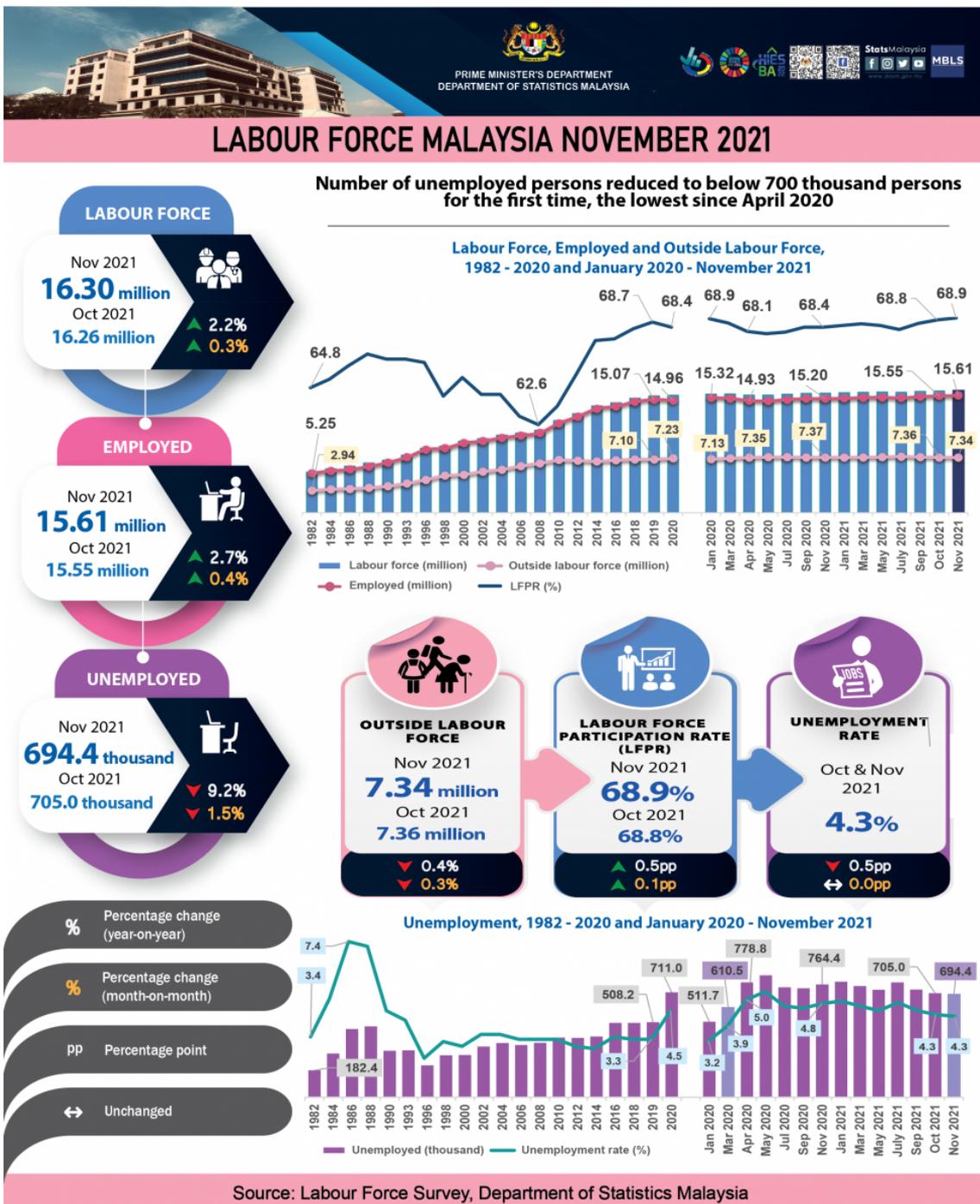




MINISTRY OF ECONOMY  
DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS MALAYSIA

KEY STATISTICS OF LABOUR FORCE IN MALAYSIA, NOVEMBER 2021



## CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS



### What is Labour Force Survey (LFS)?

Labour Force Survey (LFS) was conducted to collect information on the structure and distribution of labour force, employment and unemployment from the perspective of labour supply.

LFS encompasses both urban and rural areas for all administrative districts within of all states in Malaysia using the actual status approach through the personal interview, Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) and telephone interview method.

The LFS are conducted based on the standard guidelines and recommendations of the International Labour Organizations (ILO).

The survey population comprises persons who live in the private living quarters, hence excludes persons residing in institutions such as hotels, hospitals, hostels, prisons, and workers residing in construction worksite.

The working age for the analysis of LFS in Malaysia refers to household members between the age of 15 to 64 years during the reference week, who are either in the labour force or outside the labour force.

#### LABOUR FORCE



- The population in the working age group of 15 to 64 years (in completed years at last birthday).
- Either employed or unemployed in the reference week.

#### OUTSIDE LABOUR FORCE



- All persons not classified as employed or unemployed.
- Example: housewives, students, retirees, disabled persons and those not interested in looking for a job.

#### EMPLOYED



- Persons who, at any time during the reference week worked at least one hour for pay, profit or family gain (as an employer, employee, own-account worker or unpaid family worker).
- Persons who did not work during the reference week because of illness, injury, bad weather, leave, labour dispute and social or religious reasons but had a job, farm, enterprise or other family enterprise to return to.
- Those on temporary lay-off with pay who would definitely be called back to work.

