

**1. AG's Report 2014: Disciplinary proceedings begin on 24 officers**

PUTRAJAYA: A total of 1,662 warnings have been issued following the publication of three series of the 2014 Auditor-General's Report.

Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa said 49 or 2.9 per cent were punitive warnings and 1,613 or 97.1 per cent were corrective warnings.

Punitive warnings, he explained, involved embezzlement, abuse of power, misconduct or negligence in the execution of duties, whereas corrective warnings were made to improve the system and procedure.

"For the 3rd series of the report, we have started disciplinary proceedings against 24 officers on nine out of 12 punitive warnings issued in the report. Only nine have basis to start disciplinary proceedings.

"Out of nine, two involve the management of the construction of a religious school and the upgrading the of Sultanah Nora Ismail Hospital in Batu Pahat.

"The government has also formed four special committees to probe the 12 punitive warnings which involve four ministries," he told a media session on the 3rd series of the AG report today.

The ministries were the Education Ministry, Health Ministry, Works Ministry as well as the Rural and Regional Development Ministry.

Ali said the weaknesses called out in the 3rd series of the report involving the Works Ministry and Education Ministry, had caused the government to suffer a loss worth RM501,524.33.

Under Series 1 and 2 of the 2014 Auditor-General's Report, disciplinary proceedings had been taken against 16 officers

The disciplinary board had decided on the penalties for nine of them, ranging from issuance of warnings to demotion, with one being considered for dismissal or demotion.

In efforts to reduce wrongdoings and increase efficiency as well as integrity among civil servants, the government had issued a circular last month on the implementation of a new exit policy, which would start from next year.

"We have identified 2,943 poor performers last year comprising both new and experienced workers."

However, he noted that it did not necessarily mean that the same 2,943 of last year's poor performers would be in the group that would be put on notice once the new exit policy kicks in next year.

## **2. MACC suggests Pahang to regulate bauxite mining**

KUANTAN: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) is preparing two recommendations for the state government to help improve its existing system and regulations on bauxite mining activities.

State MACC director Datuk Zainul Darus said the measures includes a move to have bauxite minerals listed under a suitable Act which is related to land, mineral, mining and earth resources.

"Currently, there is no specific law for bauxite minerals as it is only referred as laterite soil. Drafting it (bauxite mineral) into a certain Act will make it easier for the authorities to take action against offenders.

Secondly, it will allow the state government to reap more profit from taxes and levy,' he told reporters after opening a programme in conjunction with World "Anti-Corruption Day" at Kampung Cempaka here today.

Zainul said a detailed-paperwork on the two measures is expected to be completed by the end of this month before MACC presents their recommendations to the state government in January.

## **3. 'No such thing as 1MDB Airlines'**

KUALA LUMPUR: 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) today clarified that it does not own or operate any airlines, following a fake Wikipedia entry and information circulating on social media regarding the set-up and operations of a so-called "1MDB Airlines Bhd".

"We confirm there is no such company owned or operated by 1MDB," the company said in a statement today.

1MDB said it has publicly confirmed since February 2015 that it would not enter into any new investments or new businesses and was focused solely on implementation of its rationalisation plan.

"We request the public to ignore this fake information and not to be influenced by any third party claiming to act on behalf of 1MDB in relation to this matter," 1MDB added. -- Bernama

#### **4. Multi-agency effort needed to tackle diseases, says deputy D-G**

KUALA LUMPUR: Tackling diseases that arise from poor sanitation, like food wastage and poor waste and drainage systems, needs a multi-agency effort and should not be a burden shouldered by health authorities alone.

Deputy Health director-general (public health) Datuk Dr Lokman Hakim Sulaiman said the Health Ministry's greatest challenge was getting other non-health agencies to treat diseases like leptospirosis, dengue, typhoid and food poisoning as "their babies, their responsibility".

The ministry, he said, was not responsible for waste disposal and management, drainage system and its maintenance, upkeeping parks, licensing of food outlets and monitoring littering and food wastage behaviour, which were the contributing factors to the problem.

He said the ministry's principal responsibility lay in treating diseases that resulted from poor sanitation, and to a certain extent, inculcate good hygiene and sanitation habits among the public.

"Other than that, it is beyond the ministry. Unless we address the core issue, leptospirosis will continue to be with us.

"How I wish, the incidence (number of cases reported) of leptospirosis (as well as dengue, typhoid, and food poisoning) is the key performance indicator (KPI) of other non-health agencies responsible for the contributing factors to the problem.

"This includes local authorities, waste management concessionaires, the Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Ministry, and Forestry Department.

"Let the Health Ministry's KPI be based on treatment outcome of the disease, which is our core business.

