

Happy Malaysia Day
16 September 2017



From Balai Ikhtisas Malaysia

29 SEPTEMBER 2017

CONDOLENCE MESSAGE

A dedicated and active supporter, Past President,
Exco and Board Member of BIM, nice and
friendly, will be sadly missed.
Heartfelt condolence to his family and loved ones.

OBITUARY



Mahesan
s/o P. S. Thilliampalam

(T. Mahesan) PJK, KMN

Age: 83

Passed away peacefully on **16th September 2017** leaving behind relatives and loved ones.

Cortège leaves **Fook Yee Parlour, No 32, Jalan PJS 3/34, Taman Sri Manja 46000, Petaling Jaya** on **18th September 2017** at **2pm** for cremation at **Nirvana Memorial Park, Jalan Pusara 21/1, Shah Alam.**

Contact

012-6022712 (Guna)
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ABOUT MEMBERS

CALLING ALL PROFESSIONALS

The Star, 11 June 2017

WHILE software developer, recruiter, database developer, information security specialist, data analyst, corporate tax specialist, payroll specialist, business intelligence consultant, regulatory specialist and marketing research specialist, are LinkedIn's "top 10" most-in-demand talents, those interested in traditionally-popular fields also have reason to be optimistic. Many crucial areas like medicine, engineering and accounting, are still thriving.

And, according to Malaysian Employers Federation executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan, the sales and marketing, hospitality, food and beverage line, are also hiring. He, however, says job seekers are reluctant to enter the sales and marketing profession, viewing the job as too demanding, especially with the need for English proficiency.

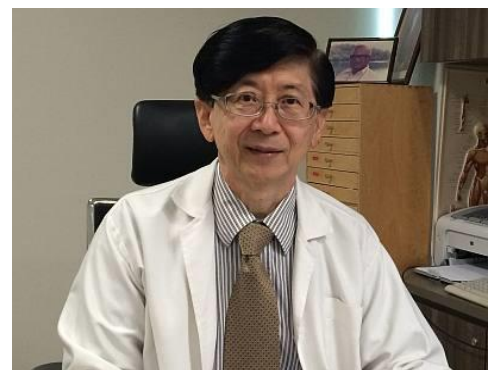
Multilingual talents for contact centres and customer service roles are also much-sought after, as are HR professionals to help companies map long-term growth plans, he says. Meanwhile, companies involved in ICT, IT-enabled services and business process outsourcing, education and manufacturing, will continue filling key positions.

"With new manufacturing hubs in Negri Sembilan, Johor and Penang, supply chain management experts well-versed in automation, process improvement, industrial engineering and research, are needed."

And, with financial institutions strengthening their governance structures, positions to manage anti-money laundering activities, sales and regulatory compliance, are opening up, he adds. "New rules and regulations for financial institutions are being introduced, so, there's a greater demand for risk managers and compliance professionals.

Medicine

With only 7,000 over medical specialists, including 4,000 in the public service, there's an overall shortage of specialists. It's not just the numbers that's the issue, but the need to maintain the high standard of specialists. On a positive note, there's a fair distribution of these specialists nationwide.



**Association of Specialists in Private
Medical Practice Malaysia president,
DR SNG KIM HOCK**

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We have more than 6,500 clinics and some 7,000 GPs equally spread out in the urban and rural areas. There are too many GPs. And now, with the government absorbing only the top 40% – 50% of new doctors who complete their four-year contracts in the service, there will be a huge spillover to the GP sector. Plus there's an influx of overseas-trained doctors. The existing moratorium on new medical colleges is a temporary solution. Unless issues of oversupply of doctors, and encroachment of private hospitals and diagnostic centres in primary care are addressed, the concept of family practice and personalised care envisioned by the Health Ministry will only be a dream.

The ministry should build more hospitals and create more posts. Medical schools must have their own teaching hospitals. And young doctors should be encouraged to explore avenues like lecturing, research and other non-clinical areas.



Malaysian Medical Association
(MMA) president,
DR RAVINDRAN R. NAIDU

Due to supply, demand and remuneration, there may be an oversupply in urban and semi-urban areas. But in rural areas, GPs are scarce. The Health Ministry can play an advisory role by providing databases for prospective GPs to open clinics at locations based on need. Doctors can be given tax rebates or other exemptions to entice them to practise in rural areas.

While there are reports of an oversupply, there are areas of undersupply within the profession waiting to be taken up.



Medical Practitioners Coalition Association
of Malaysia (MPCAM) vice-president,
DR RAJ KUMAR MAHARAJAH

The number of clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatric occupational therapists and psychiatric social workers in Malaysia is lagging, with the Philippines and Pakistan further up the field.

However, these countries merely churn out numbers that are not necessarily reflected in the scaling up of services. There are about 300 psychiatrists in the country, with a sizeable number in the private sector and concentrated in the Klang Valley. The ratio is probably 1:100,000, which isn't ideal. The WHO says it should be 1:50,000. We have about 16 clinical psychologists in government service, and some 30 or so nationwide. The pathetic number of clinical psychologists, especially in the public sector, is shocking.

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Similarly, the number of psychiatric occupational therapists and psychiatric social workers is dismal. There's an oversupply of doctors and a shortage of specialists. In the government service, salaries are standardised, irrespective of discipline, but in the private sector, a psychiatrist definitely earns less than his counterpart in most other specialities, because the practice of psychiatry hardly involves surgical, medical procedures or extensive investigations. But with increased awareness on mental health issues, the acceptance of mental illness and improved help-seeking behaviour, mental health professionals are much sought after these days, although it might still take longer for the psychiatrist to buy the de rigueur BMW compared to a surgeon.



Malaysian Mental Health
Association deputy president,
DATUK DR ANDREW MOHANRAJ



Malaysian Dental Association
(MDA) president,
DR CHOW KAI FOO

It's reasonable to say that lowering the dentist-population ratio will help ensure good oral healthcare services that are accessible and affordable. The more the merrier is generally true in dentistry as there are more dentists to treat all the oral health problems that are inherent in any population, provided the standard of training is good. Waiting time to see a dentist reduces, dentists are spread out more evenly in urban and rural areas, and accessibility is improved. Due to the law of demand and supply, treatment should become increasingly affordable.

Under or oversupply is tied closely to the demand and sophistication of demand, which in turn, is linked to the education level of the populace. So, the ideal dentist-population ratio depends on the level of oral health we as a nation want and the resources we are willing to commit. That's determined by how informed people are and what we can afford. Dentists are physicians who specialise in the mouth. We're not just concerned with your teeth, but also your overall health – physiologically, psychologically and socially.

Pharmaceutical

We're producing over 1,300 pharmacy graduates yearly. The recommended ratio by WHO for developed countries is 1:2,000. Our ratio to population is 1:2,837 and 59% of registered pharmacists are in the public sector. There should be a proper count on practising pharmacists who have direct contact with patients, rather than merely the number of pharmacists in the registry. But whether we need 1,300 pharmacy graduates yearly, is for the Government to decide.

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If there's a proper national plan on healthcare involving both public and private sectors under the 2050 National Transformation (TN50) initiative, we can identify the needs and quality of pharmacists.



Malaysian Pharmaceutical
Society (MPS) president,
AMRAHI BUANG

The current healthcare system isn't sustainable. There must be a state-owned national healthcare insurance scheme, a reasonable mechanism to control medicine pricing, proper zoning of private clinics and community pharmacies to serve the rakyat, and an integrated healthcare system involving primary, secondary and tertiary care in this country. The Government must make a stand on dispensing separation.

Engineering

In developed nations, there should be at least one engineer to a group of 75 to 150. Last year, Malaysia's population stood at about 31.7 million, so with 200,000 engineers, we're close to the 1:150 ratio. But we should target a ratio of 1:100 by 2020 to speed up our transformation to a developed nation.

Geo-technical, water, marine, mechanical, electrical and electronic, system, IT, and process engineers are in demand. In the next three years, two million jobs in computer, mathematics and engineering-related fields will be created worldwide.

But many youngsters don't want to be engineers because there's a misconception that we earn less than other professionals.

We earn just as much but we're low profile, so, engineering doesn't seem as glamorous. People think our job is dirty, difficult, and dangerous, but many engineers work in a comfortable and clean environment.

Many CEOs of listed companies are engineers. We've been actively promoting interest in engineering, but the quality and trainability of local graduates are a major concern.

As the country's biggest employer, the Government can motivate students to take up engineering by promoting engineers to top positions in the civil service.



The Institution of Engineers
Malaysia (IEM) president,
TAN YEAP CHIN

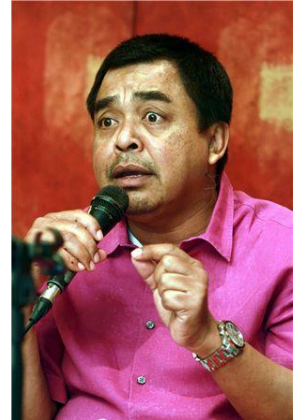
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Public transport

There are some 300,000 commercial drivers nationwide. Oversupply is an understatement if you take into account the illegal e-hailing drivers.

But if you look at taxis alone, it's just nice because not all cabbies drive full-time.

But once e-hailing laws are passed, there will be an oversupply of taxi drivers because I expect at least 70% of e-hailing drivers to quit and join us.



Big Blue Taxi Service founder,
DATUK SHAMSUBAHRIN ISMAIL

Education

When talking about teacher-to-student ratio, we must be specific about whether we are referring to enough teachers to teach our students, or enough subject teachers to teach a particular subject.



National Union of The Teaching
Profession (NUTP) secretary-general,
HARRY TAN

And, of our 450,000 teachers, some – like counsellors, administrators in government departments, and those teaching in colleges – don't enter classes, nor do they teach specific subjects. So, let's confine the question of whether there are enough teachers, to secondary and primary schools.

The best learning is done in small classes involving personal interaction with teachers. A student learns better with more face time at school. It should be one teacher to one student, so whatever number of teachers we have, it's never going to be enough if we talk about the student's education. There will always be an undersupply of teachers in the country if we want to be ahead of the rest.

Legal

There are approximately 7,100 law firms and 17,300 lawyers in Peninsular Malaysia who fall under the purview of the Bar Council.

