

Eight out of 10 childminders are untrained

Unqualified carers give nurseries a poor image — DPM

PUTRAJAYA: About 80% or 13,700 childminders for children up to four years of age in nurseries registered with the Social Welfare Department (SWD) do not meet the minimum qualification as of June this year.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail said the lack of qualified caregivers who had taken the Permata Early Childhood Care and Education (KAP) course reflected badly on the number of registered nurseries.

"The census projection by the Malaysian Department of Statistics in 2010 estimated the number of children aged four and below in 2018 to be 2.3 million," she said at the launching ceremony of the 2018 Nursery Day yesterday.

She said based on these statistics, if it is assumed that 50 per cent of children in Malaysia aged up to four years old required nursery care, our country would need 38,333 nurseries.

However, she said SWD's database showed there were only 4,302

registered nurseries nationwide.

Wan Azizah, who is also Women, Family and Community Development Minister said the numbers showed a clear shortage in terms of the requirement and availability of nurseries in the country.

"The lack of qualified caregivers and the number of registered nurseries will have implications on the quality of care and safety of our children," she said.

Wan Azizah stressed that the availability of nurseries was important to provide a support sys-

tem for working parents to manage their children while they were at work.

"This will indirectly help the country achieve its goal of increasing the number of women in the workforce to 59% in 2020 compared to 54.7% in 2017," she said.

"Equality" was chosen as the theme for the 2018 National Nursery Day celebration in line with the Malaysian government's commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child which it ratified in 1995. — *Bernama*

IN BRIEF

Community Link programme expands abroad

KUALA LUMPUR: CIMB Foundation has gone Asean-wide with its flagship Community Link programme launched in Indonesia yesterday. The "Kejar Mimpi" Leaders Camp, an activity of the Community Link programme, is aimed at helping Indonesian youths realise their full potential, achieve their dreams and become valued citizens of tomorrow, the foundation said in a statement. The initiative, organised by CIMB Niaga at the Airlangga University, Surabaya, demonstrates CIMB Group's commitment to, and leadership in, corporate social responsibility by empowering and engaging its employees across the region to champion initiatives that will leave a lasting impact on their local communities, it said. — *Bernama*

Lam Thye: Form panel on student delinquency

KUALA LUMPUR: The education ministry has been urged to set up a special committee to study and report on the level of student delinquency in schools. Malaysia Crime Prevention Foundation senior vice-chairman Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye said this would enable the authorities to gauge the seriousness of the problem as well as students' involvement in drugs, crime and other social problems. He said in a statement that there appeared to be some aggressive behaviour among youths in Malaysia but, unfortunately, there was insufficient data on how serious it was. — *Bernama*

17 security guards released on MACC bond

PUTRAJAYA: Fifteen security guards of the Prime Minister's Department (JPM) were released yesterday after being remanded for five days to assist an investigation into the misappropriation of funds involving RM3.5 million. Magistrate Nadhirah Abdul Rahim allowed the release on Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) bond. Two others were released last Friday. The MACC was reported earlier of seeking to interview former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak regarding the the money which he said belonged to Umno. — *Bernama*

944 dengue cases in three constituencies in KL

KUALA LUMPUR: A total of 944 dengue cases with one death were reported in Batu, Kepong and Segambut parliamentary constituencies, from January to Aug 4. Kepong district health officer Dr Fuad Hashim said: "Usually, the number of cases in these three parliamentary constituencies average between 30 and 40, but the figure had risen over the past few weeks. — *Bernama*

All patients get equal treatment — Health DG

KUALA LUMPUR: A controversy sparked by the removal of portraits of two gender rights activists from an arts festival has spilled over to the health services, prompting the health ministry to make a stand against discrimination.

In a Twitter post yesterday, Health director-general Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah stressed that the ministry does not discriminate against any patient base on religion, race or social group.

He was referring to a Facebook post by a doctor Nur Ilyani Mohamed Nawawi, who said she wanted to champion the right to live peacefully free from the influence of lesbian, bisexual, gay and transgender (LGBT) lifestyles. Her post, which appeared on Aug 6, has since been removed, *Malaysiakini* reported.