"Indeed, we have fared well in this. Our mortality rate is low," he told the *New Straits Times*.

Based on the ministry's data from 2010 until last year, the mortality rate for leptospirosis was between 0.16 (year 2012) and 0.31 (year 2014) per 100,000 population.

However, this year, the annualised mortality rate was 0.10 per 100,000 population, which was within the reported range of mortality globally.

Dr Lokman noted that in Singapore, the Department of Environment was in charge of controlling the spread of dengue cases and not the Health Ministry.

"Maybe that is why they achieved better control, even if we compare the cases geographically between Singapore and the Klang Valley, which is similar in terms of landscape, population density and urbanisation.

"The dengue burden in the Klang Valley is five times higher than in Singapore. Whereas, leptospirosis in Singapore is unheard of," he said.

## 5. Toxins in Kuantan's treated water

KUALA LUMPUR: The presence of heavy metals in treated water in Kuantan may have confirmed the worst-case scenario of bauxite contamination raised by experts in August.

Analyses on Dec 3 by a team of experts show traces of aluminium in the treated water supply in Felda Bukit Goh and Felda Bukit Sagu, and lead, in Semambu.



*(File pix) Photo shows a bauxite mining area near Felda Bukit Sagu Satu. Experts believe runoff from the area is seeping into the water supply in its surrounding area.*

Experts believe these traces could have come from the bauxite sediments in runoff water from the heavy rains that have lashed the state in recent weeks. Scientists believe that the runoff, with the contaminants, have seeped into the water supply.

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Chemical Engineering Department's Professor Dr Maketab Mohamed, who was part of the team, said the one-off sampling, which was commissioned and funded by concerned residents in Kuantan, had unearthed non-compliance in the treated water in three areas.

"The lead content at the consumers' end, which was taken from the Semambu area, was at 0.022 mg/L, which exceeded the limit set by the Health Ministry, which is at 0.01 mg/L.

"There is also 'non-compliance' for aluminum (Al) at Station 9 (0.29 mg/L) and Station 10 (0.25 mg/L). The limit set by the mHealth Ministry is 0.20 mg/L. Both sampling sites were in residential areas at Felda Bukit Goh, Kuantan. There was also a near non-compliance at Station 7 (0.19 mg/L), taken at a residence in Felda Bukit Sagu."

He said even though aluminium was used as a coagulant in the treatment of water, it was unusual to have such high levels of it in drinking or potable water.

"Without bauxite or other surface mining near water catchment areas, heavy metal levels in water do not exceed that set by the ministry.

"The non-compliance indicates that the main problem is the storm runoff that contains bauxite, especially near water catchment areas, which is polluting the raw water.

Maktab urged the ministry also called on the Health Ministry to come up out with parameters for aluminium concentration in raw water.

"The concentration of aluminium at the three raw water intakes (Sg Kuantan Barrage at Kg Kobat; Sg Batu/Sg Rong confluence for Felda Bukit Sagu intake; and Sg Riau for Felda Bukit Goh intake) are at 0.74 mg/L, 0.78 mg/L and 0.81 mg/L respectively.

"Although the ministry does not have parameters for aluminium concentration in raw water, something must be done to control the aluminium pollution as a result of bauxite mining, which is contaminating the drinking water supply."

It is believed that aluminium is linked to degenerative brain diseases, such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

Water quality specialist Dr Zaki Zainudin said water sources near the bauxite mining areas were expected to be contaminated further during rainy season as more discharge from the mining would flow into the water sources.

"The impact of bauxite mining in Kuantan is visible and widespread. The streams, rivers and even coastal areas have all turned red as a result of anthropogenic activities, either directly or indirectly.

"It will become worse in the rainy season as more runoff is generated and sediment is channelled into nearby water sources."

He said the blanket of choking red dust from the mining of bauxite mining in Kuantan should have been enough to set off alarm bells to galvanise the relevant authorities into action.

"Something is wrong here and it doesn't take a genius to figure this out. The issue is staring at us right in the face. The fact that nothing has been done, is a travesty."

Zaki also challenged those claiming that the experts were exaggerating the claims of a health risk.

"Would you eat fish that has been swimming in that pool of red filth? And if the water is so safe, why not have a drink straight from the source, like how our ancestors used to, without any physico-chemical treatment, except boiling it?"

Environmental health expert Professor Dr Jamal Hisham Hashim, in an online discussion on Facebook, said the poorly-regulated bauxite mining in Kuantan made a mockery of the legal system and environmental governance.

"We, as environmental professionals, cannot just sit back and watch this continue unabated. We cannot to allow the plundering of the environment. It goes against our conscience and professional responsibility. We have to intervene and make it right."

