

# Medicine prices remain stable

Manufacturers have absorbed higher production costs, says Dzulkefly

By KHOO JIAN TENG  
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**SERI ISKANDAR:** The prices of medicines have remained stable for this year following manufacturers' decision to absorb production costs, including logistics costs, due to the increase in fuel prices, says Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad.

This allows the prices of medicines to remain within a stable price range, with an increase of 1% to 2%, if any, he added.

"So far, industry players have absorbed and borne the increased operational costs, including diesel-related costs," he said at a press conference after the inauguration of Hospital Seri Iskandar by the Sultan of Perak, Sultan Nazrin Shah, here yesterday.

Dzulkefly said the ministry's Special Task Force on Drug and Medical Device Security was continuously monitoring medicine supply and prices through an early warning mechanism.

He said monitoring was conducted weekly using real-time reports involving supply sufficiency, costs and buffer stock



**New facility:** Sultan Nazrin signing the commemorative plaque at the official opening of Hospital Seri Iskandar. Also in attendance are Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Saarani Mohamad (right) and Dzulkefly (second from left). — Bernama

planning to prevent disruptions.

The ministry was also diversifying sources of raw materials, including active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) and medical device components, to ensure adequate supply of critical medicines, reported Bernama.

On another matter, Dzulkefly said the ministry will soon announce enforcement measures to tackle the growing threat of "zombie vape" products allegedly

mixed with synthetic drugs.

He added that enforcement efforts were being strengthened on open-system vape devices, which can be easily tampered with and refilled with prohibited substances after sale.

"This is something the ministry is paying very close attention to.

"In the near future, we will make several announcements on the measures that will be taken."

Dzulkefly said the ministry was working closely with the Home Ministry, Domestic Trade and Cost of Living Ministry, police and the Customs Department to address the issue comprehensively.

He said authorities were particularly concerned over cases where vape liquids were allegedly mixed with synthetic drugs such as methamphetamine and furanyl fentanyl.

"These synthetic drugs produce

effects previously described as 'mushroom' and 'zombie'-like behaviour," he said.

Earlier, during the opening of Hospital Seri Iskandar, Sultan Nazrin signed a commemorative plaque to mark the official opening before touring the hospital and exhibition gallery.

The hospital is aimed at improving access to specialist treatment for communities in central Perak.

# State ready to take in international medical students

By SHARON LING  
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SARAWAK is ready to take in returning Malaysian specialists and international medical students in Malaysia to help address the shortage of doctors in the state, says Datuk Michael Tiang.

The state Deputy Public Health, Housing and Local Government Minister said the Sarawak Medical Committee (SMC) was seeking approval from the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) on this matter.

He said overseas-trained Malay-

sian doctors who wished to return often faced the obstacle of needing a pass in Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia Bahasa Melayu and History to serve in public hospitals.

"We also notice that international medical students who graduate in Malaysia are generally not allowed to do housemanship in Malaysia, according to council regulations.

"We are now proposing to MMC

to delegate to us the authority to recruit this group of talents to come to Sarawak to serve or do their housemanship," he told Datuk Seri Wong Soon Koh (GPS-Bawang Assan) during Question Time in the state legislative assembly.

Tiang said Sarawak's healthcare sector still has 5,738 vacancies in existing approved posts by the Health Ministry.

He said the state also needed an additional 18,814 posts to be created to meet its healthcare demands.

In light of this, he said the SMC's

establishment, under delegated authority from MMC, would strengthen Sarawak's capacity to suitably address its own healthcare workforce and regulatory challenges.

"The SMC provides a platform to facilitate workforce planning and expedite regulatory processes related to medical practitioners and specialists serving in Sarawak.

"This includes facilitating the issuance of limited practising licences for qualified foreign medical practitioners and returning Malaysian specialists with

internationally recognised qualifications that may not yet be formally recognised locally."

Tiang also said the SMC was part of Sarawak's pursuit of greater healthcare autonomy under the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63) to meet the state's unique healthcare realities.

"Greater healthcare autonomy under MA63 does not imply separation from the national healthcare system.

"Rather, it empowers Sarawak to implement context-specific solutions more efficiently," he said.

# Loo-king to keep customers

Eatery owners:  
Clean toilets  
crucial for  
business

By KHOO GEK SAN  
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**PETALING JAYA:** A pleasant dining experience is not just about food and ambience. Clean and hygienic toilets at these restaurants matter, too.

