



**By FARID WAHAB**  
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SEPANG Municipal Council (MPSepang) is to erect a new headquarters as part of the council's 10th anniversary celebrations in Cyberjaya, Selangor.

The project comprises an 18-storey office tower with a gross floor area of 234,000 sq ft. It will also have a multi-storey parking complex, amphitheatre and a multipurpose hall.

MPSepang president Muhamad Shah Osmin said the new building is expected to be completed by Jan 9, 2027.

The council also has 100 staff members. The existing building, which was built in 2010, has only capacity accommodate a maximum of 50 staff members, he said.

Abul Husein said funds for the project would come from MPSepang's reserves and other sources.

The Sepang municipality was among rapid development and growth in the area in the past few years, he said.

The council's headquarters will be located next to the council's existing premises at Persiaran Semarak Api in

## Towering landmark for Sepang municipal council

RM129mil project slated to be completed by January 2027

The building will also have an amphitheatre, a multi-storey parking complex, a multipurpose hall and a multipurpose hall. The building will also have an amphitheatre, a multi-storey parking complex, a multipurpose hall and a multipurpose hall.



StarMetro report on April 9.

(Left) MPSepang officers towing away cars illegally parked in front of Dupuze shopping centre in Cyberjaya. — Courtesy of MPSepang

# Sepang council freezes asset purchase, hiring

Star  
30/9  
(Sepang)

Move to preserve cash flow until new headquarters completed

**By FARID WAHAB**  
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SEPANG Municipal Council (MPSepang) has frozen the purchasing of new vehicles and moveable assets to preserve cash flow while awaiting the completion of its new headquarters, scheduled for January 2027.

Its deputy president Muhamad Shah Osmin said the council had also paused hiring for contract positions.

"Currently, all our vehicles are still in good condition.

"There is no need to replace assets such as furniture until the new headquarters is completed," he said after chairing the council's full board meeting.

StarMetro reported on April 9 that the new headquarters would be located next to the council's existing premises at Persiaran Semarak Api in



Muhamad Shah says the new headquarters costs RM129mil.

Cyberjaya, Selangor.

Costing RM129mil, it will comprise 18 storeys, with a gross floor area of 234,000sq ft, capable of housing 1,500 staff.

The new building will, among others, include a multistorey parking complex, multipurpose

hall and an amphitheatre. Muhamad Shah said piling works were completed and RM5.06mil had been paid to the contractor based on the progress made.

MPSepang was projecting a RM34mil budget deficit next year owing to increased spending on the project, he added.

The council was expecting to generate some RM232mil in revenue with RM266mil in total spending.

On a separate matter, Muhamad Shah said the hearing session for those who objected to the proposed revaluation of assessment tax rates has concluded.

The council received 7,000 objections and MPSepang was in the midst of reviewing the appeals.

On the issue of abandoned vehicles, Muhamad Shah said as

of Aug 31, a total of 1,458 vehicles had been towed in Sepang for various parking offences under local by-laws.

Of the figure, 87.4% or 1,275 vehicles were towed from Cyberjaya and sent to council depots located in Cyberjaya and Bandar Baru Salak Tinggi.

"There is a RM300 fee to release vehicles towed from Cyberjaya and RM150 from other locations," said Muhamad Shah.

Currently, he said three vehicles had yet to be claimed, adding that the owners had a year to claim their vehicles, after which the council would engage the Road Transport Department to initiate an ownership transfer to dispose of the vehicles.

Muhamad Shah also said a third depot was recently built in Dengkil and was expected to be operational soon.

By MEGAT SYAHAR  
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(MPS)

## Groups opposing Batu Arang incinerator want S'gor govt to reject draft local plan

NON-GOVERNMENTAL organisations (NGOs) opposing a proposed RM4.5bil incinerator project in Batu Arang are urging Selangor government to reject Selayang Municipal Council's (MPS) Draft Local Plan 2030.

Jaringan Rawang Tolak Insinerator (JRTI) representative Abdul Hanan Abd Mokti said MPS was pressing ahead with amendments to the draft local plan to rezone the site from residential to heavy industrial, despite receiving over 4,000 objections to the rezoning.

"According to Section 14 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1976, any changes to the draft local plan requires MPS to conduct inquiries and hearings before approval.

"Despite MPS receiving 4,417 objections from local residents, housing developers and elected representatives, the council has proceeded with the rezoning.

"MPS had the option to keep the draft local plan unchanged or

modify it based on these objections, as stipulated in Section 15(1) of the same Act.

"However, it approved the plan without any changes, disregarding the community feedback.

"It is believed that the draft local plan is now awaiting final approval from the Selangor executive council," he said.

JRTI and two other NGOs are planning to hold a protest tomorrow in front of the MPS office in Batu Caves at 10am and are calling for public participation.

"We and our counterparts are deeply disappointed with MPS' decision and demand a thorough explanation for disregarding community objections.

"We also urge Selangor government to reject this draft local plan amendment," said Abdul Hanan at a press conference in

Bandar Tasik Puteri.

JRTI received a letter from the Gombak District Police refusing it permission to assemble, citing safety, location and traffic congestion concerns, given that the MPS building is along the main road and near residential areas.

In response, JRTI issued a statement saying the refusal contradicted subsection 14(1) of the Peaceful Assembly Act 2012.

"The police may only impose restrictions and conditions but cannot block the assembly if the notification complies with Sections 9 and 10 of the said law.

"Under the Peaceful Assembly Act 2012, the organiser is only required to notify the police at least five days prior to the assembly - which we did on Sept 13, giving two weeks notice.

"JRTI remains fully committed to ensuring that the protest will be peaceful and orderly."

On July 2, *StarMetro* reported that over 4,000 objection forms were submitted to MPS, opposing its plan to rezone land for the proposed mega incinerator project at Sultan Idris Shah Green Energy Park in Batu Arang.

The objection forms outlined key issues such as conflicts with Rawang's status as a heritage town, traffic hazards, health risks, odour and water pollution, soil instability and impact on property value.

In a *StarMetro* report on Aug 27, MPS president Shahman Jalaludin assured residents that the proposed incinerator project in Batu Arang would not commence before the relevant studies were carried out.

However, he said land rezoning for the project would have to be done prior to the studies.

THE STAR

30 SEP 2024

# A call to action to end rabies

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LITTLE Awang was nipped when he was playing with a seemingly friendly stray dog that had approached him with a wagging tail. Unbeknown to the young Sarawakian, deadly viruses lurking within the dog's saliva had transferred to him. Days later, he began experiencing fever and muscle weakness – symptoms that were tragically misdiagnosed as a common flu. By the time rabies was suspected, it was too late.

