RakanKKM to boost public healthcare

KUALA LUMPUR: The RakanKKM initiative is not designed as a replacement, but to add value to the public healthcare system, says Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad (pic).

"Through this initiative, those who can afford it have the option to access these additional services voluntarily, without any coercion.

"The existing comprehensive public healthcare services will continue, and there will be no compromise in providing the best public health services to Malaysians," he said in a parliamentary written reply dated Dec 2.

Dzulkefly was responding to concerns raised by Ayer Hitam MP Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong that RakanKKM amounts to a privatisation of public hospitals.

The minister reiterated that the initiative is fully owned by the government through the Minister of Finance Inc, and involvement of government-linked investment companies will be considered in the future.

He said RakanKKM will be regulated by the Health Ministry.

"As such, the issue of privatisation does not arise. On the objectives and utilisation of additional revenue generated by RakanKKM, this is clearly intended for public interest," he said.

Dzulkefly said RakanKKM is an improvement to two existing initiatives, namely the Full-Paying



Patient (FPP) initiative and Flexi Hours, in terms of equity and sustainability.

The Health Ministry has also begun working on health reforms outlined in the White Paper, and this has also been coordinated with the Economy Ministry

for the 13th Malaysia Plan.

Among the main reforms undertaken are health financing.

"The Health Ministry is taking a realistic and phased approach, tailored to Malaysia's context and framework, with long-term strategic solutions through the initiative to establish a National Health Fund.

"In essence, the National Health Fund will function as the custodian and collector of funds from diversified sources, with government allocations as its backbone.

"It will drive the transition toward demand-based health financing, ensuring transparent and clear accountability for health outcomes," he added.

He was responding to a question by Dr Wee on the latest status of the implementation of reforms outlined in the Health White Paper, and what assurance the government can provide that the RakanKKM initiative will not become an early step towards the privatisation of public health services or the creation of a two-tier system based on ability to pay.

RakanKKM, which is the government's premium economy service, is expected to see its first patient by the end of the year.



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Anti-Bullying Tribunal a real turning point if done right

THE Anti-Bully Bill 2025 is one of the most significant child protection reforms Malaysia has seen in years.

One of the most promising aspects of this legislation is the establishment of a child-friendly Anti-Bullying Tribunal, Victims aged 18 and below or their parents will be able to file complaints without complicated legal steps or high financial costs. This removes one of the biggest barriers that families face when seeking help.

The Tribunal is also expected to deliver decisions within 60 days. For victims, timing matters.

Bullying affects emotional health, academic performance and a young person's sense of safety. Waiting months for institutions to "investigate" often leads to more trauma. A fast and clear process shows that the system finally understands the urgency of protecting victims.

But accessibility must come

with proper safeguards. The Tribunal needs to operate in a trauma-informed way with privacy protections, sensitive interviewing procedures and psycho-social support.

A process that is meant to help victims should never overwhelm or traumatise them again.

Bullying today is no longer limited to physical or verbal aggression. It includes online harassment, impersonation, doxxing. edited photos, viral rumours and even AI-generated deepfakes.

Harm now spreads faster, lasts longer and reaches wider audiences. For this reason, the Tribunal must be equipped to handle modern forms of evidence. These include screenshots. video recordings, posts that have been deleted, anonymous accounts and content that circulates across multiple platforms.

The Tribunal must also understand the use of AI tools and how they can be misused to imitate, distort or target individuals.

If the Tribunal is not prepared for digital-age bullying, it risks falling behind at the very moment when young people need protection the most.

The Bill also places responsibility on institutions. Schools and educational bodies will now be required to take active steps to prevent bullying, investigate complaints and ensure victims are not retaliated against.

This is essential because many cases worsen due to inaction or fear of reputational damage.

The Tribunal includes both compensatory and restorative tools. This balance is important.

Counselling, mediation and rehabilitation may help young offenders address their behaviour, especially if they are struggling with their own challenges.

But restorative approaches should never replace consequences in serious cases. Victims should not be pressured to "forgive and move on".

The Tribunal's ability to order compensation, mandate counselling, issue digital removal orders or require formal apologies reflects a system that takes accountability seriously.

Malaysia now has an opportunity to build a safer environment for every young person. This requires proper training, digital capacity, funding and strong oversight. The law is a significant milestone, but its success will depend on how faithfully it is carried out.

Every young person deserves to feel safe in their learning environment. The Tribunal can help make that a reality if the commitment to protect victims remains at the centre of its work.

> LIEW LI XUAN Kulai, Johor

WHO issues unprecedented global guidelines to combat infertility



Supported by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission

HE World Health Organisation has published for the first time directives to improve the prevention, detection and treatment of infertility, which affects millions across the globe.

"One in six people worldwide experiences infertility during their lifetime," said Pascale Allotey, the global health body's head of sexual and reproductive health.

"The condition affects individuals and couples across all regions and income levels.

"And yet, access to safe and affordable care remains highly inequitable."

Allotey told reporters that the issue of infertility had been neglected "for far too long".

The new quide would provide a "unified, evidence-based foundation" to ensure care is safe, effective and accessible for all, she added.