Maintaining high standards for toilets is also essential for attracting customers and sustaining business, say restaurant and coffee shop operators.

Hygiene standards, particularly toilet cleanliness, directly influence customer confidence and repeat business, said C. Krishnan, deputy president of the Malaysian Indian Restaurant Owners Association.

"Clean toilets are part of the overall dining experience. If toilets are not clean, customers will simply not return."


Krishnan said restaurant operators are already subject to inspections by the Health Ministry and local councils under food establishment regulations, which cover various aspects of cleanliness, including kitchens, food handling, refrigeration, dining areas and toilets.

Operators are assessed through a scoring system and premises that fail to meet the minimum marks would be ordered to close temporarily until improvements are made.

"Operators may be instructed to close for about 14 days and rectify the issues before reopening," he said.

Krishnan said customers today are very particular about hygiene. "In the last five years, restaur-

## BMW Standard: Clean, Attractive, Fragrant Toilets



What does a BMW toilet look like?	Who is affected?	Minimum must-haves	Why BMW Matters
<p><b>Bersih (Clean)</b></p> <p>No stains, rubbish or overflowing bins</p>	<p>From Jan 1, 2026, food premises in 20 city council areas including restaurants, F&amp;B outlets and cafés must meet the BMW toilet standard to renew their business licences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working flush, taps and plumbing</li> <li>Floors kept dry and safe</li> <li>Clear cleaning schedule</li> <li>Soap, water and basic hygiene facilities</li> </ul>	<p>► Premises that fail BMW checks can have their business licences refused renewal.</p> <p>► More than 12,000 public toilets in schools, markets, parks and food courts have been upgraded under this effort.</p>
<p><b>Menawan (Attractive)</b></p> <p>Well-kept fittings, good lighting, not run-down</p>			
<p><b>Wangi (Fragrant)</b></p> <p>Odour-free, properly ventilated, regularly cleaned</p>			

**Phased roll-out for BMW licence requirement**

BMW toilet cleanliness as a business licence condition for food premises will be enforced in stages:

- 2024** City councils
- 2025** Municipal councils
- 2026** District councils

*The Star graphics*

rant standards and outlook have improved significantly. Operators know they have to keep their restaurants and toilets clean to maintain business."

"You cannot have an unclean or unhygienic toilet," he said, adding that it would affect the overall image and performance of a restaurant.

However, he admitted that maintaining cleanliness has become challenging due to labour shortages and rising operating costs.

"One of the biggest issues now is worker availability. When you have limited workers, it becomes very difficult to maintain cleanliness of the entire premises,

including the toilets," he said.

Krishnan said many operators could not afford to hire dedicated cleaning contractors, especially moderate-sized restaurants serving lower- and middle-income customers.

"Separate cleaning services are too expensive for many operators," he said.

Malaysian Singapore Coffee Shop Proprietors' General Association president Wong Teu Hoon said association members are constantly encouraged to maintain cleanliness standards despite the challenges.

"Many coffee shops have already started renovating and upgrading their toilets over the

past year," he said.

Wong said coffee shop operators, particularly those in older rented premises, often faced practical difficulties in maintaining toilet facilities due to heavy public usage.

"These toilets are almost like public toilets. With too many users, the flushing systems break down easily, and supplies such as toilet paper run out," he said.

"Some toilets are located at the back of old buildings, making it difficult to carry out major improvements. But at the very least, they must be kept clean," he said.

Wong said many operators had spent significant sums upgrading

toilets, including replacing tiles and toilet bowls.

"In some cases, renovation costs can exceed RM10,000," he said.

"At the end of the day, cleanliness protects our own business. If we fail to maintain it, customers will stop coming," he said.

Wong added that some high-traffic outlets continue to face challenges despite regular cleaning.

"In busy eateries, especially hawker-style outlets, toilets are used constantly throughout the day. Sometimes stains build up quickly and even cleaning chemicals cannot fully solve the problem immediately," he said.

# Small dietary changes can have significant benefits

WORLD Salt Awareness Week 2026 (from May 12 to 18) and World Hypertension Day (May 17) serve as a reminder for Malaysians to reflect on our dietary habits and the hidden salt content in the foods we consume

Hypertension remains one of the leading contributors to cardiovascular disease globally, yet excessive salt intake – a major modifiable risk factor – often goes unnoticed in everyday diets.