There is no data to suggest whether there's an under or oversupply of the profession (but) there is ample work in the areas of civil and commercial litigation, criminal law and conveyancing.

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Lawyers who are newly-called to the Bar are still able to gain employment, provided they are not fussy about the type of firm, or the type of work undertaken by the firm.



Bar Council president,
GEORGE VARUGHESE

The Bar Council has been developing and advocating for the Common Bar Course to be implemented as the single entry point to the legal profession for both local and foreign law graduates, (because) with globalisation and the liberalisation of the legal sector, it's imperative that Malaysian lawyers are able to compete with their counterparts from other jurisdictions.

Insurance

The number of insurance agents stands at around 80,000. It's been the same for many years. The ratio-to-population is 1:375. In Taiwan, the ratio is 1:77 – that's 300,000 agents servicing a population of 23 million.

There, the insured population is 260%. In Malaysia, only 54% are insured. To achieve Bank Negara's insurance penetration rate to 75% by 2020, we need more agents.

Most graduates want to "work" for a fixed salary of RM3,000 to RM4,000. But a career in life insurance offers a stable income of RM100,000 per annum after three years in business, if you work for it.



National Association of Malaysian
Life Insurance and Family Takaful
Advisors (Namlifa) president,
JAMES BONG

Spa

The industry is booming in a very big way, but it's the foreigners who are benefiting. We have about 3,000 local spa therapists and are still short of 3,000.

Jobs seen as "hard work" have been taken over by labour from neighbouring countries. The spa industry is no different. Therapists from China pay to come here to work. They work 15 hours a day, seven days a week.

Their attitude is different from locals. But eventually, we must stop relying on foreigners. A 25-year-old Indonesian can earn RM10,000 a month here as a spa director. Where are the locals? We must take the industry to the next level. There's lots of money to be made, but Malaysians must get ready for real-world demands.

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Everyone wants to be doctor, engineer or lawyer, and then they complain that there are no jobs. Malaysians don't want to do what they consider "tough jobs". And, some still have a negative perception of the spa industry. But that's changing.

Accounting

Under the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP), it's envisaged that our nation will need 60,000 accountants by 2020 to transform Malaysia into a developed nation.

The profession is versatile and offers diverse opportunities. It goes beyond the "accountant" title as job designations nowadays are more creative. The profession includes financial controller, chief financial officer, vice-president of finance, financial director and so forth.

We're very much in need of accountants. There's a low number of accounting graduates registered with the MIA. There's fear of how work-life balance may be affected by the profession.



Malaysian Institute of Accountants
(MIA) Chief Executive Officer,
DR NURMAZILAH MAHZAN

The younger generation see emerging areas within the technological space as more attractive. To increase the number of accountants, the MIA has intensified efforts to engage with schools and institutions of higher learning.

Architecture

The number of architects should be increased. To achieve the ideal ratio of 1:4,000, we need 7,500 architects. The present ratio of 1:15,000, is far below the ratio in most developed countries.

It's time for us to build capacity to compete with international firms. Local firms are facing increasing competition from these firms, both here and abroad.

Due to the current soft market in the local development sector, the demand for architects is lower. But with new infrastructure, townships, housing and building projects starting to grow again, the market is expected to improve. Demand for architects will start to increase by 2020.



Malaysian Association of Wellness
and Spa (MAWSPA) president,
DR BASKARAN KOSTHI



Malaysian Institute of Architects
(PAM) president,
EZUMI HARZANI ISMAIL

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TAMAN TUGU GREENOVATION DESIGN COMPETITION 2017 **4 September 2017 – 16 October 2017**

Khazanah Nasional Berhad with the collaboration of the Institute of Landscape Architects Malaysia (ILAM) is calling the Malaysian public: groups or individuals from various walks of life, to be part of Malaysia's latest green legacy - the TAMAN TUGU.

Taman Tugu Greenovation Design Competition is an idea based design competition open to all Malaysians. The challenge in this competition is to design innovative benches or gazebos that will be located within the 27 hectares Taman Tugu. These will serve as iconic features of the park, which is second to none.

Alternatively, you can also download the form via ILAM website,

<http://www.ilamalaysia.org/greenovation>

The submission will open until 16th October 2017.

We would appreciate if you could disseminate the attached brochure to all your organization members.



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DENGUE STUDY RAISES CONCERNS IN MALAYSIA

The Malay Mail, 7 September 2017

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 7 — Healthcare practitioners and consumers should take cognizance of the various phases of dengue attack, failing which could lead to fatalities.

The vice-president of the Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society, Bharati Suresh Chand, said there were a few areas where information about dengue was lacking and that was where most healthcare professionals and consumers overlooked the symptoms of the disease.

“A lot of patients, when they have a fever, only know about the high fever symptoms of dengue. But there is a phase in dengue, called the critical phase, that comes after the febrile phase.

“When you go into the critical phase, your system shuts down and there is no fever. So there is a possibility when a patient walks into the clinic or pharmacy, and we as healthcare professionals only look for the fever, we may think and exclude dengue,” she said during a panel discussion at the ‘Unveiling of the South East Asia Dengue Survey’ programme yesterday.

The febrile phase, lasting from three to seven days, is when the patient develops a sudden onset of high fever, which is often accompanied by headache, myalgia, and gastrointestinal symptoms.



From left) Dr Naidu, Pelier, Bharati Suresh, Dr Yeong and Low sharing their views on the survey results

It was unveiled earlier at the event, organised by Allied Against Dengue, that 80 per cent of the 500 Malaysian respondents surveyed were worried about dengue but only a quarter of them felt prepared or understood the disease.

According to the South-East Asia Dengue Survey that was commissioned by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) Consumer Healthcare, despite the widespread concern, understanding of the risks, symptoms and management of dengue was severely lacking.

“Just over half of individuals surveyed described themselves as knowledgeable in recognising the symptoms and only 33 per cent are aware that there is no cure,” the survey said.

This particular dengue survey is a first-of-its-kind commissioned by GSK Consumer Healthcare, and its results have made people realise just how crucial dengue awareness is.

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United in their efforts to address the educational needs across the region, Allied Against Dengue (AAD) coalition yesterday announced the joining of four new partners in their mission of increasing advocacy on dengue prevention and management through engagement, empowerment and education.

The partners are UCSI University Malaysia, Caring Pharmacy Group Berhad, Apex Pharmacy Marketing and MIMS Health Today.

"This is something we all need to work together to get the message across," said GSK's South-East Asia Area Marketing Director for Pain Relief and Respiratory, Heather Pelier, who related the struggle she went through with her son who was infected with dengue 18 months ago.

"When you've lived through it, and seen what it's like first-hand, you would want to make sure you know what you can do to manage and prevent it," said Pelier.

"Dengue is a viral fever, and we do not want anyone to be further infected by it. We need to give them the confidence to be able to say, 'I have all the tools and understanding in my hand to be able to counteract this problem,'" she added.

Also present were UCSI deputy vice chancellor (academic and research) Associate Prof Dr Yeong Siew Wei, Guardian Health and Beauty Sdn Bhd marketing director Christina Low, Cedric Chua from Apex Pharmacy Marketing and Laura Lai from Caring Pharmacy Group Berhad.

President of the Malaysian Medical Association Dr Ravindran Naidu said the media plays a major role in disseminating the information to the public.

"We should start it from schools so the children know how to control, prevent, and take action when dengue strikes.

"The public, healthcare professionals and pharmacists need to constantly keep a lookout for the signs and symptoms of dengue," said Dr Ravindran, who believes children should be enlightened about the dangers of dengue from a young age.

Given the distinct awareness of the impact of dengue and its severity, it comes as no surprise that about 90 per cent of individuals who participated in the survey were keen to learn more about the disease.

This was particularly so for those who have been personally affected or if the topic of dengue is highly visible in the media. Around half of them believed that sufficient levels of information was not readily available for them.

The latest venture of AAD to garner social empowerment against dengue is the AAD Run, set to take place on September 17.

"The AAD Run will bring together all parties to demonstrate the strength of our collaboration, with proceeds of the race contributing to future initiatives to drive dengue education and awareness across Malaysia," Pelier said.

"By joining forces to leverage our capabilities and taking action, we come ever closer to defeating dengue."

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ROLE OF PHARMACISTS HAS CHANGED, MPS SAYS

Free Malaysia Today, 15 September 2017

Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society supports a separation in roles of doctors and pharmacists, saying primary healthcare clinics are the only ones who do not practise separation of dispensing from prescribing.

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society (MPS) today clarified the role of pharmacists after some general practitioners (GPs) blamed pharmacies for their drop in business.

MPS president Amrahi Buang said pharmacists were no longer just dispensers of medication but also partners in health care and providers of care for consumers and patients.

“The role of a pharmacist in the community setting has evolved. The community pharmacists today assist patients in self-monitoring of their blood glucose levels and blood pressure levels.

“They also provide medication counselling for non-communicable diseases and help to increase patient compliance and adherence to medication therapy,” he said in a statement today.

In a recent FMT article, several GPs had said pharmacies were behind their “lacklustre” business as pharmacists were now assuming the functions of doctors by diagnosing patients, recommending alternatives to prescription medicines and even dispensing medication without prescriptions.

One of the doctors said business at his clinic had decreased by some 30% over the past



year, adding that it was important for the public to realise that doctors prescribe specific medications according to a patient’s condition.

“Pharmacists cannot diagnose patients, that’s what doctors are for,” he said. Addressing the claim that pharmacists dispense medication without prescriptions, Amrahi said there were strict rules governing the supply of medicines at clinics and pharmacies.

“Only pharmacists with a Type A licence are allowed to sell medicines by retail to patients. As per Malaysian law, only board-registered pharmacists can apply for the Poison A licence which gives them the right to provide medicine by retail.”

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He said only Group B poisons required prescriptions, adding that these were hard to come by because most doctors refuse to release prescriptions for them.

“This puts the patient at a cost disadvantage and leaves the pharmacist in a situation of having to decline service to patients with chronic diseases on long-term medication.” Amrahi said there was also a lack of clarity on the term “over-the-counter” (OTC) medication.

“The term over-the-counter (OTC) medicine is defined as medicines that are not controlled under the Poisons Act 1952.

