



KEMENTERIAN SUMBER MANUSIA

“

KERATAN AKHBAR KESUMA”

”

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ENAM tahun lalu, pandemik Covid-19 telah mengubah landskap ekonomi dan pasaran buruh Malaysia secara mendalam.

Kadar pengangguran meningkat kepada 4.5%, iaitu yang tertinggi dalam tempoh hampir tiga dekad, dengan lebih 700,000 rakyat Malaysia kehilangan pekerjaan menurut Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia (DoSM). Namun kesan sebenar pandemik tidak hanya terletak pada angka statistik.

Krisis tersebut meninggalkan ketidaktentuan sosioekonomi yang berpanjangan apabila ramai pekerja terpaksa beralih ke sektor tidak formal, manakala sebahagian lagi terus berdepan kesukaran untuk kembali mendapatkan pekerjaan yang stabil disebabkan faktor usia, masalah kesihatan dan ketidakpadanan kemahiran.

Ketika negara mula menunjukkan tanda-tanda pemulihan, Malaysia kini berdepan cabaran baharu. Kali ini, ancamannya bukan berpunca daripada krisis kesihatan awam, tetapi daripada ketegangan geopolitik di Asia Barat, khususnya di sekitar Selat Hormuz, salah satu laluan perdagangan dan tenaga paling penting di dunia.

Walaupun krisis tersebut berlaku ribuan kilometer dari negara ini, kesannya mula dirasai di Malaysia. Data Sistem Insurans Pekerjaan PERKESO menunjukkan bahawa jumlah kehilangan pekerjaan bagi empat bulan pertama tahun ini meningkat sebanyak 34.4% berbanding tempoh sama pada tahun 2025.

Pada ketika ini, kebanyakan majikan masih berusaha menyerap peningkatan kos operasi dengan mengurangkan margin keuntungan, melaraskan waktu bekerja, mengawal aliran gaji serta menangkahkan keputusan sukar seperti pemberhentian pekerja.

Namun, langkah-langkah ini tidak mampu bertahan sekiranya tekanan ekonomi global terus berpanjangan. Sekiranya krisis ini berlanjutan ke fasa kedua yang lebih serius, sektor-sektor yang sangat sensitif terhadap kenaikan harga bahan api dan gangguan rantaian bekalan akan menerima kesan paling besar.

Ini termasuk sektor perlombongan, pembuatan, pengangkutan, pembinaan, pertanian, perdagangan borong dan runcit, serta sektor makanan dan penginapan. Menyedari risiko tersebut, kerajaan telah mengambil langkah segera melalui inisiatif Progressive Acceleration for Capability and Employment (PACE) dengan peruntukan melebihi RM710

Krisis Asia Barat: Pasaran buruh berhijrah, bukan menyusut



ORANG ramai menghadiri Karnival Premium MYFutureJobs di KL Convention Centre pada 25 dan 26 April lalu yang menawarkan lebih 10,000 peluang pekerjaan dari pelbagai industri.

juta bagi memperkukuh daya tahan pasaran buruh dan pembangunan modal insan.

Usaha ini turut diperkuatkan melalui analitik pasaran buruh

oleh KESUMA menerusi platform LMX Exchange PERKESO yang membolehkan intervensi awal dilaksanakan sebelum pemberhentian pekerja berlaku.

Keutamaan kerajaan adalah jelas, iaitu memastikan pekerja tidak tercir terlalu lama daripada ekonomi formal. Apa yang penting, keadaan semasa tidak seharusnya dilihat sebagai peluang pekerjaan yang semakin mengecil.

Hakikatnya, pasaran buruh sedang mengalami perubahan struktur. Pekerjaan dalam sektor tertentu mungkin berkurangan, namun peluang baharu sedang muncul dalam industri yang lebih berdaya tahan dan bersifat masa hadapan.

Cabaran utama adalah memastikan pekerja bersedia untuk menyesuaikan diri melalui peningkatan kemahiran, latihan semula dan pembelajaran berterusan.

Bagi sesetengah pihak, ekonomi gig mungkin menjadi laluan alternatif, walaupun realitinya sektor ini jauh lebih rapuh. Apabila isi rumah mula berbelanja secara lebih berhati-hati, permintaan terhadap perkhidmatan penghantaran makanan, e-dagang dan mobiliti gig dijangka menjadi perlahan.

Dalam masa sama, kenaikan harga bahan api, kos penyelenggaraan kenderaan dan permintaan yang lemah terus menekan pendapatan pekerja gig yang sememangnya tidak menentu.