According to WHO, infertility is a condition of the male and female reproductive system, defined as the inability to achieve pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual relations.

The situation can lead to major distress, stigmatisation and financial difficulties.



One in six people worldwide experiences infertility during their lifetime. PICTURE CREDIT: FREEPIK

In several countries, most of the cost of infertility tests and treatment is borne by patients, which often leads to "catastrophic financial expenditures".

"In some settings, even a single round of in vitro fertilisation (IVF) can cost double the average annual household income," WHO said.

The guide, published recently, sets out 40 recommendations and calls for the integration of fertility in national health funding, services and strategies.

It also wants to see steps for effective clinical management, in both diagnosis and treat-

For example, WHO calls for male diagnoses, which are often underinvestigated, suggesting a range of approaches, starting with advice before moving to active treatment.

It also advises increased investment in prevention.

Health professionals need to address the main risk factors for infertility, which include untreated sexually transmitted infections and smoking, it says. AFP

NEWS / Nation

SECOND POST-MORTEM

Lawyer demands accountability over cadet's murder

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Naran Singh, the lawyer for the family of Palapes cadet Syamsul Haris Shamsudin, is demanding accountability from officers who allegedly misled the defence minister and armed forces chief.

The cadet's death has now been

classified as murder by the Attorney-General's Chambers (A-GC). A second post-mortem revealed that the 22-year-old Universiti Teknologi Malaysia student died as a result of "sustained severe neck injuries while he was alive". Naran told the New Straits Times he wants to know what is Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin's next course of action.

Khaled had said that an investigation committee found no evidence of abuse, and a hospital report confirmed no signs of injury on Syamsul Haris' body.

He also said the armed forces trainer had not had physical contact with the cadet.

Armed Forces chief General Tan Sri Mohd Nizam Jaffar said the military's probe into the death found no evidence of bullying or hazing.

Naran said the question now was who allegedly provided the minister and the armed forces chief incorrect information or concealed the truth.

"What action will be taken against those who allegedly fed them false information?

"Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr

Dzulkefly Ahmad must seek explanations from the two medical officers who performed the postmortem: Dr George Sixtus Fernandez Jr and Dr Nurfarrah Balgies Abdul Lateef.

"He must also clarify why the initial report stated that findings were pending laboratory investigation.

"Those who allegedly conspired to conceal information must be hauled up."

Syamsul Haris died on July 28 at Kota Tinggi Hospital in Johor. He was undergoing training at the Combat Inoculation Firing Range of the Army Combat Training Centre in Ulu Tiram, Johor.

He was buried on July 29 in Kampung Riching Ulu Muslim Cemetery in Selangor.

Syamsul Haris' body was exhumed for a second post-mortem following an order by the Shah Alam High Court judge Datuk Bhupindar Singh Gurcharan



Syamsul Haris Shamsudin

Singh Preet.

Naran said Syamsul Haris' mother, Ummu Haiman Bee Daulatgun, 45, expressed relief that her eldest son's death would be investigated as a murder.

The investigation into Syamsul Haris' murder has been taken over by Bukit Aman's Classified Criminal Investigation Unit.

Bukit Aman Criminal Investigation Department director Datuk M. Kumar said police were identifying those allegedly involved in Syamsul Haris' death.

UTM has pledged full cooperation with the authorities.



No.

III BY KIRTINEE RAMESH

newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: Experts have hailed Malaysia's first-ever anti-bullying Bill as an overdue step in tackling a problem long swept under the carpet, but warn it must not overlook adults trapped in toxic, abusive workplaces.

Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia senior lecturer and licensed counsellor Dr Farhana Sabri said the Anti-Bullying Bill 2025 represents a major shift in national policy, particularly in how it recognises bullying beyond physical aggression.

"For the first time, Malaysia clearly defines bullying to include psychological and social harm such as humiliation, exclusion, discrimination and online harassment, all recognised under Section 3(2)."

She added that the new definition matches what counsellors see daily, with many children and teenagers experiencing "silent psychological erosion" long before the behaviour is even labelled as bullying under existing norms.

She also described the Bill as bold for mandating that all educational institutions provide counselling and psychosocial support under Section 7(1)(d).

Farhana said making emotional support a legal requirement represents an acknowledgement that victims need trained responders, not just disciplinary action.

"It recognises that the emotional consequences of bullying require qualified responders, not simply disciplinary action," she said, adding that all counsellors must now be registered and licensed under the Malaysian Board of Counsellors to ensure competency and ethical accountability.

The Bill also outlines child-sensitive reporting channels and strict confidentiality rules to help young victims speak up safely.

She also welcomed the widened powers of the proposed Anti-Bullying Tribunal, which

Experts laud anti-bullying Bill

Protection clearly defined to include psychological and social harm: Academic

may order formal apologies, deletion of harmful online content, counselling for parents or guardians and compensation of up to RM250,000.

"These are mental-health-informed solutions that prioritise mending, accountability and long-term behavioural change over simple punishment."

However, she cautioned that the Bill's definition of "victim" remains narrowly focused on children, specifically students of any age in educational institutions and minors in protective homes, as outlined in Section 2.

