan seperti organisasi penyelidikan kontrak (CRO), makmal, kilang pembuatan dan perkhidmatan logistik juga akan menyaksikan perkembangan pesat.

Sementara itu di **KUALA TERENGGANU**, Anwar meminta semua agensi persekutuan di negeri itu menyelaraskan gerak kerja bersama kerajaan negeri bagi memastikan masalah kemiskinan tegar di negeri itu dinoktahkan dalam tempoh dua bulan.

Menurutnya, berdasarkan statistik ter-

dapat 1,663 keluarga berada dalam kelompok miskin tegar di negeri itu sehingga 2 Mei lalu.

"Insya-ALLAH di negeri Terengganu kita boleh noktahkan kemiskinan tegar dalam tempoh dua bulan akan datang.

"Besarnya harapan saya agar semua kementerian dan agensi yang berkaitan memberi perhatian khusus dan segera bagi memastikan kelancaran perancangan dan pelaksanaan projek-projek di Terengganu ini," katanya ketika menghadiri Majlis Sambutan Aidilfitri Madani 2024 di Pekarangan Kompleks Sukan Gong Badak di Kuala Terengganu.

Anwar memberitahu, perbelanjaan pembangunan hasil peruntukan daripada kerajaan Persekutuan dan negeri mencecah RM7 bilion pada tahun ini.

Jelasnya, antara projek pembangunan itu merangkumi tebatan banjir, bekalan air, ketenteraman makanan, keselamatan di pintu masuk pusat pelancongan negeri dan kesejahteraan sosial.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 26
RUANGAN : NEGERI

Rancang bina kompleks parkir bertingkat atasi masalah kesesakan di HoSHAS

KUANTAN - Kerajaan Pahang rancang bina kompleks parkir bertingkat dengan kapasiti lebih besar bagi mengatasi masalah kesesakan tempat letak kereta di Hospital Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah (HoSHAS) Temerloh terutama pada waktu puncak.

Exco Kerja Raya, Pengangkutan dan Kesihatan, Ir Razali Kassim berkata, susulan itu juga HoSHAS telah mengadakan kaedah temu janji berperingkat di klinik pakar bagi mengawal kemasukan kenderaan pesakit dan waris.

"Melalui kaedah ini, pesakit hanya boleh mendaftar 30 minit lebih



RAZALI

awal sebelum waktu temu janji agar bilangan pesakit yang datang menerima rawatan dapat dikawal dengan lebih teratur dan memberi ruang kepada waris serta pesakit merancang perjalanan ke hospital.

"HoSHAS turut merancang memperkenalkan kaedah temu janji secara digital melalui aplikasi bagi memudahkan pesakit serta waris membuat pengesahan kehadiran ke klinik pakar tanpa perlu tergesa-tergesa hadir di hospital pada awal pagi," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian ketika menjawab soalan perancangan ke-

rajaan bagi mengatasi isu kesesakan parkir di HoSHAS Temerloh yang dikemukakan Hassanuddin Salim (Pas - Kuala Semantan) pada Sidang Dewan Undangan Negeri (DUN) Penggal Ketiga di Wisma Sri Pahang di sini pada Khamis.

Razali berkata, HoSHAS juga telah melaksanakan polisi dalaman tidak membenarkan kakitangan hospital meletak kenderaan di kawasan parkir di hadapan klinik pakar sehingga jam 2 petang bagi memberi kemudahan kepada waris pesakit.

Sebaliknya kakitangan hospital tersebut diarahkan untuk meletak kenderaan masing-masing di kawasan parkir yang berkapasiti 120 petak disediakan di belakang hospital berkenaan.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS OF TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NEWS / NATION



Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad (third from left) visiting a booth after the launch of the Clinical Research Malaysia (CRM) Trial Connect 2024 in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. With him are (from left) CRM chief executive officer Dr Akhmal Yusof and Sarawak Deputy Premier Datuk Amar Dr Sim Kui Hian. PIC BY ASYRAF HAMZAH

VACCINE'S RARE SIDE EFFECTS

MINISTRY'S STATEMENT ON ASTRAZENECA SOON

Health minister says details will be provided, urges public to be patient

NURADZIMMAH DAIM
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THE Health Ministry will issue a statement on adverse events following immunisation stemming from the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine soon, said minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad.

