

## *HARI RAYA GREETING*



12 JUNE 2018

# CONGRATULATION





# BIODATA

## CABINET MINISTERS 2018

MAY 21, 2018 **Star**

### PRIME MINISTER



**Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad**  
Age: 93  
DOB: July 10, 1925  
Education background:  
> Bachelor's degree in medicine from King Edward VII College of Medicine in Singapore  
Other positions: Pakatan Harapan chairman, Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) chairman, Langkawi MP

### DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER WOMEN AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT MINISTER



**Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail**  
Age: 66  
DOB: Dec 3, 1952  
Education background:  
> Qualified ophthalmologist from Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland  
Other positions: Pakatan Harapan president, PKR president, Pandan MP

### FINANCE MINISTER



**Lim Guan Eng**  
Age: 58  
DOB: Dec 8, 1960  
Education background:  
> Bachelor's degree in Economics from Monash University in Australia  
Other positions: Pakatan Harapan deputy president, DAP secretary-general, Bagan MP, Air Putih assemblyman

### HOME MINISTER



**Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin**  
Age: 71  
DOB: May 15, 1947  
Education background:  
> Bachelor's degree (Hons) in Economics and Malay Studies from Universiti of Malaya  
Other positions: Pakatan Harapan deputy president, Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) president, Pagoh MP, Gambir state assemblyman

### DEFENCE MINISTER



**Mohamad Sabu**  
Age: 64  
DOB: Oct 14, 1954  
Education background:  
> Diploma in Culinary Arts from Institut Teknologi MARA, now known as Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)  
Other positions: Pakatan Harapan deputy president, Parti Amanah Negara president, Kota Raja MP

### COMMUNICATIONS AND MULTIMEDIA MINISTER



**Gobind Singh Deo**  
Age: 45  
DOB: June 19, 1973  
Education background:  
> Bachelor's degree (Hons) in Law, from University of Warwick, United Kingdom  
Other positions: DAP deputy chairman, Puchong MP

### HUMAN RESOURCE MINISTER



**M. Kulasegaran**  
Age: 61  
DOB: Aug 10, 1957  
Education background:  
> Bachelor's degree in Law from Lincoln's Inn London  
Other positions: Pakatan Harapan vice-president, DAP vice-chairman, Ipoh Barat MP

### HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINISTER



**Zuraida Kamaruddin**  
Age: 60  
DOB: March 14, 1958  
Education background:  
> Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences from University of Singapore  
> Bachelor's degree in Sales and Marketing  
Other positions: Pakatan Harapan Wanita chief, PKR Wanita chief, Ampang MP

### TRANSPORT MINISTER



**Anthony Loke Siew Fook**  
Age: 41  
DOB: April 28, 1977  
Education background:  
> Bachelor's degree in development science from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia  
> Master's in Public Administration from Universiti Malaya  
Other positions: Seremban DAP chairman, DAP national organising secretary, Seremban MP, Chennah assemblyman

### ECONOMIC AFFAIRS MINISTER



**Datuk Seri Azmin Ali**  
Age: 54  
DOB: Aug 25, 1964  
Education background:  
> Bachelor of Science in Economics and Mathematics from University of Minnesota  
> Master of Education in Mathematics and Economics from University of Minnesota  
Other positions: Pakatan Harapan vice-president, PKR deputy president, Gombak MP, Bukit Antarabangsa assemblyman

### AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-BASED INDUSTRY MINISTER



**Salahuddin Ayub**  
Age: 57  
DOB: Dec 1, 1961  
Education background:  
> Diploma in business management from Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman  
> Bachelor of Science in Human Resource Management from Universiti Putra Malaysia. Other positions: Pakatan Harapan vice-president, Parti Amanah Negara deputy president, Pulaui MP, Simpang Jeram assemblyman

### HEALTH MINISTER



**Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad**  
Age: 62  
DOB: Jan 1, 1956  
Education background:  
> Bachelor of Science degree from University of Birmingham  
> Doctorate in Medical Science (Toxicology) from Imperial College (St Mary's Hospital Medical School)  
Other positions: Parti Amanah Negara strategy director, Kuala Selangor MP

### RURAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER



**Rina Mohd Harun**  
Age: 45  
DOB: April 18, 1973  
Education background:  
> Diploma in Business Studies from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM)  
> Bachelor's degree (double major) in Banking & Finance and Management from Northwood University, Michigan, United States  
Other positions: Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) srikandi chief, Titiwangsa MP

### EDUCATION MINISTER



**Dr Maszlee Malik**  
Age: 44  
DOB: July 15, 1974  
Education background:  
> Bachelor's degree in fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and usul al-fiqh (principles of Islamic jurisprudence) from Al al-Bayt University, Jordan and Master's in same subject from Universiti of Malaya  
> Doctorate in the field of Good Governance from University of Durham, United Kingdom  
Other positions: Simpang Renggam MP, Board member of Ideas of Autism Centre, Adviser of Teach For The Needs (TFTN)

## ABOUT MEMBERS

### BROADENING THE HORIZONS OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

The Star, 26 April 2018



(From left) PTA Design Sdn Bhd associate Ainol Najwa Asmuni and director Peter Tan celebrating their win after receiving the Project of the Year 2017 Award from Mohammad and Osman

BEING a woman in the male-dominated landscape architecture field means one has to be assertive and strict, such as when dealing with contractors, said Syamim Azhari.

“We need to show contractors that we clearly know what we’re doing. We also need to anticipate issues and be better prepared with solutions,” said the 29-year-old project landscape architect at Aecom Malaysia

“It’s not easy to juggle multiple responsibilities, as a professional, wife and mother... but I have a supportive husband who understands the nature of my work and offers advice when needed.

“He is also a landscape architect but works in the government service and I work in the private sector,” she said.

Syamim said she was fortunate to have joined Aecom when it was executing the River of Life (ROL) project to revitalise Sungai Kelang.

“It was one of the most challenging projects I had ever done. I had to be on-site often to supervise contractors, meet clients and communicate with supporting government agencies.

“I had to think on my feet and make site adjustments, because some of the things planned at the design stage could not be executed due to site constraints, such as hidden utility pipes,” she said.

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Syamim and Muhamad Zaedi Mohd Asri were honoured with the Young Landscape Architect Awards at the Malaysia Landscape Architecture Awards (MLAA), organised by the Institute of Landscape Architects Malaysia (ILAM).

Muhamad Zaedi, 28, took a bold step by starting his own company four years ago with his wife Norain Mohamed Ayem.

“We aim to be different by providing landscape solutions that are functional and look aesthetically pleasing,” said the LARZ Associates Sdn Bhd managing director, adding that his team comprised nine young and dynamic landscape architects.



The team from Selangor Development Corporation (PKNS) posing for a group photo with Mohammad (fourth from left) and Osman (fourth from right) after receiving the Presidents Award for the PKNS Headquarters building in Shah Alam.

“It was initially difficult to work with my wife in the same company, but we adjusted and now focus on our respective roles.



Syamim and Muhamad Zaedi honoured with the Young Landscape Architect Awards.

“As the creative director, Norain oversees the concept and design development, while I look into business development, on-site implementation and meet clients,” said Muhamad Zaedi.

He hopes to collaborate with Ilam and the industry to elevate the role of landscape architects in playing a more influential role in national development.

