

# Keeping kidneys healthy

BY REBECCA RAJAENDRAM  
educate@thestar.com.my

IT is easy to figure out the size of the heart – it's roughly the size of your clenched fist – but did you know that your clenched fist is also approximately the size of your kidney?

These bean-shaped organs are in charge of detoxifying our blood but being buried deep within us, it's easy to take their well-being for granted.

Factor in unhealthy habits like smoking, a sedentary lifestyle, not drinking enough water, a liking for sweet food and even consuming too much protein drinks (a favourite of bodybuilders), and our kidneys are in serious trouble.

What is more distressing is that recent statistics show that more than 5,000 Malaysians are diagnosed with kidney failure every

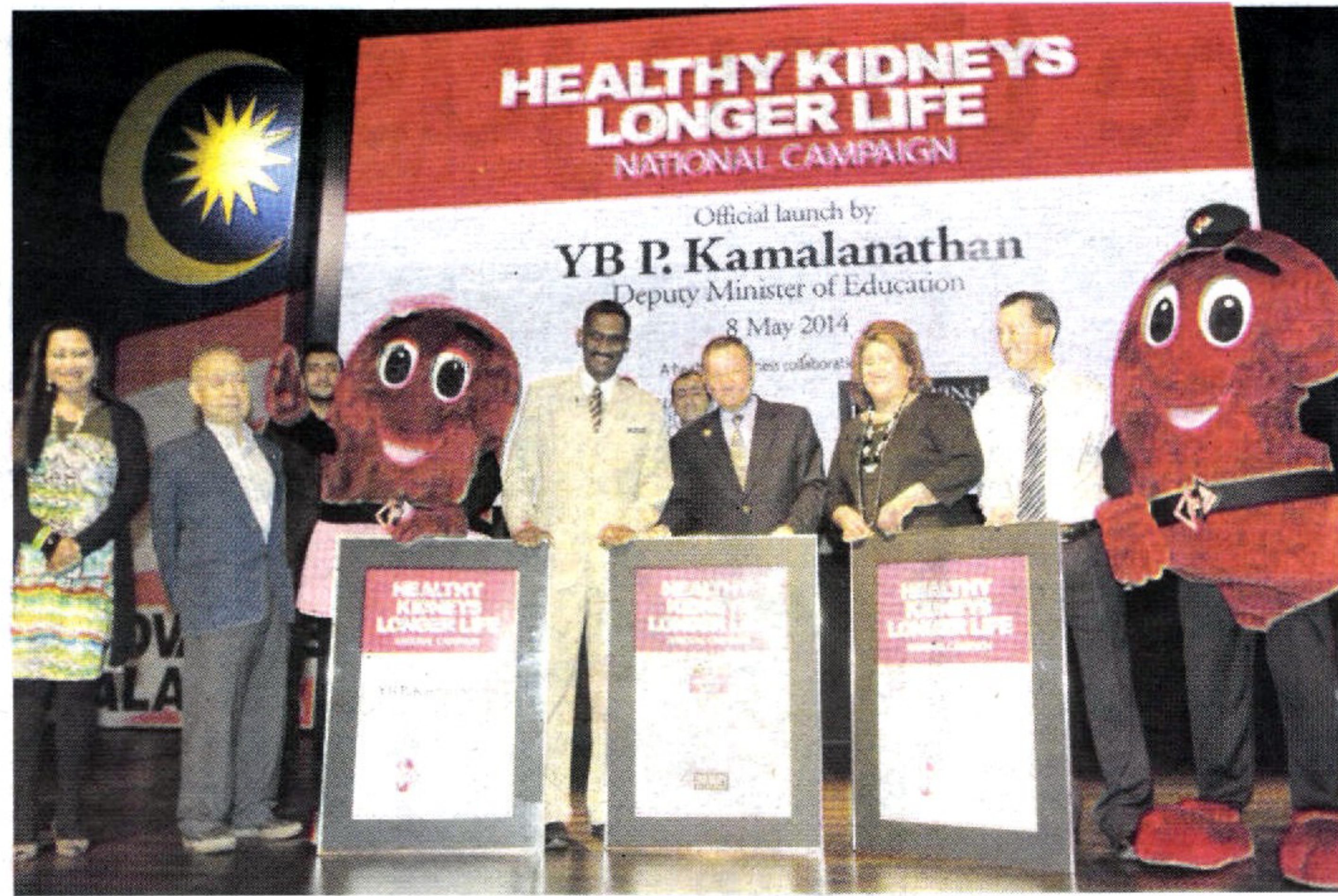
year, with diabetes and hypertension listed as the leading causes.

In 2012 alone, 2.6 million Malaysians had diabetes and by 2020, it is predicted that there will be 4.5 million diabetic Malaysians above the age of 18.

"More and more Malaysians will be stricken by chronic kidney disease that will result in greater health expenditure for costly dialysis treatment; loss of productivity; and much human suffering," said the National Kidney Foundation of Malaysia (NKF) board of directors vice chairman Goh Seng Chuan.

These alarming figures had prompted Limkokwing University of Creative Technology to collaborate with the NKF to make a major push to fix this deadly trend.

"We will be going deeper into a campaign that will reach out to



(From left) Shobana, Liew, Kamalanathan, Goh, Fajura and Chua at the launch of the *Healthy Kidney, Longer Life* national campaign.

Malaysians to embrace a healthier lifestyle. It is not a good sign if every year more than 5,000 Malaysians succumb to kidney disease," said the university's president Tan Sri Lim Kok Wing.

The first phase of the university's long-term plan to address this issue, dubbed *Healthy Kidneys, Longer Life*, was officially launched by Deputy Education Minister P. Kamalanathan at the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology campus in Cyberjaya, Selangor, recently.

The launch included a free health screening for everyone with Kamalanathan taking part, and finding out that he had a

healthy blood pressure reading.

There was also a kidney health talk by professionals from NKF for the university's students.

The campaign is a clear indication of the foundation's desire to educate youth in order to prevent the onset of the disease.

"The Education Ministry has always advocated a healthy lifestyle among school children and young adults in colleges," said Kamalanathan.

He said the ministry is very concerned that Malaysians, especially school children, have fallen into the trap of an unhealthy lifestyle which leads to obesity.

He was also pleased that the

foundation was actively reaching out to schools and colleges to promote healthy living among the young people.

"The effort the foundation is making to work with school and college students and promote awareness among them so that they will practise a healthy lifestyle is indeed commendable," Kamalanathan added.

Also present at the launch was Limkokwing University of Creative Technology vice president Datuk Fajura Juffa; the foundation's head of branding and communications S. Shobana; CEO Chua Hong Wee and one of its directors, Liew Shou Kong.