

1. Hospital Shah Alam to start operation in phases from October

The long awaited Shah Alam Hospital (HSA) will start operation in phases from October and is expected to be fully operational in January next year after a delay of seven years and four months and cost overruns of almost RM70 million. Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said the specialist clinics will be opened for outpatient service in October and the 300-bed hospital in Section 7, here, is expected to be ready to accept inpatients by January next year. "The equipment has arrived we are currently in the midst of testing the equipment and making sure that the computer system works properly before admitting patients. "I hope with the opening of this hospital, Shah Alam residents and those living in nearby areas can receive satisfactory service and congestion at the Tengku Ampuan Rahimah Hospital (HTAR) in Klang will be reduced," he said at the Handover ceremony of HAS to the Health Ministry here today.

2. Govt urged to come up with national cancer control plan

The growing number of cancer cases in the country has prompted the National Cancer Society Malaysia (NCSM) to urge the government to come up with a comprehensive National Cancer Control Plan. NCSM president Dr Saunthari Somasundram said Malaysia currently had no such plan, hence there was no proper guideline or direction in the manner which people fight cancer. "Why doesn't the country have a National Cancer Control Plan when it's the second biggest killer in this country? Why don't we have a direction in which we are going to fight cancer? "According to the World Health Organisation's GlobalCan 2012 cancer research, 37,000 Malaysians are diagnosed with cancer every year and the number is on the rise. "It's estimated that there will be an increase of between three and five per cent yearly. Currently, one in four Malaysians suffer from cancer, and if drastic measures are not taken to address the issue today, one in three Malaysians may succumb to cancer by year 2030. "Hence, our first action plan following the rebranding exercise is to get the National Cancer Control Plan up and running," she said in a press conference after the launch of "Cancer Action Malaysia" (CAM), here today. Dr Saunthari, who is also the NCSM medical director said the plan would list down the guidelines on cancer treatment for the healthcare sector, detailing the areas that need focus, preventive measures and facilities available for cancer treatment, and resources needed. The plan, she said would also look at the financial aspects of a person and ways in which the government could make it affordable. "We don't have equitable, comprehensive, and affordable cancer care for all Malaysians currently. There's no consistency and uniformity in cancer care. "Hence, the end result of this plan will ensure affordable and comprehensive care for cancer patients nationwide." Meanwhile, NCSM vice-president Dr Ahmad Kamal Mohamed, who is also an oncologist, said the country lacks cancer treatment experts, where Malaysia only has 70 oncologists nationwide. In his first official visit to NCSM, Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Shah and Raja Permaisuri of Perak Tuanku Zara Salim launched CAM, which marked the beginning of a re-branding exercise of NCSM in the run-up to their 50th anniversary which would be celebrated in 2016.

Through the rebranding exercise, NCSM hopes to set up an information centre on cancer which will be manned by experienced nurses and cancer survivors to give advice to cancer patients. During the visit, Sultan Nazrin who is also NCSM's royal patron, toured the cancer screening centres there and launched a new digital x-ray machine to be used for cancer screening. Sultan Nazrin and Tuanku Zara also visited Rumah Harapan Kanak-Kanak at the premises which provides temporary accommodation for children with cancer receiving treatment at Kuala Lumpur Hospital.

NEW STRAITS TIMES Thursday, 6 August, 2015

3. Dengue: 71,000 cases recorded between Jan and Aug: Health Ministry

GEORGE TOWN: Selangor continues to top the number of dengue cases in the country with 40,058 cases between January and Aug 3 this year. Deputy Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Hilmi Yahaya said there were only 30,111 cases in the same period last year. He said this was followed by Johor, Perak, Negri Sembilan and Penang, which also showed an increase in the number of cases recorded. Dr Hilmi added that nationwide, there was an increase by 15,000 cases, during the same period, with 71,001 cases recorded this year and 55,237 cases last year. "This is worrying. "We hope the community will work together with us to fight the dengue scourge," he said after launching an anti-dengue programme at SMK Teluk Bahang here this morning. Dr Hilmi said the onus was on each and everyone to keep the surrounding clean and not only the ministry. During the same period, there was also an increase in the number of death from 104 last year to 192 this year.

NEW STRAITS TIMES Saturday, 8 August, 2015

4. Integrated CGPA system to asses university students' overall performance

KUANTAN: Starting September, five public universities in the country will implement an Integrated Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) system to assess the overall performance of its students.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh said the system, which is one of the initiatives under the new Higher Education Blueprint, will not only measure students based on their academic performance but as a whole including their involvement in curricular, community, leadership and spirituality activities.

"Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia along with four other universities will implement the system during the September student intake and the ministry hopes to expand the system to both technical and research universities," he told reporters after opening the Higher Education ministry's "Soaring Upwards" tour programme here today.

5. Malaysia needs more optometrists: Dr Subramaniam

PUTRAJAYA: The Health Ministry has urged public and private universities to offer more places for students to study in the field of optometry, in an effort to produce more optometrists thereby improve eye health services in the country.