#### UNEMPLOYED



- Those who did not work during the reference week but are interested to work and seeking for a job.
- Classified into two groups which are actively and inactively unemployed.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



- The proportion of the unemployed population to the total population in labour force.
- Percentage of the unemployed population in the labour force.

#### LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE



- The economic activity of a population depends on the demographic characteristics of that population.
- The proportion of the economically active population, hence differs between sub-groups of that population.
- These variations are measured by specific activity rates termed as labour force participation rate.
- Labour force participation rate is defined as the ratio of the labour force to the working age population (15 to 64 years), expressed as a percentage.

## KEY REVIEWS

- Employed persons in November 2021 continued to increase for four consecutive months with an addition of 55.7 thousand persons (0.4%) month-on-month recording 15.61 million persons (October 2021: 15.55 million persons). The employment-to-population ratio which indicates the ability of an economy to create employment went up by 0.2 percentage points to record 66.0 per cent in November 2021 (October 2021: 65.8%).
- By economic sector, the upward trend of employment in Services sector persisted mainly in Wholesale and retail trade; Food & beverages services; and Transport & storage activities. A similar trend was observed in Manufacturing and Construction sectors while employment in Agriculture and Mining & quarrying sectors remained decreased.
- During the month, the employees' category which accounted for 76.9 per cent of the total employed persons, continued to climb by 0.2 per cent (+27.1 thousand persons) recording 12.0 million persons (October 2021: 11.97 million persons). Similarly, the own-account workers category which consists mostly of daily income earners working as small business operators such as retailers; hawkers; sellers in markets and stalls; as well as smallholders continued to trend up in November by 0.8 per cent (+20.1 thousand persons) to record 2.63 million persons (October 2021: 2.61 million persons).
- The unemployed persons in November 2021 reduced to below 700 thousand persons for the first time, the lowest since April 2020 with a decrease of 1.5 per cent month-on-month (-10.6 thousand persons) to 694.4 thousand unemployed persons (October 2021: 705.0 thousand persons). The unemployment rate for the month was 4.3 per cent, unchanged from October 2021 as more in the inactivity group were searching for jobs.
- The number of labour force in November 2021 was higher by 45.1 thousand persons or equivalent to 0.3 per cent to 16.30 million persons (October 2021: 16.26 million persons). Therefore, the labour force participation rate (LFPR) for the month elevated further to 68.9 per cent (October 2021: 68.8%).
- The number of outside labour force continued to fall in November 2021 with a reduction of 20.1 thousand persons or 0.3 per cent to record 7.34 million persons (October 2021: 7.36 million persons). Outside labour force due to schooling/ training was the largest composition with 42.2 per cent while the reason of housework/ family responsibilities category ranked second with 41.1 per cent.
- Malaysia's labour force situation is picking up gradually since August 2021 as most economic and social activities were operating as usual in accordance to strict standard operating procedures. The continuous operation of those activities may also create more jobs opportunities, thus giving more chances for the jobseekers and subsequently will strengthen the labour market in the upcoming months. With the recent flood disasters that hit the central and east coast of the country, the impact is foreseen to be more localised and may not be substantial to the entire labour market. Besides, the

recovery path also may face some challenges with the presence of a new COVID-19 variant of Omicron.

## **THE LABOUR FORCE SITUATION IN NOVEMBER 2021 HOLDS STEADY WITH THE CONTINUING EMPLOYMENT GROWTH AND REDUCING NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED PERSONS AS THE REVIVAL OF MORE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES HAS STIMULATED A POSITIVE VIBE TO THE LABOUR MARKET**

November 2021 saw another five states namely Perlis, Perak, Pulau Pinang, Sabah and Kedah had moved into Phase 4 of the National Recovery Plan (NRP) effective from 8 November 2021 except for Kelantan and Sarawak which were still in Phase 3. As more states moving to the next phase of the NRP, more business and social activities were resumed with longer business hours, thus contributing to the creation of more job opportunities especially in Wholesale and retails, as well as Accommodation and Food & beverages activities. In the meantime, as of 30 November 2021, completed overall vaccination has reached 77.8 per cent with adults covered at 98.3 per cent. Furthermore, an additional booster dose of vaccination to ensure optimal protection against the COVID-19 infection has been introduced starting from 13 October 2021. This booster dose has reached an average of 70,000 doses daily during the month. Additionally, the average number of daily COVID-19 cases has also been reduced to 5,000 cases as against 7,000 cases in the previous month.

These encouraging circumstances, also had resulted in more travelling activities domestically and abroad during the month, hence influencing the labour market in November 2021. Therefore, the labour force situation in November 2021 held steady with the continuing employment growth and reducing number of unemployed persons as the revival of more economic and social activities has stimulated a positive vibe to the labour market. Meanwhile, the Leading Index (LI) increased by 0.3 per cent as compared to a year ago (September 2021: 0.6%) which anticipated a more promising outlook in the near term if gradual normality of economic activities preserves. Meanwhile, month-on-month comparison recorded a decrease of 0.9 per cent in LI (September 2021: 4.0%). In addition, the monthly external trade indicators portrayed that exports registered a month-on-month negative growths of 1.9 per cent (October 2021: 3.2%) while imports continued to expand by 5.9 per cent (October 2021: 4.1%).

