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Seeing red at green zone

Patients upset as Klang hospital closes Emergency Dept again

By DIYANA PFORDTEN and
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PETALING JAYA: For the second time this week, the Emergency Department at the Hospital Tengku Ampuan Rahimah Klang (HTAR) was closed to non-critical patients.

The closure of the department's green zone, which started early yesterday morning and extended for a period of about seven hours, was due to a shortage of staff and a high patient load.

A notice was placed at the entrance of the department to inform the public and redirect them to other health facilities.

"The Emergency Department is dealing with an overwhelming patient load at the moment, and they need to be given close attention.

"For this period, we need to prioritise critical and terminal cases. For non-emergency cases, patients are encouraged to go to nearby health facilities to receive treatment," it said.

Sources from HTAR said the head of the department decided to put up the notice after doctors had to review patients until the wee hours of yesterday morning.

"The patient load was heavy, and the green zone was piling up with non-critical cases.

"We are lacking manpower, with only 50 medical officers (MOs) and less than 10 housemen working there.

"In addition, MOs are required to



Unable to cope: The green zone at HTAR's Emergency Department was closed due to shortage of staff. — KK SHAM/ The Star

do a passive call system after their shift. If the hospital needs manpower, the MO on standby for the day is required to work another minimum of four hours before going back," a source told *The Star*.

The source said hospitals would not reject critical or urgent cases, but non-urgent cases are considered "risks of misuse".

It is also learnt that a new shift system will be imposed starting next week to accommodate the high patient load, where off days and night offs are subjected to the number of days a medical staff member works on a night shift.

Pregnant medical staff who are above 34 weeks, although exempt

from the night shift, are required to extend their working hours to 4pm, instead of 3.15pm, should they be given two days off per week.

HTAR is one of the many government hospitals facing overcrowding issues.

There have been grouses on social media about long waiting times and poor services at Hospital Kuala Lumpur and Hospital Pasir Mas, with one social media user claiming that a loved one had died due to the situation.

A government doctor working in Sabah, who only wanted to be known as Farhin, said the root cause of the problem affecting government hospitals is a manpower

shortage. He said the issue needed to be addressed.

"In our hospital, there are only 21 MOs, and with it being upgraded to a specialist hospital this year, MOs had to be transferred to these specialised departments, leaving us with only 15 MOs now.

"Everyone is burned out, and some MOs quit after one or two months because they cannot stand the pressure.

"If the situation persists, many more medical staff will quit and the healthcare system will be affected," Farhin said.

Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa said in a statement on Wednesday that the ministry would meet with the Finance Ministry to discuss increased funding to improve services.

Dr Zaliha said the meeting would also highlight the need for bigger allocations encompassing aspects of infrastructure, digitising existing systems, and human resources.

"Engagements with all stakeholders will also continue to get feedback, especially from on-ground staff.

"The engagement also aims to identify long- and short-term solutions that should be prioritised in the current healthcare system," she said.

She added that the ministry was also in the midst of deriving processes to resolve issues such as worker welfare, the physical and mental well-being of healthcare workers, and fitting wages, among others.

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Nation 5

Health services in crisis

Govt aid needed with long wait times and overstretched resources

By RAGANANTHINI VETHASALAM
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PETALING JAYA: "Sometimes it is like a warzone". . . That is how healthcare workers describe their working condition at some public healthcare facilities.

Long hours of waiting, a lack of beds, manpower shortage and overstretched resources has led to many urging the government to act quickly to save the situation.

Dr Timothy Cheng, an orthopaedic surgeon in Hospital Duchess of Kent, Sandakan, painted a dire picture.

In a tweet to Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, he said the issues of human resource, facility failure and others are only the tip of the iceberg.

"Lab reagents are running out, antibiotic supplies are low, clinics are running out of oral rehydration salts, multiple doctor-patient consultations are done in the same room," he said.

"I have personally carried a patient down the stairs when lifts broke down in a hospital. In another hospital, operating theatre lights fell from the ceiling onto a doctor," he added.

