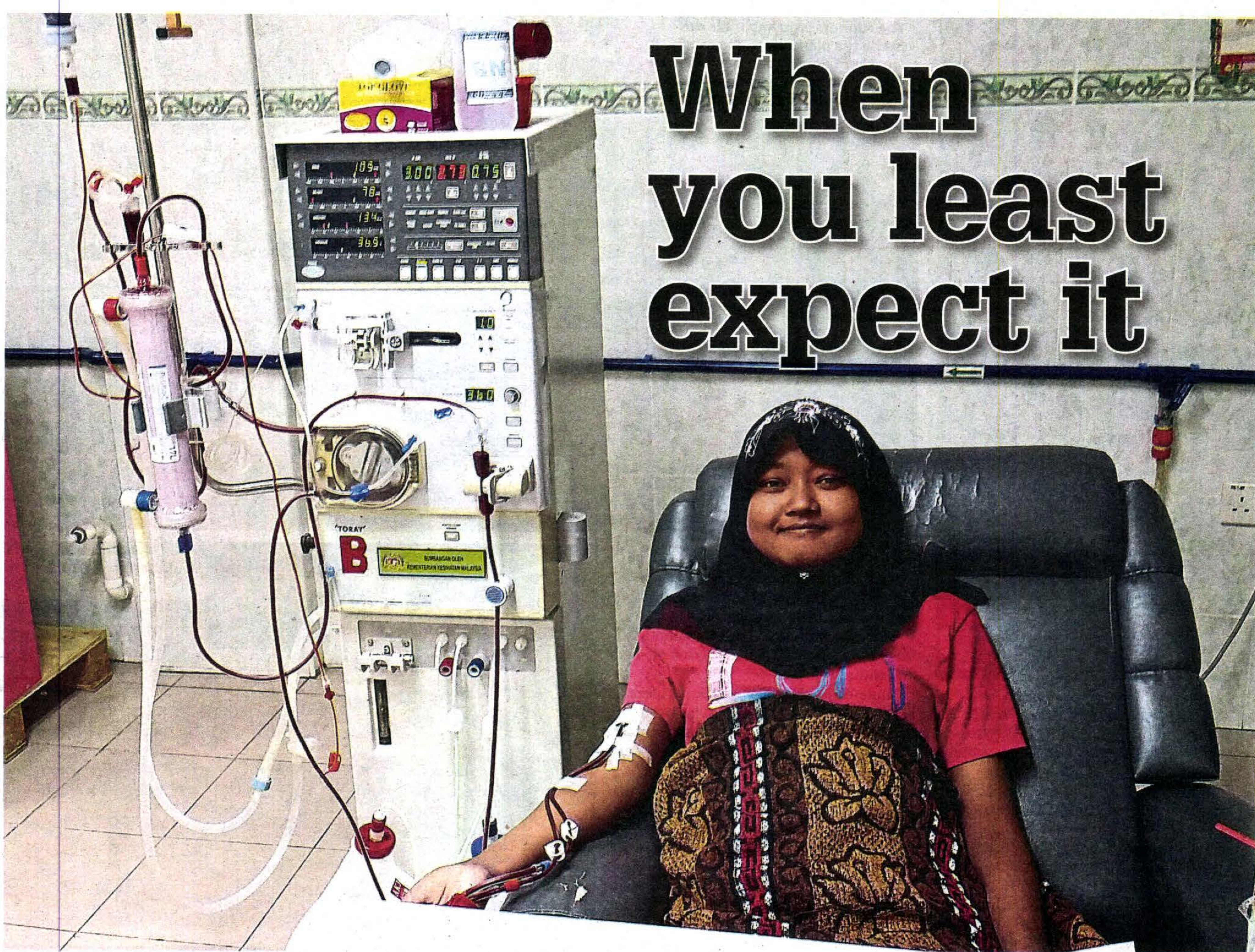


When you least expect it



Nurul, who is determined to make the best of her life, is undergoing dialysis while awaiting kidney transplant.