The Labour Force Report for November 2021 describes the labour supply situation as the country entered the various phases of the NRP. The report also elaborates on the month-on-month changes to examine the immediate effects of the NRP to rejuvenate the economy while containing the spread of COVID-19. Users are advised to interpret the monthly statistics with caution since they are non-seasonally adjusted. In addition, annual changes from the same month of the previous year are also reported.

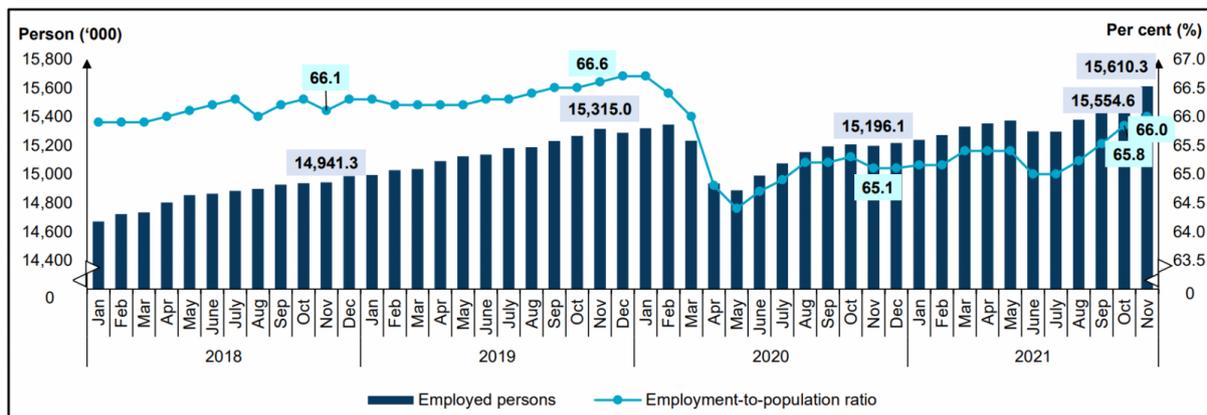
## Employed persons in November 2021 continued to increase for four consecutive months

Employed persons in November 2021 continued to increase for four consecutive months with an addition of 55.7 thousand persons (0.4%) month-on-month recording 15.61 million persons (October 2021: 15.55 million persons). Similarly, year-on-year, the number of employed persons was on an increasing trend, adding up by 414.2 thousand persons or 2.7 per cent (November 2020: 15.20 million persons).

By economic sector, the upward trend of employment in Services sector persisted mainly in Wholesale and retail trade; Food & beverages services; and Transport & storage activities. A similar trend was observed in Manufacturing and Construction sectors while employment in Agriculture and Mining & quarrying sectors remained decreased. In addition, it was witnessed that labour demand increased in line with the resumption of economic activities. This includes the tourism-related sectors such as Accommodation and Arts, entertainment & recreational activities. Besides, a promising economic outlook also may prompt people to search for a better job.

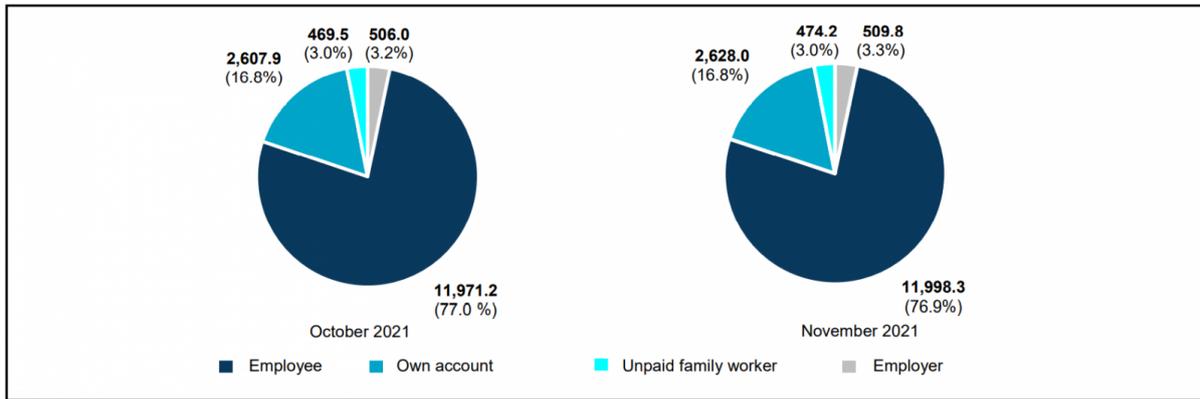
The employment-to-population ratio which indicates the ability of an economy to create employment went up by 0.2 percentage points to record 66.0 per cent in November 2021 (October 2021: 65.8%). In comparison with one year earlier, the ratio ascended by 0.9 percentage points (November 2020: 65.1%). [Chart 1]

Chart 1: Employed persons and employment-to-population ratio, January 2018 - November 2021