Awang's story is a heartbreaking reminder of the silent killer that continues to plague South-East Asia, including Malaysia. According to the World Health Organisation, an estimated 59,000 people die from rabies annually, with the majority of cases occurring in Asia and Africa. In South-East Asia, the disease is endemic in several countries, including Malaysia, where an average of 10 to 15 human rabies cases are reported each year. The actual number of cases may be higher due to under-reporting and misdiagnosis.

The primary reservoir of rabies in Malaysia is stray dogs, which account for over 90% of human cases. Other animals, such as cats, monkeys and bats, can also transmit the virus, albeit less frequently. Rabies symptoms typically develop two to three months after exposure, but the incubation period can vary from a few weeks to several years. Initial symptoms may include fever, headache and



Photo: MUHAMAD SHAHRIL ROSLI/The Star

muscle weakness, followed by more severe neurological manifestations such as confusion, hallucinations and hydrophobia (fear of water). Once symptoms appear, rabies is almost invariably fatal, highlighting the critical importance of preventive measures.

In Malaysia, the government has implemented various strategies to control rabies, including mass dog vaccination campaigns, stray dog control programmes and public education initiatives. However, challenges remain, particularly in ensuring adequate vaccination coverage in rural areas and addressing the issue of stray dog populations.

It is crucial to remember that rabies is a fatal disease, but it is entirely preventable through vaccination and post-exposure prophylaxis. Any animal bite, par-

ticularly from a dog or other mammal, should be considered potential rabies exposure requiring immediate medical attention. Washing the wound thoroughly with soap and water and seeking medical advice promptly can significantly reduce the risk of infection.

Pet owners have a vital role to play in rabies prevention. Ensuring their animals are vaccinated and avoiding contact with stray or wild animals are essential steps to protect both pets and the community. Responsible pet ownership, including spaying and neutering, can help reduce strays.

Ultimately, it is important to remember that animals infected with rabies are victims of the disease themselves. We should approach them with compassion and empathy, as well as support

humane solutions to control the disease and protect both animals and people.

World Rabies Day is marked annually on Sept 28 to remind us of the devastating impact of this disease, and the urgent need for concerted action. This year's theme, "Breaking Rabies Boundaries", emphasises a collaborative approach to addressing health threats at the human-animal-environment interface.

And it is not just for scientists and policymakers. By increasing public awareness, improving access to animal healthcare, strengthening rabies control measures, and fostering a compassionate approach towards animals, we can work towards eliminating this deadly disease from South-East Asia.

It is our collective responsibility to protect ourselves, our families, our communities, and the animals we share our world with, from the silent killer that is rabies. Let us not allow another Awang to become a victim of a preventable tragedy.

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# Impak besar lonjakan nilai ringgit



PERSPEKTIF  
WONG CHUN WAI

**P**enguatan nilai ringgit berbanding dolar Amerika Syarikat (AS) ternyata memberi impak besar terhadap keyakinan negara, sekaligus menyuntik rasa bangga dalam kalangan rakyat.

Ringgit Malaysia terus mencatatkan aliran meningkat, melonjak kepada paras tertinggi berbanding dolar AS sejak Mac 2022. Ia bukan sahaja mata wang yang mencatatkan prestasi terbaik di rantau ini, malah menunjukkan penguatan paling ketara di peringkat dunia bulan ini susulan penurunan kadar faedah yang besar oleh Rizab Persekutuan (Fed) AS.

Perjalanan negara dalam mengatasi cabaran dan mencapai pertumbuhan pesat, disokong ekonomi yang berkembang pada kadar terpacak dalam tempoh 19 bulan lalu telah menarik perhatian global.

Tidak dapat dinafikan kestabilan po-

litik negara di bawah Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim antara sebab utama kejayaan ekonomi Malaysia berbanding Thailand dan Indonesia yang mengalami kegawatan politik.

Baru-baru ini, ringgit naik kepada paras tertinggi dalam tempoh 30 bulan pada 4.1815 berbanding dolar AS. Ia ditutup 4.1230/1280 pada Jumaat lalu. Kini terdapat spekulasi ringgit boleh meningkat hingga RM4 berbanding dolar AS.

BMI, unit Kumpulan Fitch menyemak semula unjuran ringgit untuk akhir tahun daripada 4.55 berbanding dolar AS kepada 4.0, mencerminkan prestasi mata wang tempatan yang kukuh pada suku ketiga 2024. Selepas tempoh enam bulan, BMI turut mengunjurkan ringgit akan mengukuh sembilan peratus tahun depan, mencecah 3.55 berbanding dolar AS pada akhir 2025.

Prospeknya dilihat amat baik tetapi seperti kita tahu, ringgit sangat bergantung kepada faktor luaran terutama kepada trajektori kadar faedah Fed AS dan pertumbuhan ekonomi China yang merupakan rakan dagangan terbesar kita.

Dalam jangka sederhana akan sentiasa ada aktiviti pengambilan untung yang akan memberi kesan kepada kadar

kita, namun ia perkara biasa dan sihat untuk ekonomi. Tahun lalu, terdapat kebimbangan ringgit akan mencecah paras serendah RM5 berbanding dolar tetapi mata wang tempatan kini melonjak lebih 12 peratus berbanding dolar AS.

Walau apa pun kritikan dan keraguan dilemparkan terhadap Perdana Menteri kerana lewat melakukan pembaharuan serta berkompromi dengan kumpulan konservatif yang tidak mengundi beliau pada pilihan raya umum lalu, namun beliau berada di landasan betul.

Politik Malaysia kini stabil dan Kerajaan Perpaduan pimpinan Anwar dijangka terus kekal bertahan. Walaupun terdapat banyak gembur-gembur politik dan rakyat Malaysia sudah terbiasa dengan keadaan itu, lawannya perlu menunggu tiga tahun lagi untuk mencabar beliau.

*South China Morning Post* (SCMP) memetik Ketua Ahli Ekonomi Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd, Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid sebagai berkata - kestabilan membantu pelaksanaan dan penggubalan dasar yang lebih efektif, meningkatkan keyakinan terhadap ringgit.

Perkara itu turut mendapat perhatian *Reuters* menerusi laporan bertajuk *Malaysia shines as foreign investors re-*

*turn, peers stumble* (Malaysia menyerlah dengan kehadiran semula pelabur asing, rakan serantau hilang momentum).

Di peringkat tempatan, ketika kos sara hidup kekal menjadi kebimbangan utama kebanyakan rakyat Malaysia, kadar inflasi telah susut kepada 1.90 peratus pada Ogos daripada dua peratus (Julai 2024).