MLAA, which was staged during Ilam’s gala night, was held to award the best and

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most outstanding projects in Malaysia and Singapore from the previous year

This year marks the 10th edition of the annual event that recognises quality landscape architecture work, projects and professionals. Some 165 entries were submitted.

A total of 67 awards were given across eight categories, including Professional (Landscape Design, Landscape Analysis and Study, and Young Landscape Architect with less than 10 years' industry experience), Landscape Contractor, Developer and GLC, Government, Researcher, Student and Media.

Two new categories introduced this year were International Entry (under Professional), and Supplier and Manufacturer.

The night's highest honour – Project of the Year 2017 – went to PTA Design Sdn Bhd for their work on Afiniti Medini @ Iskandar Puteri, Johor.

“MLAA previously focused on local projects; this year it goes international to raise the overall quality,” said Ilam president Assoc Prof Dr Osman Mohd Tahir.

“The new category for suppliers and manufacturers will showcase and promote green landscape products.”

He added that MLAA had grown from an award created to honour professional landscape architecture works in 2007, to recognition of the entire landscape industry in Malaysia a decade later.

MLAA was endorsed by the International Federation of Landscape Architects (Ifla) in 2015.

“Over the past 10 years, we have witnessed changing trends in landscape architecture design and practices,” said Osman.

“The current trend is about reflecting the character and identity of a location. It creates a sense of belonging, or an active ‘play area’ for people of all ages.”



The writer (left) receiving the Landscape Architecture Media Awards from Osman while MLAA jury member Abu Hassan Wahab look on. She was among the media personnel honoured for their work at the Malaysia Landscape Architecture Awards.

Besides meeting the category's criteria, he said the jury also considered factors such as presentation of innovative and creative ideas, incorporation of new and green technology, and project sustainability when deciding on the winners.

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He announced that Malaysia would be hosting the Ifla World Congress 2020, to be held concurrently with the World Landscape Architecture Summit.

The event, he added, would play a key role in gathering ideas from global players in formulating the Landscape Architecture Agenda 2050 that would serve as a new direction to shape the next 30 years of the landscape architecture profession in Malaysia.

Guest-of-honour Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Mohammad Mantek said: "Landscape architects must create a future where there is a more inclusive approach between humanity and nature.

"Landscape architects can be game changers for the environment and to address issues such as air and water pollution, food production, embedding nature in cities, and merging greenery with the built environment."

## PHARMACISTS WANT BETTER, MORE INCLUSIVE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

FMT News, 18 May 2018

The Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society says new PH government should be given a chance to implement its vision for a better healthcare system.



Health practitioners have been told to drop the call for a royal commission on healthcare as there is now a new government in place.

KUALA LUMPUR: Health practitioners have been urged to give the new Pakatan Harapan government a chance to implement the healthcare programme laid out in its election manifesto.

“With the right amount of public and professional engagement, the new government has a real opportunity to chart a new course for the health of the Malaysian people,” Amrahi Buang, the president of the Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society, said in a statement today.

He said there had been calls by some for a royal commission on healthcare, but now that a new government was in place, health practitioners should drop that call.

Amrahi said it was easy to blame problems in the healthcare system on big businesses and over-regulation, but that “the truth is that there exists a public-private dichotomy in our healthcare system”.



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“On one hand, we have a highly subsidised healthcare model with high demand, a heavy workload and long waiting time for bigger institutions with very high patient loads. On the other is one of high out-of-pocket costs and limited access to those that need it the most.”

Solving this, he said, would require all the best minds in the country.

Saying the patient was the cornerstone of the healthcare system, Amrahi added that they should be given the right information at the right time and accorded transparency and control over their healthcare decisions.

“A truly inclusive health system is one that recognises the knowledge and expertise of each professional and, allowing healthcare policies and decisions to reflect that diversity of opinions, is united in wanting the best outcome for the patient.

“Health professionals should unite in this mission to put control back into the hands of the patient. There is an urgent need to band together to promote wellness initiatives and provide health information closer to the people.

“Armed with the relevant health information, counselled by the family physician or the community pharmacist, the rakyat can practise responsible self-care and join in wellness initiatives.

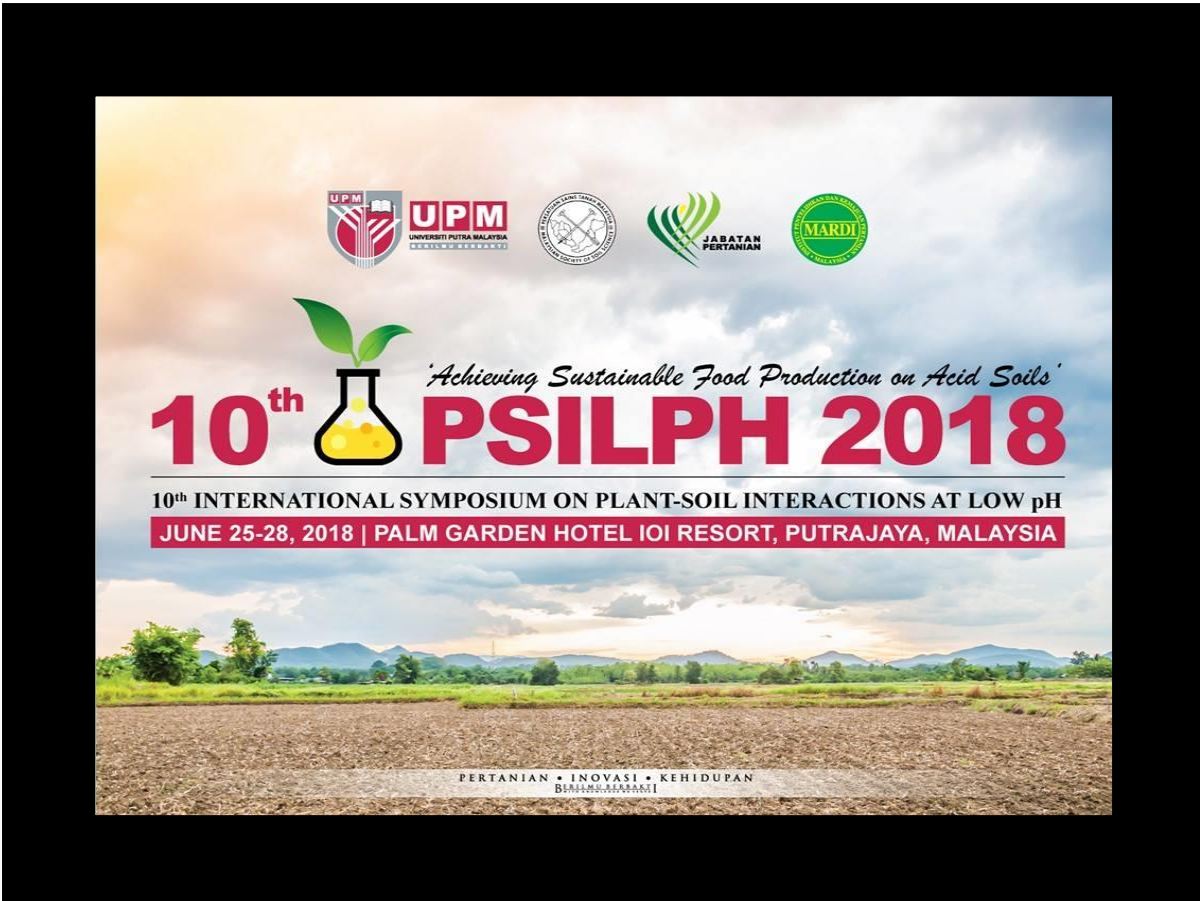
“This will in turn reduce the burden on our existing health infrastructure as the patients only visit clinics and hospitals when they need to.”

