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UKK KPKM

UNIT KOMUNIKASI KORPORAT
KEMENTERIAN PERTANIAN DAN KETERJAMINAN MAKANAN
(UNTUK EDARAN DALAMAN KPKM, JABATAN DAN AGENSI SAHAJA)

JOHOR

Centre to improve Johor food security

Five companies will act as reference points for agricultural research, use of technology

By **YEE XIANG YUN**
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AN AGRICULTURE research and development centre will be established in Johor to amp up the state's food security.

State agriculture, agro-based industry and rural committee chairman Datuk Zahari Sarip said a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed on April 18 to set up the Johor Agriculture Research and Development Centre (J-ARDC) soon.

"The centre's role will be to coordinate research and development efforts as well as promote innovation of the agricultural sector in Johor.

"This will strengthen our food security and boost sustainable economic growth through collaboration with various stakeholders and the application of advanced technology," he said in a statement.

As a starting point, five agricultural companies, which had earlier invested in the Bio Desaru Food Valley, have been selected as centres of excellence, he added.

Zahari explained that the companies would act as a reference point for industry players interested to get advice and information related to technology usage and research

relating to agriculture.

He said the J-ARDC came about after Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi led the Johor delegation for a meeting with Deputy Agriculture and Food Security Minister Datuk Arthur Joseph Kurup in February.

"During the meeting, the centre was mooted as an effort to strengthen Johor's agriculture sector while giving focus to research and development.

"After a series of discussions and planning with the ministry, the MOU was signed, where Johor Biotechnology and Biodiversity Corporation was given the mandate to spearhead the development of J-ARDC."

Zahari noted that the state government would be working



Datuk Zahari Sarip

"The centre will coordinate research and development as well as promote innovation of the agricultural sector."

with strategic partners such as Universiti Teknologi Malaysia's Institut Sultan Iskandar to

develop an agricultural research action plan to support J-ARDC.

14/05/2025

UTUSAN

DALAM

29

MALAYSIA

NEGERI

Subsidi telur: Peniaga kekal harga makanan, kek

SHAH ALAM: Golongan peniaga termasuk pengusaha kedai pastri sekitar bandar raya ini memilih untuk mengekalkan harga kek dan roti yang dijual selepas kerajaan mengurangkan pemberian subsidi telur ayam mulai 1 Mei lalu.

Seorang peniaga gerai makanan, Muhammad Asri Jamaluddin, berkata, harga makanan masih kekal apabila tiada perubahan pada kos telur ayam daripada pemborong yang dilihat mengekalkan harganya.

“Sebanyak 240 biji telur dibeli pada setiap minggu dan harganya tidak banyak berubah

seperti sebelum ini. Jadi, harga makanan dijual kepada pelanggan adalah kekal,” katanya.

Sementara itu, tinjauan *Utusan Malaysia* di beberapa buah kedai makan juga mendapati peniaga masih mengekalkan harga makanan yang dijual mereka.

Misalnya, sebiji telur dadar masih lagi kekal RM3, telur masin RM1.50 sebiji, telur rebus RM1.50 sebiji selain satu bahagian ayam goreng dijual pada RM6.

Bagi pastri pula, peniaga masih menjual sepotong kek pada harga RM12, dan satu kek macaron kecil pula dijual pada RM2.50.

Sebelum ini, kerajaan dilapor

mengurangkan pemberian subsidi telur ayam daripada RM0.10 kepada RM0.05 sebiji, mulai 1 Mei lalu.

Keputusan itu dibuat setelah mengambil kira komitmen pihak industri untuk memastikan pengeluaran telur ayam yang cukup dan terjamin berikutan kos pengeluaran stabil.

Bagi cef di sebuah kedai pastri, Isma Arief Ismail memberitahu, tiada perubahan harga telur ayam tidak terlalu tinggi selepas subsidi bahan mentah itu ditarik sepenuhnya mulai 1 Ogos ini.



ISMA Arief Ismail menunjukkan pastri yang dijual dekat kedainya di Shah Alam, Selangor. - UTUSAN / MOHAMAD NAUFAL MOHAMAD IDRIS

Malaysia free of bacteria infections linked to pigs

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia remains free of *streptococcus suis* bacterial infections linked to pig livestock.

In a statement, the Veterinary Services Department said it had received various reactions following a report in the Thai media regarding recent human deaths caused by *streptococcus suis* infections originating from pigs in Thailand.

"This disease or streptococcosis, also known as deafness fever in humans, has triggered a public health warning in Thailand.

"However, as of now, Malaysia remains free of

any pig-related disease outbreak caused by the *streptococcus suis* bacterium," the statement said.

This disease is zoonotic, meaning it can be transmitted to humans through open wounds exposed to blood or fluids from infected pigs, or through the consumption of undercooked pork. The department said early clinical signs of the disease in pigs include fever, inconsistent appetite, shifting lameness between legs, lethargy and depression.

"Infected pigs may also show more distinct signs of meningitis, such as pulling back their ears, squinting, loss of coordination and

adopting abnormal body positions (such as sitting like a dog)," the statement added.

Individuals involved in the pig industry including farmers, slaughterhouse workers, meat transporters and pork vendors are advised to take appropriate personal protective measures, such as wearing gloves and protective clothing when handling pigs or pork products.