“Examples of OTC medicines are non-poison cough preparations, sore throat preparations, anti-diarrhoea preparations and anti-constipation preparations, among others.

“These types of medicines are available at department stores, convenience stores, clinics and pharmacies, and sundry shops. It is possible that due to the vast amount of places to get these medications, clinics may be feeling the pinch.”

In Malaysia, unfortunately, there was no separation of dispensing from prescribing at the private primary community level, despite the fact that this had been proven at the worldwide level to provide additional patient safety, he said.

“The Poison Act 1952 does give doctors the full freedom to dispense medication by themselves after examining a patient.

“However they do not have the freedom to supply medicines by retail from their clinics without providing consultation to the patient first. This legislation is in place to prevent harm to the person seeking treatment.

“Patients not only have the right to request for a prescription, they also have the right to know the name (brand/generic) of the medicinal product they have been provided, and finally the medication needs to be handed over to the patient by the doctor and not the clinic staff who may or may not have the correct pharmaceutical training.”

He agreed with those who said a separation in the roles of doctors and pharmacists would save doctors a large amount of expenditure in terms of medication procurement and management of stock.

“Separation of dispensing happens in the public hospital, private hospital, and public health clinic setting. Almost three quarters of the health care system practises separation of dispensing except for the quarter that does not, namely the primary healthcare clinics,” he said.

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MPS agrees with doctors view on cost saving with dispensing separation

FULL TEXT OF RESPOND TO THE FREE MALAYSIA AND MIMS TODAY NEWS

REFERRING to the posting which was published on Free Malaysia Today news portal as well as MIMS Today the Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society (MPS) would like stand in agreement with a certain Dr Khatijah who wisely claimed that the separation of the roles of doctors and pharmacists would save the doctors a huge portion of expenditure in terms of medications procurement as well as managing the movement of the stocks.

“Separation of dispensing happens in the public hospitals, private hospitals and public health clinics. The only area that has no separation of roles is the private primary healthcare involving GP and community pharmacists.” said Tn Hj Amrahi, President of Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society to reporters.

The roles of a pharmacist in the community setting has evolved. The community pharmacists today assist patients in self-monitoring of their blood glucose levels and blood pressure levels. They also provide medication counseling for non-communicable diseases and help to increase patient compliance and adherence to medication therapy. Pharmacists are no longer mere dispensers of medication, they are also synergistic partners in health care and providers of care for consumers and patients.

Addressing the comment that pharmacist dispense medication without prescriptions, Amrahi further stated, “Firstly, we must be clear that only group B poisons require prescriptions. However, the public will concur that these are hard to come by because most doctors in the private primary care setting refuse to release prescriptions, thus putting the patient at a cost disadvantage and leaves the pharmacist in a situation of having to decline service for patient with chronic disease on long term medication.

He further stated, “There are strict rules to the supply of medicines in clinics and pharmacies. Only Pharmacists with a Type A license can provide medicines by retail to patients. As per Malaysian law, only board registered pharmacists can apply for the Poison A license which gives them the right to provide medicine by retail.”

He added that there is also lack of clarity on the term OTC. The term Over-The-Counter (OTC) medicine is defined as medicines that are not controlled under the Poisons Act 1952. Examples of OTC medicines are non-poison cough preparations, sore throat preparations, anti-diarrhoea preparations and anti-constipation preparations amongst others. These types

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of medicines are available in department stores, convenience stores, clinics, pharmacies, and sundry shops. It is possible that due to the vast number of places to get these medication, private clinics may be feeling the pinch.

Unfortunately, in Malaysia, there is no separation of dispensing from prescribing at the private primary community level even though at worldwide level it has been shown to provide additional patient safety.

The Poison Act 1952 does give doctors the full freedom to dispense medication by themselves after examining a patient. However, they do not have the freedom to supply medicines by retail from their clinics without providing consultation to the patient first. This legislation is in place to prevent harm to the person seeking treatment.

Patients not only have the right to request for a prescription, they also have the right to know the name (brand/generic) of the medicinal product they have been provided and finally the medication needs to be handed over to the patient by the doctor him/her self and not the clinic staff who may or may not have the correct pharmaceutical training.

In his closing remarks, Amrahi expressed disappointed that certain quarters always used pharmacists as the punching bag. Maybe it is time to conduct a thorough survey as to why GP's are shutting down? "

Going to war benefits no party and we must join forces with the authorities to ensure the doctors get their dues via consultation fees and pharmacist get to serve the community as the party that vets and dispense the prescription. This will ultimately bring benefits to the rakyat.

AMRAHI BUANG

President

Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society

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IN WAKE OF TAHFIZ TRAGEDY, PAM OFFERS TO HELP AUTHORITIES ENHANCE FIRE SAFETY AWARENESS

NST, 15 September 2017

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Institute of Architects (Pam) has offered to work with local authorities and the Fire and Rescue Department to enhance the safety aspects of buildings and educate the public on fire safety.

Commenting on the tahfiz fire tragedy which killed 23 people here yesterday, Pam president Ezumi Harzani Ismail said local authorities should assist building owners and operators to improve building safety.

“It is important for building owner or operators to engage professional architects and engineers to design (buildings which are) in compliance with safety requirements set under the laws. The purpose of these laws is to ensure that all buildings are designed and constructed properly and are safe for occupation,” he said.

Ezumi said in the case of schools, in particular, boarding schools, stringent requirements for emergency egress should apply under the seventh schedule in the Uniform Building By-Laws (UBBL).

“Dead ends are not permitted, so there must be a minimum of two exit doors from any room with occupancy of more than six persons,” he said.

Ezumi added that each building under this category must be equipped with two or more staircases.



The Malaysian Institute of Architects (Pam), Ar Ezumi Harzani Ismail

“Besides these passive safety designs, there are many other fire safety requirements that need to be fulfilled to ensure the safety of a building and its occupants, such as an illuminated emergency exit sign, a heat detection system, a smoke detection system, a fire alarm, a fire extinguisher, a hose reel and emergency lighting.

“While there is demand to have more religious schools and hostel buildings, the operators of the schools should not compromise on safety standards.

“As architects, it is always a special concern to us when lives are lost through building failures like this,” Ezumi said, adding that Pam, as the national institute of architects, will continue efforts to improve fire safety awareness among professional and members of public.

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MPS ON PHARMACY BILL: MEDICATION AND PATIENT SAFETY FIRST

Newstream Asia, 27 September 2017

27 September 2017, Puchong, Malaysia –

Referring to the recent statements from the Health Minister on the Pharmacy Bill, President of the Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society, Amrahi Buang in a recent press release said, “Pharmacists and consumers are on the same page when it comes to the Pharmacy Bill; we want medication and patient safety.”

It was reported that recently, the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Association (FOMCA) CEO Paul Selvaraj said that patients, as consumers, have the right to make informed buying decisions and should not be forced to buy medication from private practitioners.

Reinforcing this notion even further, Amrahi said: “MPS is on the same page and we are on board with empowering patients by educating them on their rights to a prescription. We have launched an ‘Ask for your Prescription’ campaign since last year.”



“He added, “However, we have advised to make it mandatory for primary care doctors to provide a complete prescription as it will benefit the patient. It is easier to educate a doctor to provide a complete prescription than to educate a whole nation to ask for a complete prescription.”

When asked about what the pharmacy community thought about the dispensation separation issue, Amrahi said it isn’t news to the pharmacy community and with current laws in place, doctors are still allowed to dispense.

Commenting further, he added, “If the government chooses to maintain the status quo we can only do our part by voicing out the need for a safety net in the private primary care setting. We are not at war with the doctors, and that must be clear. We are advocating medication and patient safety as well as demanding the right to practice what we have been educated for.”

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Taking to social media to voice out his opinion, Lim Kean Ping, a community pharmacist wrote, “Judges, lawyers and policemen carry out their jobs independently to protect the rights of the citizens. The same should be in the healthcare sector. No one should diagnose, treat, dispense, compound, counsel, and monitor medical progression without anyone to check and balance. Healthcare is never a one man show.”

MPS reports that there has been similar thoughts aired on social media by other community pharmacists, with the majority of them hoping that doctors would provide complete prescriptions to patients who request for one.

“I have received prescriptions that only have the brand name without any dosing instructions and attempts to contact the prescribers sometimes fail, so I have to send the patient back to the clinic,” shared one community pharmacist by the name of Santhanathan Rajendram.

Amrahi agrees with the sentiments of the pharmacy community: “Five sectors out of 6 are already carrying out separation of medicine dispensing – the public sector in the primary care, secondary care and tertiary care and the private sector in the secondary and tertiary care. The only sector that did not have the separation system is the private primary health care.”

Amrahi encouraged the public to attend the World Pharmacist Day 2017 celebration on 7 October 2017 at Aeon Mall Bukit Raja, Klang as MPS, in collaboration with Selangor State Health Department and the Pharmaceutical Services Division will be showcasing pharmacists and the roles they play in the nation’s healthcare system as per the theme “From research to health care: Your pharmacist is at your service.”

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CURRENT ISSUES

KL BAR HELPS WITH ONLINE MIGRATION OF LAND TITLES

The Star, 25 August 2017

KUALA LUMPUR: The implementation of the new “e-Tanah” system to improve land administrative processes in Kuala Lumpur has caused some application delays.

But the Kuala Lumpur Bar has teamed up with the Federal Territory Kuala Lumpur Land and Mines director’s office to expedite the migration of land titles online to resolve the issue.

The director’s office said as of Aug 18, they had migrated about 68% of 500,000 titles registered in Kuala Lumpur.

The KL Bar’s Corporate and Conveyancing Committee chairman Jacky Loi said the KL Bar and Lands and Mines office have worked out a system whereby the titles for urgent cases will be migrated online first.

“On our end, we help by vetting our members’ applications before sending them to the director’s office on a daily basis. The land office has given us a limit of 100 title applications per day for urgent cases,” said Loi.

Initially, there were two conditions for urgent cases – if the KL Bar’s members were advising the banks to release the balance purchase price and if the completion date of the sale and purchase agreement was less than three weeks away.

“With this process, we have been receiving an average of 60 applications a day,” said Loi. He added that more categories have been opened for members to expedite the conversion of titles.

Loi said the Bar Council of Malaysia and the Selangor Bar Committee were also compiling requests from lawyers practising outside of Kuala Lumpur and in Selangor.