"This approach does not apply to adult workers who are subjected to workplace bullying, power-based harassment and psychological intimidation."

She said within her counselling practice, many employees suffer depression, anxiety and burnout due to toxic work environments, adding that limiting protection to those in school risks sending the message that support for victims "expires" in adulthood.

Farhana also said the Bill lays a strong foundation for protecting child and youth mental health, but Malaysia needs a parallel mechanism, potentially under occupational safety regulations, to address psychological harm throughout a person's life.

"If we view this Bill as the first pillar of a larger societal commitment, we are genuinely advancing toward a Malaysia in which dignity, safety and emotional wellbeing are protected at all stages of life."

Parent Action Group for Education chairman Datin Noor Azimah Abdul Rahim echoed the Bill's importance, saying it reframes bullying, including cyberbullying and institutional negligence, as a matter of legal responsibility rather than just a school-level disciplinary issue.

She also said the emphasis of the Bill on prevention, restorative approaches and institutional accountability aligns with global best practices on child protection and human rights.

However, she said implementation would make or break the law, adding that without proper training, resources and enforcement, the Bill risks becoming "symbolic rather than effective".

"The roots of bullying, social norms, power dynamics, peer pressure, mental-health issues and institutional complacency run deep."

She said government agencies, schools, civil society, parents and communities must see the Bill as part of a long-term movement for cultural change.

Dex-Lab moves closer to **SGX Catalist listing**

Fast-growing social robotics provider steps up IPO plans as eldercare demand grows

KUALA LUMPUR: Nova MSC Bhd's subsidiary Dex-Lab Pte Ltd, has appointed Evolve Capital Advisory Pte Ltd, as its sponsor for Dex-Lab's listing on the Singapore Exchange (SGX) Catalist Board.

This appointment marks a significant milestone in Dex-Lab's progression from Singapore's first mover in eldercare humanoid robotics to a fast-scaling provider across Asia-Pacific (Apac) and Australia.

The proposed IPO remains subject to due diligence, finalisation of transaction structure, market conditions and approvals from both Nova MSC's shareholders and the relevant stock exchanges.

Nova MSC executive chairman Sunny Loh Guan Huat said Dex-Lab has grown rapidly in Singapore with proven outcomes and attracts strong interest from care providers and institutions.

"The caregiving sector worldwide is under intense pressure. Our humanoid social robots Dexie and provide meaningful, complementary support to care teams and deliver measurable benefits to residents.

"With global demand rising for eldercare robotics, we believe the time is right to explore an SGX listing.

"The appointment of Evolve Capital is a key step as Dex-Lab prepares for regional scale-up. A SGX listing will help Dex-Lab accelerate market expansion, enhance R&D and strengthen its global position," he said in a statement.

Founded in Singapore in 2020, Dex-Lab develops humanoid social robots designed specifically for eldercare and dementia environments.

Its current flagship robots - Dexie and Daisy - deliver structured programmes including cognitive stimulation, mobility exercises, music and multilingual conversation and social engagement.

The solutions are developed to complement, not replace, human caregivers by reducing manual workload and enabling consistent, meaningful interaction for seniors.

Dex-lab's solutions have gained strong market adoption in Singapore, with active deployments across leading care providers such as Singhealth Community Hospitals,

PeaceHaven Nursing Home, MWS Nursing Home, All Saint Homes, Bright Hill Evergreen Nursing Home, Lion's Home for the Elderly, and St Andrew's Nursing Home.

Independent studies conducted with a major public healthcare cluster reported measurable have improvements - including a 32% increase in positive patient engagement, cognitive gains in 46% of participants, up to two hours of staff time reallocated per session, and enhanced staff-to-patient ratios from 1:3 to as efficient as 1:5-6.

Together with deployments in Australia and showcases in Hong Kong, these outcomes affirm Dex-Lab's position as an emerging leader in social robotics in the Asia-Pacific

The sector in which Dex-Lab operates is experiencing rapid global acceleration with social robots, humanoid systems, and digital eldercare technologies gaining significant traction as healthcare systems worldwide grapple with rising care demand, shrinking labour supply, and rapidly populations.

Global market drivers underscore this momentum, with the social robots market projected to exceed US\$40 billion (RM165 billion) within the next decade, strong growth expected in humanoid robotics through 2030 and beyond, the dementia-care market estimated at US\$40.6 billion by 2034, and the global population of individuals aged 60 and above forecast to reach 1.4 billion by 2030 - expanding further to 2.1 billion by 2050.

Against this backdrop, Dex-Lab is accelerating its expansion across key Asian markets and Australia, regions facing some of the world's fastestageing demographics.

The company is building on completed and ongoing pilots in Singapore, Australia, and Hong Kong.

It is currently evaluating new opportunities in Malaysia, China, the Middle East, and other emerging markets.



ounded in Singapore in 2020, Dex-Lab develops humanoid social robots designed specifically for eldercare and dementia care environments. - DEX-LAB WEBSITE

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APABLA unia servakin meningkat, polbagai perubahan berlaks pada tubah marasia, termasukiah pada sendi dan otot. Salah satu bahagian yang sering terjejas ialah lutut.

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