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“10<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON PLANT-SOIL INTERACTIONS AT LOW pH”

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## GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

### DANCING IN THEIR GOLDEN YEARS

The Star, 27 April 2018

It's 7.30am and the neighbourhood field in SS20, Petaling Jaya, is already a hive of activity.

At the basketball court is a group of about 30 practising Tai Chi.

In the children's play area, a handful of women are going over their dance steps, counting under their breath as they co-ordinate their feet to match the rhythm of a tune that's playing softly in the background. There are a couple of brisk walkers circling the park and a few others walking their dogs.

These are the third agers of SS20 – those in their 60s and 70s who have retired from work but haven't slowed down one bit.



Every Monday and Fridays, you find a group of about 20 seniors dancing in the park for an hour.

"I'm so busy that if I want to start a new activity, I'd need to check my schedule," says Datuk Koh Kia Lim, 70, a retired Malaysian Air Force Brigadier General.

SS20 isn't a retirement community but Koh says many of its residents are empty nesters – seniors who live on their own after their children have left the coop.

A couple of years ago, the community attracted the attention of University Malaya geriatrician [Dr Tan Maw Pin](#) who included them in her study, *Promoting Independence in Seniors with Arthritis*.

Part of the study was looking at how communities can encourage social participation among the elderly through social groups.

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SS20 residents rose to the challenge. They formed a Social Connect Group (SCG) to promote independent and active living among the seniors. The group is an extension of their resident's association but is not limited to those living in their suburban community.

“Our vision is to create a community of seniors who are healthy and happy by providing opportunities for them to interact socially and take part in healthy, lifestyle activities. There is no membership required and we encourage people to bring their friends or relatives to join us in our activities,” says Koh, who heads the dynamic group.

Koh and his wife, Datin Dr Lim Ah Lan, 70, lead the hour-long park dancing sessions at 8am every Monday and Friday.

“The idea was just to get together, dance and have fun. But because many of us have never danced in our lives, we decided to start these weekly sessions where we could learn a few basic dances. I’m not a great dancer myself but I know a couple of dances and was brave enough to step forward to teach the group what I know,” says Koh, with a laugh.

So far, the group has learnt dances such as cha-cha, rhumba and Macarena, says Lim.

“When we started, everyone was self-conscious and shy but just two months later, at our (community) Merdeka event, we actually performed some dances and everyone joined in! We hope one day soon we can organise parties where everyone just dances to the music, freestyle,” says Lim, who also records tutorial videos to enable her group members to learn new dance moves at home.



The “park dancing” sessions started last July and have proven to be quite popular, attracting about 20 or so regulars each time. The oldest dancer is Leong Yu Fong, who at 83, hardly misses a session or a beat.

## Retirement spells freedom

For E.K. Hong, retirement has given him the opportunity to try new things that he'd missed out on when he was busy working. The retired teacher from Lumut, Perak, is the classic third-ager – refusing to view retirement as a time to wind down and take things slow.

“It’s the opportunity to be free! I’m enjoying things that I couldn’t do before because I was working. I’m making new friends and catching up with old friends and I’m really enjoying my life,” says Hong, 77.

According to academic Peter Laslett, life is divided into four ages. The First Age is the era of dependence and learning; the Second Age, the era of independence, responsibility and working; and the Fourth Age is the era of final dependence and death.

He believed that the Third Age is the golden era – the period after retirement for personal achievement and fulfilment.

Laslett coined the term third-agers – those from the ages of 50 to 75, retired and with resources to pursue their interests.

Because of longer life expectancy, current generations enjoy a “life bonus” of 30 years or so not available to previous generations.

Third-agers like Koh, Lim and Hong are challenging stereotypes about ageing by leading active lives. And, they are determined to get more of their peers to join them in their activities.

## KEEPING OLD MUSCLES GOLD

The Star, 16 May 2018

**KUALA LUMPUR:** All it takes are three simple tests.

When it comes to the muscle health of the elderly, consultant geriatrician Prof Dr Tan Maw Pin urges family doctors to include screening for any problems during their patients' visits.

"We know that older people regularly visit doctors, because they are just more susceptible to illness, or they already have high blood pressure or diabetes that requires them to go for regular checking," she said.



No longer that active: Elderly residents resting on a bench. A simple test to check for walking balance involves standing up from a chair, walking three metres, turning around and sitting back down.

This, the Universiti Malaya lecturer added, would be a good opportunity to keep an eye on the condition of their muscles.

Upkeeping one's muscles is crucial in ensuring mobility and independence.

## Fit For Life

Poor muscle health and strength increases the risk for falls, which is the second leading cause of accidental or unintentional injury deaths worldwide (after road traffic injuries), according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

And it is adults aged 65 and above who are the ones suffering the highest number of deaths and injuries from falls, WHO reported.

Prof Tan said that poor muscle health, especially in the elderly, becomes even more apparent when they fall ill.

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“Because they have low muscle strength to begin with, as soon as they fall ill, their muscles start shrinking away,” she said.

This reduces their mobility and ability to take care of themselves, leading to a need for someone to take care of them, which incurs further financial and social cost to them and their families.

The three tests for muscle health, which can even be done at home, are monitoring the patient’s weight, measuring their muscle strength and testing their walking balance.

Prof Tan explained that having a serial record of the patient’s weight is important as it is an indication of the amount of muscle they have.

“When you are old, when you lose weight, you lose muscle,” she said.

“So, we actually need people to be aware that even if you are overweight, when you’re ill, you still need to take (muscle health) supplements to actually maintain your body weight – you must not lose weight when you’re old.”

Even if an elderly person has no discernible problems, once they have lost more than 5% of their body weight, healthcare intervention is needed, said Prof Tan.

A more specific test is using a grip-strength dynamometer to directly measure muscle strength.

Prof Tan noted that doctors can get a reasonably priced dynamometer for about RM300-RM400, which can probably last for their entire career.

“So patients can do their grip strength when they come in, and if doctors keep the records, they should see if it deteriorates, if the patient is becoming weaker.”

The final test is for walking balance.

“We actually validated this test in Malaysia – it’s called the Timed Up and Go (Tug) test. “It’s a very good test because it tests muscle strength, walking speed and balance,” explained Prof Tan.

“So, what we ask an older person to do is to stand up from a chair, walk three metres, turn around, walk back and sit back down again.

“And what we found is that, if they can do that within 13.5 seconds, the risk of falls is much lower.”

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She said that they have also developed a more specific centile chart for this test, which shows the Tug time according to age.

This is as the average normal time for the test increases with age.

The chart will show if a person is average, above average or below average for their age.

“So, if you identify yourself as below average, you had better do something before it gets worse.

“So, do more exercise, check that you’re eating the right things, and you might need some rehabilitation,” she said.