"Some emergency wards have patients so close to each other that there is no space even for the emergency trolley," he added.

He claimed that the contract system, which was implemented in 2016, has resulted in more good doctors leaving for abroad.

"I still try to persuade them to stay but it is getting harder,"



Under strain: Patients needing urgent medical attention only to be greeted by a waiting room full of others who also need urgent care. — Photo taken from Nayli Majid's tweet

he said.

A medical officer at a hospital in the Klang Valley called the healthcare system a "sinking ship" with medical workers struggling to attend to the high number of patients.

"The healthcare system itself is in a code triage — a disaster — of sorts. We are short of beds and sometimes patients have to wait for hours and even days. There is only so much that can be done at an emergency department. When patients are in pain, the healthcare workers have to bear the brunt of their agony," she said.

"We are often scolded by patients and their next of kin. But this is beyond us. The healthcare system can no longer take the patient load," she added.

She acknowledged that the extremely long wait hours may cause the patients' conditions to deteriorate. In some cases, lives

could be at stake.

"We do not have enough beds and manpower. There is no point having facilities without enough manpower," she said.

Another emergency department head at a hospital said the wait at the emergency department could be up to eight hours as it was severely understaffed, with more contract medical officers quitting.

"The green zone has become busy with the increasing number of patients."

"Sometimes there are only two doctors managing green zone cases which is not enough," he said, adding that it was not easy to divert green zone or non-critical cases to health clinics as most of them do not operate beyond 5pm.

"Some patients come to hospital by public transport, we cannot tell them to leave," he said.

He suggested that medical officers and health workers be

allowed to double up as locum or be given after-hours pay to ensure enough manpower at emergency departments.

The pharmacy department is also understaffed causing longer wait hours.

A pharmacist said there are three doctors and four medical assistants at his health clinic along with two pharmacists and one pharmacy assistant.

"When one of the pharmacists is off or on emergency leave, there won't be any replacement but we still try to make sure the patient is served within 30 minutes."

"Each day, we have almost 140 patients, sometime more," he said.

"Two pharmacists have to issue queue numbers, do screening, transcribing, printing labels, filling medication, labelling and dispensing. It takes time because patients must get the right medication," he said.

Checks at emergency departments at hospitals at the Klang Valley and Penang also showed long queues.

Recently, Hospital Tengku Ampuan Rahimah in Klang had to shut down its emergency department green zone for a few hours due to patient overload.

Meanwhile, the son of a patient who died after heart attack had alleged that his father had to wait for close to 30 hours for a bed at the Serdang Hospital. This, he said, led to the older man's death.

Selangor Health Department director Datuk Dr Sha'ari Ngadiman, however, replied that hospital had done its best for the patient.

Health Minister promises to resolve issues at hospitals

KUALA LUMPUR: Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa (pic) is determined to do everything she can to resolve the issue of healthcare staff shortage, congestion and long waiting time at public hospitals.

In a message on TikTok yesterday, she said, it is best for aggrieved healthcare workers to discuss their problems with her and the Ministry (MOH) rather than go on a strike, adding that protests will not solve the problems.

"I understand the problems due to my own background as a doctor. I am determined to resolve these issues."

"If I can, I will resolve them today, but we have to understand that I need some time to understand the problems and issues at length and to achieve the best solution to the best of my ability," she said.

Dr Zaliha said the aggrieved healthcare workers can meet her and her officers to discuss the issues and find a solution.

She also told the Dewan Rakyat that there has been an increasing trend of patients coming to the emergency departments at public hospitals based on MOH data.

"One of the reasons is the Covid-19 pandemic and the increasing complications from non-communicable diseases (NCD)," she added.

To address this, she said MOH will be meeting state hospital directors at the end of this month to find out more about the situation on the ground.

She said efforts will be made to increase efficiency and reduce waiting time for patients, including the time taken for a patient to register at the counter until medication is dispensed or for a patient to be admitted into the ward.

For example, such efforts have helped to reduce waiting time at the Tengku Ampuan Rahimah Hospital in Klang from 192 minutes to 88 minutes, she added.