“The Selangor Bar is also compiling its own title requests, while the Bar Council’s Conveyancing Practice Committee will be handling all other states,” he said.

The “e-Tanah” system allowed the public to apply for land searches, submit applications for consent or approvals, land subdivision and to check the status of applications online.

Other facilities include online payment for quit rent.

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The system will also reduce the overall processing time for strata titles by the end of this year.

Recently, several readers of *The Star* had complained that they found it difficult to perform online title searches at the land office.

Some, who were in the midst of completing their sale and purchase agreement, said the migration had delayed the process

Prior to the migration process, the director's office stated, it had met with the Kuala Lumpur Bar and Selangor Bar committees to inform them about the new system and the conversion process.

Even so, there have been road bumps, especially with problematic titles such as those with incomplete plans or those which had legal issues over ownership.

For the latter, they would not be migrated until the legal issues were resolved.

"Officers physically inspect all titles, so the process needs time," it said.

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CLEARING MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT CREDIT REPORTING AGENCIES

The Star, 5 September 2017

THE country's largest private credit reporting agency, CTOS, has been in operation for over 26 years, but several misconceptions still remain about its role.

While it is known that the agency helps credit grantors like banks and financial institutions make better, and more informed decisions, it is a lesser known fact that it also enables consumers to take charge of their own credit ratings. Operating under the ambit of the Credit Reporting Agencies (CRA) Act 2010, CTOS facilitates credit extensions by empowering individuals as well as businesses with better access to crucial credit information.

In essence, it aims to provide a form of "transparency" between consumers and lenders to improve access to credit.

While lenders gain access to information about their potential clients, individuals seeking credit are also able to use CTOS' services to better manage their credit profiles and keep them up to date.

The agency desires to shift the country's financing landscape to one that is more consumer-centric, whereby individuals are empowered to manage their own creditworthiness and be rewarded with faster access to credit and at lower borrowing cost.



Martin: Understanding one's credit standing is important for every Malaysian.

Through education and awareness programmes, it aims to help consumers make smarter financial decisions by understanding their credit scores and knowing how to utilise them to achieve their goals.

By providing this service, the agency is also preventing Malaysians from falling into the trap of taking up more loans than they can handle, leading to insolvency.

According to the statistics from the Insolvency Department, one in four bankruptcy cases in the country between 2011 to 2015 was caused by the inability to service loans taken for the purchase of vehicles.

Other top reasons for bankruptcy among Malaysians are housing loans, followed by personal and business loans.

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In 2016, Malaysian courts declared 82,383 individuals as bankrupt.

Household debt in Malaysia also remains relatively high, at 88.4% of the country's GDP.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

- **The right to access credit information.**
Individuals with credit profiles can request for their credit status from CTOS.
- **Your right to dispute incorrect credit information**
Individuals have the right to challenge or dispute the credit report if it is found to contain incorrect information.
- **Your right to request for information regarding unfavorable credit action**
If an individual applies for a loan and it is rejected by the credit provider based on information provided by a credit reporting agency, the individual has the right to access the said credit report.

“At a time when Malaysians are faced with the rising cost of living and stagnant salaries, the role of agencies such as CTOS becomes increasingly crucial.

“The public largely remains unaware about its role, as well as what individuals can do in order to ensure their credit information is accurate and up-to-date,” said CTOS Group CEO Dennis Martin.

What they do

As a credit reporting agency, CTOS' core function is to collect and process credit information of individuals' and businesses' borrowings and repayments, and provide this information to credit grantors.

As the country's main private credit reporting agency and among the pioneers in the industry, CTOS maintains one of the most comprehensive databases of credit information of over 10 million individuals and two million companies in Malaysia.

Basically, whenever an individual applies for a loan, credit card or even an insurance scheme, he or she is creating credit history.

Based on the individual's repayment behaviour and other factors, credit reporting agencies, such as CTOS, gather from its users, as well as from the public domain and offer the information as a service to credit grantors.



Be in the know: Individuals and businesses should determine the financial status of prospective customers, partners or suppliers before committing to important financial decisions.

Credit grantors, such as banks, will then utilise this information to make decisions about whether to provide credit such as loans or credit cards to the individual.

In Malaysia, CTOS' services are widely used by banking and financial institutions, insurance companies, large corporations, legal firms, businesses and state bodies.

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CTOS has three main customer segments, which are the banking and financial institutions, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as well as consumers.

Banking and financial institutions use data from CTOS to evaluate credit applications, account openings and portfolio reviews, while SMEs use the data to evaluate and monitor their trade counterparts. Consumers, meanwhile, can use the MyCTOS Score report to access and take charge of their credit profiles.

How it works

A credit report is essentially a record of an individual's borrowings and repayments. The information on a credit report typically includes your personal information such as your name, address, date of birth, and employment information.

It states your credit information such as your credit card accounts, mortgages and car loans, and may also include the terms of your credit – how much you owe your creditors, and your history of making payments.

Your public record also appears on your credit report – this may include information about any court judgments against the individual, or whether the person has previously filed for bankruptcy.

Having access to such information not only empowers businesses to make more informed decisions, it also allows individuals to ensure that they have access to the best financing terms.

“Understanding your credit standing is important for every Malaysian.



An individual with a healthy credit profile has the advantage of negotiating better interest rates with the credit provider and is more likely to gain approvals much faster compared to a person with a weak credit profile. “Among the common misconceptions about CTOS is that they blacklist individuals with poor credit records,” said Martin.

CTOS does not blacklist

In reality, CTOS does not blacklist anyone. The agency merely provides credit information to its subscribers, after which, decisions on credit applications are made exclusively by the lenders or credit grantors themselves.

These decisions are made in accordance to the lender's risk appetite, business policies and strategies.

Another issue is the handling of personal data by a private agency, which can be sensitive and also dangerous, especially if the information falls into the wrong hands.

CTOS, as a registered agency under the CRA Act 2010, is legally empowered to collect and process information pertinent to credit evaluation.

Access to this information, however, is strictly limited and controlled.

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Your rights as an individual

It is your right to have access to your credit information or credit report. The CRA Act 2010 empowers consumers with the right to access, dispute and even request further information about their credit profiles, and this can be used to their advantage.

CTOS says its goal is to not only provide lenders with crucial information, but also to encourage the public to take ownership and understand their credit scores.

By providing individuals with access to their credit information, the agency hopes to help individuals manage their personal finances and make sound credit decisions.

While the agency regularly updates its database based on the available information from statutory bodies, its subscribers and public sources such as government gazettes, newspapers and court filings, it also accepts requests to update its information, given that there is sufficient proof and the necessary documentation.

By updating your credit information, you have the power to ensure that CTOS is able to provide the most accurate and up-to-date information to the banks or financial institution that you are seeking credit from.

Individuals, however, cannot choose to completely remove their information from the CTOS database.

Growing poorer ... inflation versus living cost

StarBiz 11 Sep 2017 Comment ANTHONY DASS Anthony Dass is chief economist and head at AmBank Group Research

IF a household wakes up in the morning and heads to the local grocery store only to find out that the local currency is not stretching as far at the store, it is incorrect to say the household is merely imagining things.

With prices generally on the uptrend, one is likely to hear a lot about rising inflation and living cost. What do these terms really mean? How do they affect one's daily life?

Imagine it is a situation where both the income of households and the prices of the goods and services increase by the same percentage.

In this scenario, while the value of the currency would have shrunk due to inflation, in contrast it will be neither difficult nor easier to maintain the same real standard of living.

But this is a hypothetical situation. In most cases the rise in household income which tends to mirror the consumer price inflation is still lower than the living cost.

While both the living cost and inflation generally measure and compare prices of goods and services, yet they both de-

The living cost view is often confused with inflation. Under normal circumstances, the living cost concept arises from the role of money as a medium of exchange. When a household says the cost of living has increased, it generally means that it is harder to maintain a given standard of living on a given income.

Simply put, the one dollar today is much smaller than let us say 10 years ago. What it

means is that the household in today's environment will end up being satisfied with fewer goods or services or save less or work harder to maintain the current living standard.

What is inflation all about? It can be best understood as a change in the value of unit of the local currency. When there is inflation, it simply tells us that the value of the unit of the local currency is smaller for all transactions.

in the living cost will hurt household and make them poorer.

The harm from inflation is more subtle as it makes it harder to plan for the future and so it discourages savings and investment and also erode the real value of cash and other assets that have fixed nominal values.

Because the rate of inflation typically becomes more variable, it increases uncertainty and makes markets work less efficiently and slows economic growth.

In the meantime, the effects of inflation are the same for everyone, but changes in the living cost varies from place to

scribe different economic conditions and situation.

For instance, a household wanting to know more about the income level needs to determine the affordable average lifestyle in a given area, will be referring to living cost.

Meanwhile, if the household is seeking to find out how much prices are rising or falling over a period of time, it will be appropriate to look at the inflation levels.

Harmful in different ways

Meanwhile, inflation and the living cost are both harmful in different ways. An increase

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place and from person to person. If inflation shrinks the unit of account by 5%, then the real values of anything will also fall by 5% . In contrast, the change in general prices of goods and services will affect people's cost of living differently.

For instance, rise in the price of heating fuel will hurt those in cold regions more than those in warm regions. An increase in the price of meat does no harm to vegetarians. The living cost in New York does not necessarily keep pace with that in Detroit.

Bottom line

Households and economists find different patterns in the storm of price data each month. Consumers look for changes in the cost of living. Typical cost of living calculations take into account will be the prices for food, shelter, clothing, transportation, utilities, health care, education and entertainment. There is hardly any official cost of living metric provided in many countries including Malaysia.

Economists, instead, look for situations that are relevant to policy. Assuming there is a conflict in an oil-producing state which sends the price of gasoline higher, so what? There is little the central banks can do

about it. At best, to calm the waters they hold the interest rates steady.

Meanwhile, an upward rise in inflation even by a few basis points per month or should inflation stay stubbornly sticky may allow the central bank to show that the time has come to begin a gradual tightening of policy.

To conclude, the consumer price inflation is measured based on changes in a set basket of consumer goods and services tends to get into a hot debate, especially on its reliability as a good indicator to reflect the real inflation level which is the purchasing power of money.

