

# Getting women back to work

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**NATION**

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## Steps taken to increase their labour participation to 60%

KUALA LUMPUR: Efforts will be stepped up to encourage women to remain in employment or return to the workforce as Malaysia aims to increase their participation in the labour force to 60% within a decade.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said this will be carried out with relevant facilities and support, such as childcare, financial incentives and flexible working hours.

Programmes such as MamaCare, affordable daycare, Career Come Back and nursery fee subsidies at work would be implemented, he said when tabling the 12th Malaysia Plan Mid-Term Review in the Dewan Rakyat here yesterday.

“Women’s role in the care economy will be acknowledged to increase their participation in the workforce.

“This effort will also combat the challenge of a shrinking workforce as the result of an ageing nation,” said Anwar.

He added that this would, however, require a commitment from all parties, including the private sector and civil society groups, as well as a “whole of nation” approach.



Going all out: Efforts will be stepped up to encourage women to remain in employment or return to the workforce. — FAIHAN GHANI/The Star

On Aug 30, Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri said her ministry would focus on three areas to increase female labour participation from 56.2% to 60%.

These are better policies and laws; an ecosystem to support women; and training, capacity building, upskilling and reskilling.

In terms of the ageing population, those aged 65 and above were expected to account for 14% of the population in two decades.

This shift would affect the country’s socioeconomic development and fiscal position should no serious attention be given to the issue, Anwar said.

“The most significant impact is the decline in the working population and productivity, as well as the government’s increased financial commitments in preparing care services for more senior citizens,” he said.

Putrajaya is in the midst of developing a National Action Plan for Aging, he said.

The government had also taken the proactive step to set up a new geriatric centre and was finetuning the implementation of Private Aged Healthcare Facilities and Service Act 2018, which was passed in Parliament on Nov 29, 2017, he added.

The Act, Anwar said, would come into force in 2025.