Other initiatives included creating short stay unit wards for patients who are medically stable and only require treatment for less than 72 hours.

"This will reduce the waiting time for inpatient beds for mild cases that need short-term monitoring. This can help reduce congestion at the emergency departments and patients' length of stay at hospitals."

She said that the MOH has also strengthened the bed management unit through the hospital's Crisis Preparedness and Response Centre system.

She added the indicators for admissions to wards from emergency departments are also monitored.

Non-emergency cases are transferred to health clinics and the government is also looking at extending operation hours of these clinics.

She was replying to Dr Kelvin Yil Lee Wuen (PH-Bandar Kuching) who asked on the ministry's plans to reduce congestion at emergency and trauma departments nationwide.



Manpower shortage stems from hiring process

PETALING JAYA: The hiring process of civil servants by the Public Service Department (PSD) needs to be reviewed first before any improvement in the public health system can be seen, says former deputy health minister Dr Lee Boon Chye.

He said the hiring quotas for the Health Ministry (MOH) are usually subject to PSD approval.

He lamented the slow bureaucracy of the department's hiring process for MOH staff.

"PSD's bureaucracy has been there since Independence, and there are hardly any reforms in the hiring system to keep up with changes and development," he claimed when asked to comment on the issue of a shortage of manpower at public healthcare facilities, which has led to congestion and long waiting times for patients at hospitals.

Dr Lee said when the MOH wants to hire more permanent healthcare staff, it has to do an internal study on needs and financial implications.

"This is the reason why there is a situation of overcrowding, long waiting time for patients to see doctors or specialists at public hospitals. But at the same time, many contract doctors cannot get permanent posts," said Dr Lee.

For 2023, the MOH announced vacancies for 4,263 permanent positions for medical officers, 335 openings for dentists and 316 for pharmacists.

Public health advocate Datuk Dr Zainal Ariffin Omar, who is also a former MOH official, urged the PSD to give priority to the hiring of healthcare workers.



Too long a wait: The hiring process in MOH requires an internal study on needs and financial implications.

He added that the issue of hiring staff involves several agencies such as the PSD, the Public Services Commission (SPA), the Finance Ministry and the Health Ministry.

"The increasing number of patients, increasing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCD) and emergency cases as well as the high expectations from people, means more workforce and resources are required," he added.

Meanwhile, Hartal Doktor Kontrak hopes for a higher allocation for the MOH under Budget 2023 which will allow for the hiring

of more staff and the acquisition of more equipment like CT scans, X-ray machines, surgical equipment and medicines.

As for Hartal Ahli Farmasi Kontrak, which is a movement of contract pharmacists, it is hoped that there will be enough allocation under Budget 2023 to ensure that all pharmacists on contract will be absorbed into permanent posts.

"Please don't think our work is only to give medicines to patients. There are a lot of other things that patients and people don't know or see," said a spokesman for the group.

The revised Budget 2023 will be tabled in the Dewan Rakyat on Feb 24. The MOH was given an allocation of RM36.1bil in that budget which was tabled by the previous government before the dissolution of Parliament last October.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa said her ministry will continue its engagements with various departments on the staffing issue.

"This issue is not the sole responsibility of the MOH, but it should also be discussed with other agencies such as the PSD and Finance Ministry," she told the Dewan Rakyat.

"If possible, the MOH would want to take on all staff and doctors, but if the positions and funds are unavailable, then we cannot implement this move," she said in requesting the government's consideration for an increase in financial allocation for her ministry.

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Why was this firm given the project?

Due diligence may not have been properly done for immigration job contract

By MAZWIN NIK ANIS
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PUTRAJAYA: An investigation into possible power abuse in connection with the National Immigration System (NIIS) has found that the committee which endorsed the company for the project did not fully determine if it is capable of undertaking the job.

It is learnt that graft investigators believe the committee did not do proper due diligence when it proposed that the company be given the project.

Sources said investigators were of

the opinion that the committee did not properly check if the company was able and capable in IT development.