"We will issue a statement re-

lated to AstraZeneca in the near future.

"Please be patient," he said after the launch of the Clinical Research Malaysia Trial Connect 2024 yesterday.

He, however, did not divulge details.

Dr Dzulkefly previously said the ministry would seek clarification from the biopharmaceutical company following reports that its Covid-19 vaccine caused rare side effects.

There were cases of thrombosis with TTS associated with the vaccine reported by the Indonesia authorities.

Dr Dzulkefly assured the public that the ministry had nothing to hide and urged all parties not to

draw conclusions on the matter.

He said the vaccine's benefits outweighed the risks, and that cases of side effects were at a probability rate of 0.9 per cent in one million people.

AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals was reported to have acknowledged in court documents that its Covid-19 vaccine could cause rare side effects.

The company is facing lawsuits over allegations that its vaccine, developed with the University of Oxford, could cause death and serious injury in dozens of cases.

Its lawyers, however, have argued that the vaccine produced side effects that adversely affected a small number of people.

'Sponsored clinical research has brought in RM1.16b since 2012'

KUALA LUMPUR: Sponsored clinical research has raked in RM1.16 billion in cumulative gross national income for Malaysia since 2012.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said the Malaysian government recognised the value proposition of making this country a global clinical trial hub, as well as its qualitative contribution to healthcare.

He said the government valued the investments made, and continuously strived to provide value-added benefits for investors here.

The global clinical trial market was valued at more than US\$80 billion last year, with a projected growth of 6.5 per cent annually, he said.

"Half of this is now very much focused within the Asia-Pacific region, especially in China, South Korea, Japan and Australia."

"Reflecting on this, I believe that the Southeast Asian nations are sleeping giants because, as a whole, it is one of the most diverse locations with skilled workforce and supportive infrastructure," he said in his keynote address at the Clinical Research Malaysia Trial Connect 2024 launch yesterday.

He was speaking on behalf of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Dr Dzulkefly, who is GRM chairman, said its establishment to drive and catalyse the industry in Malaysia had proven to be a successful strategic initiative by the ministry.

Commending the global trusted research management organisation, he said CRM had been self-sufficient for the past six years, and significantly and positively impacted the country's clinical research landscape.

This is especially in driving clinical research as a value-based industry, in addition to bringing in valuable foreign direct investments and catalysing local ones, he said.

He said it further supported the downstream growth in this country, especially in enabling domestic production of pharmaceuticals.

"The potential investments in our human capital, expansion of industrial capacity, economic and financial gains from increased exports, as well as Malaysia's advancement in the global value chain, are massive."

"We are already observing the ripple effect from the growth of the clinical research industry, with multinational pharmaceuticals and Contract Research Organisations (CROs) growing their presence in Malaysia, thus making this country as a hub in the region."

He said multinational biopharmaceuticals such as AstraZeneca had expanded their clinical research team in Malaysia to support the growing needs of the organisation.

He said Novo Nordisk Malaysia had recently been elevated to Clinical Development Centre status, thereby making the centre a regional hub for clinical research operations in Southeast Asia.

"Their focus on Malaysia is a testament of our country's performance, competitiveness and potential in this global industry."

As the clinical research industry grows, he said, supporting services such as CROs, laboratories, manufacturing plants and logistic services would see expansion, as well as create more job opportunities.

He said more than 2,700 skilled jobs were recorded in the clinical research field last year.

"We have already observed this in Parexel Malaysia, where its data management centre was set up to support the region."

"Additionally, with the establishment of Hematogenix — a central oncology laboratory with Malaysia being one of only four global locations — has contributed to the employment of scientists and bioinformaticians in the country."