In the meantime, households will continue examining their monthly data which will determine their living cost. While the effects of each type of inflation are similar, the underlying causes are not necessarily the same.

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MALAYSIA PALM OIL STOCKPILES UP IN AUGUST

The Star, 12 September 2017



Still climbing: August exports had risen 6.43 from July to 1.49 million tonnes, beating analyst expectations of 1.42 million tonnes.

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian palm oil stockpiles climbed again in August, but did not breach the two-million-tonne mark due to stronger-than-expected exports of the commodity, used to churn out products ranging from chocolate to shampoo.

Inventories of the tropical oil rose 8.79% from July to 1.94 million tonnes, data from industry regulator the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB) showed yesterday, the highest level since February 2016.

Growing stocks in the world's No.2 palm producer, could dampen benchmark prices for the oil, which gained 2% last week.

They stood at around RM2,780 a tonne yesterday.

"Although we are slightly positive that stock levels are lower than expected, they are still climbing," said Ivy Ng, an industry analyst at CIMB Research.

The data showed that August exports had risen 6.43% from July to 1.49 million tonnes, beating analyst expectations of 1.42 million tonnes.

"Exports have done better than estimated, which is why stocks were below the expected two million tonne level," Ng said.

Demand for palm oil is expected to be well-supported in September ahead of major festivals in top consumers India and China the following month.

"We are optimistic on demand due to the Diwali and mid-autumn festivals in October. We should see improvements in September exports ahead of (those celebrations)," Ng added. The gains in stockpiles came despite production declining 0.9% from July to 1.81 million tonnes.

Palm oil output in Malaysia is seen recovering in the second half of this year as the crop damaging effects of an El Nino weather pattern fade.

Output is set to recover this quarter, but analysts and planters say trees are still seeing some lingering impact from the 2015 El Nino.

A Thomson Reuters survey had pegged inventory levels rising 6.5% to 1.9 million tonnes in August.

Production was seen down 1.5% at 1.8 million tonnes.

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EMPOWERING THE DISABLED TO BE SELF-RELIANT

The Star, 12 September 2017

THERE are 24,193 severely disabled persons in Malaysia, according to statistics compiled by Social Welfare Department (JKM) up to last year.

In the 11th Malaysia Plan, the Government announced that independent living centres (ILC) would be set up in the country to improve their quality of life.

According to independentliving.org, the disabled want self-determination, self-respect and equal opportunities.

Independent living postulates that disabled people are the best experts on their needs and must take the initiative, individually and collectively, in designing and promoting better solutions.

JKM Persons with Disabilities Development Department senior principal assistant director N. Pathmanathan said ILCs would provide services and facilities to allow the severely disabled to live independently and have a better quality of life.



The Independent Living and Training Centre in Petaling Jaya, run by the Beautiful Gate Foundation, teaches the disabled how to manage their lives in all aspects, provide skills training and has helped disabled students cope in college.



The independent living centre aims to provide social activities for the disabled.

Instead of living in an institutionalised setting, the centres will assist the disabled to live independently or with their families.

Other than providing independent living skills, ILCs may also comprise personal assistants, counselling, advocacy, reference, support groups and information.

“A crucial aspect would be the personal assistants provided to the severely disabled to perform daily tasks.

“Our officers would first evaluate a severely disabled person’s needs. They would then be assisted by hourly paid assistants or even volunteers,” said Pathmanathan.

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The assistant's duties would include grooming as well as personal hygiene tasks such as helping them to change their diapers and shower, he added.

The personal assistant would also help with tasks such as grocery shopping and doing the laundry.

Socialising is another key area which is often ignored but important for the disabled. To address this, the personal assistant will bring the disabled for social gatherings or to the park.

Pathmanathan said those who were able would also be given job training at ILCs.

History of the first independent living centre

1962

The first well-known centre for independent living in the world was created by Ed Roberts, an American. Roberts was the first severely disabled student to be enrolled in the University of California, Berkeley, US. The polio survivor, who was paralysed from the neck down, faced numerous challenges mostly due to the lack of a support system. This led him to establish the physically disabled students programme which offered wheelchair repair, peer support and referrals.



Ed Roberts with his son, Lee

He received his bachelor's and master's degrees in political science from the university and taught political science there for six years.

1972

With overwhelming support from the disabled community, Roberts founded the first independent living centre in Berkeley, California.

1981

He introduced the concept in Japan.

1986

The first independent living centre called Human Care Association (HCA) was formed in Japan. Soon the idea was introduced by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and HCA in Asia.

1995

Roberts died of natural causes at the age of 56.

Source: World Institute on Disability and Peter Tan

Core services to be provided by the independent living centre

Independent living skills services

- Setting of life goals
- Understanding the extent of impairment
- Understanding self potential
- Health and emergency management
- Family relationships
- Financial management
- Accommodation management
- Proper diet and food preparation
- Social interaction and information



Personal assistant service for the disabled

- Personal care (change of diaper, showering)
- Domestic help (buying groceries, reading and writing, filling in forms)
- Social activities (help the disabled to meet others)



Advocacy

- Advocate for facilities and services such as a barrier-free environment
- To share their needs based on the different types of disability



Support, reference and information

- A place to get appropriate equipment
- Obtain information related to their disability
- Collaborate with government and non-government sectors



Peer counselling

- Seek counselling from other disabled individuals



Sources: Persons With Disabilities Development Department, Social Welfare Department

©The Star Graphics

“Once they are physically and mentally ready, we will provide them with training, personal coaching and help them with job placements. This will enable the disabled to live independently in society.”

He said the disabled and their family members could also visit the centres for support, counselling and programmes related to empowerment.

“When a person becomes disabled, they may not know what to do and where to go. These ILCs will also help connect them to relevant agencies like JKM, Social Security Organisation and the Health Ministry,” he added.

All other forms of help will be located under one roof too.

In addition, teachers and community leaders will be asked to direct the disabled and their families to the ILCs for assistance.

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JKM Persons with Disabilities Development Department director Nor Tipah Majin said the Government hoped to have seven centres set up throughout the country by 2020.

“The centres will act as a one-stop location for the disabled to gain all kinds of information, help and services,” she said.

Ultimately, the centres will double as a resource centre for both the government and private sectors on matters related to disabilities.

The centres will be located in the central, northern, southern and east coast regions as well as Sabah and Sarawak

Freedom of choice

Most adults with disability want to make decisions for themselves and live independently.

However, the severely disabled are usually dependent on others to perform even basic tasks like eating and showering.

Disability equality trainer Peter Tan, 51, said the disabled should be given the freedom to decide how they want to live their lives.

“They should be given options to choose from,” said Tan, who became disabled after a spine injury when he was 18.

According to the World Report on Disability 2011 by the World Health Organisation and World Bank, some 15% of the world’s population are living with some form of disability.

Between 2% and 4% experience significant

difficulties in functioning.

Tan said ILCs in developed countries such as the United States, Japan and Australia act as a one-stop centre for the disabled.

They provide services such as personal assistants, peer counselling, living skills training, repairing essential equipment, empowerment and advocacy.

“It has been the hope of the disabled to see independent living centres created in Malaysia,” said Tan, adding that they would enable the disabled to live their lives with dignity.

“At the moment, the severely disabled are looked after by their spouses or other family members while those who can afford it will hire caregivers or domestic helpers.

“However, it becomes difficult when family members cannot perform these duties because of work commitments, illness or when their maids leave or fall sick.

“It is the responsibility of the Government to provide help to the severely disabled,” said Tan, who has been working with JKM on the blueprint for independent living centres.

He said in Japan, such centres were funded by the country’s central government (50%), prefectural government (25%) and the city authorities (25%).

Tan hopes there will be an allocation in Budget 2018 to kick-start the independent living centres.

“The Government can start small by maybe having one or two centres. We can then work on improving them and open more such centres,” he said.

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TOWN HALL SESSION GATHERS FEEDBACK ON INDUSTRIALISED BUILDING SYSTEM

The Star, 14 September 2017

THE Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) plans to make it mandatory for the Industrialised Building System (IBS) to be incorporated in private sector projects in three years time.

IBS is a construction technique where components are manufactured in a controlled environment, transported, positioned and assembled into a structure with minimal additional site work.

It is said to guarantee the quality of the construction, reduce construction time, lessen reliance on unskilled workers, increase construction productivity, reduce wastage and increase sustainability, ensure a clean and safe construction site and encourage local workers' involvement.

CIDB held a town hall session at its convention centre in Jalan Cheras, Kuala Lumpur to spread awareness of the product among construction industry stakeholders.

Its chief executive, Datuk Ahmad Asri Abdul Hamid, said feedback from stakeholders would pave the way towards incorporating the IBS in building projects in Malaysia.

Among those who attended the session titled "Mandatory Usage of



Construction industry stakeholders paying close attention to Ahmad Asri's presentation on IBS during the town hall session.

IBS in Build Industry Mechanism" were representatives from local authorities, government agencies and developers.

There was also a dialogue with representatives of the Works Ministry and Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Ministry.

In the 71st National Council for Local Government meeting, it was agreed that IBS would be made mandatory for building projects exceeding RM50mil.

Works Ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Zohari Akob noted that a Finance Ministry circular stated that government projects exceeding RM10mil must reach a minimum of 70 IBS score but there was no such policy yet for private sector projects.

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“However, I am confident that the state authority, local government and private developers who have not implemented IBS in construction will follow suit,” he said.

Local Government Ministry secretary-general Mohammad Mentek said the direction of the policies were set and details were being finalised.

“Once the government decides on the details of the policies, we will make amendments to the Uniform Building By Laws 1984 (UBBL 1984) as well as use it as a requirement in building’s Development Order application.

“Before that, we have to ensure that there is steady supply and demand in the market,” he said.

Since 2008, the use of IBS was mandatory for government construction projects that exceeded RM10mil and the government planned to extend it to private construction projects that took up 72% or 4,851 projects out of the entire construction project in Malaysia last year worth RM176.3bil.

The proposal for IBS usage will be implemented through talks and private companies are given a three-year transition period.

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POULTRY STOCKS TO GAIN FROM LOWER FEEDSTOCK PRICES?