Berbeza dengan pekerja sektor formal, ramai pekerja gig masih belum menikmati perlindungan sosial yang mencukupi termasuk faedah di bawah Skim Keilatan dan Sistem Insurans Pekerjaan.

Jurang perlindungan ini tidak boleh dibiarkan terus melebar. Melangkah ke hadapan, reformasi untuk memperkukuh perlindungan sosial pekerja gig perlu menjadi keutamaan negara.

Pada saat kritikal ini, dasar kerajaan tidak boleh hanya tertumpu kepada usaha menstabilkan harga sematamata, tetapi mesti memberi fokus kepada perlindungan mata pencarian rakyat dengan keselamatan pekerjaan sebagai teras utama.

Dasar pengalakan pekerja yang disokong melalui langkah fiskal bersasar amat penting bagi memastikan majikan tidak mengambil tindakan pengurangan tenaga kerja secara pramatang.

Langkah-langkah ini perlu dilaksanakan dengan segera memandangkan unjuran Bank Dunia menunjukkan tekanan akibat krisis Asia Barat hanya dijangka mula reda secara beransuransur menjelang hujung tahun.

Dalam masa yang sama, Malaysia juga perlu terus memperkukuh penyertaan tenaga buruh dalam kalangan rakyat usia bekerja, khususnya wanita yang meninggalkan pekerjaan selepas melahirkan anak akibat peningkatan kos sara hidup dan tanggungjawab penjagaan keluarga.

Pelaksanaan ElauN Selepas Cuti Bersalin menerusi pindaan Akta Sistem Insurans Pekerjaan 2017 merupakan satu langkah penting bagi membantu wanita kembali

bekerja sambil memperkukuh ketahanan ekonomi isi rumah.

Dari sudut pandang rakyat, keadaan di Malaysia mungkin masih kelihatan stabil kerana kerajaan terus menampung kesan kenaikan harga minyak global melalui subsidi yang mencecah sehingga RM7 bilion sebulan.

Namun di sebalik ketenangan itu, tanda-tanda tekanan semakin jelas kelihatan. Pada Januari sahaja, PERKESO merekodkan 10,568 kes kehilangan pekerjaan, iaitu jumlah bulanan tertinggi pernah direkodkan.

Tanpa intervensi yang pantas dan berkesan, Malaysia berisiko menyaksikan keadaan pasaran buruh kembali merosot ke tahap seperti ketika pandemik enam tahun lalu.

Justeru, ini bukan masanya untuk mengambil pendekatan tunggu dan lihat. Setiap kelewatan hanya akan menambah tekanan terhadap pekerja, keluarga dan majikan yang sedang bergelut dengan ketidaktentuan ekonomi.

Dalam menghayati tema Pekerja MADANI Kesuma Bangsa, pengiktirafan terhadap golongan pekerja tidak boleh sekadar bersifat simbolik atau retorik semata-mata.

Ia mesti diterjemahkan melalui perlindungan yang nyata, dasar yang responsif dan sistem keselamatan sosial yang benar-benar mampu menyesuaikan diri dengan cabaran semasa.

Akhirnya, kita mesti memastikan bahawa jaringan keselamatan yang menjadi simbol dalam logo PERKESO benar-benar berfungsi sebagaimana yang diharapkan iaitu cukup kukuh, cukup responsif dan cukup luas untuk melindungi rakyat Malaysia daripada terjerumus ketika berdepan krisis.



RAMANAN RAMAKRISHNAN

Wider coverage eyed for homemakers

PERKESO mulls raising Lindung Kasih age limit

By RAGANANTHINI VETHASALAM
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PETALING JAYA: The Social Security Organisation (PERKESO) is looking to increase the age limit for coverage under the Housewives Social Security Scheme (Lindung Kasih) to 60, in line with the retirement age.

It said in a consultation document that the move will ensure continuous social protection for housewives up to the age of 60 as more women continue to run households and contribute to the care economy even after 55.

The scheme is available to women who manage their own households.

Eligible participants may be married, unmarried, widowed, or single mothers, and they can work either full-time or part-time.

Currently, it is open to Malaysians or permanent residents below 55.

At RM120 per year, contributions may be made by the hus-

band, the woman herself, or any third party.

It was rolled out in December 2022 as protection against domestic accidents, invalidity or death.