In her post, Nur Ilyani criticised Malaysian AIDS Foundation patron Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir who had asked for her portrait for the *Stripes and Strokes* photo exhibition at the George Town Festival in Penang to be removed, in solidarity with two LGBT activists Nisha Ayub and Pang Khee Teik whose portraits had been taken down, according to *Malay Mail Online*.

Commenting on the issue, Deputy Human Resources Minister Datuk Mahfuz Omar said LGBT persons should be helped to return to their original identities, *Bernama* reported.

He said that rather than criticising them as a threat to society, the focus should be on educating them.

"I think this issue should not be seen in a wrong framework, we should look at it in the context of educating them and bringing them back to their normal and true identities," he said.

Treadell: Eusoffe tribute timely

BY RASH BEHARI BHATTACHARJEE

KUALA LUMPUR: The publication of Tan Sri Eusoffe Abdoolcader's judgements to mark Merdeka Day this year is a timely reminder of his insistence on the rule of law, says British High Commissioner HE Vicki Treadell in a tribute to the acclaimed jurist.

Referring to the new government's commitment to institutional reforms to restore the functionings of democracy, she said: "How fitting and timely then that we are reminded of this judge, this man of the law, who stood for the rule of law because it's a reminder to everyone in Malaysia of how good it can be because this is how it was."

"To return to that trajectory, the re-establishment of the rule of law, and now with two volumes that remind the current judiciary, young lawyers, those thinking of going into the field, that this is the standard, this is the benchmark, this is what we are talking about — this is what Malaysia is returning to," said Treadell.



Treadell says Eusoffe's laser-like intellect and photographic memory would often put someone on the spot. Photo by Akasaa

She was speaking in a tribute to Eusoffe at the launching of Kinokuniya Book Store's Merdeka month celebration last Friday.

The two-volume publication of Eusoffe's judgements, who is renowned as the Legal Lion of the Com-

monwealth, is the first in a series to revive the history of a man who has been called Malaysia's Greatest Judge, the publishers Akasaa and Avec said in a press statement.

"As a jurist, he was second to none," Treadell said, and his laser-like intellect and photographic memory would often put someone on the spot or challenge a lazy counsel who had not done his homework with just a few pithy words.

"Standing up for the constitution of this country, and in particular the separation of powers, the integrity of the judiciary, if he felt the government had strayed beyond its constitutional place, he was not afraid of doing so and pointing out that actually they were breaching the constitution and the law," she said.

"His judgements were drawn on not just in this country but across the Commonwealth where we share English common law of the legal system around the 50 plus nations of the Commonwealth," said Treadell, who was born in Ipoh.

Treat us like our federal counterpart, says Johor opposition leader

ISKANDAR PUTERI: State governments under Pakatan Harapan should recognise the opposition in the way the federal government has done, says the opposition leader of the Johor state legislative assembly.

Datuk Hasni Mohamad said this included choosing the opposition to chair the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) just as the federal government had chosen the opposition to head the PAC at federal level.

"I hope the state government would recognise the opposition in the same way as at the federal level," he told reporters after receiving the key to the opposition leader's room from Speaker Suhaizan Kaiat at Lev-

el 1 of Bangunan Sultan Ismail here yesterday.

In its 14th general election campaign, Pakatan pledged among others to choose an opposition leader as PAC chairman.

On the opposition leader's room, Hasni, who is the assemblyman for Benut, hoped this is an initial measure of the Pakatan government to recognise Barisan Nasional (BN) as a good opposition. "Let us hope they will provide more than this office.

"As pledged in the Pakatan manifesto, we hope we would be provided with other facilities as well as supporting staff for our duties as the opposition," he said.

Johor BN has pledged not to engage in immature and childish acts or treat the State Assembly like a "circus," said Hasni — who is also the opposition whip.

"In summary, the Sultan of Johor's (Sultan Ibrahim Almarhum Sultan Iskandar) decree contains three things. Firstly, the Sultan wants all elected representatives to give [their] best for Johor and its people.

"Secondly, we must respect and make the state assembly the best platform to discuss issues faced by the people and lastly, it is our duty to take Johor to greater heights and not let political ideology influence our decisions. — *Bernama*