The Star, 18 September 2017



PETALING JAYA: The decrease in corn and soybean prices due to a bumper harvest in the United States, coupled with the slight appreciation of the ringgit against the greenback, will result in cost-saving for the local poultry players.

However, analysts said that it would take some time to be reflected, taking shipment period into account.

Corn and soybean, are the two major components in chicken feed, making up an estimated 80%, with vitamins and miscellaneous supplements making up the remaining 20% of chicken feed.

Feed cost is a significant chunk in a poultry company's revenue as corn and soybean are imported, while vitamins and supplements are locally-sourced. Generally, feed cost accounts for more than 50% of a poultry player's revenue.

Inter-Pacific Research Sdn Bhd analyst David Lai said that the ringgit's slight appreciation against the US dollar would augur well for poultry companies, as imported feed components are denominated in US dollars.

"Sure, poultry companies can enjoy a slight relief in terms of production costs. But if the ringgit is able to appreciate to RM4 against the US dollar, then there would be greater savings," says Lai.

The two significant segments of the poultry industry are eggs and broilers, the latter referring to chickens bred for meat production.

An analyst explained that in the first half of the year, the market has been facing an oversupply of eggs, and this situation is expected to carry on until year-end.

"This is due to a wave of poultry players expanding their egg production. The supply growth of eggs has outpaced demand, which in turn pushes prices down," he says, adding that there would be a time lag between three and six months, before poultry companies could see if the lower corn and soybean prices would benefit them significantly.

However, for poultry companies including QL Resources Bhd, which produce their own feed and trades in feed, the effect of the low corn and soybean prices would not impact them significantly.

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According to a recent analyst report on Teo Seng Capital Bhd, the average egg price has been trending lower since June 2015, from a high of 36.2 sen to 28.3 sen last week.

Lai said that egg prices were expected to be higher next year compared with the lower prices from the oversupply this year.

Cyclical trends show that egg prices tend to increase towards year-end, due to festive seasons like Christmas and the Chinese New Year. "To address the oversupply of eggs, many poultry players have culled stocks eight weeks before the end of the usual 85-week life cycle," said Lai.

Meanwhile, for broilers, prices have been trending upwards and the trajectory is likely to continue, going forward.

Lai explained that the savings from lower feed cost would result in profit margin expansion for broilers.

"Broiler prices are not inclined to decline, as poultry companies that produce broilers are price takers, not price movers. The price of broiler chickens will follow demand of broilers," he says.

Broiler prices at farm hit a five-year high of RM6.80 in August this year, recording higher average year-to-date prices this year compared with the previous year.

Analysts said that the low corn and soybean prices were not expected to generate large savings for poultry companies, particularly in the short-term, but they signified a change of trends in the local poultry industry.

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IMPORTANT KEYS TO HEALTHY EATING

The Star, 18 September 2017

CHRONIC non-communicable diseases (NCDs) pose one of the greatest threats to public health and economic growth at national and global levels. In addition to healthcare costs, NCDs contribute substantially to costs associated with lost productivity.

According to a report from our Health Ministry, 73% of deaths among Malaysians are caused by NCDs. Such diseases are also being detected among young people every year.

Diseases categorised as NCDs are hypertension, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. NCDs are directly associated with people's unhealthy lifestyle such as smoking, being sedentary and bad eating habits .

Choosing healthier foods is easier than many people think. By changing just a few eating habits, we can make a big difference to our diet.

Return to slow food from fast food. Fast food means that the food has travelled several thousand kilometres to reach our plate. These foods are highly processed and contain large amounts of carbohydrates, high fructose corn syrup, unhealthy fats and sodium



that can have serious adverse effects on our metabolism.

On the other hand, slow food means food is fresh, locally produced and consumed, should be free of chemicals and also tastes better. These foods are more nutritious and beneficial to both producers and consumers.

Replace white food. Avoid refined sugar and white flour as these have been stripped of their nutritional benefits (empty calories) and contain simple carbohydrates that are very harmful to the human body. Simple carbohydrates will quickly enter the blood stream and spike our blood sugar level. Replace refined sugar with jaggery (*gula merah*) which is nothing but sugar cane juice evaporated to dryness without adding any chemical or additive. Jaggery is a complex carbohydrate that is a good source of iron, calcium, phosphorous, thiamine, riboflavin and niacin.

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For refined white flour, all the good nutrients (bran and germ) have been removed from the grain, leaving only the endosperm which has little nutritional value and empty calories. White flour is also a high glycaemic food that can cause quick spikes in blood sugar levels and produce obvious problems for diabetics.

The glycaemic index (GI) ranks carbohydrate foods based on how quickly the body turns them into glucose (blood sugar), provoking an insulin response. It is usually interpreted in the glycaemic index scale to check how good or bad they are:

- > 55 or less – Low (good)
- > 56- 69 – Medium
- 70 or higher – High (bad).

Unfortunately, most of the food we eat today, like bread, white pasta, cookies, pizza and other baked goods, are made mainly with white flour. Food made of whole wheat flour are good alternatives.

Reduce salt, red meat and dairy products. Commonly cited guidelines suggest that excess salt causes our body to retain water. This, in turn, causes pressure on our heart and blood vessels. High blood pressure is the most troublesome result.

Three-fourths of our salt intake comes from processed foods while 5% is added in cooking and 6% at the table. Another 12% occurs naturally in food. Managing our salt intake is actually very difficult and the only alternative is to cook all our food from scratch.

Reduce dairy products together with red meat as they are high in saturated fat and have been convincingly linked to NCDs. There is some evidence suggesting that milk probably protects people against some cancers but processed cheese and diets high in calcium have been shown to increase risk of disease.

Revive the good old past. In olden times, vegetables and fruits were the main components of people's diet. Increase the consumption of grains such as wild rice, barley, brown rice and millet and legumes in their natural state. Researchers have found that eating a variety of fruits and vegetables every day can reduce the risk of certain cancers.

The World Health Organization recommends eating 400g of fruits and vegetables daily and up to 10 portions per day.

However, there is no one food that can give all nutrients our body needs. Three important keys to healthy eating are variety, balance and moderation.

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Faculty of Hospitality & Tourism
Lincoln University College
Petaling Jaya

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RAM: MALAYSIA'S AUGUST INFLATION RATE TO INCREASE TO 3.8%

The Star, 19 September 2017



The faster pace of growth in consumer prices is underpinned by higher retail petrol prices, which averaged RM2.12/litre in August (compared with RM1.96 in July) and amid strengthening global crude oil prices, RAM said in a statement yesterday

KUALA LUMPUR: RAM Ratings expects the August 2017 inflation rate to increase to 3.8%, following four consecutive months of declines.

The faster pace of growth in consumer prices is underpinned by higher retail petrol prices, which averaged RM2.12/litre in August (compared with RM1.96 in July) and amid strengthening global crude oil prices, it said in a statement yesterday.

“This will, in turn, raise the transport component’s contribution to overall inflation in August.

“While the food component is envisaged to remain a key contributor of headline inflation, it is expected to slip slightly, relative to earlier months as demand has moderated after the Hari Raya festive period,” it said.

RAM Ratings has maintained its projected headline inflation at 3.8 per cent for 2017.

“Overall consumer prices are envisaged to increase at a slower pace in the second half of 2017, given the expected moderation in contribution by the transport component as the low-base effects dissipate.

“With the better-than- expected gross domestic product numbers for the first half of 2017 and stronger potential for demand-pull inflation to become a more prominent feature in the future, we believe there is more room for a 25-basis points hike in the overnight policy rate if the current growth momentum is maintained,” RAM Ratings added.

RAM Ratings said disruptions in oil production will be pivotal to the trajectory of domestic consumer prices.

It said the disrupted output and supply in Libya and the United States last month, will likely shore up global oil prices in the following weeks.

“As consumer fuel prices now closely track global oil prices, such supply disruptions will likely feed into domestic consumer price trends,” it added.

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TAXING THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

The Star, 19 September 2017

KUALA LUMPUR: The Royal Malaysian Customs Department plans to amend the goods and services tax (GST) Act to enable the Government to collect taxes from foreign companies operating in Malaysia under the digital economy.

According to Customs Department director-general Datuk Seri Subromaniam Tholasy, the amendments will allow the Government to tap a segment that is worth “billions of ringgit.”

“We are amending a few of the tax laws, especially with regard to the GST to collect taxes from foreign companies that offer digital services in Malaysia,” he told reporters after the GST Conference 2017 here yesterday.

“Taxes from the digital economy... we can easily collect a couple of billions of ringgit. It runs into several billions.



Royal Malaysian Customs Department director-general Datuk Seri Subromaniam Tholasy at the GST conference 2017 yesterday.

“Nobody knows how big the monster is out there. Once we amend the law and look into the details we would know for sure.”

Subromaniam said the Act could help boost the country’s revenue.
Sikh ObGyn in the country.



He added that the Customs Department aimed to propose the amendments when the Dewan Rakyat reconvenes next month.

“Of course, the industry will also need to be consulted,” he said.

Subromaniam pointed out that amending the Act would not be “without issues.”

“One of the requirements for GST is that the companies need a place of supply in Malaysia.

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But if the place of supply is outside Malaysia then it's difficult to tax.

"It's not provided for under the GST Act, so we are amending the law to tax the digital economy. That's from the point of service.

"For products, it's no problem because it's physical movement in the country. But services are intangible.

"There are some issues here and they are not only in Malaysia but all over the world." The GST was implemented in April 2015.

It was reported recently that tech heavyweights like Google and Facebook could face higher tax bills in Europe, as European Union giants Germany and France are pushing for taxes on profits made within the continent by technology firms.

According to a report by *The Financial Times* (FT) earlier this month, the move would overhaul national tax codes to include an "equalisation tax" for tech companies, which would collect levies based on national turnover.

"Currently, US technology groups such as Apple and Facebook are taxed in Europe based on profits instead of total revenues," the newspaper said.

It highlighted that many of the companies had "angered" European tax collectors and voters for years by using EU's disparate tax codes to record profits in jurisdictions with the lowest effective rates.

This means that some companies have been able to pay little or no tax in countries where they have recorded billions in sales.

Under EU treaties, tax measures require all members to back legal changes, including support from low-tax countries like Ireland and Luxembourg, for the initiative to become law, said the FT.

