

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN  
MUKA SURAT : 8  
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

8

## Nasional

9 April 2023 BH AHAD

### MDA, KPND banteras kes jual peranti perubatan palsu

Kuala Lumpur: Pihak Berkuasa Peranti Perubatan (MDA) Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) banyak menerima aduan berkaitan tindakan farmasi yang menjual peranti perubatan palsu dan melepasi tarikh luput.

Berikutan itu, Ketua Eksekutifnya, Dr P Muralitharan, berkata pihaknya sudah berbincang dengan Kementerian Perdagangan Dalam Negeri dan Kos Sara Hidup (KPND) berhubung isu berkenaan ketika kunjungan hormat ke atas Ketua Setiausaha KPND, Datuk Azman Mohd Yusof, kelmarin.

Beliau memaklumkan demikiani dalam satu kenyataan, namun tidak memperincikan jumlah aduan diterima pihaknya berkaitan kes penjualan peranti perubatan palsu dan melebihi tarikh luput.

"MDA dan KPND berbincang mengenai kaedah untuk membanteras penjualan peranti perubatan palsu dan tamat tempoh ini. Kedua-dua agensi bersetuju untuk meningkatkan pengawasan dan pemantauan dengan melakukan pemeriksaan bersepadu terhadap premis menjual peranti perubatan.

"MDA dan KPND juga bersetuju untuk berkongsi maklumat mengenai peranti perubatan yang berada di pasaran tanpa pendaftaran serta badan perniagaan yang menjual peranti perubatan tanpa lesen," katanya.

### Pengecualian nikotin daripada Akta Racun

# CAP bimbang ramai anak muda jadi penagih nikotin

### MMA saran kerajaan perlu tunggu RUU kawalan rokok dibentang sebelum ambil tindakan

Oleh Ilah Hafiz Aziz dan Zuhainy Zulkiffli  
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Georgetown: Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang (CAP) bimbang lebih ramai generasi muda negara akan menjadi penagih nikotin berbanding dadah jika bahan kimia beracun semula jadi itu dikeluarkan daripada Akta Racun.

Pegawai Pendidikan CAP, NV Subbarow, berkata pihaknya yang melakukan tinjauan di kedai menjual produk vape sekitar negeri ini sejak beberapa hari lalu, mendapati sebahagian daripada pelanggan kelihatan sangat muda.

"Terdapat pengunjung mengaku baru berusia 14 tahun. Sebelum ini, mereka memberitahu takut hendak masuk ke kedai vape untuk membeli cecair nikotin, tetapi selepas 1 April, mereka bebas masuk mana-mana kedai vape," katanya dalam satu ke-

nyataan, semalam.

Sebelum ini, media melaporkan, kerajaan melaksanakan cukai cecair vape untuk e-rokok pada kadar 40 sen setiap milimeter (ml), berkuat kuasa 1 April 2023. Warta menyatakan tampaian, cecair dan gel nikotin untuk membantu menghentikan tabiat merokok kini dikecualikan daripada Akta Racun 1952.

Subbarow berkata, maklum balas diperoleh persatuan itu hasil tinjauan berkenaan mendapati ada dalam kalangan remaja pelanggan yang tidak berpuas hati dengan pelaksanaan duti eksais, tetapi itu tidak menghalang mereka bagi membeli cecair nikotin.

"Penghisap vape seperti pelajar mendakwa dapat wang daripada rakan dan ahli keluarga bagi membeli cecair berkenaan. Beberapa pemilik kedai vape juga mendakwa tidak terkesan dengan duti eksais, sebaliknya jualan meningkat.

"Malah pemilik kedai vape juga mengaku lebih ramai gadis muda menjadi pelanggan baharu. CAP bimbang trend ini akan membawa kepada keadaan tidak sihat bagi generasi muda akan datang kerana vape dan e-rokok

berkesan membantu mencipta ketagihan nikotin dalam generasi baharu," katanya.

