

## Management cost of non-communicable diseases recorded at RM64.3b yearly

**HULU LANGAT:** The country now spends RM64.3 billion annually on non-communicable diseases (NCD), exceeding this year's total Health Ministry allocation of RM46.52 billion.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said Malaysia must move beyond a treatment-focused "sick care" approach to more effective prevention and public empowerment.

"The rise in diabetes cases in Hulu Langat is worrying, with 2,847 new cases recorded over the past two years. In 2024, 1,461 cases were reported, up 5.24%, while last year saw 1,386 new cases, a 4.73% increase.

"Overall, the cumulative number has increased by around 10.2%," he said at the opening of the Hulu Langat Wellness Hub open day in Bandar Seri Putra yesterday.

Commenting on the Wellness Hub, he said it reflects health system reforms and broadens access to a more health-literate society.

"This initiative supports the National Health Literacy Policy, helping people stay informed and make smarter choices for their wellbeing."

He said the Wellness Hub also tackles national issues like stunting and malnutrition, providing nutrition counselling that equips parents from early pregnancy through their child's first 1,000 days.

"We use a behavioural insights approach or behavioural science. Instead of just giving instructions, we provide choices and guidance to help people adopt healthier habits independently. The Wellness Hub supports healthy ageing in line with the Senior Citizens Package, which is part of the ministry's 2026-2030 strategic plan." – Bernama

## Schools allowed flexible operations in hot weather

**NIBONG TEBAL:** The Education Ministry is concerned about the welfare, health and safety of students, teachers and all school staff in dealing with the hot weather or any unexpected weather conditions, especially in the northern states.

Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek said as such, all school administrators have been given the autonomy to make decisions in handling school activities and operations during hot weather conditions, especially in terms of wearing sports attire in place of the official school uniform.

"Actually, we have reiterated this matter each time we are faced with the hot weather. We have guidelines and also advisories from the Malaysian Meteorological Department (MetMalaysia) and the Health Ministry.

"So, I ask that all school administrators follow these guidelines and run through the guidelines from the ministry and MetMalaysia.

"With these guidelines in place, I think we can handle the situation. So, there is no issue regarding the wearing of sports attire and also activities during the hot weather," she said.

She said this after officiating at the Semarak Sejahtera Activity Centre Older Persons programme at Jalan Sungai Aceh here yesterday, which was also attended by Social Welfare Department director-general Datuk Che Murad Sayang Ramjan. – Bernama

# Emission reduction from EV use may not be as expected

■ BY HARITH KAMAL  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Electric vehicles (EV) are supposed to fight climate change but in Malaysia, they could end up doing the opposite, an energy expert said, unless the country cleans up its power grid.

The electricity grid – the network of power plants and transmission lines that delivers electricity to homes, businesses and vehicles – is still largely powered by coal and gas, meaning charging EVs can produce almost as much carbon as petrol cars, said Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia senior lecturer Dr Muhammad Ammirul Atiqi Mohd Zainuri.

He said EVs can, in theory, generate higher lifecycle emissions than internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles when electricity is still largely produced from coal and gas.

He was responding to a recent RimbaWatch report that challenges the widely held assumption that switching to EVs automatically leads to emissions reductions.

The report found that if all 825,000 cars registered last year had been electric, annual emissions in Peninsular Malaysia would have been slightly higher, reaching about 3.66 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, after accounting for battery production, electricity

➤ Coal and gas burned to power electricity grid that charges such cars may generate as much carbon as vehicles that run on fossil fuels, says expert

generation and battery replacements.

"In theory, EVs can contribute more emissions than ICE vehicles if the electricity grid relies heavily on fossil fuels," Muhammad Ammirul said.

"This happens because the region's power grid is more than 80% dependent on fossil fuels."

While EVs eliminate tailpipe emissions, he said their true environmental impact must be assessed across the entire lifecycle, including emissions from battery manufacturing and electricity used for charging.

"Without transitioning to renewable power, switching to electric vehicles may ironically increase total carbon output instead of reducing it," he said, describing this as a critical risk in Malaysia's EV transition.

Muhammad Ammirul said the stark contrast between Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak illustrates how electricity sources determine

whether EVs are genuinely low-carbon.