"All pig farmers and livestock handlers are encouraged to be alert to any changes in their health and to seek medical attention immediately if they exhibit symptoms," the statement added. - Bernama

14/05/2025

HARIAN

LOKAL

12

METRO

Malaysia bebas daripada sebarang wabak penyakit babi

Putrajaya: Malaysia masih bebas daripada jangkitan bakteria Streptococcus suis yang berpunca daripada ternakan babi, menurut Jabatan Perkhidmatan Veterinar (DVS).

DVS dalam kenyataan semalam memaklumkan, pihaknya menerima pelbagai reaksi terhadap laporan media tempatan Thailand mengenai kes kematian manusia akibat jangkitan bakteria Streptococcus suis yang berpunca daripada ternakan babi di Thailand baru-baru ini.

“Penyakit itu atau strep-

tococcus yang juga dikenali deafness fever pada manusia, mencetuskan amaran kesihatan awam di Thailand.

“Bagaimanapun, sehingga saat ini, Malaysia masih bebas daripada sebarang wabak penyakit babi yang disebabkan bakteria Streptococcus suis,” menurut kenyataan itu.

Streptococcus suis adalah bakteria penting yang menyebabkan penyakit streptococcus pada ternakan babi terutama dalam kalangan anak babi selepas berceraai susu.

“Penyakit itu atau streptococcus yang juga dikenali sebagai deafness fever pada manusia, mencetuskan amaran kesihatan awam di negara Thailand”

Kenyataan Jabatan Perkhidmatan Veterinar

Penyakit ini adalah penyakit zoonotik iaitu penyakit yang boleh menjangkiti manusia melalui luka terbuka yang terdedah kepada darah atau cecair daripada babi yang dijangkiti atau dengan makan daging babi yang tidak dimasak sempurna. DVS memaklumkan antara tanda kimikal awal penyakit ini pada ternakan babi ialah demam, selera makan tidak menentu, tempang yang berubah-ubah antara kaki, kelesuan dan kemurungan.

“Ternakan babi yang dijangkiti juga boleh menunjukkan tanda klinikal meningitis yang lebih ketara

seperti menarik telinga ke belakang serta mengedipkan mata, hilang koordinasi pergerakan dan menunjukkan posisi badan yang luar biasa (contohnya duduk seperti anjing),” menurut kenyataan itu.

DVS sentiasa memantau situasi dan kekal komited memastikan kesihatan haiwan serta keselamatan makanan berasaskan haiwan sentiasa terpelihar demi melindungi kesihatan awam veterinar dan kesejahteraan rakyat.

Bagi individu yang terlibat dalam industri babi

(penternak, pekerja rumah sembelih, pengangkut daging, dan penjual daging), amalkan langkah-langkah perlindungan diri yang sesuai seperti memakai sarung tangan dan pakaian pelindung semasa mengendalikan babi atau produk babi.

“Setiap penternak dan pengendali ternakan babi digalakkan berwaspada terhadap perubahan kesihatan diri dan segera mendapatkan pemeriksaan di fasiliti kesihatan sekiranya bergejala,” menurut kenyataan itu.

Tiga lelaki dicekup punggung 45.1 tan kelapa seludup ke Thailand

TUMPAT – Tiga lelaki dicekup semasa sedang memindahkan sebanyak 45.1 tan kelapa yang bernilai lebih RM1 juta dari sebuah treler ke dua buah lori untuk diseludup ke Thailand di Kampung Terbak di sini pada Ahad lalu.

Ketiga-tiga lelaki itu dicekup Pasukan Gerakan Am (PGA) kira-kira pukul 12.30 tengah malam semasa menjalankan tugas menerusi Op Taring Wawasan Kelantan di sini.

Komander Briged Tenggara PGA, Datuk Nik Ros Azhan Ab. Hamid berkata, anggota Batalion 8 PGA menahan sebuah treler dan dua buah lori selepas mendapati ketiga-tiga kenderaan



SEBANYAK 45.1 tan kelapa yang dirampas di dalam sebuah treler dan dua buah lori di Kampung Terbak, Tumpat pada Ahad lalu. – IHSAN PGA

itu berada dalam keadaan mencurigakan di kawasan berkenaan. Menurutinya, pemeriksaan

mendapati, tiga lelaki sedang memindahkan sebanyak 45,100 kilogram kelapa dari sebuah treler ke

dalam dua buah lori.

"Ketiga-tiga suspek gagal menunjukkan dokumen pembelian

kesemua kelapa tersebut.

"Anggaran kesemua rampasan termasuk tiga buah kenderaan itu dianggarkan bernilai RM1.35 juta. Ketiga-tiga suspek dan barang rampasan diserahkan kepada Pejabat Lembaga Pemasaran Pertanian Persekutuan (FAMA) Kota Bharu untuk tindakan lanjut," katanya ketika dihubungi pemberita semalam.

Nik Ros Azhan memberitahu, kes disiasat mengikut Peraturan 4(2) Akta FAMA 141 Rancangan Pemasaran Kelapa 1973.

Tambahnya, PGA akan terus mempergiat usaha bagi mengesan kegiatan penyeludupan daripada terus berleluasa di sempadan negara.

Illegal sand mining, coconut smuggling foiled

KOTA BHARU: The General Operations Force (GOF) cracked down on illegal sand mining activities in a river near Kampung Pahi in Kuala Krai under Op Taring Wawasan on Sunday.