During the month, the employees' category which accounted for 76.9 per cent of the total employed persons, continued to climb by 0.2 per cent (+27.1 thousand persons) recording 12.0 million persons (October 2021: 11.97 million persons). Similarly, the own-account workers category which consists mostly of daily income earners working as small business operators such as retailers; hawkers; sellers in markets and stalls; as well as smallholders continued to trend up in November by 0.8 per cent (+20.1 thousand persons) to record 2.63 million persons (October 2021: 2.61 million persons). The positive growth in both categories sustained, and thus reflecting the continuity of the business activities during the month. [Chart 2]

Chart 2: Employed person by status in employment, October and November 2021



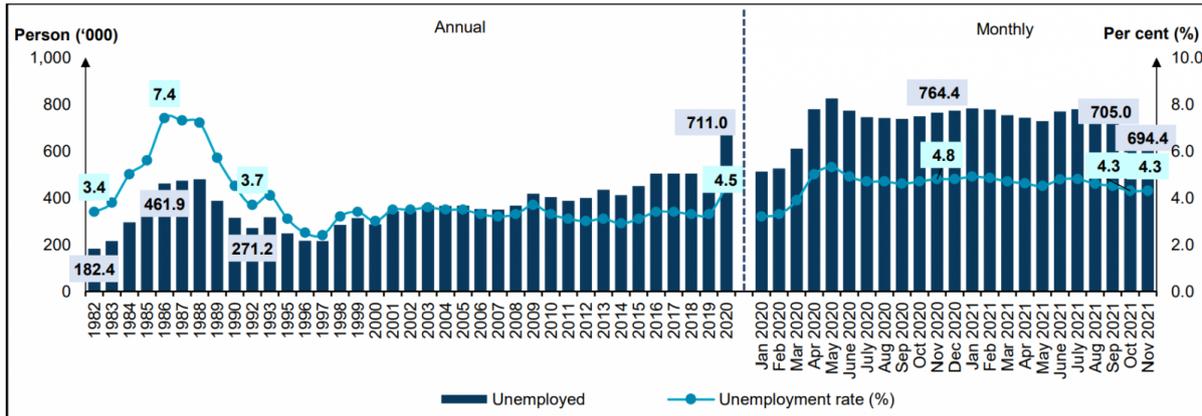
The number of employed persons who were temporarily not working during the month continued to register a negative growth for the second month to 112.2 thousand persons as compared to 122.7 thousand persons in the preceding month. Year-on-year comparison, this category recorded a reduction of 29.8 thousand persons (November 2020: 142.0 thousand persons). This group of persons, who were most likely not able to work was not categorised as unemployed as they had work to return to.

### Number of unemployed reduced to below 700 thousand persons for the first time

The unemployed persons in November 2021 reduced to below 700 thousand persons for the first time, the lowest since April 2020, with a decrease of 1.5 per cent month-on-month (-10.6 thousand persons) to 694.4 thousand unemployed persons (October 2021: 705.0 thousand persons). The unemployment rate for the month was 4.3 per cent, unchanged from October 2021 as more in the inactivity group were searching for jobs.

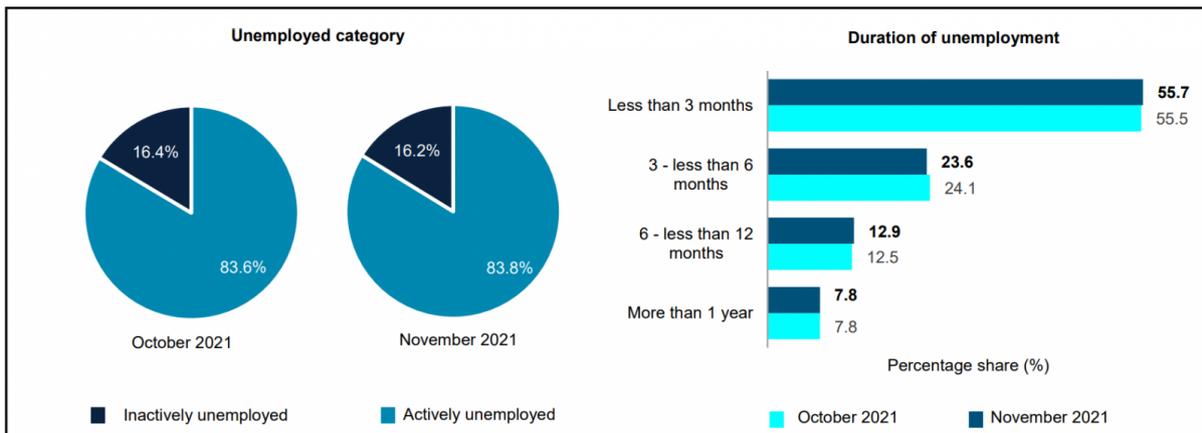
By comparing with the same month of the previous year, the unemployment rate dropped by 0.5 percentage points (November 2020: 4.8%) while the number of unemployed persons fell by 9.2 per cent or equivalent to 70.0 thousand persons (November 2020: 764.4 thousand persons). [Chart 3]

Chart 3: Unemployed persons and unemployment rate, 1982 - 2020 and January 2020 - November 2021