He also acknowledged the role played by clinical research participants in contributing to medical advancement, with more than 26,000 participants in Malaysia having taken part in various global clinical trials so far.

Dr Dzulkefly also expressed his gratitude to investigators of clinical trials, whose commitment and perseverance had ensured the quality delivery of studies.

He said their excellent contribution had placed Malaysia in the global clinical trial map.

"A monumental achievement can only be built on a solid foundation, which is the clinical trial community."

"And we can do so only with the spirit of humanity, stability and sustainability."

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NATION

Expert: Upgrades needed to become regional research hub

PETALING JAYA: More can be done to advance Malaysia's standing as the main hub for clinical research in the region, says a health expert.

Even though the country has seen positive growth in sponsored clinical research, raking in over RM1.16bil in cumulative gross national income since 2012, Prof Dr Sazaly Abu Bakar said there are areas that should be improved to level up Malaysia's position as the main country in the field.

The Universiti Malaya Tropical Infectious Diseases Research and Education Centre executive director said the ecosystem needs to be

improved to facilitate more efficient registration of products for clinical trials, with particular focus on locally developed products.

In order to maintain Malaysia's potential as a regional hub for clinical trials moving to first-in-human trials, Sazaly said there is also a need to allocate more sizeable and dedicated research funding towards the development of products that will go into the clinical trial pathways.

"We also need to develop infrastructure that will allow for rapid transition of research output into clinical trials," he said when contacted yesterday.

Such recommendations are important, according to Sazaly, as the current infrastructure is insufficient to enable Malaysia to take clinical research to the next level and be on par with other developed countries in Asia, such as South Korea and Japan.

At the Clinical Research Malaysia (CRM) Trial Connect 2024, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said sponsored clinical research in Malaysia has achieved the highest growth in 2023, with a 24% increase when compared to 2022.

Anwar said clinical research also brought in 2,700 skilled jobs

in the field, proving its positive impact on the socio-economic side.

On April 22, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said the country has recorded a historic total of 276 sponsored clinical research as of 2023, which cemented the country's position as the number two in industry-sponsored clinical trials in South-East Asia.

He said clinical research also has a profound impact on Malaysia's healthcare, especially through increasing access to innovative research treatments for patients.

In 2022, the then health minister Khairy Jamaluddin said Malaysia had the potential to become a world-class hub for clinical research due to its multi-ethnic population's genomic diversity.

Khairy said the country's diverse population would benefit from clinical trials seeking to understand the effectiveness of a new therapy across a diverse Asian population.

In addition, he said Malaysia was relatively low-cost for clinical research and trials, while the time to trial in the country was one of the fastest in the world.

Big potential for clinical research

Industry has contributed RM1.16bil to national income so far, says PM

By **TEH ATHIRA YUSOF**
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KUALA LUMPUR: Sponsored clinical research has brought in over RM1.16bil in cumulative gross national income since 2012, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said that sponsored clinical research reached its peak last year, with a 24% increase in new sponsored studies compared to 2022.

"The establishment of Clinical Research Malaysia (CRM) to drive and catalyse this industry in Malaysia has proven to be a successful strategic initiative by the Health Ministry.

"What is truly astounding is the fact that CRM has been self-sufficient for the past six years and, while doing so, is significantly and positively impacting the country's clinical research landscape," Anwar said in his speech read out by Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad at the launch of CRM Trial

"The socio-economic value brought about by clinical research is impactful, with over 2,700 skilled jobs recorded in the clinical research field last year."

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

Connect 2024 at Connexion @ Nexus here yesterday.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said the global clinical trial market was valued at over US\$80bil (RM379.3bil) in 2023, with a projected growth of 6.5% annually.

"Half of this is now very much focused within the Asia-Pacific region, especially in China, South Korea, Japan and Australia.

"Reflecting on this, I believe that the South-East Asian nations

are sleeping giants, because as a whole, it is one of the most diverse locations with a skilled workforce and supportive infrastructure," he added.