Another contention was the company's financial capability.

Sources said investigators had found that the company could not pay RM30mil to another firm supplying licence for IT.

"This has raised questions as to why this company was given the project. Was proper due diligence done before it was brought to the tender board?"

"Did the committee take into account all this information before

suggesting that the company be given the job?"

"Was the tender board given the right and correct information for them to make the decision to choose this company?" a highly placed source told *The Star*.

It is also learnt the project has been classified as a "sick project" due to its slow progress.

Sources pointed out that since the project was awarded in 2021, not even Phase One, which is the analysis report on requirement and design, had been completed.

They said the fact that the government had released RM60mil to the

company, or about 5% of the RM1.13bil project cost showed that "not much work has been done".

It is learnt that Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission investigators will also call a senior government official over his statement on NIIS which affected the share price of an e-government service provider linked to the project.

"Investigators want to find out the context of his statement as a probe into the project is underway," a source said.

Sources however stressed that should the officer be called, it would not be due to ethical issues or that he

was being investigated.

"Investigators want to find out the reason for the statement and the context made," a source said.

While the source made no mention of the said senior government official, Immigration director-general Datuk Seri Khairul Dzaimie Daud was recently reported to have said that come 2025, all immigration-related affairs, including those being managed by outside parties such as MyEG, would be handled by the Immigration Department.

The day after the news report was published, MyEG's share price dropped sharply.

Easing traffic at hospitals:

Extended hours for health clinics would be a cost-effective way to divert green cases from emergency departments, says Dr Lee.

— RAJA FAISAL HISHAN/*The Star*



'Review SOPs to deal with patient overcrowding'

By RAGANANTHINI VETHASALAM
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PETALING JAYA: Diverting green zone or non-critical cases to health clinics will reduce patient volumes at overcrowded emergency department of hospitals but this will involve increasing manpower at these facilities, say experts.

Public health advocate and former Health Ministry official Datuk Dr Zainal Ariffin Omar said there was a need to review the standard operating procedures for patients coming in to the department and admissions.

"Green zone cases should go to health clinics. There should be a new operation schedule for health

clinics based on location, patient load and staff," he said.

As a long-term solution, he said, more emergency departments based on population and location must be set up.

Former deputy health minister Dr Lee Boon Chye said among the reasons for overcrowding at emergency departments was bed shortage.

"More patients, especially the non-urgent green zone cases, are coming to emergency. This is because health clinics and a lot of general practitioners' clinics do not operate at night. The working population can only consult doctors or bring their children or parents for consultations at night," he said.

Dr Lee added that extended hours

for health clinics would be a cost-effective way to divert green cases from emergency departments.

The Star reported on Jan 10 that health clinics, too, were critically understaffed with some doctors having to see 40 to 140 patients a day.

Both Dr Lee and Dr Zainal Ariffin agreed that the Health Ministry needs a higher budget.

Dr Zainal Ariffin said Malaysia's healthcare spending is still below the World Health Organisation yardstick of 5% of the gross domestic product (GDP), adding that funds are needed for new facilities, equipment, training and enhancing ICT and digitalisation.

Dr Lee felt the ideal healthcare expenditure for a middle-income

nation like Malaysia should be a 6%-7% of the GDP.

"At the moment, it is at about 4% of the GDP with 50% each from the public and private sectors. To make it to 6%-7%, public sector expenditure has to be doubled.

"The ministry's budget should be increased from RM30bil yearly to RM60bil!" he said.

On top of this, he added, there is a need to improve efficiency within the ministry, which includes computerisation of administration and electronic medical records, decentralisation or flattening of organisational structures so that state or district or large hospitals have more autonomy in planning, budget control as well as hiring of healthcare workers.

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MOH to review safeguards following stabbing at hospital

By RAGANANTHINI
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GOMBAK: The person who stabbed a patient at Hospital Selayang is a psychiatric patient who was brought in by the police, says Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

"Before disinformation becomes viral, please be informed that the stabbing was committed by a psychiatric patient brought in by the police," the Health director-general said yesterday.