Meanwhile, Subromaniam noted that there was a significant number of service providers that offered their services in Malaysia but based overseas – hence evading tax.

"A lot of people can provide services from outside the country. Payment can be made via credit cards, but the services are being enjoyed and consumed here. So, when the services are consumed in the country, it should be able to tax.

"We're not worried about business-to-business (B2B). This is a non issue because under the current tax regime, there is no loss of revenue. If it's B2B, one company would charge tax, another would claim tax. There is no real tax gain to the Government."

He said the biggest loss in the digital economy is when it is business-to-consumer (B2C).

"When the business provides services directly to consumers and the business which is providing the service is overseas, it gets direct payment and the services are not taxed. This also creates discrimination – the local players get taxed but the foreign players are not.

"This is what we're trying to correct and once the law is amended, it will create a level playing field. Once the amendment is done, we will have a legal basis to register them and tax the services."

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AMID PUBLIC INDIFFERENCE TO FIRE SAFETY, SURVEYORS SAY GRENFELL TOWER TRAGEDY POSSIBLE HERE

The Malay Mail, 21 September 2017

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 21 — Following the tragic tahfiz school fire last week which killed 23, building surveyors said that a Grenfell Tower-like tragedy is possible in Malaysia unless public indifference towards fire safety is tackled.

London's 24-storey Grenfell Tower went up in flames in the early hours of June 14 killing about 60 people while leaving many more homeless.

Joshua Kang, a registered building surveyor with Canaan Building Inspection, said a similar tragedy could happen here.

However, this is totally avoidable simply through regular checks and greater public awareness about the need to comply with fire safety standards.

"A regular building inspection by an independent building inspector would also ensure all the fire-fighting systems in buildings are in good and working condition," he told *Malay Mail Online*.

Kang noted that a recent fire at a Johor Baru hospital could also have been avoided with regular building inspection and maintenance.



Last week, a pre-dawn blaze at Kuala Lumpur's Darul Quran Ittifaqiyah tahfiz school had killed 23 people.

Last week, a pre-dawn blaze at Kuala Lumpur's Darul Quran Ittifaqiyah tahfiz school had killed 23 people who were unable to escape from the flames in a building that had yet to obtain clearance from the authorities.

According to Kang, all building owners and developers in Malaysia must first comply with the fire safety requirements specified in the Uniform Building By-Laws — such as fire-rated doors, fire-resistant walls and ventilation to lift shafts — before a Certificate of Compliance and Completion (CCC) can be obtained and before the building can be put to use.

All buildings with the CCC or what was previously known as Certificate of Fitness for Occupation should be in compliance with fire safety standards,

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as the Fire and Rescue Department would have done the necessary testing and inspections before granting approval for the CCC, he said.

He noted, however, that there are some buildings that were not built according to the specified fire safety standards and requirements but are occupied.

While arguing that all buildings are at equal risk of fires, he noted that high-rise residential buildings, industrial buildings, and high-rise commercial buildings such as office towers, malls, hotels, hostels and hospitals tend to be most problematic in terms of fire safety due to the complexity of their mechanical and engineering system and greater plot ratio or higher occupancy rate.

“The initial fire requirement and fire fighting systems might be in place during the early stage. However, once the buildings have been obtained the CCC and are occupied, many of the fire requirements and systems have been compromised,” he said when touching on the most common fire safety non-compliance in local buildings and when suggesting that the provision of fire-fighting equipment in buildings be improved.

Kang attributed the non-compliance of fire safety requirements mainly to the lack of awareness and concern from both the building owner and the public.

“How many Malaysians would really study and understand the Fire Exit [for emergencies] when we are entering a shopping mall or office tower?

“How many tenants or house owners will really put the fire prevention and fire fighting requirements in their renovation?” he asked, noting that fire-rated doors are often replaced purely for aesthetic purposes and fire-partition walls often hacked off.

Mohd Amin Mohd Din, who chairs the Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia’s (RISM) building surveying division, similarly said an incident like the Grenfell Tower tragedy could happen here and advised everyone to pay attention to fire safety.

“It is possible...the least one can do is to purchase an appropriate fire extinguisher for the initial move in case fire breaks out. Please seek the services of a Building Surveyor for your property,” the building surveyor who is also RISM vice-president told *Malay Mail Online*.

According to Mohd Amin, many fires revealed that there was inadequate adherence to fire protection requirements, with most of the public having an indifferent attitude towards fire safety.

While most commercial and public buildings are well-covered in terms of fire safety with fire-detection devices such as smoke detectors and fire alarms installed and with personnel such as security guards and janitors who can detect fire, compliance in residential buildings is often dependent on the awareness of their owners or occupiers, he said.

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“The challenges to fire safety are the non-compliance and the indifferent attitude of the owner/occupiers. It is worse when there is a change of use of the premises as originally intended.

“These changes are not made known to the Fire and Local Authorities,” he said, stressing that it is the building owner’s responsibility to ensure safety.

Mohd Amin said non-compliance may also be partially contributed by insufficient enforcement by authorities, but highlighted that “we can’t expect all firemen to linger around and check every premises in town.”

“It is up to the owner to work with the Fire Department to hold periodical fire drill exercises,” he said, further highlighting the importance of the law’s requirement for periodic and annual building inspections.

“This is where the Building Surveyors can offer services to the public, owner and interested parties. We don’t only inspect the fire safety requirement but we cover all other aspects of building defects that might pose danger and harassment to occupiers,” he said.

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GREENING A BARREN LAND

The Star, 26 September 2017

FRIM has successfully transformed a former tin mining area into a lush man-made forest

“Just imagine that less than 20 years ago, you could see as far as 3km from where you are standing,” said Dr Ang Lai Hoe, pointing ahead. It was indeed something hard to picture, because we could hardly see beyond 100m due to the thick foliage around.

It was getting warm when we first arrived at the ex-tin mining area in Bidor, Perak, at about 10am.

Members of the media and ASEAN delegates of the seminar on “Reclamation, Rehabilitation and Restoration of Disturbed Sites” held in Kuala Lumpur last month were taken on a tour of the site recently, situated about 10km southwest of Bidor town.



Ang (right) sharing with delegates and the media about the various tree species that thrive at the ex-tin mine.

The seminar, themed “Planting of National and IUCN Red List Species”, was organised by the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) with the support of the Korea Forest Service and Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions (APAFRI).

(The IUCN Red List Species refers to the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s list of threatened plant and animal species).

Part of the programme was a visit to FRIM’s Tin Tailings Afforestation Centre (TTAC), which sits on a former tin mine in Bidor.

What was once barren land, unsuitable for vegetation to grow, has now been successfully rehabilitated with rainforest species. Pathways there are not tarred so as not to affect the growth of plants, especially roots. Various fauna has slowly returned to the lush green space spanning 121.4ha (300 acres) – more than 70 bird species, and 25 mammals and other wildlife have been observed including migratory birds, hornbills, squirrels, wild boars, civets, moonrat, monkeys and snakes.

“I like to come here at night and just stand still and there will be a wild boar nearby,” shared Ang, TTAC coordinator, who has been with the project since the beginning.

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It all started in 1996 when the Perak State Government leased the ex-mining land to FRIM for the establishment of a research station, also known as the FRIM Bidor Research Station.

The degraded area consisted of tin tailings – or waste from the mining industry – like slime and sand tailings largely covered by grass and sparsely colonised by several pioneer species. Pioneer species are hardy plants which were the first to grow on previously disrupted or damaged ecosystems.

Today the research station, also just referred to as the TTAC, has been successfully rehabilitated by FRIM with over 90 indigenous and exotic timber species. Overall, the site features 150 plant species in all, populated by about 1,500 plants per hectare.

In recognition of its success, TTAC was listed by the Malaysia Book of Records in October last year as the Largest Man-made Forest Established on Ex-Tin Mine.

TTAC is also the first tin-tailing area in Malaysia systematically and successfully greened with rainforest species. It serves as a model forest, recognised as an international educational site for rehabilitation of ex-tin tailings and a research site for international and national research projects on afforestation, biodiversity, forest influences, phytoremediation and eco-toxicity.

Labour of love

The regeneration project first began in 1999 and was earmarked as a 16-year project. The cost of planting work in the area alone took RM295,000.

There are 10 commercially important timber tree species successfully planted at TTAC, namely *Acacia mangium*, *Intsia palembanica* (merbau), *Hopea odorata* (merawan siput jantan), *Fagraea crenulata* (malabera), *Palaquim* spp.

(nyatoh), *Shorea roxburghii* (meranti temak nipis), *Dyera costulata* (jelutong), *Acacia* hybrid, *Acacia auriculiformis* dan *Dryobalanops oblongifolia* (keladan).

What is the main challenge in rehabilitating an ex-tin mine?

“Basically, such sites have adverse soil properties and bad microclimate, and are not suitable for rainforest tree species to be planted directly. So we need to first improve the site before we can plant them, after which we need to give intensive care to the site,” said Ang.

Among other measures, biomass waste in the form of empty fruit bunches contributed by an oil palm plantation nearby helped to regenerate the soil.

However, despite the effort and results seen so far, it will take a total of 200 years for the land to return to its former glory.

“Eventually, we hope to replant as many lowland species that were originally there as possible. But we are not at the full restoration level yet, which is when (all) the flora and fauna returns to the area.

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“Right now, there are not many species here because we don’t have enough food for them, but we have already completed the first stage of rehabilitation,” explained Ang.

Out of the 90 timber species currently found there, 22 belong to the Endemic, Endangered and Threatened species (EETs) category.



The Tin Tailings Afforestation Centre was recognised last year by the Malaysia Book of Record as the Largest Man-made Forest Established on Ex-Tin Mine

Ang then posed a question to the group, “Why must we plant EETs in problematic sites?”

“The answer is, a tin tailing area is difficult to plant things because there is bad soil and bad microclimate. The temperature in a forested area is normally about 5°C lower compared to its surroundings.

“So, first we had to bring plants back to make the microclimate better in order to plant the rainforest species. That’s why in the first five years, the average diameter of plants we achieved was 25cm.

“Now, the biggest we have is 60cm in diameter, which is an acacia tree,” said Ang with pride, adding that the tallest acacia recorded in the area is 28m, while the tallest tongkat ali tree, which also grows there, is 22m high.