*Trading Economics* melaporkan kadar inflasi dijangka pada 1.50 peratus menjelang akhir tahun ini, sebagaimana berdasarkan model makro global dan unjuran penganalisis. Namun, lebih penting ialah jumlah pekerjaan suku pertama tahun ini meningkat 1.5 peratus kepada 8.94 juta, angka tertinggi sejak 2018, demikian menurut Statistik Guna Tenaga Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia bagi suku pertama 2024.

Rakyat Malaysia kini menunggu laporan ekonomi tahunan dan Belanjawan 2025 yang bakal dibentangkan di Parlimen untuk mendapatkan gambaran serta idea lebih jelas dan terperinci mengenai apa yang disediakan untuk mereka.

\* Datuk Seri Wong Chun Wai ialah wartawan veteran yang pernah meraih anugerah dan berpengalaman lebih 40 tahun, juga merupakan Pengerusi Bernama

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# KKM disaran guna pakai sistem kompaun elektronik

**Kuala Terengganu:** Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) disaran melaksanakan sistem pengeluaran notis kompaun elektronik sebelum menguatkuasakan Akta Kawalan Produk Merokok Demi Kesihatan Awam 2024 (Akta 852) yang berkuat kuasa esok.

Presiden Kesatuan Inspektor Kesihatan Semanjung (KIKSM), Mohd Ruhaizie Riyadzi berkata,

kaedah pengeluaran notis saman secara bertulis sudah tidak sesuai digunakan.

Menurutnya, ini kerana semua agensi penguat kuasa lain sudah menggunakan kaedah pengeluaran notis kompaun dan saman secara elektronik.

"Kita juga mencadangkan KKM menambah baik imej termasuk pembaharuan pakaian seragam pegawai kesihatan persekitaran

(PKP) dan penolong pegawai kesihatan persekitaran (PPKP) yang bertanggungjawab melaksanakan akta itu. PKP dan PPKP sebagai pegawai penguat kuasa dalam melaksanakan akta itu perlu berpakaian seragam dengan tanda nama, jawatan serta jaket (vest)," katanya.

Terdahulu, Mohd Ruhaizie bersama lebih 150 penunggang motosikal berkuasa tinggi mengedarkan

risalah Akta Kawalan Produk Merokok Demi Kesihatan Awam (Akta 852) sempena program Ukhwah Ride kepada pengunjung di Pasar Payang Satu di sini, kelmarin.

Mohd Ruhaizie berkata, cadangan penambahbaikan dibuat berdasarkan maklum balas orang ramai ketika mengadakan program Ukhwah Ride di Kedah, Pulau Pinang, Perlis, Pahang dan Terengganu.

Berdasarkan maklum balas itu, katanya, KIKSM merangka strategi memperkasakan pelaksanaan akta berkenaan dengan mengemukakan saranan dan cadangan kepada KKM.

"Saranan itu mampu meningkatkan pelaksanaan penguatkuasaan akta secara cekap, efisien dan mencapai matlamat dalam meningkatkan taraf kesihatan rakyat di seluruh negara," katanya.



Kita juga mencadangkan KKM menambah baik imej termasuk pembaharuan pakaian seragam PKP dan PPKP sebagai pegawai penguat kuasa dalam melaksanakan akta itu"

Mohd Ruhaizie Riyadzi

HARIAN METRO  
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## Langkah progresif walau tak sempurna

**Kuala Lumpur:** Akta Kawalan Produk Merokok Demi Kesihatan Awam 2024 (Akta 852) adalah langkah progresif dalam usaha untuk mencegah kesan berbahaya tembakau serta produk rokok elektronik dan vape yang sekian lama berlaku.

Presiden Persatuan Alumni Manipal Malaysia Dr Koh Kar Chai berkata, walaupun akta itu tidak sempurna seperti yang didakwa oleh sesetengah pihak namun sebagai pengamal perubahan beliau menyifatkan ia sememangnya satu langkah ke hadapan yang hebat.

Beliau memuji keberanian Menteri Kesihatan Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad dan Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) yang beriltizam tinggi untuk merealisasikan Akta 852 itu.

"Terdapat kebimbangan penjualan vape kepada golongan bawah umur tidak akan disekat kerana kawalan nikotin dikeluarkan daripada Akta Racun.

"Apa yang diperlukan sekarang ialah kempen kesedaran yang disasarkan bukan sahaja kepada masyarakat umum, tetapi kepada anak sekolah generasi kita yang semakin terdedah dengan produk vape.

"Visi untuk memastikan generasi akan datang bebas daripada tembakau dan produk merokok atau vape.

"Kempen kesedaran kemudian harus diikuti dengan penguatkuasaan ketat akta berkenaan. Kami berharap pihak berkuasa akan terus membanteras mereka yang melanggar akta itu dan tidak membiarkan aktiviti penguat-



*Apa yang diperlukan sekarang ialah kempen kesedaran yang disasarkan bukan sahaja kepada masyarakat umum tetapi juga kepada anak-anak sekolah generasi kita yang semakin terdedah dengan produk vape sejak kebelakangan ini"*

**Dr Koh Kar Chai**

kuasaan gagal," katanya.

Beliau mengulas mengenai KKM akan menguatkuasakan Akta Kawalan Produk Merokok Demi Kesihatan Awam 2024 (Akta 852) bermula 1 Oktober 2024.

Akta itu merangkumi peraturan pendaftaran, penjualan, pembungkusan, pelabelan dan larangan merokok di tempat awam.

Menurut KKM menerusi media sosial, peraturan dan perintah yang bakal dikuatkuasakan termasuk rokok elektronik.

Akta 852 diwartakan pada Februari lalu sehingga kini masih belum dikuatkuasakan walaupun pada mulanya diumumkan akan dilaksanakan pada Jun dan kemudiannya ditangguhkan pada Ogos.

Sebelum ini, Dr Dzulkefly berkata, langkah KKMewartakan Akta 852 bermula 2 Februari lalu adalah sejajar usaha untuk mengekang penggunaan produk tembakau dan mengurangkan kemudaratan akibat merokok.

HARIAN METRO  
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# Pengenalan Akaun 3 KWSP tingkat belanja pengguna

Kenaikan gaji penjawat awam juga beri kesan besar aliran tunai pengguna

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**Pengenalan** Akaun Fleksibel (Akaun 3) oleh Kumpulan Wang Simpanan Pekerja (KWSP) dijangka menjadi pemangkin utama dalam peningkatan perbelanjaan pengguna di Malaysia, kata MIDF Research.