While it is more difficult to objectively detect muscle loss through sight alone, Prof Tan shares that some of the indications of early muscle loss include:

- The body looking “baggier”.
- False teeth (without adhesives) starting to fall out, as the mouth muscles can no longer help to hold them.
- Guttering of muscles at the temples of the head.
- Clothes becoming loose and looking baggy.



## **DOUBLE JOY OR DOUBLE TROUBLE?**

**The Star, 18 May 2018**

**IPOH:** Statistically speaking, twin pregnancy occurs at a frequency of one in 80 pregnancies.

This incidence differs in different parts of the world, with the highest incidence being in Nigeria, where the incidence is around one in 25 pregnancies.

You have a higher chance of having a twin pregnancy if you have had a previous twin pregnancy, if you have a family history of twin pregnancy, if you are older than 35 years of age or if you are undergoing fertility treatment.

### **Are all twin pregnancy the same?**

No, they are not. In general, there are two types of twin pregnancy. An identical twin pregnancy occurs when one ovum (egg) is fertilised by a sperm which later splits into two embryos.

A non-identical twin pregnancy occurs when two ovum are fertilised by two sperms, producing two embryos.

The risks and complications of twin pregnancy occur more frequently in the identical twin pregnancy, especially when the babies are sharing only one placenta.

### **How can I find out what type of twin pregnancy I have?**

An ultrasound scan before the 14th week of pregnancy can usually tell you what type of twin pregnancy you are having. This ultrasound scan can tell you how many placentas and sacs there are, and if there are any obvious abnormalities with the babies.

### **What are the complications of a twin pregnancy?**

Complications to a mother who is pregnant with twins include increased pregnancy symptoms during the early part of pregnancy like excessive vomiting and lethargy. They are also at a higher risk of miscarriage, anaemia (low blood levels), high blood pressure, gestational diabetes, placenta previa (placenta which is in the lower part of the womb) and antenatal vaginal bleeding.

The most common complication of twin pregnancy to the babies is premature delivery. Up to 60% of all twin pregnancy will end up as premature delivery (birth before 37 weeks of pregnancy).

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If the babies are born before 34 weeks, they have a higher chance of being affected by complications of premature delivery which include breathing difficulties, infection and prolonged stay in the neonatal intensive care ward.

There is also a higher risk of structural abnormalities to the babies, such as defects of the heart, in twin pregnancy.

Another common complication that can occur in twin pregnancy is intrauterine growth restriction, giving rise to birth of small babies.

This may affect both the babies or one of the babies.

Apart from the above complications, twin pregnancy (especially the identical twin pregnancy with a single placenta) can also give rise to unique complications such as conjoined twins, Twin Reversed Arterial Perfusion (TRAP) and Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome.

### **What is Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS)?**

TTTS occurs in 10-15% of identical twin pregnancies, or one in 4,000 pregnancies.

TTTS occurs when there is an unequal sharing of blood between the two babies due to blood vessels that communicate between them on the surface of the single placenta.

Due to these communicating vessels, one twin (known as the donor twin) transfuses its blood to the other twin (known as the recipient twin). This puts both the babies at risk of death.

Another effect of TTTS is the sudden increase in the amniotic fluid in the sac of the recipient twin. This makes the mother's tummy increase in size rapidly and causes tightness across the belly and sometimes difficulty in breathing on lying down.

TTTS tends to occur at around the 4th to the 6th month of pregnancy. Without timely treatment, the chance of survival for both the babies is less than 5%.

### **What is the treatment for TTTS?**

The effective treatment for TTTS is fetoscopic laser photo coagulation.

This "key-hole surgery" is performed at around the 4th to the 6th month of pregnancy.

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It involves the insertion of a small telescope into the womb. The communicating blood vessels between the two babies on the surface of the placenta is then inspected and lasered with laser beams via the telescope to seal off these communicating blood vessels.

### **How can I prepare myself if I am having a twin pregnancy?**

Preparation for any pregnancy starts before pregnancy. Ensure you have a healthy lifestyle (no smoking or use of illicit drugs), and take folic acid and multivitamin supplements and a healthy diet to minimise the chances of adverse outcomes to the babies.

Make sure you have an early ultrasound scan (before 14 weeks of pregnancy) that can tell you what type of twin pregnancy you are having.

It is important that your doctor tells you this so that you are better prepared to anticipate the risks and complications, which is increased in identical twin pregnancy.

Make sure you are regularly followed up by your doctor. This may vary from fortnightly to monthly appointments, depending on the type of twin pregnancy and complications that you may have.

Regular check-ups will make it easier for your doctor to pick up any problems or complications that may appear during the course of your pregnancy, so that effective and timely treatment can be given.

Dr Japaraj Peter is an Obstetrician & Gynaecologist and Maternal Fetal Medicine Specialist from Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun Ipoh.

## EXPERT TIPS ON HOW AND WHEN TO GET THROUGH TO CHILDREN

The Star, 18 May 2018



I'm not saying Wendy Mogel spied on my family to research her new book. But I'm not sure she didn't.

Mogel is a clinical psychologist who specialises in childhood. She serves on scientific advisory boards at Parents Magazine and Stanford University's Graduate School of Education. Her new book, is *Voice Lessons For Parents: What To Say, How To Say It, And When To Listen*.

It's about my family. Maybe it's about your family too. "My main goal in *Voice Lessons* is to teach readers how to learn the dialect needed to converse with their daughters and sons at every stage and in every phase of the child's life," Mogel writes.

No small task. But I've read her previous books (*The Blessing Of A Skinned Knee*, *The Blessing Of A B Minus*) and interviewed her multiple times, and I knew she would more than deliver.

Mogel separates the lessons by age range (toddlerhood, young boys, young girls, teenage boys, teenage girls) and by topic (talking to young children about sex, death and money; teaming up with your partner or ex; getting the best out of nannies, teachers, coaches).

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She encourages readers to “insert mental quotation marks as needed” around the references to gender. Her theories about boys versus girls are rooted in neuroscience, but that certainly doesn’t mean there aren’t exceptions.

Anyway. Some highlights.

On young boys: “All young boys face the same existential questions,” Mogel writes. “How can I be myself without getting into trouble? Does anyone consider me a hero? What do I contribute to this family that someone else doesn’t already contribute better?”

Keeping that in mind can help adults do two things: understand what’s behind a boy’s behaviours and words, and steer him toward activities that let him be a hero in his own unique way.

Young boys also might take longer than girls to recognise what they’re feeling and why. A parent’s job is to help them.

“For boys (and men), saving face is of utmost importance,” Mogel writes, “so pick a feeling your son needs to understand and insert the concept into a setting that does not involve him.”

During a bedtime story, for example.

“Ask him what he thinks the character feels or how he would feel if he were in that situation. Then repeat what he said, agree, and deepen the landscape of emotions. ‘If that happened to me, I might feel a little excited AND a little worried.’ This way your son doesn’t have to acknowledge his own hurt, fear or anger, but hearing a parent name it models and teaches empathy.”

On young girls: Basically, they have our number.

“In an effort to avoid a fight,” Mogel writes, “mothers will often say things like, ‘Do you really want to wear that to school? Do you think you’ve done this homework thoroughly enough?’ These are passive-aggressive rhetorical questions that no girl is going to answer with, ‘Oh, thank you, Mummy! I can’t believe I was going to wear this dress. Why, I’d be so chilly!’