**6. A staggering 8.5 million Malaysians are overweight, says Health Ministry**

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysians are eating 30 per cent more fat than the required amount, resulting in 8.5 million overweight citizens.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahya said the unhealthy trend is causing more people to be diagnosed with diseases.

"A change in lifestyle from an agriculture to industrial-based country is causing more people to be overweight. Now people watch more TV, relax more, use more computers and exercise less. It is a start to many diseases," he told Dewan Negara today.

He advised Malaysians to avoid non-dairy creamer in 3-in-1 tea sachets as the fat contents are higher than those in regular dairy creamer.

He urged Malaysians to use more palm oil to fry food to benefit from the balanced monosaturated and polysaturated fat instead of olive oil and corn oil.

"In western countries, olive oil and corn oil is more suitable for their kind of cooking. But for Malaysian cooking, palm oil is found to be more suitable, especially for frying food," he added.

Dr Hilmi also advised avid shoppers to park their cars away from the entrance of shopping malls.

"The more we walk, the more we are likely to burn calories. We can incorporate exercise into our daily lives," he added.

He was responding to Senator Chia Song Cheng's request to state measures taken by the ministry to increase public awareness on the importance of a balanced diet for a healthier and more prosperous Malaysia.

Dr Hilmi said due to the change in lifestyle, 44.2 per cent of the population above 18-years-old was overweight and the numbers are increasing every year.

He advised men not to consume more than 2,000 calories and women to limit food intake to 1,800 calories every day. The ministry has also introduced various health campaigns to encourage Malaysians to burn extra calories.

Various ministries are also involved in campaigns. The Education Ministry is spurring healthy eating habits within students; the Agriculture and Agro-Based Industries Ministry is producing healthier food while the Domestic Trade, Co-operative and Consumerism Ministry is monitoring price control and food production trends, he said.

The Health Ministry uses the Body Mass Index (BMI) scale and consider those with BMI of 22 to 29.9 as overweight while those above 30 as obese.



**7. Education Ministry failed to pay security companies on time: PPKKM**

KUALA LUMPUR : The Education Ministry's failure to pay security services providers is claimed to be the reason security guards working at a number of schools did not receive their salaries.

Security Services Association Malaysia (PPKKM) president Datuk Seri Mustapa Ali said the ministry's failure to provide timely payment to the contractors placed a burden on about 200 security companies servicing some 12,000 schools nationwide.

"We have our savings, so we may be able to afford a month or two delay in payment, but what we are facing now is a lot more than that. Some of our members have not received their payments for between three to ten months.

"According to the Treasury department's instruction, the ministry is supposed to provide payment to the companies within 14 days after they submitted their invoice," he said.

Mustapa said the ministry's inability to pay the security companies has also indirectly tarnished the image of the security services industry.

"Some of them can not even renew their operating license since they have overdue payments with the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and Social Security Organisation (Socso).

"Some (employers) have to fork out their own pocket money to pay their workers, while others opted to sell their land, houses or borrow from financial institutions and 'Ahlongs' to clear their debt," he claimed.

A group of security personnel from ten schools around Hulu Langat, came forward on Dec 1 to urge the Human Resource ministry to assist them in getting their payment from a security services company that was appointed by the Education Ministry.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahadzir Khalid was reported to have said that the ministry was currently in the midst of gathering information pertaining to the matter.

**8. Critical calls going to wrong states**

KUALA LUMPUR: A flaw in the 999 Emergency Response Services (MERS999) system has left ambulance service providers scrambling to find the location of patients.

The flaw had been pinpointed to the data generated by the Automated Location Identification (ALI) system, which could be caused by inaccurate details from the caller, error of MERS999 operators or inaccurate information relayed by telecommunication companies' base transceiver stations (BTS).

ALI, which is part of MERS999, detects where emergency calls come from so that better response time and coordination can be provided.

The flaws had caused ALI to feed the wrong location data to MERS999 operators, who then connected the call to the wrong Medical Emergency Coordination Centre (MECC).

Sources close to the operations of the nation's MECCs said the flaws had caused ambulances to be sent to the wrong locations, wasting precious time in responding to emergencies.

"When a person makes a call to the MERS999 centre, ALI will instantly provide an operator with the caller's location. This information, which comes in a call card and map on the operator's computer screen, is generated based on data relayed by the telecommunication companies' BTS.

"However, there are many cases where the location, based on the telcos' BTS data, were not even close to the scenes of emergency," said one source.

Speaking to the *New Straits Times*, the source claimed that MERS999 operators, when taking the callers' details and location, seldom asked the state where they are calling from as it would be automatically generated by ALI.