Its Southeast Brigade Commander Datuk Nik Ros Azhan Nik Ab Hamid said the operation was carried out in collaboration with the Kota Bharu Land and Mines Office at 4.15pm.

He said the inspection found that the activities were carried out by three local men and three Bangladeshis, who failed to show valid permits or

documents for sand extraction.

"Police detained and seized all equipment and machinery, estimated to be worth RM2 million.

"The case is being investigated under Section 426 of the National Land Code 1965. The suspects and seized items were handed over to the Kota Bharu Land and Mines Office."

He also said GOF foiled coconut smuggling activities after detaining a trailer and two lorries in Kampung Terbak, Tumpat on Sunday.

"The results of the inspection

found that three local men were transferring about 45,100kg of coconuts from the trailer to the lorry. They failed to show purchase documents related to the coconuts.

"The estimated value of the seizure is RM1.35 million, including vehicles. The case is being investigated under Regulation 4(2) of the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (Fama) Act 141 Coconut Marketing Plan 1973. The suspects and the seized items were handed over to the Fama Kota Bharu Office." – Bernama

Farmers: No open burning of padi fields in dry season

Decomposing agents sprayed on rice straws to curb hazards

By **IMRAN HILMY** and **N. TRISHA**
 newsdesk@thestar.com.my

GEORGE TOWN: Mindful of the hot and dry season, most farmers in Kedah have stopped the practice of rice straw burning to clear their padi fields.

"Although, open-burning is the most cost-effective way to clear our padi fields, this will lead to haze especially during the dry season.

"Poor air quality is also not good for our health," said farmer Wan Maharuddin Sulaiman, 68. Another farmer in Pendang, Abdul Rahman Abdullah, 58, said they have abandoned the practice of burning the padi fields.

Besides it being a harmful practice, he said the fire could spread

"We use a decomposing agent to clear the padi straw after a harvest and before starting a new planting season," he said.

"We also hire drone pilots to spray decomposing agents onto the field. This rice straw decomposition method also helps enrich the soil and promotes sustainable farming practices."

Muda Agricultural Development Authority (Mada) chairman Datuk Dr Ismail Salleh said padi farmers are prepared for the dry weather as they have enough water supply to get them through it.

"Dry weather is never a problem as long as farmers have proper irrigation.

"Our preparations are good and the water supply and irrigation grid is working well, which is



Every drop counts: The impact of the south-west monsoon starting May 10 are hotter days. Seen here are the water levels at the Ayer Itam dam. — LIM BENG TATT/The Star

reduced rainfall with more dry days, he said.

"Avoid open burning and use water mindfully," he said in a statement.

In Penang, there has been rain almost nightly on the island, which is filling up both dams here in Air Itam and Teluk Bahang.

However, Penang Water Supply Corporation chief executive officer Datuk K. Pathmanathan advised the people to be judicious in their water usage, especially in areas like Teluk Bahang, Batu Ferringhi, Tanjung Bungah and Air Itam.

He urged the public to stay within the target of 250 litres per person per day.

"With climate change, we can't afford to waste water. We shouldn't expect enough rain to fully replenish dams before the next dry season," he said when contacted.

Pathmanathan recommended simple water-saving habits, such as washing cars with a bucket and watering plants with a can instead of using a hose.

He also reminded everyone to avoid leaving taps running and to teach children the correct way to turn off taps.

Malaysia berpotensi teraju ekonomi kitaran sektor pertanian ASEAN



AHMAD
IBRAHIM

PERTUMBUHAN ekonomi menjadi agenda utama semua negara namun, bagaimana pertumbuhannya boleh dicapai secara mampan?

Ketika ini, dunia dilihat mula beralih kepada ekonomi kitaran (guna-pulang-cipta semula) sebagai alternatif kepada model ekonomi linear tradisional (ambil-guna-buang).

Salah satu sebabnya kerana sumber semula jadi seperti mineral, air dan bahan fosil semakin berkurangan. Ekonomi kitaran mengoptimalkan penggunaan sumber melalui kecekapan, kitar semula, guna semula dan pengurangan sisa.

Masalah pencemaran dan perubahan iklim juga banyak mendorong peralihan tersebut. Model linear menghasilkan banyak sisa dan pelepasan karbon. Melalui ekonomi kitaran mampu mengurangkan pencemaran dengan mengelakkan pembaziran dan mempromosikan tenaga boleh diperbaharui.

Tekanan undang-undang dan dasar kerajaan juga main peranan. Banyak negara seperti Kesatuan Eropah (EU), China, Jepun memperkenalkan polisi ketat untuk mengurangkan sisa plastik dan pelepasan karbon.

Di EU, Pelan Tindakan Ekonomi Pেকেiling mewajibkan pengurangan sisa dan peningkatan kitar semula. Kesedaran pengguna mula meningkat dengan lebih prihatin terhadap alam sekitar dan memilih produk mampan. Syarikat seperti Patagonia dan IKEA menggunakan pakai model kitaran untuk memenuhi permintaan ini.

Tidak dinafikan ekonomi kitaran bawa peluang ekonomi dan inovasi untuk dunia. Ekonomi kitaran membuka pasaran baharu seperti kitar semula canggih, produk modular dan perkhidmatan perkongsian.