Mum is trying to manoeuvre her daughter into thinking it’s her idea, but it makes the mother seem weak and amounts to a challenge: ‘Yes, I want to wear this and I will wear it!’ “

Better, Mogel writes, to deliver your message in a direct, honest, relaxed manner. (It’s too cold today for that dress. Grab one with long sleeves.) Or let her experience the chill, and decide for herself to store that dress away till summer.

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“Natural consequences and other outside forces can do a lot of the work for you,” Mogel writes.

On teenagers: For both girls and boys, Mogel recommends approaching them like someone else’s children.

“I’m going to pretend this young male is a student from a foreign land,” she suggests. “He acts confident but is unsure of the territory. Behold his energy and enthusiasm! But don’t confuse his size and IQ with maturity.”

“I’m going to pretend this lively young girl is not my daughter but my niece from a distant land,” she writes. “Behold her passion! See how her friends admire her. Marvel at her style.

Not how quickly it changes. Wait at least one day before weighing in on anything she says.” It’s an approach, Mogel maintains, that will help you micromanage less, listen more and remember, above all, that this too shall pass. The power of notes: Mogel suggests this for boys, but I have watched it work wonders with my daughter.

“Some boys prefer to write down a big thought, confession or heartfelt sentiment and slip a note under your door rather than say it in person,” she writes. “If you leave little notes every so often on his desk, night table or pillow, you’ve opened up an avenue of communication he hadn’t realized was available and he’ll be more likely to do the same.”

On the bank of goodwill: “Mutual respect between a parent and child depends upon a parent’s deposits in this bank,” Mogel writes.

“What guarantees a high return on investment? Ask your son for more details about tornadoes or drones or professional sports brackets. Display a good-natured tolerance for your daughter’s clothing choices, however flamboyant or strange, as long as they don’t violate the school dress code. Resist making references to how carefully the two of you shopped for her wardrobe. “Remind yourself that respect begets respect.”

It’s kind and loving, but it’s also strategic.

“At every age, children will bring you the worst problems you can imagine and also the most dazzling moments,” Mogel writes. “The more you know what gladdens your child’s heart, the more of those moments you’ll get to see. – Chicago Tribune/Tribune News Service

## CELESTIAL CRADLE

The Star, 21 May 2018

# Celestial cradle

Scientists develop a 3-D view of an interstellar cloud, where stars are born.

Star2 21 May 2018 By AMINA KHAN

TWO astronomers from Greece have managed to model the three-dimensional structure of an interstellar gas cloud, and found that it's on the order of 10 times more spacious than it originally appeared.

The shape and structure of Musca, described in the journal Science, could help scientists probe the mysterious origins

and evolution of stars – and by extension, the planets that surround them.

Finding the 3-D structure of such clouds “has been a ‘holy grail’ in studies of the interstellar medium for many years now,” said senior author Konstantinos Tassis, an astrophysicist at the University of Crete.



Interstellar clouds serve as the celestial cradles for nascent stars, which condense out of these enormous conglomerations of gas and dust. These cold, dusty, magnetised clouds can reach a million times the mass of the sun. But because they're filled with molecular hydrogen that blocks the light of background stars, they typically appear as holes in an otherwise bright night sky. They're more easily studied using infrared light.

But even in infrared light, these clouds are difficult to study because we can see them only as flat structures, even though they're actually three-dimensional. We know very little about how dense they are, what shape they are and how they're



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organised inside.

“All sorts of different physical and chemical processes take place in their interior, and as a result, the process of star formation is poorly understood,” Tassis said in an email. “How does a giant cloud of a million solar masses break up into smaller pieces, and how do

these fragments condense into stars similar to our sun? What makes a cloud form a lot of small stars or a few larger ones?”

“These problems, although they are directly related to the question of the origin of our sun, our planet, and, ultimately, ourselves, are still very much a mystery,” he added.

About a decade ago, astrophysicist Paul Goldsmith of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in La Canada Flintridge and his colleagues discovered strange hair-like wisps surrounding such gas clouds, rather like the cilia of a bacterium. Amid the chaos of a gas cloud, these ordered structures drew astronomers' attention. How did

they form, and why?

“Understanding how you make new stars is really a critical challenge for modern astrophysics,” Goldsmith, who was not involved in the new paper, said in an interview. “These molecular clouds are where new stars are formed, and so understanding the structure of these clouds, and how deep they are, what their three-dimensional structure is, is obviously critical for understanding the whole picture.”

While completing his doctoral work at the University of Crete, lead author Aris Tritsis (now a postdoctoral fellow at Australian National University) concluded that these striations were actually caused by mag-

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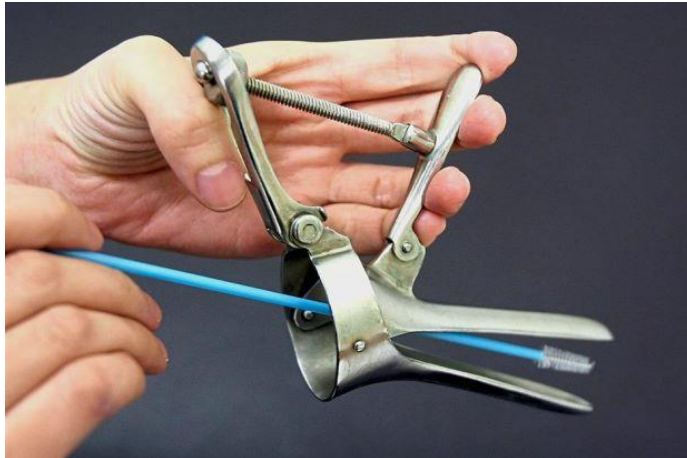
<p>netic waves leaving their imprint on the cloud's gas.</p> <p>"It was then that we realised that these striations might encode a global vibration if the cloud is isolated, a 'song,' a pattern of frequencies that could reveal the true, 3-D shape of the cloud," Tassis said.</p> <p>To try and use those magnetosonic waves to understand the shape of an interstellar cloud, they pulled data from the European Space Agency's infrared Herschel Space Observatory, which can see into the infrared. They focused on Musca, which lies in the Southern Hemisphere roughly 500 light-years from Earth.</p> <p>Musca, a filamentary cloud</p>	<p>that's long and thin, made an ideal target because it was relatively isolated. This meant that its striations were unlikely to have been warped by "noise" coming from nearby structures, Tassis said.</p> <p>Because the waves are basically trapped within the interstellar cloud, the wavelength will actually hold information about its dimensions. After using the striations to determine the wavelength of this "global vibration," the scientists were able to determine the true shape of this gas cloud.</p> <p>From our vantage point, Musca looks like a needle. But the magnetosonic waves revealed that the gas cloud actually was</p>	<p>shaped like a pancake – one we were viewing edge-on. All in all, the cloud seems to measure roughly 24 light-years wide by 18 light-years across and one light-year thick.</p> <p>"In much the same way that a piccolo flute makes a much different sound than a tuba (the air vibrates with different frequencies in the two cases because the shape and size of the instruments are very different), a pancake-shaped cloud vibrates in a tune that is very different than that of a needle-shaped cloud," Tassis said. "Musca very clearly vibrates like a pancake, not a needle. It is not a subtle effect, it is eye-popping!"</p> <p>This meant that the gas cloud</p>
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<p>was far more voluminous than previously thought – roughly on the order of 10 times larger, Tassis said. And because the same amount of gas filled that bigger-than-expected space, it meant the cloud was much less dense than scientists had expected.</p> <p>"It was a huge surprise to us," Tassis said. Goldsmith, whose team originally identified the existence of striations, praised the work.</p> <p>"This is great. This is exciting," the astrophysicist said. "Now we have to figure out if we can confirm that by some other kind of measurement."</p> <p>The discovery that Musca is a pancake and not a prototypical</p>	<p>needle-like filament totally changes scientists' understanding of the balance of forces that shaped this gas cloud and influenced its star-forming process, Tassis added.</p> <p>For one thing, a less dense gas cloud would have a much lower rate of star formation. On top of that, the molecular demographics of sparser clouds are different from denser ones. Dense clouds, for example, are more likely to have nitrogen-based molecules such as ammonia.</p>
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## CHECKING FOR CERVICAL CANCER