Anwar said the industry is also benefiting from the ripple effect of the industry's growth, with multinational pharmaceuticals and contract research organisations (CROs) marking their presence in the country, thus making it a regional hub.

He said multinational biophar-

maceutical companies such as AstraZeneca have expanded their clinical research team in Malaysia to support the growing needs of the organisation.

At the same time, he said Novo Nordisk Malaysia was recently elevated to Clinical Development Centre status, thereby making the centre a regional hub for clinical research operations in South-East Asia.

The Prime Minister said as the clinical research industry grows, supporting services such as CRO, laboratories, manufacturing plants, and logistic services will see expansion as well.

"This is where a more skilled workforce is created to support the industry's needs. We have already observed this at Parexel Malaysia, where its data management centre was set up to support the region.

"Additionally, the establishment of Hematogenix, a central oncology laboratory with Malaysia being one of only four global locations, has contributed

to the employment of scientists and bioinformaticians in the country.

"The socio-economic value brought about by clinical research is impactful, with over 2,700 skilled jobs recorded in the clinical research field last year," he added.

On a separate matter, Dzulkefly said his ministry will be issuing a statement on pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine soon, after he had earlier sought an explanation from the company in relation to the side effects of the vaccine as reported recently.

International media reported that AstraZeneca had admitted in a court document that its Covid-19 vaccine could cause rare side effects.

The firm is facing lawsuits over claims that the vaccine could cause death or serious injury, with a total of 51 cases filed in the UK High Court and claims reaching almost £100mil (RM592mil).

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 5
RUANGAN : NATION

Upsurge in skilled expats

154,155 expatriate passes granted last year, highest in five years

By JUNAID IBRAHIM,
RAGANANTHINI VETHASALAM
and SHYAFIQ DZULKIFLI
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PETALING JAYA: Malaysia has become a magnet for skilled foreign professionals, with the number of expatriates entering the country surpassing pre-pandemic levels.

According to the Immigration Department's data, a total of 154,155 expatriate passes were issued last year – the highest since 2018.

As of March, the department has issued a total of 38,197 passes – compared with the 32,947 passes given out during the same period last year.

Malaysian Employers Federation president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said employers are often forced to hire foreign professionals due to the mismatch in locals' skills and competencies with the requirements of certain jobs.

There is a need for specific expertise in sectors such as aerospace, manufacturing (food processing) and construction. These sectors require expertise in emerging technologies such as machine learning, automation and data analytics.

"The aerospace industry, for instance, demands highly specialised skills, expertise and experience in aerospace engineering, aircraft maintenance and related fields.

"However, Malaysia faces stiff competition for skilled and experienced workers from neighbouring countries.

"Employers in Malaysia struggle to recruit and retain talent in the aerospace industry, leading to gaps in the workforce and challenges in meeting industry de-



mands," he said when contacted.

An expatriate is a skilled professional, who is a non-citizen or a permanent resident who is allowed to work in Malaysia on a contract or temporary basis.

Due to skill gaps among the local workforce, Syed Hussain said employers are favouring expatriates over local talents.

"The upward trend in expatriate hires over the years can be attributed to various factors.

"One reason is the real lack of locals especially for new and emerging technologies.

"Higher learning institutes need to ensure that the programmes they offer are meeting the latest and emerging skills required by the labour market," he said.

Malaysian Trades Union Congress president Mohd Effendy Abdul Ghani said companies will only employ overseas workers if

they fail to find suitable candidates for highly skilled positions.

"In fact, companies often prioritise hiring locally to avoid issues related to work permits, cultural integration and potential language barriers," he said.

The Statistics Department's 2023 fourth quarter report revealed that Malaysian labour share in the skilled category only amounted to 25% of the total filled jobs.

The report showed that the majority of local talents were in the semi-skilled category with over 62.7% cumulatively.

Sunway University economics professor Dr Yeah Kim Leng said it is encouraging that the number of expatriates in the country is on the uptick after experiencing a decline over the last few decades.

"The decline has been reflective of falling foreign investment in

the country as well as increased use of Malaysians in running the foreign-owned operations due to lower cost," he said.