Menurut ramalan Forum Ekonomi Dunia, ekonomi kitaran boleh menjana AS\$4.5 trilion (RM19.3 trilion) dalam pertumbuhan ekonomi



SEKTOR pertanian negara boleh menjadi lebih lestari, menguntungkan dan mesra alam dengan pendekatan ekonomi kitaran.

menjelang 2030. Ekonomi kitaran boleh membantu menguatkan ketahanan rantaian bekalan. Krisis seperti Covid-19 dan perang menunjukkan kerapuhan rantaian bekalan linear. Model kitaran menggalakkan sumber tempatan dan bahan kitar semula untuk mengurangkan kebergantungan pada import.

Sungguhpun demikian, ekonomi kitaran juga menghadapi cabaran. Ia perlu ditangani dengan baik bagi melangkah ke hadapan. Walaupun ekonomi kitaran memberi banyak manfaat, pelaksanaannya memerlukan kerjasama antara kerajaan, industri dan pengguna, pelaburan dalam teknologi hijau seperti kecerdasan buatan (AI) untuk pengurusan sisa, bahan biodegradasi) serta pendidikan awam tentang amalan mampan.

Peralihan kepada ekonomi kitaran bukan sekadar trend, tetapi keperluan untuk kelestarian alam sekitar dan ekonomi global. Dengan menggabungkan inovasi, dasar yang kukuh dan kesedaran masyarakat, dunia boleh mencapai pertumbuhan yang lebih hijau dan efisien.

Sektor pertanian global antara yang semakin beralih kepada ekonomi kitaran untuk mengurangkan pembaziran, meningkatkan kecekapan sumber dan mengurangkan kesan alam sekitar. Ada beberapa cara ekonomi kitaran lumrah dilaksanakan dalam pertanian. Satu melibatkan

pengurusan sisa organik dan kompos. Sisa tanaman, najis haiwan dan sisa makanan dikitar semula menjadi kompos atau baja organik.

Belanda menggunakan sistem biogas untuk menukar sisa pertanian kepada tenaga boleh diperbaharui. Ini mampu mengurangkan keperluan baja kimia dan memperbaiki kesuburan tanah.

Pertanian regeneratif banyak diamalkan. Teknik seperti rotasi tanaman, tanaman penutup bumi dan agroforestri boleh memulihkan tanah. Syarikat seperti Danone dan Nestlé melabur dalam amalan regeneratif untuk mengurangkan pelepasan karbon. Faedahnya termasuk meningkatkan biodiversiti dan menyerap lebih banyak karbon.

Sistem akuaponik dan hidroponik juga mula diminati. Akuaponik melibatkan gabungan akuakultur (ternakan ikan) dan hidroponik (tanaman tanpa tanah), di mana sisa ikan menjadi nutrien untuk tanaman. Manakala hidroponik menggunakan air yang dikitar semula untuk penanaman, menjimatkan sehingga 90 peratus air berbanding pertanian tradisional. Singapura menggunakan pertanian bandar termasuk hidroponik untuk mengurangkan import makanan.

Penggunaan biochar dan bahan kitar semula juga langkah penting. Biochar

adalah arang dari sisa pertanian yang meningkatkan pengkalan air dan nutrien dalam tanah. Plastik kitar semula digunakan untuk sistem pengairan atau rumah hijau. Kenya menggunakan kaedah ini untuk memulihkan tanah yang terdegradasi. Pengoptimuman rantaian makanan penting bagi mengurangkan sisa makanan.

Tenaga diperbaharui dalam pertanian adalah antara langkah disarankan dalam ekonomi kitaran. Solar, biogas dan angin digunakan untuk mengurangkan kebergantungan pada bahan api fosil.

India menggunakan tenaga solar untuk pam air pertanian. Model perniagaan berkongsi juga dipelopori. Umpamanya perkongsian jentera pertanian seperti platform Hello Tractor di Afrika.

Pertanian komuniti juga digalakkan dengan pengguna melanggan hasil tempatan secara terus. Antara cabaran dalam pelaksanaan termasuk kos awal tinggi, (contoh teknologi akuaponik mahal), kurang kesedaran dalam kalangan petani tradisional, serta infrastruktur kitar semula yang terhad di negara membangun.

Masa hadapan pertanian kitaran dilihat cerah. Teknologi internet kebendaan (IoT) dan AI mampu digunakan untuk pemantauan sisa dan pengurusan sumber. Dasar kerajaan seperti subsidi baja organik atau insentif

kitar semula digalakkan. Permintaan pengguna untuk produk mampan mendorong lebih banyak ladang beralih kepada amalan kitaran perlu ditingkatkan.

Pertanian kitaran bukan sahaja mengurangkan sisa dan pelepasan karbon tetapi meningkatkan produktiviti jangka panjang. Dengan gabungan inovasi teknologi, kerjasama global serta sokongan dasar membolehkan sektor pertanian menjadi lebih lestari dan berdaya tahan.

Ekonomi kitaran semakin mendapat perhatian dalam sektor pertanian Malaysia kerana potensinya untuk meningkatkan keberlanjutan, mengurangkan sisa dan menjana pendapatan tambahan.