Explaining the move to increase the age limit to 60, PERKESO said women aged between 55 and 60 generally remain active in the care economy by being involved in managing households, including caring for children and grandchildren, as well as sick, disabled and elderly parents.

"(This will ensure) longer social security protection which can help ease the burden of health-care costs for housewives in the event of domestic accidents or incapacity in managing the household," the organisation said.

The move will require an amendment to the Housewives' Social Security Act 2022.

Commenting on the proposed move, financial planner Linnet Lee said increasing the age would be beneficial as people are living longer and staying active.

"A homemaker's work is life-long. Many women in their late 50s are still caring for their grandchildren or elderly parents, or managing their households full-time.

"Household work carries physical risks regardless of age. It may be better to increase the age limit to 65 instead of 60, as retirement age may be increased as Malaysia is fast-moving towards an ageing nation," she said.

Lee said medical issues and disabilities tend to increase with age, and extending coverage gives families financial protection to mitigate higher risks and medical inflation.

"Compared with raising the retirement age for employment, extending Lindung Kasih to 60 or even to 65 is not controversial because it is a protection scheme and not a requirement to work longer.

"Homemakers are not competing for jobs in the same way," said the licensed director of Resolute Planning Sdn Bhd.

Benefits under Lindung Kasih



Medical Benefit
Payments as regulated by the Fees Act 1951



Permanent Disablement Benefit
Up to **RM30,000**



Facilities for Recovery / Rehabilitation & Dialysis
Up to **RM50,000**
Dialysis: **RM200** per month



Constant Attendance Allowance (Caregiver Allowance)
A monthly allowance of **RM250** for the caregiver



Morbid Allowance
RM300 per month



Funeral Benefit
A one-off payment of **RM3,000**

Source: Perkeso
The Stargraphics



Survivors' Pension
Up to **RM300** per month

"The objective is social protection rather than extending employment tenure.

"Children of the homemakers are able to afford medical care for their mothers."

The increase in age aligns with Malaysia moving toward an ageing society, as policymakers are reviewing retirement and social protection frameworks more broadly. Perhaps this can also reduce taxpayers' burden by keeping tax at a certain level,"

she added.

Sunway University economics professor Dr Yeah Kim Leng welcomed the move to align the coverage age to the mandatory retirement age.

"This will enhance financial security for housewives, given their dominant role in family well-being," he said, adding that the risk is higher for women in this age bracket, especially those belonging to the B40 and M40 groups.



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Employers and workers urged to join wage survey

PUTRAJAYA: The Human Resources Ministry has invited employers and private sector workers nationwide to participate in a review survey for the Minimum Wage Order (PGM) 2024 from May 6 to June 19.

In a statement yesterday, the ministry said the survey, conducted through the National Wages Consultative Council (NWCC), forms part of the review of the PGM 2024 being carried out from January to September 2026.

"The review aims to ensure the national minimum wage rate remains relevant to the current economic situation, cost of living,

workers' productivity and developments in the country's labour market," it said.

It said findings from the survey would serve as important input in the evaluation process and recommendations to the government regarding the implementation and determination of future national minimum wage policies.

"This will also help ensure that the balance between workers' welfare, business sustainability, and the resilience of the national economy is comprehensively strengthened," the statement added, Bernama reported.

It said engagement sessions

were also held at 21 locations nationwide from March 30 to April 29 to obtain views and direct feedback from employers, workers, employer associations and trade unions regarding the implementation of the PGM 2024.

It said the sessions also aimed to enhance stakeholders' understanding of minimum wage policy while encouraging the implementation of a more effective, fair and sustainable wage system in line with the country's current needs.

"All information and data collected through the survey are confidential and will only be used

for policy research purposes and improvements to the implementation of the national minimum wage policy," it said.

In addition, the ministry also welcomed memoranda or written views from employers, employer associations, workers and trade unions, which can be submitted via e-mail at kajianpgm@mohr.gov.my.

The measure is crucial to ensuring that the views of all stakeholders are considered in the development of a more inclusive, responsive, and sustainable minimum wage policy for the future workforce of Malaysia, it added.



A filepic of large crowds at the MYFutureJobs Premium Carnival at the KL Convention Centre last month, which offered more than 10,000 job openings across various industries. Malaysia's labour market isn't shrinking, but shifting as new roles emerge. — Photo by PERKESO

MIDDLE EAST CRISIS: THE LABOUR MARKET IS SHIFTING, NOT SHRINKING

SIX years ago, the Covid-19 pandemic reshaped Malaysia's economic structure and labour market in profound ways.