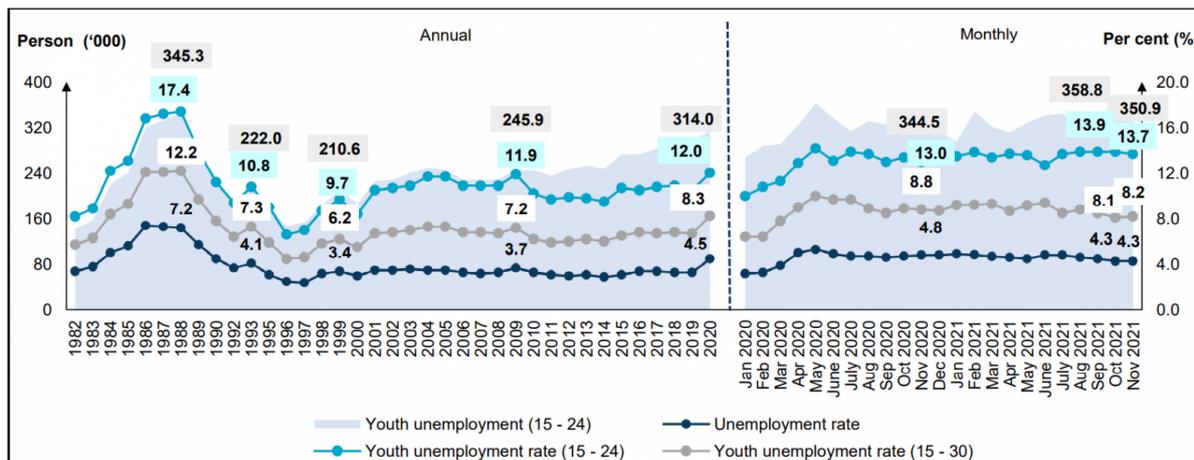
In terms of the unemployment category, 83.8 per cent of the total unemployed persons were the actively unemployed or those who were available for work and were actively seeking jobs. This category declined by 1.3 per cent or 7.8 thousand persons to register 581.8 thousand persons (October 2021: 589.5 thousand persons). By duration of the unemployment, 55.7 per cent were the unemployed persons for less than three months while 7.8 per cent were those who were in long-term unemployment of more than a year. For those who believed that there were no jobs available or were inactively unemployed, the number dropped by 2.5 per cent or 2.8 thousand persons to 112.6 thousand persons (October 2021: 115.4 thousand persons). [Chart 4]

Chart 4: Unemployed category and duration of unemployment, October and November 2021



In November 2021, the youth unemployment rate for aged 15 to 24 years reduced by 0.2 percentage points to record 13.7 per cent after registering 13.9 per cent since August 2021. The number of unemployed youths decreased by 7.9 thousand persons (-2.2%) to 350.9 thousand persons (October 2021: 358.8 thousand persons). However, the unemployment rate for youth aged 15 to 30 years recorded a marginal increase of 0.1 percentage point month-on-month to register 8.2 per cent (October 2021: 8.1%). [Chart 5]

Chart 5: Unemployment rate by selected age groups, 1982 - 2020 and January 2020 - November 2021

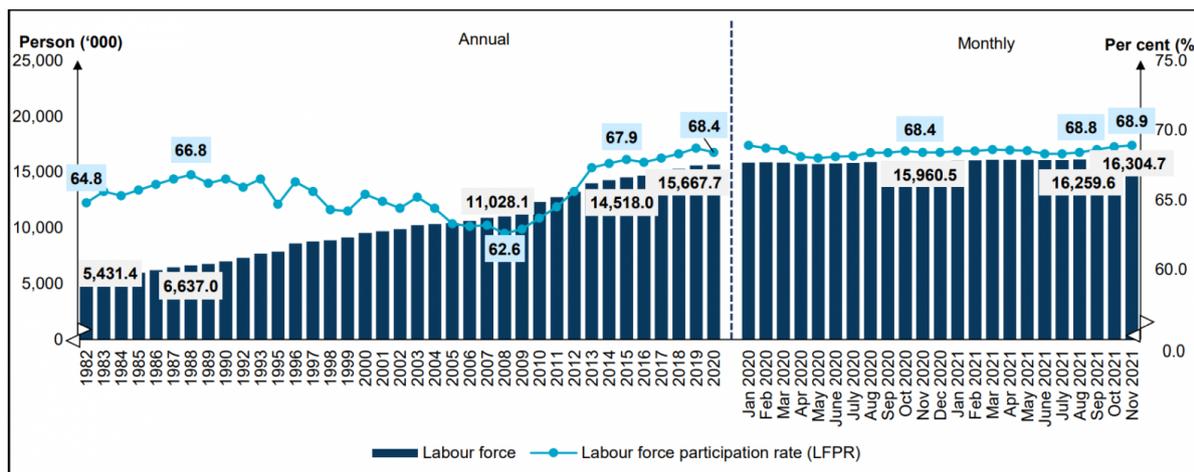


### LFPR elevated further to 68.9 per cent in November 2021

The number of labour force in November 2021 was higher by 45.1 thousand persons or equivalent to 0.3 per cent to 16.30 million persons (October 2021: 16.26 million persons). Therefore, the labour force participation rate (LFPR) for the month elevated further to 68.9 per cent (October 2021: 68.8%).