Bimbang kerana kebanyakan peranti vape juga boleh diguna bagi menyedut jenis dadah lain yang diharamkan, beliau berkata, CAP menggesa Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) mengambil langkah segera bagi membandung remaja daripada bebas membeli cecair nikotin.

"Jika tidak, kita mungkin perlu menubuhkan lebih banyak pusat pemulihan dadah di negara ini. CAP percaya pertama sekali yang penting ialah pendidikan kepada remaja dan ibu bapa. Remaja biasanya memperoleh sebahagian besar maklumat mengenai vape dan e-ro-

kok daripada media sosial," katanya.

### Tidak boleh terima alasan

Di ibu negara, Persatuan Perubatan Malaysia (MMA) berbanding kerajaan boleh menunggang Rang Undang-Undang Kawalan Merokok dan Hasil Tembaku 2022 dibentang terlebih dulu sebelum ambil langkah kontroversi mengecualikan nikotin daripada Akta Racun.

Presidennya, Dr R Murugan Raj, berkata Menteri Kesihatan, Dr Zaliha Mustafa sudah memberi penjelasan berhubung keputusan menandatangani pengecualian nikotin daripada Akta Racun yang membenarkan cecair vape, termasuk cecair mengandungi nikotin, dikenakan cukai mulai 1 April.

Bagaimanapun, katanya, alasan dan pendirian diberikan Dr Zaliha walaupun mengakui 'berat hati' bersetuju dengan pengecualian itu masih belum tidak boleh diterima MMA yang berpendapat ia bukan senario ideal kerana RUU Kawalan Hasil Tembaku dan Merokok 2022 belum diluluskan.

"MMA sudah mendengar penjelasan, tetapi mendapati alasan diberikan tidak boleh diterima. Sepatutnya kerajaan tunggu satu atau dua bulan saja lagi untuk RUU ini dibentangkan dan diluluskan terlebih dulu sebelum meneruskan pengecualian nikotin daripada Akta Racun," katanya sambil menegakkan nikotin adalah bahan berbahaya dan membawa kepada ketagihan.

"Mengecualikannya daripada senarai bahan terkawal mengikut Akta Racun bermakna membenarkan mana-mana vape, yang mengandungi nikotin dan bukan nikotin, dijual secara terbuka dan sah kepada sesiapa sahaja," katanya.



NV Subbarow

## 12 projek fasiliti kesihatan dikategorikan 'sakit'

Papar: Sebanyak 12 projek fasiliti kesihatan di seluruh negara dikenal pasti sebagai 'projek sakit' berikutan pembinaannya yang masih tertangguh.

Menteri Kesihatan, Dr Zaliha Mustafa, berkata ia termasuk tiga fasiliti kesihatan di Sabah, iaitu projek naik taraf Hospital Papar dan pembinaan Hospital Beaufort serta Klinik Kesihatan Sikuati di Kudat.

Katanya, kelewatan proses pembinaan Hospital Papar adalah 11.72 peratus atau lewat 89 hari berbanding jadual; Hospital Beaufort sebanyak 45.97 peratus (553 hari), manakala Klinik Kesihatan Sikuati 37.12 peratus (271 hari).

Mengenai tinjauan ke tapak projek naik taraf Hospital Papar semalam, beliau memaklumkan, projek berkenaan yang bermula pada 23 Mei 2017 mengalami kelewatan, namun dijangka dapat dipulih dan disiapkan pada peng-

hujung tahun ini sebelum mula beroperasi pada Mac tahun hadapan.

"Kita mendapat taklimat daripada Jabatan Kerja Raya (JKR), apakah masalah dan kekangan yang dihadapi dan kita kategorikannya sebagai projek sakit. Perkembangannya pada masa kini adalah 62 peratus dan agak keterbelakangan sedikit daripada jangkaan iaitu 70 peratus.