Akaun yang sudah diperkenalkan itu membolehkan ahli KWSP mengakses simpanan mereka pada bila-bila masa untuk sebarang tujuan, memberikan fleksibiliti yang belum pernah terjadi sebelum ini.

Menurut MIDF Research, ia dijangka membawa kesan besar kepada aliran tunai pengguna, seterusnya meningkatkan perbelanjaan isi rumah terhadap barangan keperluan dan bukan keperluan.

"Peningkatan aliran tunai ini akan memperkuat sektor peruncitan, khususnya dalam kalangan barangan pengguna bergerak pantas (FMCG) dan runcit," katanya dalam nota penyelidikan.

Akaun 3 membolehkan ahli KWSP mengeluarkan dana untuk menampung perbelanjaan harian seperti makanan dan perumahan.

"Ini memberikan kelegaan ke-



Pengenalan Akaun Fleksibel KWSP dijangka menjadi pemangkin meningkatkan perbelanjaan isi rumah pengguna.

wangan kepada ramai isi rumah, terutama yang terjejas oleh inflasi dan kos hidup yang tinggi," kata MIDF Research.

Sementara itu, tambahnya, kenaikan gaji penjawat awam yang dijangka bermula Disember 2024 akan mempercepatkan lagi peningkatan dalam perbelanjaan pengguna.

#### Perkukuh perbelanjaan runcit

Langkah itu akan memberi tambahan pendapatan boleh guna kepada sebahagian besar rakyat Malaysia, terutama dalam kalangan penjawat awam yang membentuk sebahagian besar tenaga kerja negara.

"Ini akan memperkukuhkan lagi perbelanjaan runcit, dengan lebih banyak dana dijangka disalurkan kepada perbelanjaan barangan serta perkhidmatan bukan keperluan," katanya.

MIDF Research turut menje-

laskan peralihan ini akan memberi manfaat besar kepada peruncit yang menawarkan barangan mewah dan perkhidmatan gaya hidup, seperti kedai makanan dan minuman kelas pertengahan hingga tinggi.

Mereka menjangkakan permintaan untuk makanan dan minuman berkualiti, pakaian berjenama serta perkhidmatan riadah akan meningkat.

Ini menandakan peralihan struktur ke arah tahap perbelanjaan yang lebih tinggi, terutamanya selepas pandemik COVID-19 yang merubah corak perbelanjaan rakyat Malaysia.

Selain itu, pemulihan sektor pelancongan yang sedang berlaku turut memberikan rangsangan tambahan kepada pertumbuhan sektor runcit dan perbelanjaan pengguna.

Menurut data terkini daripada Tourism Malaysia, jumlah keti-

baan pelancong antarabangsa melonjak dalam separuh pertama 2024, terutama dari pasaran utama seperti India dan China.

Pelonggaran visa dan dasar kemasukan tanpa visa untuk warga negara India telah menjadi pemangkin utama kepada peningkatan ini.

Pada Januari hingga Jun 2024, Malaysia menerima 537,000 pelancong dari India, meningkat sebanyak 51.6 peratus berbanding tempoh yang sama pada 2019.

Pelonggaran visa sejak Disember 2023 yang membenarkan warga negara India tinggal di Malaysia selama 30 hari tanpa visa, memberi dorongan besar kepada sektor pelancongan.

Sementara itu, jumlah pelancong dari China turut menunjukkan peningkatan, selain pelancong dari Singapura dan Indonesia yang terus mendominasi senarai ketibaan pelancong.

BERITA HARIAN  
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# Bajet dijangka fokus cukai progresif, elak GST demi rakyat

Langkah tingkat pendapatan kerajaan, kurang kebergantungan kepada dividen

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Belanjawan 2025 dijangka akan memberi penekanan kepada langkah progresif dalam cukai seperti memperkenalkan Cukai Barangan Bernilai Tinggi (HVGT) dan Cukai Minimum Global (GMT), demikian mengikut TA Securities dalam nota penyelidikannya.

Katanya, langkah itu penting bagi membantu meningkatkan pendapatan negara tanpa memperkenalkan semula Cukai Barangan dan Perkhidmatan (GST), yang berpotensi memberi kesan negatif kepada golongan berpendapatan rendah.

Selain itu, pelaksanaan e-invois secara lebih meluas dijangka bermula pada pertengahan 2025, membabitkan semua syarikat kecuali perusahaan kecil dan sederhana dengan pendapatan tahunan



kurang daripada RM150,000.

"Langkah ini, bersama dengan pengenalan HVGT dan GMT, dijangka menyumbang kepada peningkatan pendapatan kerajaan dan mengurangkan kebergantungan kepada dividen daripada PETRONAS, yang mungkin berkurangan berikutan perubahan hak minyak dan gas di Sarawak," katanya.

Berdasarkan unjuran TA Securities, kutipan hasil kerajaan dijangka meningkat sebanyak 5.7 peratus kepada RM325.3 bilion pada 2025 berbanding RM307.6 bilion dalam Belanjawan 2024.

Peningkatan ini disokong oleh kutipan cukai yang lebih baik hasil pertumbuhan ekonomi yang pesat dan perluasan pelaksanaan e-invois.

Namun, Malaysia masih ketinggalan berbanding negara serantau dari segi kutipan hasil sebagai peratusan kepada KDNK.

Sebagai perbandingan, kutipan hasil Malaysia pada 2018 adalah 20.9 peratus daripada KDNK, tetapi ia terus menurun kepada 17.3 peratus dalam tempoh sedekad.

Ia dijangka menurun lagi kepada 15.6 peratus pada 2024, situasi ini memerlukan keperluan untuk memulihkan kekuatan kutipan hasil negara bagi mengurangkan kebergantungan kepada pinjaman.

## Sumber pendapatan baharu

Dalam pada itu, TA Securities berkata, PETRONAS dijangka membayar dividen sebanyak RM30 bilion pada 2025, lebih rendah berbanding RM32 bilion pada 2024, berikutan perubahan dalam pemilikan hak minyak dan gas di Sarawak oleh Petroleum Sarawak Berhad (Petros).

"Situasi ini dijangka memberi impak kepada keuntungan PETRONAS, yang seterusnya memerlukan kerajaan untuk mencari sumber pendapatan baharu bagi menampung kekurangan itu," katanya.

TA Securities menjangkakan harga purata minyak mentah akan kembali kepada AS\$82 satu tong pada 2025, selepas sedikit penurunan pada 2024.