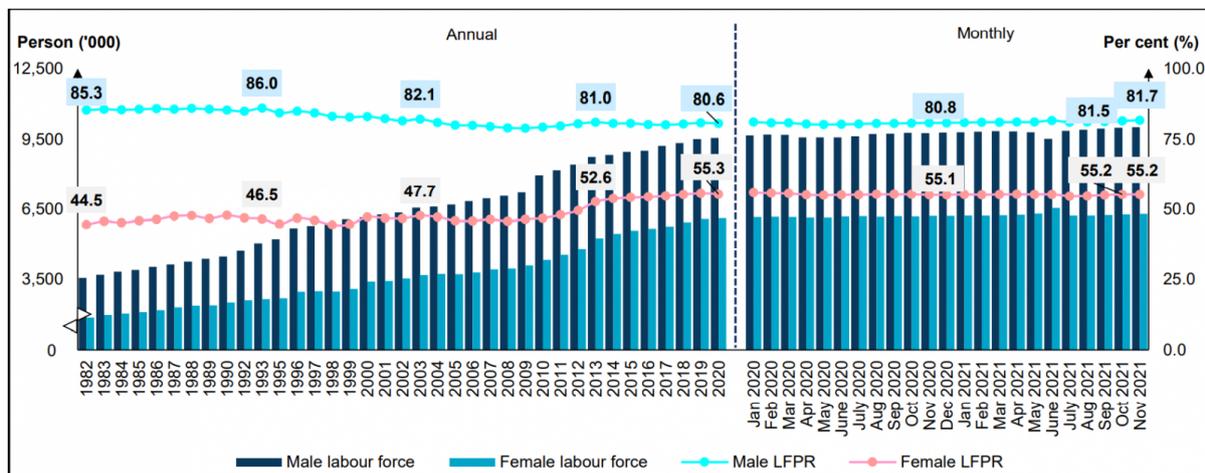
Comparing with November last year, the number of labour force added by 344.2 thousand persons (2.2%) as against 15.96 million persons. Likewise, the LFPR rose by 0.5 percentage points from 68.4 per cent in November 2020. [Chart 6]

Chart 6: Labour force and LFPR, 1982 - 2020 and January 2020 - November 2021



In November 2021, continuous positive growth was recorded in both male and female labour force. Male labour force increased to 10.0 million persons (October 2021: 9.99 million persons) whereas female labour force rose to 6.29 million persons (October 2021: 6.27 million persons). Accordingly, male LFPR continued to increase to 81.7 per cent (October 2021: 81.5%) while female LFPR stood at 55.2 per cent. On a yearly basis, male LFPR heightened by 0.9 percentage points from 80.8 per cent in November 2020, while female LFPR went up by 0.1 percentage point (November 2020: 55.1%). [Chart 7]

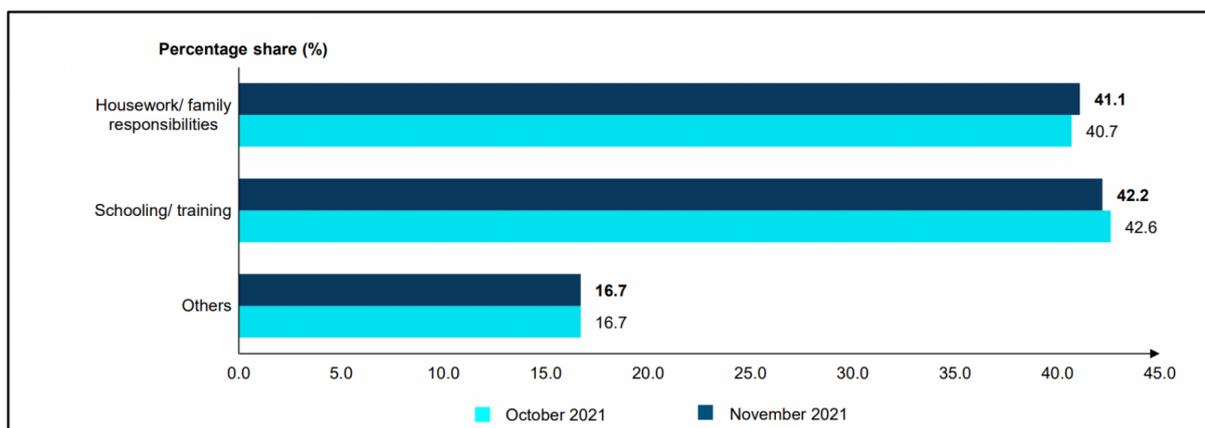
Chart 7: Labour force and LFPR by sex, 1982 - 2020 and January 2020 - November 2021



### Outside labour force continued to fall in November 2021

The number of outside labour force continued to fall in November 2021 with a reduction of 20.1 thousand persons or 0.3 per cent to record 7.34 million persons (October 2021: 7.36 million persons). During the same month last year, the number of outside labour force also posted a decrease of 30.4 thousand persons or 0.4 per cent from 7.37 million persons (November 2020). Outside labour force due to schooling/ training was the largest composition with 42.2 per cent while the reason of housework/ family responsibilities ranked second with 41.1 per cent. [Chart 8]

Chart 8: Share of outside labour force by reasons for not seeking work, October and November 2021



## **GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES**

As of 10 December 2021, a total of 322,177 employers and 2.64 million registered employees benefitted through the Wage Subsidy Programme (PSU) 1.0 under the PRIHATIN Packages which aimed to ensure employees are able to retain their jobs with an approved value of RM12.96 billion. Adding to this, through PSU 2.0 under the Kita PRIHATIN Packages which are meant to further support the employers and employees, a total of RM1.40 billion has been distributed to 81,017 employers and 715,928 employees. As for PSU 3.0, there were RM3.48 billion was channelled to retain a total of 1.52 million employees while under PSU 4.0, a total of RM1.98 billion was channelled to 139,711 employers to continue operating and retained 1.68 million employees.