The Star, 23 May 2018



During a Pap smear, the speculum is inserted into the vagina to enable the doctor to see the cervix, and the brush is used to obtain cells from the cervix for examination.

IPOH: More than 2,000 Malaysian women get cervical cancer every year, with over 600 dying from it annually.

Only one in four (24%) are diagnosed early enough for a total cure to be possible, according to data from the Health Ministry.

Despite efforts to raise awareness about cervical cancer and the importance of screening, it is still the third most common cancer among Malaysian women.

Here, senior consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist and Malaysian Gynaecological Cancer Society vice-secretary Dr Zamzida Yusoff answers some questions on cervical cancer screening.

### Why is cervical cancer screening needed?

Screening is done to detect pre-cancer changes that can occur years before the actual cancer develops.

If detected at this stage, the chance of a total cure is very high.

### Does every woman need to be screened?

No, you are only at risk of cervical cancer if you are sexually active. If a woman has never had sex, she need not undergo this screening, as it is very rare to get this type of cancer.

If a woman has previously been sexually active and is no longer so, it is advisable to still go for screening.

Those who are sexually active need regular screening tests.

12 JUNE 2018

### **Why is it rare for virgins to get cervical cancer?**

Studies show that more than 90% of cervical cancers are due to infections caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV).

These infections are believed to be spread by sexual contact.

HPV has also been implicated in other cancers associated with sex, such as mouth, throat and anal cancers.

### **When should screening start?**

Around one year after becoming sexually active. We advocate doing the screening once a year for the first three years. If the results are normal, it can then be done once every two to three years until the age of 60.

The cut-off age of 60 is only if the woman has been having regular tests with normal results prior to that.

If, for example, a 70-year-old woman comes along who has never been screened for cervical cancer before, we would still advise her to do a test.

### **What happens during the screening?**

The doctor (or trained nurse) will insert a special tool called a speculum into your vagina in order to take a look at the cervix, which is the entry to the womb.

He or she will take some cells from the cervix using a wooden or plastic spatula or brush, which will be sent to the laboratory for examination.

This test is called a smear.

The doctor (or nurse) will also look for any polyps, bleeding, signs of infection and other abnormalities of the cervix.

For most women, the procedure is not painful, although it might cause a little discomfort.

### **When will I get the results?**

For government hospitals and clinics, it usually takes six to eight weeks.

Sometimes, due to the large number of patients, the staff can only contact those whose results are abnormal.

Those not contacted can be assured that “no news means good news”. If the patient is worried, she can go to the clinic or hospital, and request a copy of the report.

In private hospitals or clinics, the results are usually available within one to two weeks, and will be sent to the patient (if normal) or given to them during their subsequent appointment.

### **Are there other types of cervical cancer screening?**

Yes. The cervical cells taken during a Pap smear can be sent for a DNA test to detect the presence of 13 HPV subtypes.

Another type of test is liquid-based cytology (LBC), where the cells are first suspended in a solution to clean off mucus and other contaminants.

**12 JUNE 2018**

They are then placed on a glass slide and examined for any abnormalities.

### **Are these tests available in Malaysia?**

Government hospitals and clinics offer the Pap smear.

Private hospitals and clinics may offer LBC and the HPV DNA test, in addition to the Pap smear.

### **Is the HPV DNA test the best?**

This test is actually not recommended for women aged below 30.

This is because around three in four women (70%-75%) will be infected with HPV in their lifetimes.

Almost all (90%) will have immune systems that are strong enough to eventually destroy the virus without the need for any treatment.

Only 10% will be unable to clear the virus completely, and might go on to develop cervical cancer later in life.

Women aged below 30 might still have the virus in their body, which their immune system will eventually clear out.

Therefore, a positive HPV DNA test at this stage would cause them unnecessary anxiety and might cause them to seek unnecessary treatment.

## CURRENT UPDATES

### A PITCH TO RESEARCHERS

The Star, 30 May 2018



A visitor photographing one of the species of pitcher plants found at the Nepenthes Park inside the Kledang Saiong Forest Eco Park in Meru, Ipoh.

WITH the only natural nepenthes (tropical pitcher plant) garden in the world located in the state, the Perak Forestry Department is calling on researchers and academics to conduct scientific studies, including promoting education, awareness and conservation of the exotic plant.

There are three other similar nepenthes gardens in the world, located in Germany, Australia and England, but they are all cultivated in greenhouses.

The one in Malaysia – located inside the Kledang Saiong Forest Eco Park, is the only one where visitors can view the tropical plant in natural conditions.

Department director Datuk Mohamed Zin Yusop pointed out that Malaysia's suitable climate is the reason behind the only naturally cultivated nepenthes garden here.

"In greenhouses, or more like grow chambers or terrariums, the humidity, temperature and lighting can all be controlled to cater to the plants' needs.

"Under natural cultivation, researchers and academics will be able to learn and research further about every species of the carnivorous plant in their natural habitat," he told *MetroPerak*.

The garden here, he said, houses over 70 species of nepenthes, more commonly known as the pitcher plants or monkey cups.



Visitors checking out the nepenthes sumatrana, a tropical pitcher plant endemic to the Indonesian island of Sumatra, after which it is named.

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“We have 55 endemic species while the rest are hybrid, all from various countries and regions in the world, including Australia, India, Thailand, Madagascar, Sumatra and Borneo.



Children having fun with public seating design inspired by the pitcher plant at the Nepenthes Park.

“We welcome any interested party to come to us for research, education and awareness purposes.

“I am certain this will also enable more exposure and knowledge exchange between our researchers and the rest of the world,” he said, adding that the nepenthes garden is also open to visitors at RM5 per person.

On another development, Mohamed Zin said that Perak had the highest percentage of permanent forest reserves in Malaysia, covering 999,351ha or 47.43% of the state’s land.

“Right now, another 2,655ha of state land is waiting to be gazetted as permanent forest reserves,” he said, adding that the permanent forest reserves are further categorised into protection and production forests.

“Protection forests cover 48% of the total permanent forest reserves and are forbidden to be felled. They are maintained largely for water catchment, covering 295,000ha – the largest in the peninsula.

“Other reasons protection forests are maintained include flood mitigation, wildlife and soil protection, as well as research and studies,” he said.