BERITA HARIAN

Tarikh..... 3.0. SEP. 2024





**NOOR MOHAMAD SHAKIL HAMEED**

UM 30/9

# Tangani masalah rasuah, salah laku penjawat awam

**P**ERINGATAN kepada semua ketua jabatan agensi awam agar segera melaksanakan pusingan kerja di kementerian atau jabatan masing-masing bermula Oktober atau akan dikenakan tindakan tatatertib perlu dilihat dari sudut yang positif dan sebagai keperluan penting dalam menjayakan agenda reformasi perkhidmatan awam.

Isu keperluan pusingan kerja dilaksanakan terutamanya di agensi yang sensitif sering menarik perhatian khalayak kerana berpotensi menyumbang kepada rasuah, salah guna kuasa dan penyelewengan. Secara lazimnya, agensi penguatkuasaan kerap melakukan pusingan kerja membabitkan pegawai dan anggota supaya menjaga tahap integriti serta mencegah sebarang bentuk salah laku seperti rasuah dan salah guna kuasa.

Walaupun bagaimanapun arahan kali ini tidak terhad kepada agensi penguatkuasaan sebaliknya mencakupi semua jabatan kerajaan, justeru ketua jabatan perlu mengambil peluang ini untuk merombak dan menyusun semula kedudukan sumber manusia di agensi masing-masing secara menyeluruh supaya dapat meningkatkan kualiti penyampaian perkhidmatan kepada pelanggan.

Secara umumnya, amalan pusingan kerja yang bijak, berstruktur dan ber sistematik akan memberikan banyak kelebihan dan manfaat baik kepada organisasi mahupun pekerja. Antara kelebihan praktis pusingan kerja di sesebuah jabatan kerajaan ialah dapat menggunakan sumber manusia yang ada secara optimum dengan menyusun mengikut keperluan, kemahiran dan pengalaman.

Secara prinsipnya setiap agensi, bahagian atau seksyen melaksanakan skop tugas yang berbeza dan ini memerlukan pegawai yang mahir dan berpengetahuan mengikut skop tugas terbabit, justeru melalui pusingan kerja kita dapat menempatkan pegawai mengikut kepakaran di tempat yang betul dan strategik.

Pusingan kerja juga membolehkan setiap organisasi meningkatkan kualiti dan kuantiti output atau produktiviti yakni membolehkan agensi kerajaan



**PUSINGAN kerja yang kerap khususnya membabitkan agensi yang sensitif akan membantu menangani masalah rasuah dan salah guna kuasa secara lebih berkesan.**

memberikan perkhidmatan melangkaui jangkaan kepada anggota masyarakat. Ironinya, ekspektasi pelanggan terhadap kualiti perkhidmatan sektor awam terus meningkat, maka penempatan pegawai yang betul dan berdedikasi membolehkan organisasi meraih manfaat yang besar di samping menyumbang kepada kesejahteraan rakyat dan pembangunan negara.

Organisasi juga dapat mengurangkan atau menangani masalah pembaziran sumber manusia. Hakikatnya, ada saja situasi di mana berlaku lebih pegawai di sesuatu bahagian sehinggalah individu itu hanya menjadi penumpang dan tidak memberikan sebarang sumbangan efektif kepada jabatan. Maka, melalui amalan pusingan kerja, kita dapat mengenalpasti individu seperti ini dan membuat penempatan semula agar dapat mengoptimalkan penggunaan sumber manusia yang ada.

Pusingan kerja yang kerap khususnya membabitkan agensi yang sensitif pula akan membantu menangani masalah rasuah dan salah guna kuasa secara lebih berkesan. Ironinya, praktis ini akan memutuskan rangkaian perhubungan antara pegawai dengan mana-mana pihak yang cuba untuk mengambil kesempatan dan

memanipulasi kedudukan untuk kepentingan peribadi. Praktis ini akan menjadi senjata ampuh untuk melumpuhkan pelbagai sindiket yang cuba berkawan dan merasuah penjawat awam.

Apabila melaksanakan pusingan kerja, setiap jabatan juga dapat mengenalpasti pegawai dan anggota yang bermasalah khususnya masalah disiplin dan prestasi kerja seperti kaki culas dan kaki ponteng. Maka, individu ini dapat diasingkan dan ditempatkan di bahagian yang boleh membantu memulihkan masalah disiplin mereka sebelum dibuat penempatan semula.

Bagi individu pegawai, pusingan kerja akan membuka seluas-luasnya peluang untuk pengayaan dan peluasan tugas melalui peningkatan tahap kompetensi dan penambahan kemahiran baharu. Ini membolehkan seseorang pegawai itu mampu melaksanakan pelbagai tugas dengan kemahiran dan pengalaman yang dapat ditimba di beberapa agensi, bahagian atau seksyen.

Pusingan kerja juga diyakini mampu meningkatkan tahap integriti penjawat awam. Apabila pusingan kerja menjadi satu amalan yang biasa maka setiap pegawai akan lebih berhati-hati dalam setiap tindakan sekali

gus meningkatkan rasa tanggungjawab dan elemen amanah dalam diri masing-masing. Hal ini akan berlaku kerana khuatir segala tindak tanduk mereka sentiasa dipantau dan jika melakukan sesuatu kesalahan sukar untuk disembunyikan kerana akan terbongkar apabila berlaku pertukaran. Ini menyebabkan pegawai terbabit boleh dikenakan tindakan tatatertib. Maka, rasa takut akan sentiasa membayangi pegawai ketika melaksanakan tugas walau ditempatkan di mana sekalipun.

Pusingan kerja juga akan membantu meningkatkan tahap motivasi seseorang pegawai agar terus memberikan perkhidmatan yang terbaik. Hal ini penting kerana penempatan seseorang pegawai untuk suatu jangka masa yang terlalu lama di sesuatu bahagian boleh mencetuskan masalah bosan, tepu dan kekeringan idea.

Selain itu, ia juga menyumbang kepada peningkatan elemen kreativiti, inovasi dan penambahbaikan berterusan. Kemasukan pegawai di tempat baharu akan sentiasa membuka ruang untuk melaksanakan pelbagai pembaharuan yang positif sebagai penambahbaikan sekali gus menyuburkan budaya kreativiti dan inovasi. Amalan pusingan kerja

juga dilihat mampu menjadi medan pengiktirafan kepada pegawai dengan cara meraikan bakat dan kemahiran yang mereka miliki melalui penempatan di tempat yang lebih strategik. Ini akan membuka laluan kerjaya seperti peluang kenaikan pangkat yang lebih baik kepada pegawai.

