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VACCINE R&D KEY TO TREATING CANCER

New Straits Times, Malaysia



ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

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**A**FTER decades of research, scientists now believe there is promise for vaccines to cure cancer and that the concepts underlying vaccination can extend beyond prevention.

Vaccines designed to treat and cure infections are in the pipeline and made possible by improved understanding of immunology. It is encouraging that Malaysia recognises the vast economic potential of cancer vaccines.

The Malaysia Genome and Vaccine Institute (MGVI) — formerly the Malaysia Genome Institute (MGI) — under the National Institute of Biotechnology Malaysia (NIBM), operates as a national vaccine hub, connecting vaccine stakeholders

nationwide, with a strong focus on research and development (R&D).

The stakeholders comprise pharmaceutical enterprises, clinical research entities, regulatory bodies, as well as local and international academic institutions.

To drive innovation and maximise its impact, MGVI fosters collaboration with local pharmaceutical firms through the public-private partnership model.

MGVI also seeks R&D partnerships with renowned global players, such as Pfizer, GSK Vaccines Institutes for Global Health, CanSino Biologics, CSPC Pharmaceutical, The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and Islamic Development Bank.

MGVI aligns its vaccine R&D ini-

tiatives with the National Vaccine Development Roadmap (NVDR), overseen by a project office in the Science and Technology Ministry.

Within the NVDR, key initiatives, including the development of vaccines for emerging tropical diseases and halal vaccines, have taken precedence at MGVI. Currently, MGVI is also establishing state-of-the-art facilities on human vaccine research.

These cutting-edge resources will be accessible to all vaccine researchers in Malaysia. The plan is to also share market analysis with local pharmaceutical companies.

Given its significant role, securing continuous financial support becomes a paramount focus for human vaccine R&D. This ensures

sustainability and progress within the field.

The roadmap augurs well for the national aspiration to benefit economically from the vaccine business. We are not short of expertise in the field.

But, putting in place the right ecosystem for collaboration and funding is key. According to latest reports, scientists are confident that cancer vaccines are poised for success.

While the evidence is reviewed, researchers are confident vaccines will become standard anti-cancer therapies. No doubt collaboration is key to the success of the vaccine plan.

The recently launched New Industrial Master Plan 2030 (NIMP

2030), has also identified the pharmaceutical industry as a key sector to nourish the economy.

Few would disagree that developing and producing cancer vaccines can be a potential area to work on. Otherwise, it is unlikely that our investment in R&D will deliver value for the nation and the people.

Researchers in the country hope that such commitment to harness the economic potential of vaccines is not another flash in the pan.

Years ago, there were attempts to do the same. Unfortunately, the commitment was not sustained.

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## SUMMARIES

### ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

AFTER decades of research, scientists now believe there is promise for vaccines to cure cancer and that the concepts underlying vaccination can extend beyond prevention. Vaccines designed to treat and cure infections are in the pipeline and made possible by improved understanding of immunology. It is encouraging that Malaysia recognises the vast economic potential of cancer vaccines.