The rest of the 52% of permanent forest reserves are meant for production forests, and a limit of no more than 7,744ha can be felled each year with selective felling imposed.

“Only trees measuring 55cm and above in diameter can be felled. But trees that are 150cm or more in diameter are not allowed.



Nepenthes bicalcarata, also known as the fanged pitcher plant is distinctive with its two fangs above the pitcher.

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“Also, only 63 cubic metres of wood can be felled per hectare. Besides, total land clearing is never allowed in permanent forest reserves,” he said, adding that since 2000, Perak Forestry received its certification based on the Malaysia criteria and indicators (MC&I) for sustainable forest management, which is internationally recognised.



Mohamed Zin says researchers are welcome to promote education and conservation of pitcher plant.

He also noted that planting of tree saplings had been ongoing since 2010, with over 18.8 million tree saplings planted as of 2016, covering over 9,522ha in Perak.

“The department set the target to plant two million tree saplings a year since 2016, and have been exceeding the target for two years now,” he said.

Mohamed Zin also called on outdoor activities enthusiasts and hikers to apply for permits before entering any permanent forest reserves.

“The permit will be issued within three working days and RM10 is payable for each applicant.

“Applications can be submitted at the department office,” he said, adding that online application for the permit will only be introduced next year.

Popular outdoor places that fall within permanent forest reserves include Gunung Korbu, Gunung Peninjau, Gunung Suku, Gunung Bujang Melaka, and Gunung Kenderong and Gunung Liang, he added.

## HOW DOES PUBLIC DEBT MAKE OUR MONEY WORTH LESS?

The Star, 6 June 2018



Inflation mechanism: If the government issues extra money and credit, prices of goods and services will go up accordingly.

PUBLIC debt is defined as how much a country owes to lenders.

It can be categorised as internal debt (owed to lenders within the country) and external debt (owed to foreign lenders). Another common division of government debt is by duration until repayment is due. Short-term debt is generally considered to be for one year or less, long-term is for more than 10 years. Medium-term debt falls in between these two boundaries.

A broader definition of public debt may consider all government liabilities, including future pension payments and payments for goods and services which the government has contracted but not yet paid. Regardless of how the public debt is defined, it is simply the accumulation of annual budget deficits. It is the result of years of government leaders spending more than they take in via tax revenues.

By contrast, the annual “government deficit” refers to the difference between government revenue and expenditure in a single year. And there is a difference between public and external debt. Let us not get confused. In the case of external debt, it is the amount owed to foreign investors by both the government and the private sector.

Public debt affects external debt. When interest rates go up on the public debt, they will also rise for all private debts. That is one reason businesses pressure their governments to keep public debt within a reasonable range.

When is public debt good?

Public debt is a good way for countries to get the extra funds needed to invest in their economic growth. It is expected to yield positive returns to the economy when used correctly. It will help improve the standard of living in a country.

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That is because it allows the government to build new roads and bridges, improve education and job training, and provide pensions. This will spur the peoples' confidence and raise current spending more instead of saving for retirement. This spending by the people of the country will further boost economic growth through greater business activities, capital expansion and job creation.

### **Bad side of public debt**

Governments tend to take on too much debt because the benefits make them popular with voters. Therefore, investors usually measure the level of risk by comparing debt to a country's total economic output, known as gross domestic product. The debt-to-GDP ratio gives an indication of how likely the country can pay off its debt.

Investors usually are less concerned until the debt-to-GDP ratio reaches a critical level. When it appears the debt is approaching a critical level, investors will start demanding for a higher interest rate. They want more return for the higher risk.

This is because, if the country keeps spending, the risk of being downgraded by the international rating agencies becomes stronger in view of the growing risk of the country likely to default on its debt.

When interest rates rise, it will become more expensive for a country to refinance its existing debt. In time, more income has to go towards debt repayment. It will strain the money the government has and will add pressure on government expenses. This is when the government will start juggling between development and operating expenditure.

Should the public debt continue to increase with more emphasis on operating

expenditure than to the development expenditure, it will be like driving with the emergency brakes on.

When this happens, investors will drive up interest rates in return for a greater risk of default. That will make the components of economic expansion such as housing, business growth, and auto loans more expensive.

To avoid this burden, the government will have to be careful to find that sweet spot of public debt. It must be large enough to drive economic growth and yet small enough to keep interest rates low.

Probably this is what the Malaysian government is trying to do with the RM1 trillion public debt.

### **Should the people be concerned as to how much the national debt is?**

A government is able to add the national debt in various ways such as deficit spending, quantitative easing and stimulus measures. Each time the government does that, it has to create money or credit. It will add pressure on inflation. Rising prices is what many believe is the definition of inflation. Possibilities for those rising prices can be hidden or postponed or made to look disassociated.



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Also, the public debt is like a tax on us all because it makes everything more expensive so that the government can spend money it does not have. Furthermore, it can be viewed as a regressive tax in the sense that it impacts the poor more than the rich.

Aside from the ups and downs of the economy, it makes energy, groceries and housing more expensive because it makes our money worth less.

### **How does it make our money worth less?**

Let us use a simple example. Assume there is a boat, and it is wrecked in the middle of the ocean on an uncharted island. A chest that contains gold coins was salvaged from the sunken boat. In the initial period, those who salvaged the chest of gold coins could enjoy it.

However, the gold coins were worthless to these people as they could not buy anything on this uncharted island.

As time went by, this island started creating economic activities and needed a medium of exchange. So these people used the gold coins. The goods and services were measured based on the number of gold coins, now that the gold coins have found its way into the economic activities.

Assume that one of the individuals on this island found another chest of gold coins from the capsized boat. The additional gold coins increased the supply of gold coins. Now, the individual becomes richer and is able to buy more things without really working anymore.

Eventually, all the additional gold coins that the individual has, found its way into the island's economy and is equal to the total value of all goods and services.

But now the prices of goods and services in the island has increased by say 50%. That is what happens when the government issues extra money and credit.

### **How much is too much?**

Based on a basic framework, if a government could choose either having high or low debt today, with all else being equal, the country should select the latter. After all, when debt is high, the government will impose unpleasant taxes to fund spending on debt-interest payments such as goods and services tax (GST) or other taxes. These taxes can act as a drag on the economy.

What happens if the government is faced with a high debt? Is it better to practise austerity and pay it down, or take advantage of low interest rates to invest? Much will depend on the amount of "fiscal space" the government has. It is actually the gap between a country's debt-to-GDP ratio and its "upper limit".

If it surpasses the upper limit, the country will have to adopt austerity measures or prudent measures to avoid a default.

This could be what the Malaysian government has embarked on – prudent measures since the public debt-to-GDP is at 80.3%. In order to reduce the debt,

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the authorities have cancelled some of the mega projects under the government guarantee, and at the same time reduce the operating expenditure while providing incentives to boost household spending.

By instituting prudent spending and letting the economic growth take its course of action, in the long run, it should improve the public debt-to-GDP ratio, provided the economic growth outpaces the public debt growth.

But my analysis is a simplified one. Under normal circumstances, there are more concerns on the growth dynamics in the long run compared to the effects of borrowing on growth in the short run which may often be more relevant to the question of the time electoral mandates have on the government.