Jelas sekali amalan pusingan kerja memberi banyak manfaat dan kelebihan kepada organisasi dan pegawai, justeru semua ketua jabatan perlu mematuhi arahan yang telah diberikan dengan segera.

Dalam melaksanakan arahan ini di harap setiap agensi dapat menyediakan sistem pusingan kerja yang lebih berstruktur, adil dan telus. Misalnya, sebelum melaksanakan pusingan kerja perlu diteliti terlebih dahulu tempoh masa penempatan semasa pegawai, bakat, kemahiran dan pengalaman yang dimiliki pegawai serta kesesuaian penempatan baharu.

Untuk itu, perlu ada pembentukan jawatankuasa bebas dan berkecuali yang diberi mandat yang jelas untuk melaksanakan proses ini kerana kita tidak mahu pertukaran dibuat berdasarkan keputusan seseorang individu semata-mata yang berkemungkinan membuka ruang kepada salah guna kuasa.

Pada masa yang sama, kita juga tidak mahu ada pihak yang mengambil kesempatan untuk menghukum mana-mana pegawai dengan menukarkannya ke tempat yang tidak sesuai. Amalan pusingan kerja perlu bersifat neutral dan profesional sekali gus membendung budaya seperti menghukum, menafikan hak serta pilih kasih.

Tuntasnya, sektor awam memerlukan anjakan baharu yang lebih segar untuk meningkatkan mutu penyampaian perkhidmatan dan untuk itu sudah tiba masanya setiap ketua jabatan serius melaksanakan pusingan kerja secara adil dan telus demi kecemerlangan organisasi dan juga pegawai masing-masing.

NOOR Mohamad Shakil Hameed ialah Timbalan Pendaftar Fakulti Perhutanan dan Alam Sekitar di Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM).

# Laksana Dasar Gaji Progresif sehingga tiga tahun - MEF

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**PETALING JAYA:** Insentif Dasar Gaji Progresif (DGP) yang bermula bulan depan perlu dilaksanakan secara menyeluruh untuk tempoh sehingga tiga tahun.

Presiden Persekutuan Majikan-Majikan Malaysia (MEF), Datuk Dr. Syed Hussain Syed Husman berkata, pelaksanaan setahun yang diumumkan sebelum ini akan menjadi beban besar kepada majikan.

Katanya, majikan bimbang tidak dapat terus menanggung kos apabila kerajaan tidak meneruskan subsidi selepas tempoh setahun itu.

"Kebanyakan majikan tertanya-tanya status DGP jika kerajaan menghentikan insentif setelah tamat setahun sama ada mereka boleh menarik balik kenaikan gaji yang diberi atas dasar subsidi bulanan yang diberikan kepada majikan.

"Untuk memberi keyakinan dan menggalakkan majikan menyertai DGP, kerajaan hendaklah memberi keyakinan

**um**  
**30/9**  
**Kebanyakan majikan tertanya-tanya status DGP jika kerajaan menghentikan insentif setelah tamat setahun."**

bahawa insentif DGP adalah untuk jangka waktu yang lebih panjang dan bukan setakat setahun sahaja," katanya kepada *Utusan Malaysia*.

Media sebelum ini melaporkan DGP dijangka dilaksanakan secara menyeluruh pada Oktober ini selepas penilaian impak projek rintis selesai dilaksanakan bulan ini.

Selain itu, kerajaan pada Ogos dilapor tidak menolak untuk melanjutkan tempoh masa pemberian insentif kepada majikan yang melaksanakan dasar tersebut kepada 24 bulan berbanding 12 bulan ditetapkan

ketika ini.

Syed Hussain berkata, kerajaan disaran memberi rangsangan kepada majikan sektor swasta untuk melaksanakan DGP dengan memberi jaminan insentif tidak terhad kepada satu tahun sahaja.

"Walaupun ada kenyataan bahawa kerajaan menimbang untuk melanjutkan pelaksanaan lebih dari setahun, majikan tidak begitu yakin.

"Jika kerajaan memutuskan untuk tidak memberi subsidi selepas satu tahun, majikan akan dibebani dengan kos gaji yang tinggi kerana jumlah kenaikan gaji dibawah DGP adalah di antara RM200 hingga RM300.

"Keperluan majikan yang menyertai DGP untuk membayar gaji pada kadar yang ditetapkan juga menjadi halangan kepada majikan kerana kadar terendah yang ditentukan adalah kira-kira 20 peratus lebih tinggi dari kadar gaji minimum semasa," katanya.

Namun, beliau mengakui DGP mewujudkan situasi menang-menang dalam kalangan pekerja, kerajaan dan majikan.

Katanya, ini kerana pekerja

perlu dilatih untuk meningkatkan produktiviti yang akhirnya akan menjadikan majikan lebih berdaya saing.

Selain itu, MEF berharap selain pelaksanaan DGP, kerajaan berusaha membawa pelaburan baharu bernilai tinggi berimpak tinggi yang memperkenalkan teknologi baharu.

"Usaha sebegini akan mewujudkan peluang pekerjaan bernilai lebih tinggi bagi menarik lebih ramai pakar untuk tinggal di Malaysia dan menarik pakar Malaysia yang berada di luar negara pulang ke tanah air.

"Kerajaan hendaklah menarik pelaburan berkualiti tinggi untuk menyediakan rakyat peluang, cabaran dan keseronokan yang lebih baik dalam pekerjaan.

"Kita juga mesti melakukan semua usaha yang kita mampu untuk mengekalkan industri sedia ada dengan menawarkan insentif baharu yang lebih menarik.

"Untuk mengekalkan mereka di sini adalah lebih penting kerana mereka sudah biasa dengan budaya kita dan cara kita bekerja," katanya.

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## ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

# Strong ringgit to keep growth going, says Amir Hamzah

14/9 30/9

**LANGKAWI:** The country's economy continues to grow steadily, supported by the strengthening ringgit, said Finance Minister II Datuk Seri Amir Hamzah Azizan.

He said the numerous initiatives under the Madani Economy framework delivered positive results, enhancing investor confidence.

"We have seen a surge in investments, the economy is expanding, and investor optimism towards Malaysia is strong, all of which have contributed to the ringgit's strengthening."

"The country's (gross domestic product) grew by 4.2 per cent in the first quarter and 5.9 per cent in the second quarter," he said after visiting Pulau Tuba, which has been selected for the Madani village adop-



Finance Minister II Datuk Seri Amir Hamzah Azizan arriving at Pulau Tuba in Langkawi yesterday as part of the Madani village adoption initiative. BERNAMA PIC

tion initiative.

