

# KERATAN AKHBAR

TARIKH : 9 FEBRUARI 2024  
AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES  
MUKA SURAT : 3

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### PRIVACY CONCERNS

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**PUTRAJAYA:** Concerns about personal data not being protected are one of the reasons why Central Database System (Padu) registrations among Rural and Regional Development Ministry officers and staff are low.

Its minister, Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who is also deputy prime minister, yesterday said only 33.4 per cent of the 24,471 ministry officers and staff and its agencies had registered.

"We are working on it. In the middle of this month, we will initiate activities to ensure that 100 per cent of officers and staff register with Padu." He said this after the ministry's monthly assembly.

On Wednesday, chief statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said only 2.69 million out of 30.8 million Malaysians had updated their information on Padu.

When asked why the number was low, Zahid said: "Perhaps there is a lack of awareness about it.

"Some also feel that their per-

sonal details are not kept private, but we have a certain way to resolve it because it (Padu) is for everyone's benefit."

Padu consolidates data from government agencies under one roof.

Meanwhile, Zahid said the government would roll out several measures to address rising dropout rates among secondary school students. He said among the reasons students were dropping out of school was because they had to work due to their family's financial problems.

The Education Ministry found that 14,506 secondary school students dropped out last year, or 0.8 per cent of the total number of students.

Zahid said the National Social Council meeting that he chaired earlier yesterday had identified eight improvements to lower the dropout rate.

This included raising awareness about the importance of education to at least the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia level.

The awareness campaign

would be done through the print, electronic and social media.

"Other measures include periodic monitoring of employers of schoolgoing children to ensure they comply with prescribed working hours and conditions; setting up vocational training centres; and providing counselling to parents and guardians to ensure children under their care continue schooling."

He said this in his speech after chairing the council meeting here.

His speech was delivered by Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri.

He said the government would also look into helping families in financial difficulties, which compelled students to work.

Zahid said financial assistance would be provided to students based on their needs and place of residence.

He added learning spaces would be set up in residential areas, such as in community centres or activity centres.

Apart from that, he said the government was looking at introducing HIV and AIDS prevention, control and treatment programmes, particularly for youth.

He said this was necessary as youth aged 20 to 39 were the most affected with HIV and AIDS at 74 per cent.

He said the council had outlined several programmes and improvements that could be carried out.

This includes establishing shelters managed by governmental agencies or non-governmental organisations to provide aftercare for People Living With HIV/AIDS, especially those ostracised by their families and lacking support; and boosting their job security and educational opportunities.

"We also suggest implementing monitoring and restrictions on pornographic websites or social networking applications that lead to high-risk HIV activities."

In November last year, then health minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa had said an average of

eight people contracted HIV in Malaysia daily.

Zahid said HIV/AIDS was among the two discussion papers and one information paper deliberated at the meeting.

The other discussion paper was on secondary school dropout issues. The information paper was on policy enhancements to ensure fair treatment for vulnerable consumers.

On vulnerable consumers, he said, the paper had outlined two goals for best practices for financial service providers dealing with Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

This includes establishing requirements for financial-service providers to provide support to vulnerable consumers and encouraging a culture of tolerance for PWDs.

The National Social Council was established as the implementing body of the National Social Policy, which is the umbrella policy covering the philosophy and social development policies of the nation.