So a government, in planning to fix the public debt issue, will need to take a more reasoned look, rather than rushing to fix it, and that is what our government is doing.

**Anthony Dass is AmBank Group chief economist.**

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## GOVT WILL RESOLVE ISSUE OF HOUSEMEN PLACEMENT, SAYS HEALTH MINISTER

Malay Mail, 9 June 2018



Minister of Health Dzulkefly Ahmad speaks during a meeting at the Health Ministry in Putrajaya June 5, 2018

KUALA LUMPUR, June 9 — The Health Ministry will solve the glut of medical graduates and new nurses who have yet to get placement in government hospitals.

Health Minister Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said the glut was due to an increase in medical graduates from local and foreign institutions.

“The second reason is that the ministry was implementing the human resource optimisation policy which means there will be no additional new posts offered but on a trade-off or redeployment,” he said in an exclusive interview with Bernama here recently.

Dzulkefly said the ministry was aware of the issue and to overcome it, the ministry had taken the following measures:

— To change the method of appointment, from permanent to contract appointment in which the officer has the opportunity to under housemanship and obtain full registration as required under the Medical Act 1971 to improve the clinical skills and experience of officers.

— To enforce a moratorium on medical programmes with the cooperation of the Education Ministry up to April 30, 2021 with the aim of imposing quota on medical graduates by universities in the country. The original period was for five years from May 1, 2011 to April 30, 2016 and it has been extended to April 30, 2021.

He said under the moratorium, there would be no new medical programmes at degree level and no increase in the quota of medical student intake.

However, the ministry will not be able to control the intake or medical graduates coming out of foreign universities.

“Apart from that, the ministry had increased the training slots for graduates from 10,835 to 11, 706 through additional graduate training hospitals. The ministry had increased the number of graduate training hospitals from 38 in 2009 to 47 hospitals now,” he said.

Also, the public debt is like a tax on us all because it makes everything more expensive so that the government can spend money it does not have. Furthermore, it can be viewed as a regressive tax in the sense that it impacts the poor more than the rich.

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It covers 44 hospitals under the ministry and three teaching hospital (Universiti Sains Malaysia Hospital, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Medical Centre and Universiti Malaya Medical Centre) in 2018.

Other measures taken included increasing the number graduate training posting.

“Several new postings had been introduced in stages to increase training slots and placement of graduate in anaesthesia, emergency services, psychiatric and premier health departments.

Dzulkefly said the ministry would continue recruit Grade UD41 medical officers in phases under contract every two months, depending on the vacancies of training slots. On the issue of graduate nurses who have yet to receive placement in government hospitals, he said the ministry had reduced the number of nurse trainees from 2,274 in 2016 to 1,742 in 2018 (a drop of 23 per cent), he said.

Apart from that, the ministry will also appeal for special approval from the Public Service Department (JPA) to increase the number of permanent posts or to allow the ministry appoint graduate nurses from the Health Ministry Training Institutes on contract and the application is still under consideration by JPA, he said. — Bernama

## NEW MONITORING SYSTEM TO CHECK ANTIBIOTICS IN ANIMALS

The Star, 10 June 2018

STEPS are being taken at various levels to address antimicrobial resistance (AMR) – from checking drug sales to creating a system to monitor antibiotic levels in food animals.

A new system will be developed by the Veterinary Services Department (DVS) to check the levels of antibiotics in poultry and livestock to ensure it is safe for human consumption.



“The DVS will monitor the usage of antibiotics in animals,” says its director-general Datuk Dr Quaza Nizamuddin Hassan Nizam.

Echoing this, Federation of Livestock Farmers’ Associations of Malaysia president Datuk Jeffrey Ng Choon Ngee says there are plans to collect data under the proposed system from farms nationwide.

“The system will check whether the amount of antibiotic residue in food animals complies with proper standards,” he says.

However, Ng assures that there is minimal antibiotic usage in the local meat industry, adhering to World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) standards.

Growth antibiotics, he says, are rarely used in food animals like chickens in Malaysia.

“Under the Feed Act, if we were to add growth antibiotics into the animal feed, we will need to declare it.

“But most feed in the Malaysian market are not added with such components,” he adds. More often though, the type of antibiotics used are to treat sick food animals.

However, such antibiotics will be removed naturally by the animal’s body within a “withdrawal period”.

“Such periods can vary according to the number of days required. It depends on the antibiotics used.

“Farmers must comply with the withdrawal period or else, there will be a high level of residue left in the meat,” Ng says, adding that this will be checked by the proposed new system.

On the medical front, the Health Ministry is continuously carrying out enforcement to curb any illegal sales of antibiotics.

Ministry Medical Development Division Infection Control Unit head Dr Suraya Amir Husin says the sale and usage of antibiotics are controlled under the Poisons Act 1952.

“Such drugs may only be supplied by licensed practitioners, veterinarians and pharmacists, with valid prescriptions.

“The online sale of antibiotics is prohibited under the same Act,” she explains.

To avoid overprescriptions, the ministry also monitors the use of antibiotics through annual checks at government hospitals, health clinics, Armed Forces Hospitals, University Hospitals and private hospitals.

“This year, the total antibiotic sales involving government and private healthcare sectors will be checked.

“Monitoring antibiotic sales will allow us to see consumption trends, which will be used as an indicator for the success of intervention measures,” Dr Suraya says.

But everyone can do their part in reducing AMR, such as by preventing infections from being transmitted.

“These measures include the appropriate use of antibiotics and vaccines, sanitation, hygiene measures, and other habits such as safe sexual practices.

“Efforts to control drug-resistant infections must become part of everyday practice in health care settings across the nation,” she says.

Doctors and pharmacists should prescribe and dispense only the antibiotics that are required to treat a patient, rather than automatically giving the newest or best-known medicines.

“Doctors should avoid overprescribing antibiotics despite being pressured by patients and should always follow guidelines and their clinical judgment,” urges Dr Suraya.

Calling it a “huge problem”, Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society president Amrahi Buang says as a member of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Malaysia is compelled to take appropriate actions to address AMR following the guide from WHO.

“We have formed a National Antimicrobial Resistance Committee that covers all aspects with regards to humans, animals and the environment.

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“There are various working groups, covering awareness and education, antimicrobial stewardship initiatives and capacity building,” he says.

Amrahi stresses that all healthcare professionals must be trained on the proper use of antibiotics for various types of infections.

“In prescribing drugs, the choice of antibiotics in relation to the type of infection is very important.

“Patients must be given proper medication counselling by pharmacists when given antibiotics,” he urges.

Amrahi also advises healthcare professionals, handlers, visitors and patients to practice proper and adequate hand washing practices.

“Patients must follow the advice given by pharmacists at the point of dispensing.

“Antibiotics must be taken according to the stipulated time and duration of use.

“Patients shouldn’t share their antibiotics with others and inform prescribers if they are allergic to the medication,” he says.

#### BIM MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

- Malaysian Pharmaceutical Society (MPS)
- Royal Institution of Surveyors Malaysia (RISM)
- The Institution of Engineers Malaysia (IEM)
- Pertubuhan Akitteknik 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 (ICMM)
- The Chartered Institute of Logistics And Transport Malaysia (CILTM)
- International Institution of Plantation Management (IIPM)

#### CORPORATE AFFILIATE

- Malaysian Institute of Human Resource Management