He added that the declining inflation and unemployment rate of 3.3 per cent also indicated robust economic progress.

Commenting on the 2025 Budget, Amir Hamzah said the government would continue to prioritise efforts to improve living standards and drive national development.

"The government is committed to narrowing the social gap and delivering greater benefits to the people," he added.

Meanwhile, Pulau Tuba is one of three villages under the Finance Ministry's adoption programme alongside Kampung Batu 13 in Terengganu and Rumah Panjang-Rumah Entebang Anak Melayang Nanga Belaie in Skrang, Sarawak.

The village adoption initiative, introduced under the 2024 Budget, seeks to expedite the implementation of small projects in rural areas and bridge the gap in basic infrastructure between villages and cities.

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# TA Securities forecasts govt revenue will hit RM325.3b

**KUALA LUMPUR:** TA Securities projects that the government, in the 2025 Budget announcement, will forecast revenue to rise by 5.7 per cent to RM325.3 billion next year from RM307.6 billion this year.

This growth is expected to be driven by a 4.2 per cent increase in direct taxes and 11.7 per cent jump in indirect taxes, fuelled by a robust economy, thriving businesses, and rising incomes.

The research firm said no new taxes were anticipated, aside from the 15 per cent global minimum tax and the delayed high-value goods tax.

Additionally, the phased implementation of e-invoicing is set to enter its final stage next year, along with the broadening of the Sales and Service Tax.

This may offset a potential decrease in dividend payout from Petroliaam Nasional Bhd due to foregone revenue from its operations in Sabah and Sarawak.

TA Securities forecasts a budget allocation of RM403.7 billion for 2025, comprising RM305.7 billion for operating expenditures and RM97.9 billion for development expenditures.

The stronger revenue growth compared to spending is expected to reduce the fiscal deficit to RM76.4 billion, or 3.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), next year, down from an anticipated 4.2 per cent this year, and is aligned with the government's target of 3.5 per cent in 2026.

This outlook is supported by expected five per cent GDP growth next year, driven by the

services and manufacturing sectors, alongside a stable labour market, wage increases, and private investments.

Additionally, TA Securities expects the 2025 Budget to focus on key measures and beneficiaries, including significant public infrastructure projects like the Mass Rapid Transit Line 3 and Kuala Lumpur-Singapore high-speed rail, equitable development initiatives, and new growth corridors such as the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone.

It said the budget was likely to prioritise spending on the digital economy and sustainable development initiatives related to energy transition and renewable energy.

Measures to lower the cost of living and enhance disposable income are also anticipated, including salary increases for civil serv-

ants, a potential adjustment of the minimum wage from RM1,500 to between RM1,700 and RM1,800, and increases in tax relief or rebates.

TA Securities added that these measures would help mitigate the negative impacts of potential higher taxes on sugary food items.

This budget will be the final one under the 12th Malaysia Plan (2021-2025), and the government is expected to address performance gaps in this short-term plan before launching the next five-year plan.

A growing economy, a stronger ringgit, stable politics, and low inflationary pressures presented an opportunity for the government to pursue essential fiscal and structural reforms without burdening the rakyat, particularly the lower-income group, said TA Securities.

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# AI getting smarter, thanks to smarter human trainers

SUPANTHA MUKHERJEE  
AND ANNA TONG

IN the early years, getting AI models like ChatGPT or its rival Cohere to spit out human-like responses required vast teams of low-cost workers helping models distinguish basic facts, such as if an image was of a car or a carrot.

But more sophisticated updates to AI models in the competitive arena are now demanding a rapidly expanding network of human trainers who have specialised knowledge, from historians to scientists, some with doctorate degrees.

"A year ago, we could get away with hiring undergraduates, to just generally teach AI on how to improve," said Cohere co-founder Ivan Zhang, talking about its internal human trainers.

"Now we have licensed physicians teaching the models how to behave in medical environments, or financial analysts or accountants."

For more training, Cohere, which was last valued at over US\$5 billion, works with a startup called Invisible Tech.

Cohere is one of the main rivals of OpenAI and specialises in AI for businesses.

The startup Invisible Tech employs thousands of trainers, working remotely, and has become one of the main partners of AI companies ranging from AI21 to Microsoft to train their AI models to reduce errors, known in the AI world as hallucinations.

"We have 5,000 people in over 100 countries who are PhDs, master's degree holders and knowledge work specialists," said Invisible founder Francis Pedraza.

Invisible pays as much as US\$40 per hour, depending on the location of the worker and the complexity of work.

Some companies such as Outlier pay up to US\$50 per hour, while another company called Labelbox said it pays up to US\$200 per hour for "high expertise" subjects like quantum

physics, but starts with US\$15 for basic topics.

Invisible was founded in 2015 as a workflow automation company catering to the likes of food delivery company DoorDash to digitise its delivery menu.

But things changed when a relatively unknown research firm called OpenAI contacted it in the spring of 2022, ahead of the public launch of ChatGPT.

Pedraza said: "OpenAI came to us with a problem, which is that when you were asking an early version of ChatGPT a question, it was going to hallucinate. You couldn't trust the answer."

"They needed an advanced AI training partner to provide reinforcement learning with human feedback."

OpenAI did not respond to request for comment.

Generative AI produces new content based on past data used to train it.

However, sometimes it can't distinguish between true and false information and generates

false outputs known as hallucinations.

In one example, in 2023 a Google chatbot shared inaccurate information about which satellite first took pictures of a planet outside the Earth's solar system in a promotional video.

AI companies are aware that hallucinations can derail GenAI's attractiveness to businesses and are trying to reduce them, including using human trainers to teach the concept of fact and fiction.

Since getting onboard with OpenAI, Invisible says it has become AI training partners to most of the GenAI companies, including Cohere, AI21 and Microsoft. Cohere and AI21 confirmed they are clients. Microsoft did not confirm it is a client of Invisible.

Pedraza said: "These are companies that had training challenges, where their number one cost was compute power, and then the number two cost is quality training."

OpenAI, which started off the

frenzy around GenAI, has a team of researchers aptly named Human Data Team that works with AI trainers to gather specialised data for training its models like ChatGPT.

OpenAI researchers come up with experiments like reducing hallucinations or to improve writing style and work with AI trainers from Invisible and other vendors, a source familiar with the company's processes said.

At any point, dozens of experiments are being run, some with tools developed by OpenAI and others by tools of vendors, the person said.

Based on what the AI companies want, from getting better at Swedish history or doing financial modelling, Invisible hires workers with relevant degrees for those projects, reducing the burden of managing hundreds of trainers by the AI companies.