While sugar frequently dominates nutrition discussions, salt reduction deserves equal attention as part of a broader effort to prevent chronic diseases and promote healthier living.

Cardiovascular disease continues to be the leading cause of death globally, and high salt intake is one of its most important modifiable risk factors.

In recognition of this, the World Health Organization (WHO) identified salt reduction as one of its key global targets to reduce non-communicable diseases by 2025.

Yet, the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2024

found that around three in four Malaysian adults consume diets high in salt. We consume, on average, 7.3g or 1.5 teaspoons of salt a day, higher than the WHO recommendation of less than 5g (one teaspoon).

What makes salt reduction particularly challenging is that much of the sodium (the main chemical in salt) we consume is hidden in everyday meals, sauces, gravies, processed foods and meals prepared outside the home.

University and college students are especially vulnerable, as campus lifestyles often revolve around quick, affordable and convenient food options. The eating habits developed during these formative years may persist into adulthood, influencing long-term health outcomes.

This is why healthier campus food environments deserve greater national attention.

Encouragingly, some higher education institutions like ours have started introducing initiatives aimed at promoting lower-salt meals through collaboration with food vendors, nutrition awareness campaigns and gradu-

al food reformulation efforts.

These programmes demonstrate that healthier eating can be promoted without compromising affordability, accessibility or cultural food preferences.

Importantly, salt reduction should not be viewed as an isolated nutritional issue but as part of a broader societal effort involving policymakers, healthcare professionals, educators, the food industry and consumers themselves.

Public education remains essential because many people still underestimate how much sodium is present in common foods such as noodles, fried dishes, soups, processed meats and convenience meals.

At the same time, innovative approaches deserve further exploration. Globally, there is growing interest in low-sodium salt substitutes, which partially replace sodium with potassium while maintaining taste acceptability.

Emerging evidence suggests that such approaches may help reduce blood pressure and cardiovascular risks at the population

level when implemented appropriately alongside conventional salt reduction strategies.

World Salt Awareness Week serves as a timely reminder that small dietary changes can have significant long-term benefits. Reducing salt intake does not require dramatic lifestyle changes; even gradual reductions in food preparation and reformulation can help recalibrate taste preferences over time.

If we are serious about building healthier campuses and healthier communities, then nutrition must be part of the conversation. After all, the future health of our nation is shaped not only in hospitals and clinics but also in cafeterias, food courts and dining halls where daily habits are formed.

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## MELAKA

# Melaka needs new hospital, says CM

MELAKA government will request for a new hospital to be built in the state to address patient congestion and lack of parking spaces.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Ab Rauf Yusoh (*pic*) said the matter would be brought to the State Government Council Meeting (MMKN) before the proposal



was submitted to the Federal Government.

“Our population is increasing and the need for healthcare is also growing,” he told Bernama after the Melaka State Assembly sitting at Seri Negeri Complex.

Stating that he had recently visited Hospital Melaka, Ab Rauf

said: “The hospital was built 90 years ago and can no longer accommodate the large number of patients.”

Commenting on public complaints about parking at Hospital Melaka, he said a multi-storey facility would be built by a private company.

“There will definitely be a charge to recoup the investment by the company,” said Ab Rauf.



While losing more muscle than fat would be reflected as weight loss on a weighing scale, it is actually not a loss that is good for your health. (This visual is human-created, AI-aided)

By Dr YONG HENG YAW and Dr NOR BAIZURA MD YUSOP

FOR decades, many of us have stepped onto the bathroom scale with a sense of anxiety, letting a single number shape how we feel about ourselves and our health.

But does that number truly tell the full story?

Imagine losing five kilograms of muscle, but gaining three kilograms of fat.

The scale would show a “weight loss”, but your metabolic health would actually be worse.

The truth is, health is not simply just about being thin.

It is about body composition – the proportion of fat mass relative to lean mass, including muscle and bone.

While society often focuses on thinness, true health comes from having less excess fat and more functional muscle.

Muscle is not just for athletes or bodybuilders.

It is your body’s metabolic engine.

It burns calories even at rest, supports your bones, and helps you stay active and independent.