Such incidents, he said, could happen anywhere and the Health Ministry would review its standard operating procedure (SOP) for patients with psychiatric disorders.

"We need to do that to safeguard our patients in emergency departments and our clinics," he added.

In a statement, acting Selangor police chief Deputy Comm Datuk S. Sasikala Devi said the suspect was being held and treated at the hospital's psychiatric ward.

"Witnesses saw the victim, aged 29, sitting on the floor, then the 22-year-old suspect stabbed at his waist with a knife," she said, adding that investigation was being conducted under Section 326 of the Penal Code for causing grievous injury with a weapon.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa tweeted that she rushed to the hospital after the Parliament sitting to find out what had happened and get an explanation.

"The current status of the patient will be reported to the family from time to time," she said in a tweet yesterday.

Singaporean daily *The Straits Times* reported on Tuesday that during the incident, an agitated psychiatric patient had allegedly stabbed a man three times while waiting in a hospital.

It said the psychiatric patient took a knife from the staff nurse pantry and stabbed a dengue patient once in the back and twice in the abdomen.

It also said the victim had to go through a surgery as the knife ended up being wedged in the victim's abdomen.

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Reports by MAZWIN NIK ANIS and RAGANANTHINI VETHASALAM

THE STAR, FRIDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2023

Anwar promised there will be no cover-up, says A-G

PUTRAJAYA: The Prime Minister has given his assurance not to stop or hide any audit findings, says Auditor-General Datuk Seri Nik Azman Nik Abdul Majid.

He said a meeting with Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was held on Jan 17 to brief him on discoveries and matters raised in Series 2 of the Auditor-General's Report 2021.

"The Prime Minister has stated that he will not hide any audit discoveries.

"He also informed us that he will get the ministers to check matters raised in the report involving their respective ministries," he told reporters.

The Auditor-General's Report 2021 Series 2 was tabled in Parliament yesterday.

Nik Azman also said his department was encouraged by the Prime Minister's order to his ministers to give the Auditor-General's Report serious thought.

"This is a strong and clear message by the Prime Minister and is encouraging to us as auditors.

"We are proud that he has mentioned it," he added.

On Jan 18, Anwar directed his Cabinet ministers to give serious attention to issues related to their ministries, as highlighted in the Auditor-General's Report 2021.

The Prime Minister stated that the focus should be on expenditure, leakages and failure to comply with regulations, and that

these issues should be taken seriously so that mistakes are not repeated.

Nik Azman also said there were still 689 problems that had been brought up in previous Auditor-General's reports but had not been fixed.

These problems were marked as "in action".

Among the yet-to-be-resolved issues were compensation for the Penang Second Bridge and another pertaining to compensation involving klia2.

Nik Azman said no deadline had been given for issues to be settled, as auditors were aware that some cases were complicated and involved many parties.

"For example, issues that have not been resolved by a ministry may depend on action by another ministry to enable it to clear the matter," he said.

He said some issues could not be fixed quickly due to the restructuring of ministries. "When there is a Cabinet reshuffle, some components of a ministry are transferred to another ministry.

"This is another reason why there are delays," he added.

Between 2011 and 2021, the Auditor-General's Report highlighted a total of 10,910 issues at the federal and state levels.

Of the total, 10,221 issues, or 93.7%, had been resolved, leaving 689 cases unsettled.

MySejahtera came under cyber attacks

Auditor-General's Report reveals security concerns

PUTRAJAYA: Security concerns over the MySejahtera app are among the weaknesses highlighted in Series 2 of the 2021 Auditor-General's report.

The report found that there were a total of 1.12 million cyber attack attempts on the MySejahtera app.

Citing the minutes from the MySejahtera security meeting in 2022, the audit findings on the Health Ministry and National Security Council's Management of Covid-19 Vaccine Recipient Registration and the MySejahtera app revealed that cyber attack attempts began on Oct 27, 2021 using a specific IP address.