JANA PENDAPATAN

Malah, ekonomi kitaran mampu meningkatkan kecekapan kos dan pendapatan. Petani boleh menjual kompos, biogas atau hasil kitar semula sebagai sumber pendapatan tambahan. Ini sekali gus dapat mengurangkan kebergantungan pada baja kimia import yang mahal.

Dari sudut dasar kerajaan dan insentif, Polisi Hijau Malaysia seperti subsidi baja organik serta teknologi hijau menyokong pertanian kitaran.

Cabaran utama dalam usaha ini kerana ia melibatkan kos teknologi tinggi yang memerlukan bantuan kewangan kerajaan/swasta. Selain itu, petani juga kurang kesedaran mengenai kelebihan ekonomi kitaran dan infrastruktur kitar semula yang terhad.

Malaysia mempunyai potensi besar untuk menjadi peneraju pertanian kitaran di ASEAN jika kerajaan serta swasta bekerjasama dalam pembiayaan dan menyediakan teknologi. Petani juga harus diberi pendidikan serta insentif selain memperluaskan pasaran produk kitaran (tempatan dan eksport).

PROFESOR Datuk Dr. Ahmad Ibrahim ialah daripada Pusat Kajian Polisi Sains, Teknologi dan Inovasi (STI) Tan Sri Omar, Universiti UCSI dan merupakan Felo Bersekutu di Pusat Pengajian Pembangunan Ungku Aziz (UAC), Universiti Malaysia

Pasaran bebas tidak ambil kira kebajikan rakyat, alam sekitar

Oleh S. MATHAVI

PERNAHKAH terfikir sama ada produk yang dibeli secara dalam talian berkualiti atau sebaliknya? Bagaimana pula dengan kebolehtahanannya?

Tidak diragui, ia menjadi keimbangan dalam kalangan pengguna. Pengguna mula sedar kualiti sesuatu produk tidak bertahan lama.

Matematik mudah, kebolehtahan sesuatu produk boleh dinilai berdasarkan harga. Tambahan pula, model baharu bagi sesuatu produk sentiasa 'membanjiri' pasaran, jadi ada sebab seseorang itu 'terikat' pada produk yang berkualiti tinggi dan tahan lama?

Ini dikenali sebagai fenomena keusangan terancang (*planned obsolescence*), yang mana dunia perniagaan kini lebih berminat untuk menghasilkan produk yang tidak tahan lama. Ia bagi meningkatkan kitaran penggunaan dan penggantian selain membawa keuntungan dalam tempoh masa singkat.

Ini bermakna, syarikat yang mementingkan kualiti hanya boleh mengaut untung selepas satu jangka masa yang lama apabila pengguna membeli produk baharu.

Pada masa sama, jika melihat kepada harga barangan keperluan asas seperti makanan, ubat-ubatan dan sebagainya semakin melambung tinggi. Ini kerana secara relatif ia kurang dikeluarkan, walaupun wujud permintaan yang tinggi.

Satu perbandingan mudah seperti pengeluaran makanan ringan yang kurang berkhasiat lebih murah dan mudah didapati berbanding makanan asas semula jadi yang mahal.

Kesan langsung daripada pengambilan makanan kurang berkhasiat boleh menjelaskan tumbesaran anak dan remaja.

Berdasarkan kajian pada 2019, sebanyak 25 peratus kanak-kanak berumur 5 tahun ke bawah didapati mengalami kurang nutrisi atau terbantut tumberasan.

Angka itu menunjukkan peningkatan lebih kurang lima peratus dari tahun 2011. Pada masa sama, kajian tersebut juga mendapati



KERAJAAN perlu mengenakan lebih banyak kawalan dalam pasaran untuk memastikan keperluan asas rakyat terjaga dan terjamin.

“Kerajaan perlu mengenakan lebih banyak kawalan dalam pasaran untuk memastikan keperluan asas rakyat terjaga dan terjamin.”

masalah obesiti kanak-kanak juga sedang meningkat.

Ini adalah kesan langsung apabila kemampuan keluarga untuk membeli barangan makanan yang sihat dan berkualiti terkesan akibat kenaikan harga barangan makanan utama seperti beras, telur, minyak dan sayur-sayuran.

Hal ini menyebabkan ibu bapa terpaksa memilih makanan segera yang lebih murah dan kurang bernutrisi untuk menampung keperluan ahli keluarga.

Berdasarkan situasi itu, jelas pentadbiran negara gagal dalam memastikan keterjaminan makanan. Ia boleh dilihat apabila

kurangnya pelaburan untuk meningkatkan pengeluaran barangan makanan tempatan ke arah keterjaminan makanan.

Kedua, kegagalan untuk meningkatkan pendapatan pekerja, seperti gaji minimum demi menampung kos sara hidup. Pendapatan yang cukup secara langsung akan meningkatkan kualiti hidup dan membina generasi yang sihat.

Apabila pengeluaran barangan bukan keperluan secara besar-besaran menggunakan plastik, bahan kimia dan pewarna kimia akan menyebabkan risiko pencemaran.

Ia disebabkan proses pembuangan sisa kilang ke dalam sungai atau kolam. Ini adalah masalah yang berlarutan menyebabkan sumber air yang dahulunya bersih untuk diminum menjadi bahaya.

Begitu juga penggunaan plastik. Umumnya penggunaan bahan ini hanya bersifat sementara tetapi sukar dikitar semula.