Instead of aiming to be “lighter”, we should aim to be stronger and healthier.

### Accurate measurements

To improve our health, we need to look beyond body weight alone.

Body mass index (BMI) is widely used, but it has significant limitations.

Because it only considers weight relative to height, a muscular person may be classified as “overweight”, while someone with low muscle, but high body fat, may appear “normal”.

A better indicator is body fat percentage, which distinguishes between essential fat and excess fat.

High levels of body fat, especially around the abdomen, is strongly linked to chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes and hypertension (high blood pressure).

Another simple, but powerful, measure is waist circumference.

Excess fat around the waist reflects visceral fat, which surrounds internal organs and increases health risks.

A growing waistline can be an early warning sign, even if body weight remains unchanged.

Here are body composition indicators by the numbers:

#### > BMI (Asian population)

- Underweight: Less than 18.5 kg/m<sup>2</sup>
- Normal range: 18.5 to 22.9 kg/m<sup>2</sup>
- Overweight: 23.0 to 24.9 kg/m<sup>2</sup>
- Obesity: 25.0 kg/m<sup>2</sup> and above.

#### > Body fat percentage (for 20–29-year-olds)

- Athletic/fit: Men 6-13%; Women 14-20%
- Acceptable: Men 14-24%; Women 21-31%
- Obese: Men ≥25%; Women ≥32%.

#### > Waist circumference

- Healthy: Men <94cm; Women <80cm
- Increased risk: Men 94-102cm; Women: 80-88cm.

### Muscles for metabolism

If body fat is stored energy, then muscle is the system that uses it.

Shifting the focus from “losing weight” to “building muscle” can transform long-term health.

Strength training is not only about appearance.

Activities such as resistance training, bodyweight exercise, or even physically-demanding household tasks can:

#### > Boost metabolism

Muscle burns more energy, even at rest.

#### > Support healthy ageing

Prevent muscle loss (sarcopenia), improving balance and reducing risk of falls.

#### > Improve daily function

Increased strength makes everyday tasks such as carrying groceries, climbing stairs, playing with children and grandchildren easier and less tiring, while boosting daily energy and confidence.

Aim for at least two sessions per week, targeting major muscle groups such as the chest, back, shoulders, arms, abdomen and legs.

Beginners can start with simple exercises like squats, push-ups and sit-ups, and gradually progress.

While strength builds the engine, cardiovascular exercise keeps the system running efficiently.

Activities like brisk walking, cycling or swimming improve heart health and help regulate body fat.

The most effective approach combines both strength training to build muscle and cardio to support overall fitness.

### Fuel your body wisely

Exercise alone cannot compen-

sate for poor eating habits.

At the same time, extreme dieting can do more harm than good.

Crash diets, often referred to as “yo-yo dieting”, can lead to muscle loss, a slower metabolism and eventual weight regain.

Sustainable changes are far more effective.

Here are some practical nutrition tips:

#### > Eat a balanced diet

Follow the Malaysian Food Pyramid to ensure variety and moderation.

#### > Prioritise protein

Protein supports muscle repair and helps preserve lean mass during weight loss.

Getting enough high-quality protein from both animal (e.g. fish, poultry, lean meat) and plant (e.g. legumes, tofu, nuts) sources helps ensure fat loss, while protecting muscle.

#### > Include fibre-rich foods

Vegetables, fruits and whole grains such as broccoli, avocado and oats help you feel full, provide essential nutrients and support overall health, making them a better choice than relying on supplements.

#### > Small, sustainable habits

Rather than relying on crash diets, make simple changes like swapping sugary drinks for water and adding protein to each meal.

Over time, these habits lead to better and more lasting results.

### A stronger, healthier future

# A body in balance

Losing weight is just part of the equation; what you really want is a body that has less excess fat and more calorie-burning muscles.

True health is built through strength, balance and sustainable habits, not by chasing a lower number on the scale.

When we focus only on weight loss, we may lose muscle and vitality.

When we focus on body composition, we invest in long-term health.

For Malaysians, where food is central to culture and community, the goal is not to eat less of everything, but to eat wisely and stay active.

By reducing excess fat and building muscle, we can improve heart health, stabilise blood sugar and enhance overall well-being.

Let us shift our mindset.

Do not aim just to be lighter.

