

It's raining men in Malaysia

Influx of male foreign workers one reason for widening male-female ratio

By **DIYANA PFORDTEN**
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia is becoming an increasingly “male country”, with menfolk steadily outnumbering the fairer sex over the decades.

According to the Statistics Department, the country's population sex ratio in 1970 stood at 102 males to every 100 females.

The gap has since widened to 110 males for every 100 females in 2020.

The trend, according to the Statistics Department, is being driven by the large number of male foreign workers coming to Malaysia as well as higher male birth rates.

A large influx of foreign workers over the past decade accounts for a large part of the shift.

The sex ratio for Malaysian citizens, for instance, remained unchanged from 2010 to 2020 at 103 men for every 100 women.

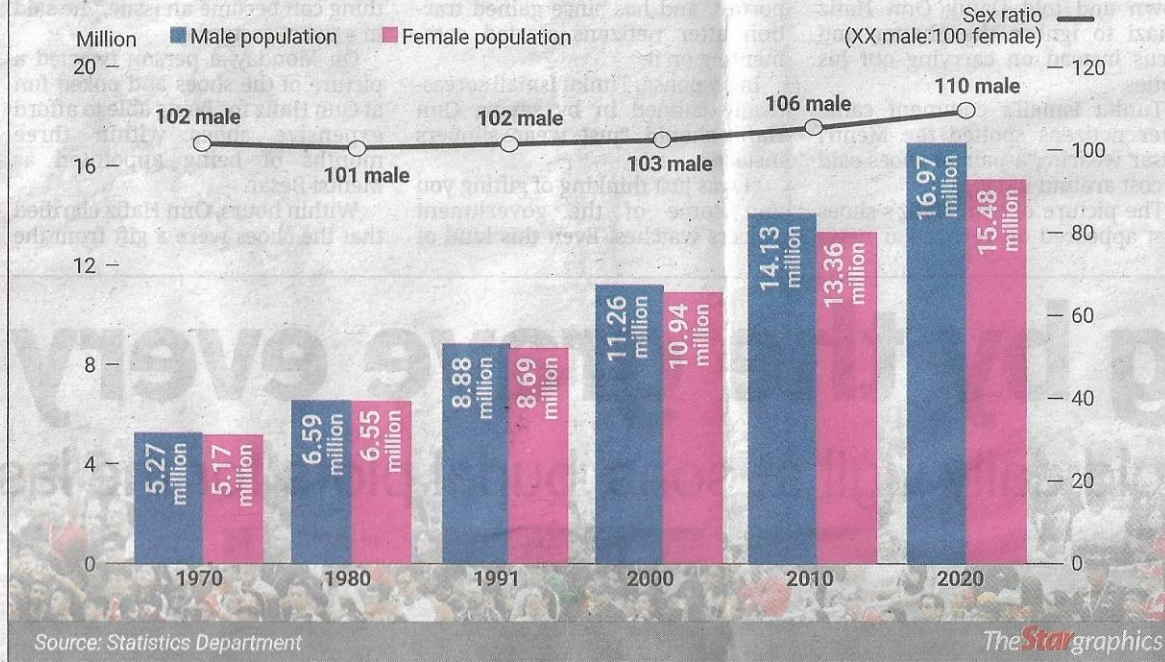
The country's non-citizen male population, on the other hand, grew rapidly over the same period, rising from 149 males to 100 females in 2010 to 229 males per 100 females in 2020. Higher male birth rates are also a factor.

In 2020, there were 243,617 (51.8%) male newborns compared with 226,578 (48.2%) females.

Chief Statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said the sex ratio at birth is not equal, with males outnumbering females in most countries.

The growth of male population over the years

The data below shows the number of male and female population in the country from 1970 to 2020



The department's Labour Force Report showed that males largely dominated industries such as construction, manufacturing and agriculture, especially in states such as Johor, Kuala Lumpur, Pahang, Selangor and Melaka.

Others, such as Putrajaya, showed a higher female population, as more

better education.

“For the same reason, we are also experiencing a brain drain with more educated males and females deciding to work abroad,” he added.

He said having more men or women can only be a negative if it infringes on the right to equal access to resources and opportunities.

progress has been made toward empowering women, long-term macro issues like the gender pay gap, the glass ceiling, and pay bias still affect women.

She added that male-dominated occupations may affect gender relations, gender bias and gender equity, but this may depend on the level of



#BREAKTHEBIAS
Challenge inequality, make a change

In support of the 2022 International Women's Day global collective against discrimination and gender bias, **The Star**, as chair of the World Editors Forum (Asia Chapter), and in collaboration with its regional media partners, will embark on a year-long initiative to highlight stories that celebrate and promote equality.

Go to thestar.com.my for more #breakthebias stories.

through greater diversity and representation but also through changing how society values such professions.

“Having male teachers alongside their female counterparts creates a space for students to learn and model after someone they perceive as similar.

“With the participation of males in the nursing industry, an option can also be available for male patients who prefer to be treated by male nurses,” she said, adding that the inclusion of men, including foreign workers, in these sectors can also help reduce labour shortages.

Addressing the negative impact of a male-dominated workforce

Mohd Uzir said the working-age population, which includes those between 15 and 64 years old, was also dominated by males at 52.9% as compared with women at 47.1%.

“The sex ratio in each state depends largely on the factors of labour force and socioeconomic status.”

“There are many males working in the construction and agriculture sectors,” he said.

women work as civil servants.

“From the Labour Force Report, the sex ratio for civil servants in Putrajaya in 2020 was 61 males compared with 100 females,” Mohd Uzir said.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia’s Critical Media Studies Assoc Prof Dr Jamaluddin Aziz said an influx of foreign workers taking up lower-paying jobs is inevitable as a country’s population edges towards

“What we need to work on is improving access for women to quality resources so that they can be more competitive in the face of global challenges,” he said.

Assoc Prof Dr Rahimah Ibrahim, deputy director of MyAgeing, stated that policies, workplace procedures, and societal norms have generally been oriented toward and with intended benefits for men.

She said that even though some

masculinity expected or normalised in such work sectors.

“Studies have also found that men in male-dominated industries face greater risks of work-related injuries and deaths, and higher rates of suicide,” she said.

Rahimah said that the entrance of men into female-dominated careers such as nursing and teaching would have enhanced the profession’s status and economic value not only

requires people willing to champion the cause, open dialogue, and present a solid evidence base.

“Gender sensitisation programmes should be increased, especially among men,” she said.

Scan the QR code here to view the interactive version of this story on

TheStar.com.my