"The rise in the number of expatriates is a good indicator that affirms the surge in foreign investment over the past two years."

It is also positive to the economy in terms of business confidence, domestic spending and investment, especially in the high-end property, automotive and durable goods markets in addition to domestic tourism, education and other household services.

He said expatriates are typically brought in to manage critical operations, train local employees and transfer their knowledge.

"With more high-value foreign investments, the expatriates play an important role in stemming the brain drain problem by training Malaysians and providing career enhancement opportunities," he said.

He said they may also contribute to the economy by renting high-end properties.

"The weak ringgit enhances the purchasing power of expatriates who are paid in the currencies of their home countries," he said.

Besides contributing in direct and indirect taxes, their daily consumption and spending power will boost local products.

Economist Dr Geoffrey William said there is no dearth of local talent in the high-skilled workforce.

"There is no lack of local talent in the local professional and high-skilled workforce; the problem is lack of jobs," he said.

"Malaysia has an underemployment of around two million people with qualifications higher than the jobs they are doing."

M'sia ceased distributing AstraZeneca vaccine 'long ago', says doctor

By IMRAN HILMI
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GEORGE TOWN: The distribution of the AstraZeneca vaccine for Covid-19 in Malaysia ceased long ago, after the pandemic was brought under control.

Hospital Penang infectious disease unit head Dr Chow Ting Soo said when the Health Ministry offered the fourth dose of vaccines in 2022, the AstraZeneca vaccine was no longer in stock.

"We stopped keeping stock of that vaccine long ago," she said.

Private clinics also said that they were no longer supplied with the Covid-19 vaccine.

A branch manager of a private clinic here, Masliha Malek, said they have not received any vaccine supplies since last year.

"We received Sinovac, Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines during the initial phase of vaccine distribution," she said, adding that distribution was stopped last year when only government clinics and hospitals were allowed to distribute these vaccines.

On Tuesday, AstraZeneca said it had begun the worldwide withdrawal of its Covid-19 vaccine called Vaxzevria due to a "surplus of available updated vaccines" since the pandemic first struck.

According to media reports, the Anglo-Swedish drugmaker had admitted in court documents that the vaccine causes side effects such as blood clots and low blood platelet counts in "more than one in 10 people".

On Monday, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad assured that his ministry would disclose data on adverse events following immunisation resulting from Covid-19 vaccines.

Elsewhere, some people who received AstraZeneca vaccines expressed worries about the latest development, while others said they had felt no adverse effects.

After receiving the AstraZeneca vaccine three years ago, a woman claimed she quickly became tired and experienced foot cramps when standing for extended periods of time.

"As a physical education teacher, this was not a problem for me before this, but after getting the vaccine, I felt otherwise," said the 35-year-old teacher, who only wanted to be known as Hana, adding that she did not get the symptoms right away after the vaccinations but only felt what she claimed as side effects late last year.

Hana was vaccinated with the AstraZeneca vaccine in June and August 2021 and received another booster jab in early 2022.

Technician Mohd Azmir Kamal, 44, said he did not feel anything unusual after he was injected with the vaccine.

"I felt healthy as usual," he said, adding that he rarely experienced flu or fevers nowadays.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 17
RUANGAN : VIEWS

Malaysia needs these advanced practice nurses

AS International Nurses Day approaches on Sunday, it's time to shine a light on an essential advancement in healthcare that Malaysia urgently needs to implement: the role of advanced practice nurses (APNs). This significant move would not only validate the crucial role nurses play in our healthcare system but also bring Malaysia in line with regional peers like Singapore and Thailand.

Known in Malay as a "jururawat pakar", an APN is a registered nurse who has attained a higher level of expertise and a broader scope of practice. An APN can be a clinical nurse specialist, nurse practitioner, nurse anaesthetist and nurse midwife. They can diagnose medical conditions, prescribe medication, and implement treatment plans independently.