If anyone has any funny ideas about harvesting them illegally, think again, as Ang said heavy metal content is still found in the plant.

Regenerating a rainforest

There are two types of regeneration process at TTAC. Natural regeneration means seeds are brought in by mother trees that exist in the area, or propagated by birds or bats, and start to grow on site.

There is also artificial regeneration which requires human intervention to propagate, for example merbau seeds which are big in size and are usually distributed by elephants.

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About halfway through our site visit, we saw a 17-year-old merbau tree reaching 20m high, while 15 red rosewoods, whose seeds were brought in from Bangalore by Ang, were also thriving.

“With enough water, nutrients, good climate and tender loving care, the plants will grow well. What’s important is we must know the suitable species to plant in the area and the distribution of the species.

The relative humidity of the area when we arrived in the morning was 65%, but by mid-day it was 30%, explained Ang, so plants in the site are selected to adjust to this factor.

By the end of our tour, we had walked a total of 3.5km and it was refreshing that our last stop was a scenic spot by the lake.

Looking out into the waters, Ang told us to imagine a huge dredging machine, sitting on barren white sand dune all around, a sight during the tin mining heydays.

Today, toman, grass carp and many types of freshwater species thrive in the lake, with some weighing up to 45kg.

“Otters can be seen swimming around here too,” said Ang, adding that the 40ha pond also serves as a mitigation pond for the whole of Bidor and is 46m (150ft) at its deepest.

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INDUSTRY 4.0: WHAT DOES IT BEHOLD FOR COMMODITIES?

The Star, 27 September 2017

The term 'Industry 4.0' has become a global buzzword since its introduction by the Germans in 2011. There are so many definitions and big words thrown around, it can be difficult for the layman to understand what it is all about.

In my simple words, Industry 4.0 or the Fourth Industrial Revolution, is about having machines that are able to send, receive and act on instructions that are connected to computing systems in-situ and through communications networks that enable them to interact with other machines and humans to produce goods and deliver services efficiently. In other words, Industry 4.0 is about greater mechanisation.

I may oversimplify things but I am no fan of overcomplicating matters!



Changing times: At the infancy of Industry 4.0, digital technology had permeated into many physical systems, including deployment of sensing, transportation and manufacturing to name a few.

The dawn of Industry 4.0

Today, at the infancy of the Fourth Industrial Revolution or Industry 4.0, digital technology has permeated into many physical systems. This includes deployment of sensing, computing and communicating systems in management of energy grids, transportation, manufacturing and water, or even our

everyday household devices – cars, refrigerators, entertainment systems and air-conditioning (read IoT or Internet of Things).

Even more astonishing is the embedding of such systems in the human body to restore sensory, cognitive and motor functions in people disabled by injury or neurological conditions.

Sounds like a scene from Star Trek or Minority Report? Yes, it is but this time it is for real.

Is it relevant for commodities?

You may ask how can it apply to the plantation industries and commodities such as palm oil, rubber, timber, cocoa or pepper. Plenty, I would say, if you dare to imagine.

Take oil palm, for instance. It is entirely imaginable that with sensors linked to computing systems through communications networks, we can track productivity by palm, rather than by plot or estate.

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We should be able to know the stress level of each palm caused by prolonged dry or wet weather and interventions that are required such as irrigation, fertilisation and pesticide application. This has a direct impact on fresh fruit bunch (FFB) yield.

When it comes to harvesting and evacuation, it would be ideal to have an integrated machine that can precisely identify FFBs that are perfectly ripe, cut them from the palms, collect entire bunches without loose fruits dropping on the ground and deliver them directly to the mill, autonomously.

Oil yields will improve dramatically through the combination of perfectly ripe FFBs that are also not bruised through unnecessary multiple handling and minimal loose fruit loss.

In fact, you can visualise estate management being conducted from a control centre with much less direct human involvement.

With growing demand for traceability, Industry 4.0 applications may be able to help a consumer determine the origins of the palm oil contained in a product, using radio-frequency identification or visual codes, to know if the ingredient is sustainably produced.

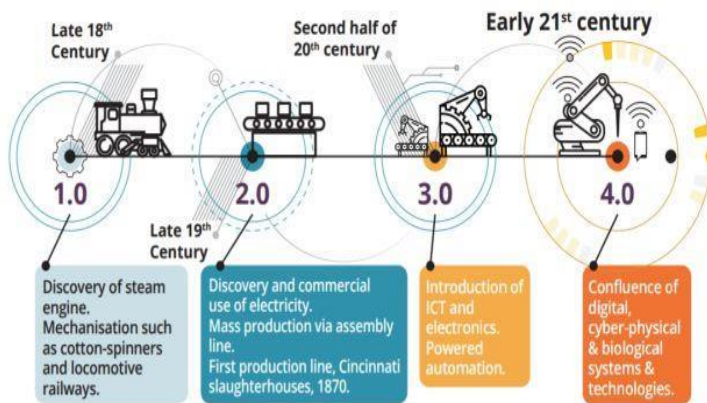
It requires even less imagination to see the application of Industry 4.0 in the milling, refining and oleochemical processes as well as transportation that will improve productivity, safety and quality.

Similarly, Industry 4.0 can help to alleviate productivity challenges both in the upstream and downstream of the rubber industry. Our on-going trial of the Automated Rubber Tapping System (ARTS) is already an indication that timed tapping, latex collection and bulking, and use of stimulant can be mechanised while collection and data crunching of gram per tree per tapping (GTT) can help to determine the intervention required to increase yield.

On the other hand, demand for foreign labour can be moderated with great automation in rubber glove production lines, as one of our industry-leading manufacturers, Hartalega, has demonstrated with its current workers per million pieces input of 2.6 at its Next Generation

Centre (NGC) in Sepang compared to several folds more in its other facilities, which are being upgraded. There is so much more productivity enhancement that can be achieved with greater IOT deployment.

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Too good to be true?

Not entirely. The embedding of sensing, computing and communicating systems in vehicles, drones and other machinery is entirely achievable today.

Global Positioning System and mobile networks along with data transmission and big data analytics have become commonplace.

Granted, the deployment of such machineries and systems for annual crops planted on plains are far easier than executing the same for perennial crops planted on more undulating terrains such as oil palm and rubber. With proper focus, collaboration and allocation of resources, nothing is impossible.

Current challenges dictate change

The truth of the matter is that challenges that we face today are already forcing our hands. The lack of labour has resulted in a loss of FFB and oil extraction yields.

Yield potential has reached a plateau while we work on new clones via genomics research that can steepen the curve again.

Coupled with limited land for new planting and the necessity to maintain our forest cover in line our Paris Climate Conference pledge, our only option is to raise productivity.

To begin with, we are in great need for humbler mechanised devices for harvesting, loose fruit collection and evacuation. Both brownfield and greenfield inventions are being considered through platforms such as the International Competition on Palm Mechanisation. These will act as the bridge to the Industry 4.0 future.

In tandem with the current national conversation with all segments of stakeholders under Transformasi Nasional 50 or TN50, we in the plantation industries and commodities space must also start the engagement to determine our way forward.

As a sector that accounts for 10% of the GDP, we have the responsibility to ensure that its relevance and sustainability is undiminished.

Industry 4.0 is an opportunity for Malaysia to develop the plantation industries and commodities of the future. Plain and simple.

Datuk Seri Mah Siew Keong is Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities. Commodities Today and Beyond is his op-ed to share his views, hopes and visions for commodities with everyday Malaysians.

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PROPOSED PHARMACY BILL REDRAFTED AND FINALISED TO RETAIN CURRENT SYSTEM

The Star, 27 September 2017

KUALA LUMPUR: Pharmacists have lost the exclusive right to dispense medicine with adjustments made to the proposed Pharmacy Bill. Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam said the Bill has been redrafted and finalised to retain the system of allowing both doctors and pharmacists to dispense medicine.

He said the proposed Bill has been referred to the Attorney-General's Chambers after further consultations were held with stakeholders.

"We are moving ahead with it. We feel that the current system should be allowed to operate while we liberalised it a bit, so that patients have a choice," he told reporters during the Insight 2017 Medical Travel Market Intelligence Conference yesterday.

The Bill will be tabled once the Attorney-General approves it, he said, adding that it was not known when it could be tabled in Parliament.

The proposed Pharmacy Bill is an omnibus Bill to replace four Acts, i.e. Registration of Pharmacists, Poisons Act, Sale of Drugs Act and Medicines (Advertisement and Sale) Act.

The Bill was initially supposed to incorporate the separation of dispensing, with pharmacists to dispense medicine and doctors barred from doing so.

Two years ago, the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) rejected the proposed Bill on the ground that the medical fraternity was not consulted on the issue of separation of dispensing rights.

Following that, the ministry put it on hold for further consultations and later redrafted the Bill.

Dr Subramaniam said following consultations with various stakeholders, it was decided that both doctors and pharmacists will have the right to dispense medication.

He said dismantling a system that was functioning properly might bring about other problems.

A patient seeing a private doctor in a rural area where the nearest pharmacy was 30km away might not be able to get his or her medication until the next day, he added.

"We look at convenience for patients," Dr Subramaniam said.

BIM MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

- Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society (MPS)
- Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (RISM)
- The Institution of Engineers Malaysia (IEM)
- Pertubuhan Arkitek Malaysia (PAM)
- Malaysian Medical Association (MMA)
- Malaysian Dental Association (MDA)
- Malaysian Institute of Planners (MIP)
- Veterinary Association Malaysia (VAM)

- Malaysian Institute of Interior Designers (MIID)
- Malaysian Society of Soil Science (MSSS)
- Malaysian Association of Social Workers (MASW)
- The Plastics & Rubber Institute of Malaysia (PRIM)
- Agricultural Institute of Malaysia (AIM)
- The Chartered Institute of Building Malaysia (CIOBM)
- Institute of Landscape Architects Malaysia (ILAM)

- Institute of Internal Auditors Malaysia (IIAM)
- Institut Bahan Malaysia (ICOMM)
- The Chartered Institute of Logistics And Transport Malaysia (CILT(M))
- International Institution of Plantation Management (IIPM)

CORPORATE AFFILIATE

- Malaysian Institute of Human Resource Management