Pedraza said 1,000 contract workers catered to OpenAI alone.

The writers are from Reuters

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# Are we prepared for the monsoon?

COMMENT  
By Chia Chu Hang

**F**LOODING has been one of Malaysia's frequent disasters. Although officially classified as a natural disaster, many floods can be mitigated or even prevented.

However, Malaysia has consistently been ill-prepared for floods, including predictable monsoon floods, resulting in hundreds of millions in losses each year and, most devastatingly, loss of human lives and livelihoods.

The great flood at the end of 2021, lasting into 2022, is one such disaster. Caused by a tropical depression, it was the biggest flood in recent history, reportedly costing Malaysia RM6.1 billion and displacing more than 70,000 people across eight states.

In 2022, Malaysia lost RM622.4 million to floods, with Terengganu and Kelantan accounting for 60% of the losses. One of the most serious floods in 2022 occurred in December, caused by the northeast monsoon, affecting more than 72,000 victims across 20 districts in Johor, Kelantan, Pahang, Perak and Terengganu.

In 2023, Malaysia suffered even greater losses to floods, amounting to RM800 million.

Similar to 2022, one of the most serious floods last year happened at the end of the year when the northeast monsoon hit hardest, displacing over 25,000 people across 17 districts in Johor, Kelantan, Pahang, Sabah and Terengganu.

History shows that annual floods at the end of the year caused by the monsoon are inevitable. Yet, our flood mitigation efforts have been lacklustre. Despite millions and billions of ringgit being spent on flood mitigation projects, there has been little success.

The Auditor-General's Report on Selangor 2022 highlighted that out of 10 flood mitigation projects in flood-prone areas, only five succeeded.

Additionally, studies have identified four inadequacies in our flood risk management: Lack of coordination and communication;



Malaysia has been consistently ill-prepared for floods, resulting in hundreds of millions in losses each year. — ADIB RAWI YAHYA/SUNPIC

insufficient manpower and assets for logistics; low public awareness; and limited enforcement power and authority in flood mitigation.

The lack of enforcement power and authority is particularly concerning. The Department of Irrigation and Drainage (DID), our main agency in dealing with floods, has limited authority over new developments pertaining to flood mitigation, only providing technical advice without the power to reject development plans.

In the same vein, the National Disaster Management Agency (Nadma), despite being the national disaster management body, has a severely limited role, focusing mainly on coordinating actions during disasters. Additionally, Nadma lacks manpower, with insufficient staff at the district level, severely hampering its effectiveness.

Considering *La Nina* is expected to emerge at the end of 2024, along with the upcoming northeast monsoon season, which experts predict will have a higher risk of serious flooding, it is crucial to ask whether we are ready to face the inevitable monsoon floods. If the current events in the northern states are a benchmark of our flood management capabilities, the results are rather uninspiring.

Kedah, Penang and Perlis have been hit by a series of massive floods

triggered by heavy downpours. These floods have not only caused flash floods in certain areas but also raised the water levels of eight rivers in Kedah to dangerous levels, with four additional rivers at warning levels, further exacerbating the situation.

However, the severity of the floods could have been significantly reduced with proper mitigation measures.

According to reports, the flood in Perlis was due to prolonged rainfall, and could have been prevented or mitigated with effective prevention methods, which we currently lack.

Flood prevention involves not only mitigation projects like dams and drains but also the maintenance of these infrastructures and limiting developments that hinder flood prevention efforts.

The Madani administration has been keen on investing in flood mitigation projects. Budget 2024 allocated RM11.8 billion for 33 high-priority projects nationwide. In July, it was reported that 15 companies were selected to implement flood mitigation projects in seven states.

However, given the Auditor-General's 2022 report, there are concerns about whether this spending has been effective. On top of that, there is a lack of plans to maintain and reassess existing infrastructure, which not only could fail when needed most

but also exacerbate the situation.

One example is the breach of the embankment under the Sungai Golok Integrated River Basin Development project, where the embankment was damaged and breached due to heavy rainfall and strong currents.

While the embankment failure was not primarily due to a lack of maintenance, as the mitigation project was not yet finished, it illustrates the potential consequences of poorly maintained mitigation projects and their counterproductive effects.

The residents affected by the project reported that floodwaters became stagnant for almost a month after the construction of the embankment, whereas previously, floodwaters would recede a few days after the initial flood.

Needless to say, many issues need fixing, and it must be done quick. Hence, the government must commit to multiple strategies to enhance our flood management capabilities.

One important step is ensuring regular maintenance of drainage system to avoid clogging. Clogged drains are the most common cause of flash floods in Malaysia, yet little has been done to maintain them properly, leading to frequent clogs that catalyse flash floods, particularly on rainy days.

Weekly inspections of drains in flood-prone areas should be the minimum requirement to prevent flash floods.

Equally important is river maintenance. Rivers play a significant part in flood mitigation and our water supply. However, it seems there is no proper maintenance to keep them clean. As a result, trash and effluent accumulate, causing the riverbed to become shallower, increasing the risk of flooding during heavy rainfall.

Importantly, these measures can be implemented quickly without significant investment in resources and time, unlike the enlargement of drains and rivers, which require more time and effort.

This is not to say that the latter is inefficient. Deepening rivers can increase their capacity and speed up water flow. However, we still need

critical infrastructure such as retention ponds and stormwater tanks to discharge and store the extra water or we risk flooding downstream areas.

Other than that, granting DID the power to reject development plans that increase flood risk is a good step forward. At the same time, the government needs to enhance enforcement of logging moratoriums and increase efforts to stop illegal logging.

Although the previous administration approved a 15-year moratorium on new forest plantations in permanent forest reserves in Peninsular Malaysia in 2021, five states have licensed about 16,100ha of forest reserves for new plantations.

Moreover, Malaysia recorded 90 cases of illegal logging in 2022, with 60 cases in Sarawak alone. Logging, legal or otherwise, destroys local ecosystems and removes natural food protection. Putting a stop to logging expansion and curbing illegal logging will help achieve multiple goals.

The government has approved multiple flood mitigation projects costing over RM10 billion. It needs to closely monitor these projects to prevent corruption and ensure effectiveness.

Emir Research has always advocated for the Input-Output-Outcome-Impact framework to ensure every project and expenditure has a profound and lasting effect.

Implementing this framework to monitor the spending of relevant agencies, such as the DID or the Forestry Department, would reliably reduce the impact of floods.

The storm in the northern states is terrifying, but the northeast monsoon could be much worse. Thus, the government needs not only reaction plans to deal with the aftermath but also solid prevention plans to minimise flood damage.

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