In the meantime, a total of RM1.5 billion had allocated through PERKESO for PenjanaKerjaya 1.0. As of 3 December 2021, a total of RM639.30 million had been channelled and benefitted 15,097 employers and 116,316 employees. As for PenjanaKerjaya 2.0, a total of RM589.42 million was aided to 16,648 employers and 138,659 employees. Next, under the PenjanaKerjaya 3.0, a total of RM68.96 million was channelled to benefit 6,906 employers involving 29,379 employees. Overall, the government channelled RM1.30 billion to 38,651 employers to retain 284,354 local employees through the PenjanaKerjaya initiatives. As of 3 December 2021, a total of 61,328 employees had been recruited under the Short-Term Employment Programme (MySTEP). Out of this total, 41,680 employees were recruited in the public sector, while 19,648 employees were positioned in the GLCs and their strategic partners.

In addition, a total of 151,505 individuals had been approved to participate in various programmes under the Reskilling and Upskilling Programme which aimed to assist jobseekers, especially among youths. As for the Reskilling and Upskilling Programme for Malaysia Armed Force Veteran (PRUV-ATM) which implemented to improve the socio-economic status of veterans, whereby the veterans will be trained to improve their knowledge and skills for the employment sector and entrepreneurship, a total of 4,600 veterans were succeeded in the Skills and Entrepreneurship Training Programmes as of 31 October 2021. Next, through the Hiring Incentive Programme and Training Assistance, a total of 137,659 employees were managed to be employed, mostly in the Manufacturing and Wholesale and retail trade industries.

Under the MyDigitalWorkforce in Tech (MYWiT) which was introduced by the government in collaboration with Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) to improve the skills and capabilities of Malaysian workers by encouraging companies to hire local workers for technology and digital services jobs through salary incentives and training course subsidies, a total of 193 participants from 2,105 applicants under MYWiT programme were successfully placed in technology and digital services jobs as of 10 December 2021. In addition, through the Professional Training and Education for Growing Entrepreneurs (PROTEGE) under the Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperative Development (MEDAC), a total of 3,284 graduates have succeeded to be positioned in the PROTEGE Ready-to-Work programme as of 3 December 2021. This programme was designed to enhance employability and inculcate entrepreneurial skills among the graduates. As for the National Apprenticeship Scheme (SPN) under the Ministry of Youth and Sport in collaboration with other ministries such as the Ministry of Works, Ministry of Human Resources and federal agencies under the three ministries, there were 7,423 youths have successfully secured jobs. This scheme was aimed at providing job opportunities to youth as apprentices in various companies and organisations as well as providing a support system for youths to gain experience and enhance their knowledge and skills through soft-skills training and on-the-job training. Meanwhile, through the Career Advancement Programme (KPT-CAP) which was one of the efforts to address the issue of the unemployed graduates, a total of 17,756 unemployed graduates have secured jobs as of 3 December 2021.

To empower the businesses, through the Danajamin Prihatin Guarantee Scheme (DPGS) under the PRIHATIN Economic Stimulus Package which focused on the viable businesses in all sectors which facing difficulties due to COVID-19, a total of RM2.06 billion of total guarantees had been approved to 58 companies out of total 88 companies applying for the guarantees as of 3 December 2021. Moreover, there

were 26,369 SMEs assisted with a total value of RM12.59 billion through the Small, Medium Enterprise (SMEs) Soft Loan Funds by Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) which comprised of Special Relief Facility (SRF); Automation & Digitalisation Facility (ADF); All-Economic Sector Facility (AES); and Agrofood Facility (AF) funds. In addition, a total of 340 applications from 701 applications were approved with a total financing of RM67.5 million through the PENJANA Tourism Financing. To support and encourage SMEs and Technical and Digital Mid-tier Companies (MTCs) to digitalise their operations and trade channels, a total of RM89.9 million was disbursed to 13,889 businesses in the form of grants and loans for digitalisation services subscriptions. Furthermore, under the SME Digitalisation Grant initiative, a value of RM150.60 million had been channelled to 53,840 SMEs in the form of matching grants.

Meanwhile, through the Indian Community Entrepreneur Development Scheme (SPUMI), 895 Micro SMEs were benefitted from a total of RM21.50 million funds. Besides, to support the Arts, Culture and Entertainment Sector, a total of RM6.13 million was channelled to 579 recipients including artists and organisations who were actively involved in the Malaysian arts and culture industry through the CENDANA initiative. As for the Agriculture and Food Industry, a total of RM241.17 million had been allocated to 19,381 Agriculture Micro SMEs to support the Agriculture and Food Industries. Additionally, a total RM152.3 million was channelled to 22 Bumiputera IPTS under the Mudah Jaya Financing Scheme for Private Institute of Higher Learning (SPiM Penjana IPTS) by Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) which focused to support the affected Bumiputera IPTS to cover their working capital.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

Malaysia's labour situation is picking up gradually since August 2021 as most of the economic and social activities were operating as usual in accordance to strict standard operating procedures. The continuous operation of those activities may create more jobs opportunities, thus giving more chances for the jobseekers and subsequently, will strengthen the labour market in the upcoming months. Furthermore, the current LI indicators are also anticipating that the economy will continue recovering in the near future. In addition, Malaysia's health crisis is seen to be showing positive signs with the average number of daily cases declining and the rate of fully vaccinated of Malaysia's population increased to 78.5 per cent with adults reached 97.7 per cent as of 8 January 2022.