Action was taken to beef up security, including taking down the IP address used for the attacks, installing a web application firewall on Nov 1, 2021 and carrying out continuous surveillance on the app.

The Health Ministry said in its response to the National Audit Department on Sept 9, 2022 that the

AG Report 2021: Compliance Audit on Ministries and Federal Agencies

- > Loss of public funds: **RM116.95mil**
- > Irregular payments: **RM26.03mil**
- > Wastage: **RM15.1mil**
- > Total losses of public funds, irregular payments and wastage: **RM158.08mil**
- > 22 audit recommendations

IP address used in the cyber attack was deactivated on Oct 28, 2021, and a police report was lodged on Nov 5, 2021.

The ministry also told the Audit Department that it has studied the cause of the attack and taken action to improve the system.

In addition, the audit report tabled in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday discovered that from Oct 28 to



Systematic review: National Audit Department staff member Eliza Suria Mohd Noor showing a copy of the Auditor-General's Report 2021 Series 2 in Putrajaya. — AZMAN GHANI/The Star

Oct 31, 2021, there were attempts from a "super admin" account to download information of three million vaccine recipients using five IP addresses.

Further audit checks on user data revealed that the account allowed access to the vaccine administrator of the MySejahtera app. Access to a vaccine administrator paves the way for the user to download all vaccination data in bulk and even enables them to destroy the data.

As a precautionary measure, the Health Ministry cancelled the super admin account and lodged a police report on Nov 5, 2021.

In its response to the Audit Department, the ministry said the super admin account, which was authorised by the Health Ministry, was abused and a request to download the data of three million vac-

cine recipients from MySejahtera was submitted.

"As soon as the matter was discovered, the account was restricted immediately," said the Health Ministry. It added that the matter was under police investigation.

"The security management of the MySejahtera data and application has to be strengthened to curb cyber attacks and ensure that the data of vaccine recipients is safe," read the audit opinions.

In its overall opinion, the report found that the management of registration of Covid-19 vaccine recipients and the MySejahtera app was well implemented.

Watch the video
TheStarTV.com



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Subsidies for the dead among wastage

PUTRAJAYA: Non-Conforming payments and awarding subsidies to the deceased are among financial management non-compliances that resulted in losses, irregular payments and waste totalling RM158.08mil.

These are among the findings of the Auditor-General's Report 2021 Series 2.

One of the issues highlighted in the report was the payment by the police to a company that did the printing and mailing of police summonses but did not do so according to contract terms.

The irregularity in payments amounted to RM17.76mil.

The force was also found not to have imposed a fine of RM1.82mil on the company for the delay in carrying out the job.

Explaining this, Auditor-General Datuk Seri Nik Azman Nik Abdul Majid said the police could not impose a fine on the company as its contract had expired on Nov 30.

"The relevant ministry and police are in discussion with the company about the fine to be paid," he added.

The report also found that the Agriculture and Food Industry Ministry had paid RM730,000 under the padi price subsidy scheme to farmers who had died.

The report also found that the Customs Department had failed to collect RM72.3mil in duties for imported vehicles brought out of duty-free islands.

The report also noted there was RM1.16mil in uncollected rent by the Prime Minister's Department for civil servants' quarters.

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Two states still owe KWAN a total of RM145.3mil

PUTRAJAYA: As of April 2022, two states – Sabah and Selangor – still owed the National Trust Fund (KWAN) a total of RM145.3mil of Covid-19 funds, Series 2 of the Auditor-General Report has revealed.

This was the outstanding amount from the RM393.42mil allocation from the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry (Mosti) to the states to carry out the Covid-19 immunisation drive (PICK).

However, the states were required to return unutilised funds.

"As a result of delays in the states finalising its expenditure of KWAN funds, the RM145.3mil could not be used for PICK," the findings of the audit on the Health Ministry and Mosti's Covid-19 management showed.

In response to the audit findings, Mosti said on Dec 29, 2022 that it had meetings with the secretaries of both states on Oct 20, 2022.