Selalunya, sampah jenis ini akan terus ke tapak pelupusan sampah. Ini akan meningkatkan bilangan sampah sekali gus

menyebabkan lebih banyak tanah akan dibuka bagi menampung kadar sampah yang semakin meningkat dari hari ke hari.

Hal ini harus dihentikan kerana tanah-tanah yang ada lebih baik digunakan bagi tujuan agrikultur sekali gus menyumbang kepada keterjaminan makanan dalam negara.

Berdasarkan kajian, jumlah sungai yang diklasifikasi tercemar meningkat dari 23 batang sungai pada 2021 ke 29 batang sungai pada 2022, iaitu peningkatan 26 peratus dalam jangka masa setahun.

Kerajaan terpaksa merawat air sebelum disalurkan ke rumah dan pengguna terpaksa membelanja lebih untuk menggunakan alat penapis air demi mendapatkan kualiti air bersih ataupun membeli air yang dibotolkan.

Sumber air yang percuma kini sudah menjadi berbayar dan jika ia berlarutan, dunia akan kehabisan sumber air. Bayangkan berapa agaknya harga sayur-sayuran jika petani perlu membayar lebih untuk air bersih?

PERANAN KERAJAAN
Kerajaan juga berusaha

dan berbelanja besar untuk memulihara sumber air terutamanya sungai. Perbelanjaan ini bagi mengenal pasti akar permasalahan. Punca yang dikenal pasti ialah kawalan ketat bagi pengurusan pembuangan sisa industri.

Oleh itu, budaya kepenggunaan perlu ditangani kerana ia meningkatkan kos hidup, menjejaskan kesihatan dan memudaratkan alam sekitar.

Tidak cukup sekadar kempen media yang menyasarkan rakyat, tetapi kerajaan yang bertanggungjawab harus proaktif dengan mengambil langkah untuk mengalih fokus sektor pengeluaran dari menghasilkan produk murah dengan kualiti yang rendah kepada produk yang membawa manfaat.

Sektor agromakanan amat penting. Ia wajar diberi keutamaan dan perlu diperluaskan melalui kegiatan tanaman sayur-sayuran, buah-buahan, ternakan ikan, ayam, lembu dan kambing.

Usaha ini akan mengambil masa namun ia amat penting untuk mengurangkan kebergantungan negara terhadap makanan import.

Pada 2022, kerajaan membelanjakan RM78.7 bilion makanan import bagi memenuhi keperluan rakyat. Kadar ini adalah tinggi berbanding jumlah eksport negara.

Selain kerajaan hanya memberi fokus tambahan mengembangkan kebun durian bagi tujuan eksport, lebih baik turut berperanan dalam usaha-usaha untuk mengiktiraf petani, pesawah dan penternak. Ini bagi memastikan bekalan makanan tempatan terjamin dan mampu dibeli.

Akhir kata, pasaran bebas adalah bagus bagi syarikat-syarikat bersaing untuk mengumpul keuntungan tetapi ia tidak mengambil kira kebajikan rakyat ataupun alam sekitar.

Maka, kerajaan perlu mengenakan lebih banyak kawalan dalam pasaran untuk memastikan keperluan asas rakyat terjaga dan terjamin.

S. Mathavi ialah Timbalan Bendahari Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM).

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THE
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High Commission promotes local fruits in Namibia

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's High Commission in Windhoek on Monday held the third instalment of the Fruits and Food Promotion programme, this time introducing popular local premium fruits to the Namibian market.

Among the tropical fruits showcased were Musang King durians, Harum Manis mangoes, honey jackfruits (*nangka madu*), Lohan guavas (*jambu lohan*) and pomelos, delighting the palates of some 200 guests who attended the event held at the High Commission.

Chargé d'Affaires of Malaysia to Namibia Datuk Dr Mohamad Rameez Yahaya said in a statement the event marked a major step in Malaysia's efforts to introduce its premium fruits to the local market.

He said the initiative also aims to strengthen bilateral cooperation

between Malaysia and Namibia, particularly in the agricultural sector, by opening up opportunities for more Namibians to become distributors of Malaysian fruits and food products within the country and across other nearby African markets.

He added that discussions are underway with Namibia's agricultural authorities and interested distributors to bring in other fruits.

Cooking demonstrations using the tropical fruits were also held.

The event built on the success of the previous editions, which were held in May and July last year.

The High Commission has been involved in promoting Malaysian fruits, including *durian* and *rambutan*, in Namibia, Bernama reported.

They flew *durian* and *rambutan* to Namibia and hosted a festa event to showcase the fruits.



Mohamad Rameez said the initiative aims to open up opportunities for more Namibians to become distributors of Malaysian fruits and food products within the country and other nearby African markets. —ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THE SUN

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Limited time for thorny treat

With Penang durian growers expecting a shorter season and smaller harvest, the state government is working with businesses to ramp up efforts to entice lovers of the King of Fruits with special packages. >2&3

All hail the king of fruits: Tourists taking a photo with a giant durian replica along Macalister Road, George Town. — KT GOH/The Star

Cashing in on durian tourism

By JEREMY TAN
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Penang hotels tying up with orchards to provide prickly deals

PENANG'S durian season has begun and the race is on to savour the best fruits.

Harvests are expected to be less bountiful this year because of unfavourable weather conditions, so fans of the "King of Fruits" may have a shorter window to indulge in their love of durian.