With the recent flood disasters that hit the central and east coast of the country, the impact is foreseen to be more localised and may not be substantially to the entire labour market. Nonetheless, the presence of a new variant of Omicron recently, has led to the issuance of temporary travel bans to several countries in Africa which took effect on 27 November 2021 as an effort to curb the spread of the virus. Also, umrah travel was temporarily suspended effective from 8 January 2022 to restrain the spread of this lethal variant. Thus, this situation may post some challenges to the recovery path of the labour market.

## TECHNICAL NOTES

This information is derived from the **Labour Force Survey (LFS)** which was conducted to collect information on the structure and distribution of labour force, employment and unemployment.

Concepts and definitions used in LFS are based on the standard guidelines of International Labour Organizations (ILO) through “Manual on Concepts and Methods: Surveys of Economically Active Population, Employment, Unemployment and Underemployment” which is also used by other country.

LFS covers both urban and rural areas of all states in Malaysia through personal interview method.

The survey population cover persons who live in private living quarters and excludes persons residing in institutions such as hotels, hostels, hospitals, prisons, boarding houses and workers residing in construction work site.

The survey comprises of the economically active and inactive population. To measure the economically active population, the LFS uses the age limit of 15 to 64 years. The economically active population comprises of those employed and unemployed whereas those who are inactive is classified as outside the labour force.

LFS uses the actual status approach, where a person is classified on the basis of his labour force activity during the reference week.

- **Labour force** refers to those who, during the reference week are in the 15 to 64 years (in completed years at last birthday) and who are either employed or unemployed.
- **Employed** refers to all persons who, at any time during the reference week worked at least one hour for pay, profit or family gain (as an employer, employee, own-account worker or unpaid family worker). Also considered as employed are persons who did not work during the reference week because of illness, injury, bad weather, leave, labour dispute and social or religious reasons but had a job, farm, enterprise or other family enterprise to return to. Also included are those on temporary lay-off with pay who would definitely be called back to work.

- **Unemployed**

Unemployed refers to those who do not have a job but are interested to work. There are two groups of unemployed that is the actively unemployed and inactively unemployed.

- **Outside Labour Force**

All persons not classified as employed or unemployed as stated above are classified as outside labour force. Includes housewives, students (including those going for further studies), retired, disabled persons and those not interested in looking for a job.

- **Labour Force Participation Rate**

The economic activity of a population depends on the demographic characteristics of that population. The proportion of economically active population, therefore, differs between sub-groups of that population. These variations are measured by specific activity rates termed as labour force participation rate. **Labour force participation rate** is defined as the ratio of the labour force to the working age population (15 to 64 years), expressed as percentage.

- **Unemployment rate** is the proportion of unemployed population to the total population in labour force. This rate measures the percentage of unemployed population in the labour force.

## Seasonally adjusted

Malaysian economic time series data are affected by major religious festivals such as the Eid-ul Fitr, the Chinese New Year and the Deepavali. The major festivals in this country are usually related to the religious activities and such as, the dates are determined by the respective religious calendar. The dates of these holidays are not in line with the Gregorian calendar. Hence, they tend to move along the Gregorian calendar and has strong seasonal influence on many economic time series data.

Since these non-fixed holidays have large impact on the time series data, they need to be taken into account when performing seasonal adjustment process so as to avoid confusion in seasonally adjusted data and trend estimates. Furthermore, the presence of the non-fixed holidays effects may complicate the interpretation of the data.

Seasonal adjustment is a process of removing the estimated effects of normal seasonal variation from the original series so that the effects of other influences on the series may be more clearly recognized.

Seasonal adjustment can be derived by various methods and the results may vary according to the procedure adopted. The approach used for seasonal adjustment in Malaysia is the **Seasonal Adjustment for Malaysia (SEAM)**.

SEAM is a procedure to remove moving holiday effect on the selected Malaysian economic time series data by introducing steps that can be used to overcome the limitations of the existing seasonal adjustment procedure. To apply the SEAM procedure, the X-ARIMA program in Statistical Analysis Software (SAS) is used.

This seasonal adjusted rate will be revised when a complete 12 months time series for the particular year are obtained.

## Population Benchmarks

Population by characteristics of age group, ethnicity and state were used as benchmarks to produce labour statistics.

Starting with the monthly release of the Principal Statistics of Labour Force, Malaysia, January 2016, the principal statistics of labour is estimated based on the current population estimates as compared to the previous series which used population projections based on the Population and Housing Census of Malaysia, 2010. This rebase is to obtain statistics that is more consistent with current population structure.

The full publication of the Labour Force Report, November 2021. This report is accessible and downloadable through the application [eStatistik](#) Portal, [Free Download](#)

For more details, please refer to the Department's portal: [www.dosm.gov.my](http://www.dosm.gov.my)

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