Aim to be stronger, more capable and more resilient.

Your body is not defined by a number on a scale.

It is a powerful system that, when properly cared for, can support a long, active and fulfilling life.

Dr Yong Heng Yaw is a nutritionist and Malaysian Society of Body Composition (MSBC) honorary secretary. Dr Nor Baizura Yusop is a dietitian and MSBC honorary treasurer. This article is contributed by Nutrition Month Malaysia (NMM) 2026, an annual community nutrition education initiative jointly organised by Nutrition Society of Malaysia (NSM), Malaysian Dietitians' Association and MSBC. NMM will be holding its Food-Fit-Fun Fair in Sunway Velocity Mall Cheras, Kuala Lumpur, on June 4-7. The information provided is for educational and communication purposes only, and should not be considered as medical advice. The Star does not give any warranty on accuracy, completeness, functionality, usefulness or other assurances as to the content appearing in this article. The Star disclaims all responsibility for any losses, damage to property or personal injury suffered directly or indirectly from reliance on such information.



Sultan Nazrin and Tuanku Zara Salim arriving for the opening of the hospital yesterday. – BERNAMAPIC

## Sultan Nazrin opens RM162m Seri Iskandar Hospital

**SERI ISKANDAR:** The Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Shah yesterday officiated at the opening of Seri Iskandar Hospital, a new healthcare facility aimed at improving access to specialist treatment for communities in central Perak.

His Royal Highness was accompanied by the Raja Permaisuri of Perak Tuanku Zara Salim.

Also present were Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Saarani Mohamad, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dzulkefly Ahmad and Health Deputy Minister

Datuk Hanifah Hajar Taib.

Sultan Nazrin also signed a commemorative plaque to mark the official opening before touring the hospital and exhibition gallery.

Dzulkefly said the RM162.3 million hospital had been fully operational since December 2024 and had already treated nearly 40,000 patients.

"In the past, elderly residents from Pasir

Salak or mothers from Pulau Tiga had to travel long distances to seek specialist treatment. Today, a world-class healthcare facility is available much closer to them."

He said the hospital currently has 401 staff, including five specialists in internal medicine and emergency care.

The facility also features specialised sections such as a maternity ward, haemodialysis unit and high dependency unit. – Bernama

## RM22m boost for Malacca healthcare sector

**ALOR GAJAH:** Malacca has allocated more than RM22 million under the state budget to strengthen its healthcare sector over a three-year period, said Chief Minister Datuk Seri Ab Rauf Yusoh.

He said the move was in line with the state government's priority to enhance the healthcare service and delivery system for the people, as well as the welfare of healthcare workers who form the backbone of the sector.

"The development of the state's health sector cannot be taken lightly as our healthcare system is facing various pressures, from the growing number of patients and disease prevalence to increasingly high expectations on the quality of health services.

"Therefore, the state government does not want the health sector in Malacca to simply 'survive,' but to be among the most trusted by the people," he said at the Santunan Seuntai Kasih, Semekar

Legasi Warga Kesihatan programme for the Masjid Tanah parliamentary constituency here on Wednesday night.

He said that during the three-year period, more than 87 health clinics throughout Malacca, including 13 health and rural clinics in the Masjid Tanah parliamentary constituency, had been upgraded to provide comfort and quality treatment for the people.

Ab Rauf said the Women and Children's Block of Malacca Hospital would also be built this year as a major step to strengthen the state's healthcare capacity for the future.

He also expressed gratitude to the federal government for approving the construction of the Armed Forces Hospital at Terendak Camp, which he said would greatly benefit security personnel and their families. – Bernama

# RM10 mln to digitalise public clinics, upgrade older facilities

Reports by Marilyn Ten, Aileen Yap, Aliah Abdullah, Churchill Edward, Jude Toyat & Matthew Umpang  
Photos by Roystein Emmor, Chimon Upon & Mohd Faisal Ahmad

**KUCHING:** Efforts are underway to enhance hardware availability, server capacity, and power reliability at public health clinics, particularly in older clinics that were not originally designed for digital operations, said Datuk Michael Tiang.

The Deputy Public Health, Housing and Local Government Minister said to support this, the Sarawak government has allocated RM10 million for the procurement of essential hardware required for digitalisation.

"In addition, upgrades are being carried out to ensure that facilities are better equipped to support system requirements and maintain consistent performance.