Whether it is the premium Musang King or Black Thorn, crowd-pleasers like Red Prawn, Hor Lor, Khoon Poh, XO and D24 or emerging cultivars like Tupai King, they are bound to be snapped up quickly.

Though the main durian season runs from May to August, the fruits actually start growing between February and April when dry and hot spells kick-start flowering on trees.

Once pollinated by insects, these develop into fruits.

However, heavy rain and strong winds last month curtailed that.

In orchards across the island and mainland, many flowers fell before they could be pollinated.

Even some that made it to fruit were stunted or affected by mould from damp conditions.

As a result, growers fear harvests could be up to 30% less than last year, making it one of the smallest in recent times.

Penang tourism and creative economy committee chairman Wong Hon Wai said the peak period should come in June and July.

Another anticipated rainy spell in August is likely to bring the season to a premature end.

"I urge all durian lovers to seize the opportunity to enjoy the thorny treat while it is still plentiful and affordably priced.

"The early bird will get the best durian," he said at the launch of Penang Durian 2025, the state's official durian promotion and travel deals programme, at Sia Boey Urban Archaeological Park in George Town.

8321 Durian Plantation owner Eric Yeap said the first fruits usually fall in late April, but this year, they only started dropping in early May.

"The rains came at the most inopportune moment.

"As many farms also cater to export markets, the supply shortage could drive prices up slightly. "But it shouldn't be overly expensive," he added.

Bahang Terrace durian farm owner Lee Jang Glap said one way for locals to enjoy better value for money was to indulge at plantations.

With no middlemen and their extra margins involved, costs should be lower. As such, this business-to-customer or B2C model is becoming increasingly popular.

"After taking over the farm last year, we had lots of requests from people who wanted to eat durian on-site.

"So we said, why not do it and give durian lovers a more authentic experience?"

Lee, whose background is in data analytics, implemented a technological approach to opera-



(Above) Tourists from China looking to buy durian from a roadside stall along Cecil Street in George Town. — Photos: LIM BENG TATT and KT GOH/The Star



(Left) The Black Thorn (foreground) and Musang King (back) are among the most prized and highly sought-after varieties. — Filepic



Goh says during durian season, hotel occupancy rates can rise by 4% or 5%.



Lee says one way for locals to enjoy better value is to indulge at durian plantations.

tions, using data to track and monitor supply and demand of every single variety in their farm.

"Prices are most affordable about six weeks after the first drop, which would be mid-June," he added.

Straight to source

Penang Durian 2025 offers 36 exclusive deals, including many all-you-can-eat durian buffets by hotels in collaboration with orchards.

While the pungent fruit has been banned in hotel premises, these establishments have now realised its tourism value and found a compromise.

Many have set up al fresco stalls at outdoor carparks or gardens so guests can tuck in without causing a stink.

Others provide direct transport to partner orchards for a more authentic experience.

Durian drop naturally when they ripen, usually in the pre-

dawn hours. The fruits are then collected and laid out for visitors by noon.

One can hardly find anything fresher.

These prickly deals range in price from RM60 to RM100 per person but individual entitlements vary. Some come alongside discounted room rates.

Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH) Penang chapter chairman Datuk Tony Goh said such packages had been well-received in recent years and boosted hotel occupancy rates.

"It's a great value-added option especially for tourists from Singapore and China, many of whom come purely to eat durian," he said, adding that prices in Malaysia are a fraction of what they would have to pay back home.

"For bigger groups consuming a lot, the savings essentially make up for the cost of flights and rooms.

"They get to enjoy a holiday and sightsee on top of enjoying

the best durian.

"During the season, hotel occupancy rates could rise by 4% or 5%," Goh said.

Yeap said farms had received more enquiries and bookings this year, due in part to the recent implementation of visa-free travel from China.

"It's just a short hop to savour the best fruits. Unlimited durian packages allow them to eat to their heart's content.

"But most will surrender after trying five or six fruits," he said. According to Wong, while most of the famous durian orchards, farms and estates in Penang are located in Balik Pulau and Teluk Bahang on the island, high-quality fruits also come from Juru, Junjung, Sungai Bakap and Bukit Mertajam on the mainland.

Unlike the more industrialised, large-scale durian operations in other states or neighbouring countries, the majority of farms in Penang are small to

medium-scale holdings – some owned by the same family for generations.

Older trees are said to yield better-tasting fruits. And owners also have the opportunity to create unique products to fill market niches.

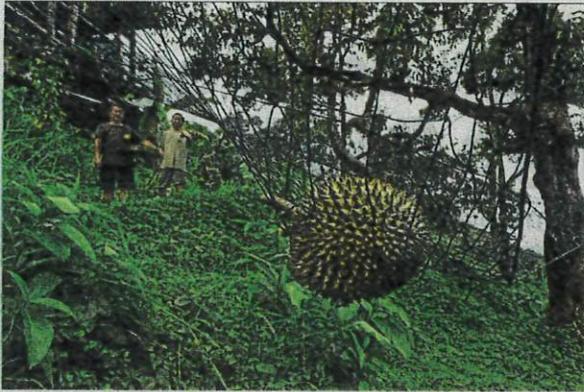
Lee said this included homestay experiences.

A chalet that's being renovated at his farm is set to open by June.