The introduction of APNs could transform healthcare delivery by enhancing access to quality care, particularly in underserved areas. APNs can provide primary and specialty healthcare services, filling critical gaps, especially where there is a shortage of physicians. This model has been shown to improve efficiency in patient management, shorten wait times, and reduce doctor workload.

Establishing the role of APNs would also recognise the advanced competencies nurses can achieve, fostering professional growth in the field. This is vital for retaining top nursing talent and ensuring that experienced nurses see meaningful career progression opportunities.

Singapore introduced APNs in 2006 with considerable success, improving patient outcomes and expanding healthcare access. Thailand too has embraced APNs, boosting healthcare delivery in rural areas, demonstrating the versatility and effectiveness of APNs.

The implementation of APNs in Malaysia calls for immediate and coordinated action by the Public Service Department, Health Ministry and the Malaysia Nursing Board. Strategic planning, policy adjustment and educational programme development are essential to prepare nurses for these advanced roles and to integrate them effectively into our healthcare system.

The introduction of APNs in Malaysia is not just a step forward; it's a necessity. As we celebrate International Nurses Day, let's advocate for a policy change that fully utilises the skills of our nursing workforce. It's time for Malaysia to adopt this global trend and revolutionise its healthcare system for better access, quality and efficiency.

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AKHBAR : THE SUN
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RUANGAN : NATIONAL

Compassion, patience among demands of nursing career

► Nurses recount instances of being scolded, vomited on and cleaning pus-filled infected wounds

■ BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI
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PETALING JAYA: Ever since Florence Nightingale pioneered modern nursing in 1853 at the Institute for the Care of Sick Gentlewoman in London, where she was superintendent, she has inspired millions worldwide to pursue the profession.

In 2022, there were more than 117,000 registered nurses, of which 97% were women, at 148 government hospitals in Malaysia.

Nurses, who are often underpaid and undervalued, are the only ones whose official mandate is to provide comfort and care and assist doctors in the treatment of patients.

As International Nurses Day is celebrated this Sunday, *theSun* spoke to two nurses on why they pursued the profession and what

it takes.

"Sacrifice, that is the first thing that comes to mind," said Siti Asiah Shaile, 44, who has been a nurse for the past 19 years.

She said her mother died the same month she entered nursing school in 2002 and she did not even have time to grieve her loss.

"She was my inspiration to become a nurse. Having to care for her while she was ill made me realise nursing was what I wanted as a career."

Now a mother of four, Siti Asiah became a nurse anaesthetist after having her children, aged eight to 18.

"It was not easy. I had to travel from Kedah, where I studied, to my hometown in Ipoh just to see my children."

"Those days, I often cried myself to sleep as I missed them very much. But even back in Ipoh, I had to 'steal' time to study."

"I wanted to build my career, so sacrifices were necessary," she said, adding that most people do not realise how stressful nursing can be.

Siti Asiah said the long hours, especially during the pandemic, and dealing with patients, who are scared and angry that they have fallen ill, call for a lot of patience.

"I have been scolded by patients and they have vomited on me too. But, we

cannot get angry at them. They are ill and we must have compassion to understand that."

Today, Siti Asiah spends more time in the operating theatre. She said the trust and respect shown to one another in a surgical team of doctors and nurses are very special and makes nursing a rewarding career for her.

Abigail Anu Sam, 29, who has dedicated eight years to nursing, said witnessing a patient being resuscitated and regaining life stands out as one of the most satisfying experiences for a nurse.

"Seeing them walk out of the hospital doors surrounded by their loved ones fills me with a deep sense of satisfaction."

"Most times, patients do not appreciate the role of a nurse in their care and recovery, but it is enough to know I have also played a part in helping them regain health."

Abigail also felt inspired to become a nurse when her father fell ill. She was 15 then, and seeing him struggle to breathe made her realise helping those in need is akin to serving God.

"Cleaning infected wounds oozing with pus and other conditions may turn many people away. But, these are among the things we are trained for."



There were 117,000 registered nurses at 148 government hospitals nationwide in 2022, of which 97% were women.

— ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THE SUN