"Because of the wrong information received, MERS999 operators have been patching calls to the MECCs in the wrong state.

"This has resulted in delays of medical assistance to victims, and the time for correct response depends on how quick the error is spotted by the dispatcher or responders," said the source.

The NST learned of several cases where ALI provided the wrong state locations.

A recent incident took place in Muar, Johor, on Dec 3, when a man dialled 999 to report a road accident in Jalan Jeram.

The 10.30pm incident saw the call being patched through to a MECC in the Klang Valley. Information provided by ALI stated that the call came from a BTS near Mid Valley Megamall here.

"Based on the data, the MECC found the nearest Jalan Jeram in the Klang Valley to be in Jeram, Kuala Selangor, and dispatched the Jeram clinic's ambulance to the 'scene'.

"Only after 15 minutes of frantic searching, did ambulance responders and the dispatcher realise that something was wrong with the location, and they then contacted the caller for clarification," said the source.

In another incident on Christmas day, a call from Kampung Pengkalan Perigi in Malacca was detected by ALI as being made from Jalan Kaki Bukit in Batu Pahat, Perlis.

Three other medical emergency calls in Taman Rambai Utama, Bachang and Pengkalan Rama Pantai (all in Malacca) were detected as calls made from Setia Eco Park in Shah Alam, Selangor.

The NST was informed that managers of the 21 MECCs nationwide had come up with a temporary solution. They had adopted a standard operating procedure where the dispatchers would scrutinise the callers' data to ensure the location matched the ones provided by ALI.

Sources said while the "flawed" cases might be sporadic and not alarming among the 1,000 emergency calls received daily in the Klang Valley, it was still a serious matter.



They claimed that there were no serious steps taken to fix the flaw, and the matter needed to be resolved quickly.

"The flaw had been there since last year but it only happened once in a while. However, in the past one week, the problem seemed to have worsened with an average of between three and five daily occurrences.

"There is no fatal incident yet that has been related to this flaw. But it may happen if a caller is not familiar with the incident location, or the victim is in critical condition."

Since MERS999, which is under the purview of the Communications and Multimedia Ministry, is also responsible for patching emergency calls to the police and Fire and Rescue Department, it is feared that this problem might also affect them.

Attempts to get official confirmation and comments from the ministry were unsuccessful as of press time.



Wednesday, 30 December, 2015

#### **9. MMC: Provisional Registration certificate only for those offered house officer post**

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) has decided that the Provisional Registration certificate for medical graduates to undergo housemanship training will only be issued to those who could show proof that they were offered the house officer post (Gred UD 41).

MMC chairman Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said the process of producing the certificate was coordinated with the requirements of Section 12 (1) (b) and Section 13 of the Medical Act 1971.

"The procedures for Provisional Registration certificate application management have been reviewed; in which all qualified applications will be given a letter informing that they are eligible to be considered for provisional registration, and is subject to those who are selected and offered a position as house officer.

"The certificate to enable them to undergo the housemanship training in Health Ministry's hospitals will only be issued after the graduates submit a letter that they had been offered the house officers post," he said in a statement, yesterday.

Dr Hisham, who is also Health Ministry director-general, said the council took note that all medical graduates from recognised medical schools need to be interviewed by the Public Services Commission before they can secure a job as a house officer.

The council also noticed that there were several house officers who had undergone the training at ministry's hospitals failed to complete the training within the stipulated two years and their session had to be extended.

He said this was due to several reasons, among them were incompetence and health problems.

"The extended training time for the houseman had resulted in a backlog of houseman in the hospitals and limited the number of intakes. Medical graduates would have to wait longer to undergo their housemanship," he said.

**10. IGP: Several documents and interviews related to 1MDB received by AG's Chambers**

KUALA LUMPUR: The Attorney-General's Chambers has received several documents related to 1MDB, including a recording of interviews with the former PetroSaudi International director Xavier Andre Justo, from their Thai counterpart.

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar revealed this to members of the media at Bukit Aman, today.

The documents include those that have been given by Justo to Sarawak Report editor Clare Rewcastle-Brown.

"I have been informed that the Thai police had handed over the related documents and interviews to its AG Chambers who then passed them to our AG Chambers yesterday," said Khalid.

Khalid added that police are now waiting for the documents to be handed to them for further action.

On Dec 15, a Malaysian police team led by Bukit Aman CID deputy director (investigation and law) Datuk Amar Singh travelled to Bangkok to record a statement from Justo.

Justo, who is a Swiss national, was arrested on June 22 in Thailand.

He was sentenced to three years' jail on August 17 after he was found guilty of stealing data from his former employer.