"Durian connoisseurs don't only want to eat the fruit. They also want a unique experience staying at a farm and learning about the growing process," he added.

AirAsia northern region director Kenneth Tan believes there is also potential in the state's kampung durian, which are a hidden gem.

"Instead of just selling the fruits, small-scale growers in villages could incorporate homestay elements to showcase the local culture and rustic way of life.



Durian drop naturally when they ripen, usually in pre-dawn hours. Farms typically have nets to catch the falling fruit to prevent damage. — Filepic



Durian connoisseurs can tell the quality and sometimes even the variety of a durian through smell alone.



Tan (in red) flanked by Rodriguez (to his right) and Pallado, sampling durian from Yeap's (left) plantation during the launch of the programme at Sia Yue Urban Archaeological Park.



(From right) Wong with the latest edition of the 'Penang King of Fruits Durian Guide' alongside Pengkalan Kota assemblyman Wong Yue Harn and Komtar assemblyman Teh Lai Heng during the Penang Durian 2025 launch.

"This is something you can rarely find outside of Penang and adds to the travel experience for foreign tourists," he said.

Beyond Musang King

There are over 200 durian varieties registered with the Agriculture Department, and new ones pop up each year. Each has a distinct combination of taste, texture, colour, aroma and appearance. Much like fine wine, cheese or chocolate, such complexities and nuances are what wins the fruit so many fans. It can be a never-ending adventure to discover and sample new types. Durian lovers differ in their preferences as well. Some prefer sweeter varieties while others insist on some bitter notes. Some like it light like custard while others consider a thicker mouthfeel a more satisfying experience. This is why Musang King – first commercially planted in Pahang in the 1980s, named after its origin in Gua Musang, Kelantan, and assigned the identifier D197 – catapulted to international consciousness. Its bittersweet flavour and lus-

cious texture are universally appealing. Its Chinese name Mao Shan Wang or "Cat Mountain King" is also good branding. Today, it is the most prized variety in China and can retail for up to 258 yuan (approximately RM149) per kg. This has contributed to a misconception that Musang King is the only durian there is. Luckily, the varied offerings at durian buffets are slowly changing mindsets. Audi Farm owner Sam Lim said many foreigners were surprised to learn that there are many different types of durian in Penang. And most can hold their own against the market leader. "We're doing our part to educate them. More often, when guests try various types, they quickly realise the taste is just as good," he shared. Echoing those sentiments, Lee said this was why his farm decided to concentrate on native Penang cultivars such as Red Prawn and Hor Lor. He also intends to plant the Black Thorn and Tupai King hybrids, which in recent years had emerged as worthy challengers for the title of "King of Fruits".

"We believe in celebrating local Penang durian and letting fans experience and appreciate all the varieties and their unique qualities," he explained. Yeap said Tupai King was now one of the most expensive varieties because of its bittersweet taste, soft creamy texture and fragrance – the perfect trifecta of desirable qualities. With very few farms having mature Tupai King trees, supply remains low, contributing to eye-watering prices of up to RM150 per kg.

Broadening thorny horizons

To enhance the experience for durian-seeking visitors, the state has unveiled the latest edition of its *Penang King of Fruits Durian Guide*. Produced in collaboration with Penang Fruit Growers Association, the guide will be available at Penang International Airport and tourist attractions. There are rich visuals and descriptions of the many varieties, helping the uninitiated identify their desired types and know what flavours to expect when out on durian hunts. Besides the aforementioned varieties, others featured are Lipan Bara, Dato Nina, Gold Fish,

Yi Dian Hong, Lin Feng Jiao, Green Skin, D600, Kunyit, Tekka, Susu, Capri, D11, Lipan, Bak Eu, Ang Bak Kia, Ice Cream, Muntri and Little Red. The guide also highlights some authentic dishes that go well with durian such as sticky rice, *pengat* and even chicken soup. It also suggests ways the fruit can be incorporated into everything from cakes and pastries to ice cream, fritters, pudding and pizza. Equally useful are the lists of popular durian farms and stalls around Penang with contact numbers and operating hours – handy for those embarking on their own thorny adventure. Spanish tourists Diana Rodriguez and Caria Pallado, who chanced upon the Penang Durian 2025 launch, tried several varieties and quickly discovered their subtle differences. "It is my first time having durian. The first one I had was sweet and creamy but had a subtle smell. It reminded me of mango. The second one was much more pungent but lacked a punch, taste-wise. The differences are interesting," shared Rodriguez, a rugby player. Said tennis coach Pallado: "We heard about durian's reputation

but didn't realise it was actually quite good." **Expanding markets** Wong said Penang was looking to expand its durian tourism promotion to new markets such as India, Australia, Europe and the Middle East. "We have long promoted durian within Asean, China and Hong Kong. With the recent availability of more direct flights to Penang, it is time to cover new regions. Feedback shows that tourists from other areas enjoy durian too and like the unique atmosphere and photo opportunities at farms. "Penang Durian 2025 promises to be a one-stop ticket to the most satisfying experience. So come hungry and come curious. If you haven't already, you'll fall in love with the King of Fruits," Wong added. Besides durian buffets, special deals also include treats, perks and discounts at cafes, museums and tour operators. The promotion is ongoing until the end of the fruiting season. For more, visit <https://penang-traveldeals.com/best-durian-season-deals%20>