"Maintenance and technical support mechanisms are also being reinforced to ensure the sustainability of digital infrastructure, especially in hard-to-reach areas," he said during the question-and-answer session.

Tiang was responding to Dato Sri Wong Soon Koh's (GPS-Bawang Assan) question on what infrastructural challenges have been identified in implementing systems in Sarawak.

"Overall, these ongoing infrastructure enhancements are critical in enabling a more stable, efficient, and scalable digital health system across Sarawak," he said.

Tiang said the government acknowledges the persistent shortage of medical specialists in Sarawak and is addressing this through a comprehensive, system-based approach aligned with current Ministry of Health (MoH) policies, including the Health White Paper reform agenda which emphasises equitable access, digital transformation, and



strengthening primary healthcare.

"Firstly, telemedicine is being expanded as a core strategy to optimise specialist reach. In line with MoH's digital health agenda, remote consultations enable patients in peripheral facilities to access specialist care without unnecessary referrals to tertiary centres, thereby reducing waiting times, travel burden, and congestion at urban hospitals. This is particularly important in Sarawak, given its challenging geography and dispersed rural communities.

"Secondly, rural healthcare delivery is being strengthened through upgrading of Health Clinics, expansion of outreach services such as mobile clinics and Flying Doctor Services, and implementation of task-shifting," he said, adding that this aligns with MoH's policy to empower primary care teams, allowing medical officers and allied health personnel to manage cases locally with structured specialist support, thus improving continuity of care and service capacity.

He also said infrastructure and digitalisation remain key priorities where to date, 176 (65.2 per cent) primary healthcare facilities in Sarawak have been digitalised through systems such as the Cloud-Based Clinic Management System (CCMS), while 94 facilities are pending implementation.

"In supporting the success of healthcare digitalisation, the Sarawak Government has contributed RM10 million for ICT hardware procurement and infrastructure strengthening across healthcare facilities," he said.



Datuk Michael Tiang

According to him, this strong collaboration has accelerated the implementation of CCMS, improved access to electronic medical records, enhanced service efficiency, and strengthened continuity of care, particularly in remote and hard-to-reach areas.

"Sarawak's broader digitalisation policy and investments in connectivity infrastructure have also created an enabling ecosystem for telehealth integration, data sharing, and more efficient healthcare delivery statewide.

"This integrated approach reflects MoH's policy direction to move from a hospital-centric model towards a people-centred, digitally enabled, and more equitable healthcare system across Sarawak," he said.

Tiang pointed out that the Ministry of Public Health, Housing and Local Government has also implemented several strategic measures to strengthen healthcare accessibility and specialist service delivery across both urban and rural areas in Sarawak.

"Among the key initiatives is the Sarawak Hospital Cluster Concept, whereby Lead Hospitals, typically tertiary referral centres, provide structured specialist outreach services to non-Lead hospitals, which are primarily non-specialist facilities.

"This model improves access to specialist consultations, enhances continuity of care, and reduces the need for patients in rural areas to travel long distances to tertiary centres," he said.

In parallel, he said the Global Surgery Initiative has been introduced to expand access to surgical services in peripheral hospitals.

"Under this initiative, surgeons from Lead Hospitals conduct scheduled visits to non-Lead hospitals to perform surgical procedures locally for patients who are already receiving follow-up care at those facilities.

"This approach improves timely access to surgery, reduces referral congestion at tertiary hospitals, and minimises patient displacement from their communities," he said.

Tiang also said the ministry has strengthened the credentialing and privileging programme for medical officers, particularly in essential surgical competencies.

Through structured training and supervised clinical exposure at Lead Hospitals, medical officers are assessed based on competency standards before being granted credentials and privileges to perform selected procedures independently at their respective district or non-specialist hospitals.

"This initiative enhances local service capability, optimises workforce utilisation, and helps reduce the backlog of surgical cases in rural facilities," he said.

He noted that infrastructure strengthening remains a critical enabler for specialist retention and service sustainability.

"Adequate upgrading of hospital infrastructure, medical assets, diagnostic facilities, and operating environments is necessary to ensure specialists are able to practise effectively and safely at district hospitals.

"The provision of well-maintained and sufficient staff quarters is equally important in improving workforce retention, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach areas where accommodation and living conditions remain significant challenges," he said.