PETALING JAYA — Life sometimes throws a curve ball when least expected.

Such was the case for Nurul Nadwa Badri. Just last year, things were looking up for her. Like most 25-year-olds, she was taking life by the horns. She was an avid traveller and was active in sports, particularly netball.

Amid all these she was also a postgraduate student at Universiti Teknologi MARA, pursuing a Masters programme in Information Technology. Her life was good — but it would soon take a turn for the worse.

It was in November 2013 when Nurul began to develop difficulty in breathing. To make matters worse, her feet, left hand and face began to swell.

Fearing the worst, she was taken to a health clinic and was examined by a hospital assistant, who immediately referred her to the Tengku Ampuan Rahimah Hospital in Klang. There, she was immediately attended to by a doctor, who found that Nurul's heart was also swollen.

Upon further examination, the doctor's fears were confirmed. Both Nurul's kidneys — which were essential in removing waste from the blood while regulating water fluid levels — had failed.

This condition was responsible for the earlier symptomatic complications experienced by Nurul. Then came the

Malaysia's kidney foundation

The National Kidney Foundation (NKF) Malaysia is a non-profit charitable organisation dedicated to helping Malaysians suffering from end stage kidney failure who lack access to or cannot afford dialysis treatment. NKF currently has over 1,600 dialysis patients receiving subsidised dialysis treatment in our 28 dialysis centres nationwide.

diagnosis that would change her life — Nurul was suffering from Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD).

"There were no words to express my distress," recalls a solemn Nurul.

"The doctor said that there was no way I could be well again, apart from undergoing a kidney transplant. Until then, I would have to endure dialysis.

"I realised then that my life would not be the same but definitely not for the better unless medical science comes up with new and improved procedures.

Her parents were equally devastated. They knew that Nurul's condition would adversely affect their own lives as well, especially in making ends meet, with the now added costs for medical bills and dialysis treatment.

Nurul's family was not well off either. With her condition, she had to depend on her 52-year-old father — a diabetic

patient who is working as a driver with Kontena Nasional Berhad — to financially support additional costs. Her elder sister also helped out financially, if she could.

Finances aside, Nurul's day-to-day life had changed as well.

"I used to enjoy sports, especially netball. After contracting CKD, I had to give it all up.

"How could I go on? I could barely even walk or climb stairs. It was so demotivating and demoralising. I couldn't even travel and go on short beach vacations like I used to.

"Thankfully, I had my family and friends by my side, who have been a strong pillar of support," explains Nurul, with hope that there would be a light at the end of the tunnel.

A ray of hope soon emerged. National Kidney Foundation (NKF) of Malaysia had learned about Nurul's plight and provided dialysis treatment for her.

"Nurul is a young lady and has her whole life ahead of her. It would be really sad to see her life, so promising, go to waste because of CKD, which we daily strive to curb here at NKF by providing education to the public on preventing the disease, as well as assisting deserving patients like Nurul with dialysis treatment," said Chua Hong

Wee, chief executive officer of National Kidney Foundation of Malaysia.

Looking towards the future positively, Nurul is still continuing her studies, even as she undergoes dialysis treatment on a weekly basis, and hopes to join the workforce upon completion of her Master's programme.

She still finds time to travel to nearby places and socialise with friends. She also hopes to have a kidney transplant procedure soon.

However, a suitable donor would need to be found first.

"My younger brother wanted to donate his kidney to me," said Nurul, her eyes welling up. "However, he was deemed too young. So my transplant procedure is pending a suitable donor. I am just thankful for the love and support of my family and friends, as well as the support from NKF. They have given me a second chance and a new hope of a normal life."

Nurul's plight is nothing new. Like her, there are hundreds of others around the country suffering from CKD, many whose conditions are even worse than Nurul's.

If there is anything to be learnt here, it is that kidney disease does not discriminate — young or old, rich or poor, regardless of status, race or profession — it can happen to anyone. The key is taking necessary measures before it is too late, because, as in Nurul's case, life can throw curve balls at any time, especially when you least expect it.