"In Sarawak, where renewables account for more than 60% of electricity generation, EVs emit just 68 grams of carbon dioxide per kilometre, compared with 166 grams per kilometre for petrol vehicles.

"In Peninsular Malaysia, indirect emissions from fossil fuel power plants effectively cancel out any vehicle-level savings."

He also warned that rapid, large-scale EV adoption could worsen emissions in the short term while placing significant strain on the national power grid.

"Mass adoption would significantly increase electricity demand, much of which is still generated by coal and gas," he said, adding that replacing ICE vehicles with EVs without decarbonising the grid would merely shift pollution from roads to power stations.

To achieve genuine emissions reductions, Muhammad Ammirul

said Malaysia must move beyond what he described as "tailpipe-only" logic and adopt a lifecycle-based emissions framework for transport policy.

"EVs only become cleaner than petrol cars once the fossil fuel share of the grid drops well below its current level," he said.

He called for road tax reforms based on total vehicle carbon footprints rather than engine size and urged the government to prioritise the electrification of public transport systems instead of expanding subsidies for private EV ownership.

Technological solutions such as off-grid solar charging, smart charging systems and vehicle-to-grid technology could also help reduce reliance on fossil fuel electricity while improving grid stability, he added.

Muhammad Ammirul said EV policies must be closely aligned with Malaysia's National Energy Transition Roadmap (NETR), citing recent measures including the proposed carbon tax and RM16.5 billion in renewable energy investments by government-linked companies.

"Electric vehicles alone aren't a silver bullet – their impact depends entirely on the grid. To see real emissions reductions, the energy transition must happen first."

## Cash aid to ease burden ahead of CNY, Ramadan

■ BY THE SUN TEAM  
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**IPOH:** Berjaya Cares Foundation, in partnership with the Sumbangan Kasih Madani initiative, distributed RM250,000 in cash aid to 800 students in the Ipoh Barat parliamentary constituency yesterday.

The joint public-private effort aims to ease financial burdens of families ahead of Chinese New Year and Ramadan.

Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming said the RM300 assistance per student is aimed at easing families' expenses for learning materials and basic necessities.

He said the programme reflects the government's commitment to public welfare and ensuring that no one is left behind.

"Even though it's Chinese New Year, we also support Malay and Indian communities as Madani stands for compassion, mercy, unity and harmony," he said after the event at SJKC Bercham yesterday. Also present were Buntong state assemblywoman M. Thulsi and Bercham state assemblyman Ong Boon Piow.

Nga, who is also Kepadang state assemblyman, said national progress requires collective effort.

"Our country is multi-ethnic. We have Malays, Chinese, Indians, Kadazan, Iban and Dusun. We are all children of Malaysia. Therefore, we must safeguard two things – unity which must be embraced and harmony which must be preserved.



Nga (centre) says the public-private aid initiative between Berjaya Cares Foundation and Sumbangan Kasih Madani highlights unity across communities to ease the financial burden of families ahead of the festive season. Also present at the event was Berjaya Group Bhd executive director Shashitharan Nair (in blue).

"These are the two keys to the country's success. Without unity, we fall apart. Without harmony, society collapses and the country cannot progress.

"You cannot go to school and learn in peace. That is why unity and harmony must be defended together."

At the same event, Nga also addressed the legalisation of houses of worship built without prior approval, underlining the ministry's readiness to assist.

"That's why, under the ministry, there is the Non-Islamic Houses of Worship division. Let's all chip in and help resolve this problem," he said.

He stressed that the construction of every house of worship must comply with the law, including obtaining planning permission from local authorities.

"Frankly, the law is very clear. They must obtain the planning permit and this regulation applies to all houses of worship, including mosques, churches and temples with no exceptions."

Nga also clarified that some houses of worship were built long before the Local Government Act or the National Land Code were enacted.

"Some of them have existed for

hundreds of years. We need to find a solution through the process of legislation. What is important is that these structures do not disrupt public order, do not encroach on river reserves and do not obstruct traffic or roads."

On Saturday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim emphasised that the government does not support the construction of houses of worship that fail to comply with regulations and laws, regardless of race.

He said all houses of worship must adhere to the rules to preserve the country's harmony and unity.