Its minister, Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said as of July this year, there were 1,502 optometrists across the country, 295 of them employed with the ministry at 42 specialist hospitals, 30 at non-specialist hospitals and two at health clinics.

He said the ratio for optometrist per population in the country was 1: 22,460, compared to 1: 8000 in developed countries.

"It is important that we increase the number of optometrists to assist ophthalmologists in an effort to improve the quality of eye health services in the country," he told reporters after opening the 2nd Ministry of Health Optometry Scientific Conference here today.

Some 200 optometrists attended the two-day conference themed 'Optometry, Evolution Towards New Challenges', which ends today.

Optometry is an eye health science field which adopts a scientific approach in treating refractive abnormalities and visual function.

Besides additional placements in public and private universities, Dr Subramaniam said it was important to raise awareness among students that the field offers a bright future.

"Nowadays many are interested to be doctors. Students should be exposed to the field of optometry as an alternative choice," he said.

Dr Subramaniam also urged Malaysians to go for eye health screening at least once a year for early detection of eye diseases so as to reduce the risk of blindness.

Meanwhile, Optometry Scientific Conference chairman Nor'aini Anuar urged the government to increase its allocation for the purchase of optometry equipment in ensuring optometry services could keep up with the rapid development in ophthalmology.

She hoped the ministry would increase optometry positions not only at specialist hospitals but also at non-specialist hospitals and selected health clinics to make optometry services easily accessible to Malaysians in preventing blindness among the community. -BERNAMA

6. 1MDB could do without “monkey business”, says Arul

Following is the statement from 1MDB president and group executive director Arul Kanda on Tony Pua's comments. We refer to a press statement today by Tony Pua, further to his “chicken challenge” issued yesterday. We note that today, Pua refers to himself as a “monkey”. 1MDB is glad that Pua is the “monkey on our back” and not one that “sees no evil, hears no evil and speaks no evil”. Such public scrutiny and questioning by YB Tony Pua is important to establish the truth. Hence despite his repeatedly unproven, recycled and reused allegations, we share below past clarifications issued by 1MDB, on the items rehashed yet again today by Pua:

Dialogue

On 16 January 2015, (1MDB president and executive director) Arul Kanda, in good faith, offered to engage with Pua and share with him facts on 1MDB. However, as evidenced by Pua's subsequent and ongoing conduct, it is clear he is not interested in the truth. Rather, his aim is to score political points, undermine ongoing investigations and negatively impact 1MDB's rationalisation plan.

Ongoing Investigations

Pua is wrong to state that “there's hardly anyone left investigating the company”. He has conveniently forgotten to highlight that lawful authorities such as the Attorney-General, Auditor-General, PDRM, BNM, MACC and PAC, are all currently pursuing investigations on 1MDB, in a thorough, professional and independent manner.

Fund Units

On 30 June 2015, 1MDB shared the following facts:

- Further to an earlier joint venture arrangement in 2009, 1MDB invested US\$1.83 billion cash in murabaha notes issued by JV Co, a company that, by then, was 100% owned by PetroSaudi following the termination of the joint venture in March 2010.
- In June 2012, this entire amount was repaid by way of conversion into shares of PetroSaudi Oil Services Limited for a value of US\$2.22 billion.
- Subsequently, in September 2012, 1MDB sold its shares in PetroSaudi Oil Services Limited for US\$2.318 billion and received fund units in a Cayman registered fund. These fund units were owned by 1MDB via its 100% subsidiary, Brazen Sky, and held through BSI Bank Singapore as custodian.
- Accordingly, 1MDB invested a total of US\$1.83 billion with PetroSaudi as murabaha notes, and ultimately received US\$2.318 billion of fund units, representing a gain over time of US\$488 million.

• The valuation of the fund units was undertaken by the fund administrator and is clearly described in 1MDB's audited financial statements. Further information referred to above can be found in the notes to 1MDB's financial statements. Accordingly, contrary to Tony Pua's claim, 1MDB has clearly provided detailed information on this — as above — on a number of occasions. Such "monkey business" by Pua does not benefit anyone. Malaysia is not a jungle — we have due process, procedures and laws to be followed. Accordingly, the lawful authorities must be allowed to carry on with their investigations. 1MDB is very much focused on the implementation of our rationalisation plan to stabilise the company and reduce our debts to a sustainable level. Please let us carry on with our job.

NEW STRAITS TIMES Sunday, 23 August, 2015

7. 1MDB has not been contacted by Swiss authorities

1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) today said the company has not been contacted by any Swiss authorities. However, the company was ready to assist in any investigation if approached, subject to advice from the appropriate Malaysian authorities, 1MDB said. "We remain committed to fully cooperate with all lawful authorities that are currently investigating 1MDB," the company said in a statement today. The statement came after media reports that Switzerland's Office of the Attorney-General has opened an investigation relating to 1MDB. --BERNAMA