# VAPE LOOPHOLE FUELS SYNTHETIC DRUG FEARS

Health Ministry to announce enforcement action against growing threat

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**T**HE Health Ministry will announce enforcement measures to address concerns that open-system vape products are being used as a loophole for synthetic drug contamination.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said the ministry is preparing to take action to contain a growing health threat.

He said the issue involves open-system vape devices and their components, such as bottles, pods and cartridges, which can be tampered with after sale.

"We are taking further action, particularly on open-system vape," he said after attending the

opening of Seri Iskandar Hospital.

Earlier, Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah officially opened the hospital.

Dzulkefly said authorities are concerned about adulteration cases, where vape liquids are tampered with and mixed with synthetic drugs.

He said the situation highlights a regulatory weakness in open-system vape products.

He said enforcement action will be strengthened.

On another matter, he said the ministry will investigate a case involving a 13-day-old baby found with a fractured thigh in Sungai Petani, Kedah.

He said the ministry would wait for the outcome of investigations before drawing any conclusions.

Dzulkefly said police investigations are ongoing, while the ministry would also conduct its own probe.

On Wednesday, police confirmed receiving a report from the baby's father alleging the infant suffered a fractured thigh while undergoing treatment for jaundice at a hospital in the district.



Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah signing a plaque to open Seri Iskandar Hospital yesterday. With him are Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad (left) and Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Saarani Mohamad. BERNAMA PIC

RM162.3 MILLION FACILITY

## Sultan Nazrin opens Seri Iskandar Hospital

**SERI ISKANDAR:** Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah yesterday opened Seri Iskandar Hospital.

Also in attendance were Raja Permaisuri Perak Tuanku Zara Salim, Raja Muda of Perak Raja Jaafar Raja Muda Musa and Raja Di-Hilir Perak Raja Iskandar Dzulqarnain Sultan Idris Shah.

Present were Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Saarani Mohamad and state Health Department director Datuk Dr Feisul Idzwan Mustapha.

Dzulkefly said he often referred

to Sultan Nazrin's speeches, which emphasised that "meaningful development is development that is human-centric".

"Tuanku often reminds me and the national leadership that the progress of a state is not measured solely by economic growth figures or towering landmarks, but by the extent to which the welfare of the people is safeguarded, particularly in health and education.

"Guided by this philosophy, Seri Iskandar Hospital was established.

"It is not merely another in-

frastructure project under the 10th Malaysia Plan, but a manifestation of the principle of social justice highlighted by Tuanku."

Dzulkefly said the hospital was built at a cost of RM162.3 million.

"Previously, elderly residents from Pasir Salak or mothers from Pulau Tiga had to travel long distances to receive specialist treatment.

"Now, world-class facilities are within their reach."

He added that nearly 40,000 patients had received treatment at the hospital.

# KKM siasat kes bayi patah paha di hospital

Siasatan akan dijalankan secara menyeluruh dan adil dengan mendapatkan dapatan daripada pihak berkaitan

Oleh NORMAWATI ADNAN

**PARIT** - Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) akan menjalankan siasatan dalam berhubung dakwaan seorang bayi lelaki berusia 13 hari mengalami patah tulang paha ketika menerima rawatan akibat jaundis di sebuah hospital di Sungai Petani, Kedah.

Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad berkata, siasatan akan dijalankan secara menyeluruh dan adil dengan mendapatkan dapatan daripada pihak berkaitan termasuk Pengarah Kesihatan Negeri serta laporan polis.

Menurutnya, buat masa ini, pihaknya tidak akan membuat sebarang kesimpulan awal sebaliknya menunggu laporan lengkap siasatan sebelum mengambil tindakan lanjut.

"Siasatan dalaman mahupun pihak polis kita akan susuli. Buat masa ini, kita jangan buat apa-apa ramalan atau bergantung kepada maklumat tidak sahah.

"Kita tunggu hasil siasatan daripada semua pihak dengan dapatan yang lebih bertanggungjawab," katanya di sini pada Khamis.

Isnin lepas, bapa bayi terbabit, Muhammad Nor Fadly Mohd Shaidi, 38, dilaporkan berkata, dia dan isterinya, Nor Shahila Abd Hamid, 34, hanya menyedari



Dr Dzulkefly bercakap kepada pemberita dalam sidang akhbar di Parit pada Khamis.

kejadian itu pada petang Ahad selepas mendapati paha kanan bayi mereka berbalut.