"The Sabah state secretary has confirmed

that the final balance that will be returned by Sabah to KWAN amounted to RM17.40mil while Selangor will return RM47.38mil," said the ministry.

For 2020 until April 2021, the Health Ministry received an allocation of RM5.742bil for PICK of which it had used up RM4.502bil. Mosti, on the other hand, had used up RM581.95mil from the RM910mil allocated for it between 2020 and October 2021.

In 2021, the government announced that it would dip into KWAN to fund the purchase of vaccines and the vaccination drive. Putrajaya announced that some RM6bil would be used for the purpose.

As of Dec 31, 2020, the fund had an asset value amounting to RM19.5bil.

In a related note, it also found that the government incurred RM13.07mil in losses over the procurement of 93 defective ventilators for Health Ministry facilities in 2021.

Speaking to the media after the release of the report, Auditor-General Datuk Seri Nik Azman Nik Abdul Majid said no warranty was provided for the ventilators.

"It depends on the ministry whether to take action or not as there was no contract (for the procurement)," he said while presenting the Series 2 of the 2021 Auditor-General's Report at a press conference yesterday.

"It was procured in a cash-and-carry manner whereby it was bought, tested, upgraded and utilised. It could be due to the pressing situation (then)," he said while explaining the audit findings on Covid-19 management by the Health Ministry and the Science and Technology Ministry.

As of April 2022, a total of 71.26 million out of 82.85 million vaccine doses received had been utilised.

Of the 11.59 million remaining doses, 1.1 million comprising CanSino (368,630 doses),

Pfizer's Comirnaty (603,954 doses) and AstraZeneca (130,200 doses) vaccines have expiry dates of between one and 212 days.

The audit's overall conclusion is that the Covid-19 management had achieved the objectives of the Disaster Management Plan and PICK.

The CanSino vaccine has a life span of 19 days, Comirnaty, 212 days and AstraZeneca, 206 days.

"Losses were incurred as the expired vaccines had to be disposed of," the report read.

The report also found that the number of nurses hired during Covid-19 pandemic was lower than the actual requirement as per the recommended level of care ratio for hospital emergency departments.

It also found that a number of personal protective equipment (PPE) had not been utilised. They comprised 3.08 million pairs of boot covers and 840,000 pieces of coveralls.

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Ampang LRT repairs until September

Prasarana hiring contractors now with work to start in March, says Loke

KUALA LUMPUR: Repairs to the serious structural damage on part of the Ampang LRT line near the Bandaraya station are expected to be completed in September at the earliest, says Transport Minister Anthony Loke.

He said asset owner Prasarana Malaysia Bhd is in the process of hiring contractors to carry out repair works, which is also expected to begin in March.

"This period consists of two

months of temporary repair works (to strengthen the structure), and five months for comprehensive repair works.

"Repair works will take time because investigations show that the damage on the affected structure has serious safety risks," said Loke during a press conference in Parliament yesterday.

Loke also said that investigations by Arup Perunding Sdn Bhd, a consultant appointed by Prasarana,

showed that three viaduct structures and piers were cracked, believed to have been caused by work related to a proposed 44-storey mixed-development nearby.

In a Prasarana statement yesterday, it said Arup's investigation was under the supervision of a joint committee consisting of Prasarana, KL City Hall, Public Works Department, Occupational Safety and Health Department, as well as the Irrigation and Drainage Department.

Loke also said the errant construction did not obtain approvals from the Land Public Transport Agency (APAD), even though (the development footprint) was located within a railway protection zone.

"We are disappointed with this incident, where the project was started without APAD's approval.

"We take this issue seriously because the construction has affected Prasarana's operations, and it has disrupted hundreds of thou-

sands of passengers every day.

"After thorough investigations are completed, we will see if any legal action can be taken," said Loke, who emphasised that any reopening of the stretch will only be done after authorities are fully satisfied that it is totally safe to do so.

On Jan 28, Prasarana halted the Ampang LRT service between the Masjid Jamek and Bandaraya stations after severe cracks were found on a railway pier next to the latter.