The health crisis drove unemployment to 4.5%, the highest level in nearly three decades, with 711,000 people losing their jobs, according to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DoSM).

One of the most enduring scars has been persistent socioeconomic uncertainty, as many workers moved into the informal sector. While some have since found their way back into more stable employment, others continue to struggle, constrained by age, skills gaps and health conditions.

Just as these wounds were beginning to heal, they are at risk of reopening. This time, however, the trigger is not a health emergency but a geopolitical crisis, driven by world's superpower.

Although the epicentre of the Middle East crisis, centred around the Strait of Hormuz, lies nearly 6,000km away, its tremors are already being felt here.

Data from Social Security Organisation (PERKESO)'s Employment Insurance System shows that job losses in the first four months of this year rose by 34.4% compared with 2025.

For now, employers are still absorbing rising operating costs by trimming profit margins, adjusting working hours, managing wage outflows and delaying difficult decisions, including layoffs. But such measures can only go so far.

If pressures persist into a second wave of the crisis, sectors that are highly sensitive to fuel price fluctuations, including mining, manufacturing, transportation, construction, agriculture, wholesale and retail trade, as well as food and accommodation services, will be affected.

In response, immediate containment measures have been rolled out through the Progressive Acceleration for Capability and Employment (PACE) initiative, backed by more than RM710mil in funding to strengthen human capital development and labour market stability.

This economic resilience package is further supported by labour market analytics from Human Resources Ministry (Kesuma) through PERKESO's LMX Exchange, enabling early intervention before layoffs occur. The priority is to prevent affected workers from being displaced from the formal economy for prolonged periods.

With the right support, workers can leverage new skills and experience gained during transition periods to move from vulnerable sectors into more resilient industries.

While many may perceive that opportunities in Malaysia's labour market are shrinking, the reality is that they are shifting.

However, this transition will only materialise if workers are willing to enhance their competitiveness through new skills and capabilities.

Another pathway, albeit a more challenging one, is the gig economy. As households adopt more cautious spending habits, demand for services such as food delivery, e-commerce and gig mobility may soften.

At the same time, rising fuel costs, vehicle maintenance and weaker demand are squeezing gig workers' already thin income margins, placing their livelihoods at risk.

Unlike formal sector workers, many gig workers still face gaps in social protection, as they are not covered by benefits such as the Invalidity Scheme and the Employment Insurance System.



Ramanan says employers are still cushioning rising costs to avoid workforce reductions, while PACE and early intervention aim to protect jobs and support workers in reskilling for stronger sectors.

Looking ahead, reforms aimed at improving social protection for gig workers are being actively pursued, in order to narrow the widening gap between them and formal sector employees.

At this critical juncture, policy must move beyond simply stabilising prices and focus on strengthening livelihoods, with employment at its core.

Worker retention policies supported by targeted fiscal measures are needed to ensure

employers do not resort prematurely to workforce reductions. Such measures must be implemented swiftly, as the World Bank's commodity outlook suggests that the impact of the Middle East crisis will only begin to ease gradually towards the end of the year.

Policy emphasis must also be directed at strengthening the social protection safety net, particularly for gig workers and those in the informal sector.

Equally important is the need to bring back into the workforce individuals of working age, especially women who have had to step away from employment after childbirth due to rising living costs.

The Post-Maternity Leave Allowance, introduced through amendments to the Employment Insurance System Act 2017, is expected to help address this by supporting workforce participation and enhancing productivity, while safeguarding the socioeconomic well being of families.

From a public perspective, the situation in Malaysia may appear stable, as the government continues to cushion the impact of rising global oil prices through subsidies amounting to up to RM7bil a month. But calm waters can be deceptive.

In January alone, PERKESO recorded 10,568 job loss cases, the highest on record. Under a worst case scenario without timely intervention, job losses could return to levels seen during the pandemic six years ago.

This is not a moment for a wait-and-see approach. Every delay adds further strain on workers, families and employers who are already under pressure.

In embracing the theme "Pekerja Madani Kesuma Bangsa", recognition must go beyond rhetoric and take the form of real protection, through a social security system that is resilient and responsive to evolving challenges.

We must ensure that the "safety net", symbolised in PERKESO's logo, has no gaps and is wide enough to serve as the final lifeline that buffers between resilience and collapse.

Datuk Seri Raman Ramakrishnan
Human Resources Minister