Muhammad Nor Fadly berkata, semasa bayinya dilahirkan pada 28 April lepas melalui kaedah pembedahan, keadaannya normal dan mampu menggerakkan anggota badan termasuk kedua-dua kaki dengan baik.

Kejadian itu kemudiannya tular di media sosial yang turut memaparkan gambar keadaan bayi tersebut yang sedang dirawat di hospital berkenaan.

Ibu Pejabat Polis Daerah (IPD) Kuala Muda mengesahkan menerima laporan kes itu dan siasatan lanjut dijalankan mengikut Seksyen 31(1)(a) Akta kanak-kanak 2001.

Sementara itu, Dr Dzulkefly memaklumkan, KKM akan mengumumkan langkah penguatkuasaan dalam masa terdekat bagi menangani penularan isu 'vape zombi'.

"Tindakan itu sedang diperincikan susulan kebimbangan terhadap penggunaan

rokok elektronik (vape) sistem terbuka yang berisiko disalah guna dengan campuran bahan terlarang iaitu dadah," katanya.

Dalam pada itu, Dr Dzulkefly memberi jaminan harga ubat-ubatan di negara ini kekal stabil dengan kenaikan minimum sekitar satu hingga dua peratus sahaja setakat ini.

"Kestabilan harga itu hasil kerjasama baik pemain industri termasuk Pharamaniaga dan Persatuan Industri Farmaseutikal Malaysia (MOPI) yang menyerap sebahagian peningkatan kos operasi.

"Sejauh ini, mereka telah menyerap dan menanggung peningkatan kos yang terkait termasuk penggunaan diesel.

"Dengan itu ubat-ubatan hari ini kekal dalam julat harga yang tidaklah melonjak. Kalau ada kenaikan pun sekitar satu hingga dua peratus sahaja dan kita harapkan ia kekal begini kerana kerjasama yang diberikan pihak industri," kata beliau.

# KKM perketat kawalan sempadan cegah Hantavirus

**Cyberjaya:** Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) mempertingkatkan pengawasan dan kawalan sempadan bagi mengekang penularan wabak Hantavirus, meskipun tiada kes tempatan dilaporkan dalam kalangan rakyat Malaysia setakat ini.

Menterinya, Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad berkata, KKM mengekalkan tahap kesiapsiagaan yang tinggi melalui pemantauan global dan juga pemerik-

saan ketat di semua pintu masuk antarabangsa.

"Tiada negara yang selamat melainkan kita semua mengambil pendekatan proaktif terhadap kesiapsiagaan dan sentiasa berwaspada,

"Walaupun enam kes yang disahkan makmal dilaporkan di tempat lain, kes berkenaan dikaitkan dengan kapal asing dan tidak membabitkan warga tempatan," katanya selepas merasmikan Majlis Pelanca-

ran Hari Tanpa Tembakau Sedunia 2026 di Universiti Cyberjaya di sini, semalam.

Malah, Dr Dzulkefly berkata, komponen utama dalam strategi empat mata kementerian adalah membabitkan sektor maritim, dengan pemeriksaan kesihatan rapi dijalankan ke atas semua kapal yang memasuki perairan Malaysia.

"Adalah penting untuk kita menjalankan saringan

kesihatan ke atas kapal dan bot yang memasuki perairan kita, terutama yang tiba daripada kawasan berisiko tinggi.

"Setakat ini, sebanyak 22,367 kapal dan bot sudah diperiksa di pintu masuk negara bagi memastikan pematuhan terhadap piawaian kesihatan dan sanitasi antarabangsa," katanya.

Beliau berkata, KKM mengeluarkan 2,421 sijil pratique dan 1,146 sijil sanitasi

kapal susulan pemeriksaan rapi berkenaan.

"Kami mahu memastikan setiap kapal yang memasuki negara ini memenuhi dan mematuhi keperluan kesihatan awam serta sanitasi antarabangsa.

"Institut Penyelidikan Perubatan (IMR) dilengkapi sepenuhnya dengan keupayaan ujian PCR untuk mendiagnosis virus berkenaan yang utamanya disebarkan oleh tikus," katanya.