"Oleh itu, kita akan terus menjalankan pemantauan dan perbincangan akan dilakukan dengan JKR, kontraktor dan beberapa pihak berkepentingan lain untuk kita lihat bagaimana boleh terus memacu projek ini," katanya selepas melawat tapak projek itu, semalam.

Projek naik taraf hospital berkenaan diluluskan dengan kos RM98.5 juta, membabitkan pembinaan wad dengan pertambahan 84 katil merangkumi wad pediatrik, wad wanita dan lelaki.



Dr Zaliha (tengah) membuat lawatan ke tapak projek naik taraf Hospital Papar, semalam.

(Foto Mohd Adam Arinin/BH)

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 11

RUANGAN : KOMENTAR

## Usah biar 'tingkap kecil' cipta penagih baharu vape

**Belalang** dapati banyak pihak resah apabila Menteri Kesihatan keluaran nikotin daripada Akta Racun 1952 hingga bekas penyandanganya anggap vape yang gunakan bahan itu akan jadi *free for all* kerana tiada sekatan undang-undang. Ini bimbangkan pakar dan pertubuhan bukan kerajaan (NGO), apatah lagi babitkan ketagihan kalangan remaja.

Usah ambil mudah implikasi 'tingkap kecil' terbuka akibat tindakan yang sepatutnya boleh ditangguh kerana Lembaga Racun di bawah KKM sendiri tak bersetuju. Belalang musykil mengapa tidak ambil kira pandangan pakar di bawahnya dan pemegang taruh kesihatan sedangkan ia babitkan nyawa serta keselamatan rakyat terutama remaja.

Belalang minta kerajaan terutama Kementerian Kesihatan, Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kementerian Belia dan Sukan pastikan kelompongan tidak bawa padah hingga cipta 'penagih' baharu sementara nanti Rang Undang-Undang (RUU) Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok dibentangkan Mei ini.

AKHBAR : METRO AHAD

MUKA SURAT : 7

RUANGAN : LOKAL

## KKM kenal pasti 12 projek 'sakit'

**Papar:** Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) sudah mengenal pasti 12 projek 'sakit' membabitkan fasiliti kesihatan yang dikenal pasti di seluruh negara.

Menteri Kesihatan Dr Zaliha Mustafa berkata, di negeri Sabah, terdapat tiga fasiliti kesihatan yang dikategorikan sebagai projek sakit iaitu Hospital Papar, Hospital Beaufort dan Klinik Kesihatan Sikuati, Kudat.

Menurutnya, kelewatan proses pelaksanaan pembinaan Hospital Papar adalah sebanyak 11.72 peratus (89 hari); Hospital Beaufort sebanyak 45.97 peratus (553 hari) manakala Klinik Kesihatan Sikuati sebanyak 37.12 peratus (271 hari).

"Projek naik taraf Hospital Papar sepatutnya bermula 23 Mei 2017 namun mengalami kelewatan. Namun ia dijangka dapat dipulihkan dan disiapkan penghujung

tahun ini dan mula beroperasi Mac tahun hadapan.

"Kita sudah mendapat taklimat daripada Jabatan Kerja Raya (JKR) apakah masalah dan kekangan yang dihadapi dan kita kategorikan sebagai projek sakit.

"Kita lihat perkembangannya (proses pembinaan naik taraf Hospital Papar) pada masa kini adalah sebanyak 62 peratus dan ia terbelakang sedikit daripada jangkaan kita iaitu sebanyak 70 peratus.

"Oleh itu, kita akan terus menjalankan pemantauan dan perbincangan akan dilakukan di antara KKM, JKR, kontraktor dan beberapa pihak berkepentingan lain untuk kita lihat bagaimana boleh terus memacu projek ini," katanya ketika ditemui pada sesi lawatan ke tapak projek naik taraf Hospital Papar, di sini, semalam.

Turut hadir, Menteri Di Jabatan Perdana Menteri



(Hal Ehwal Sabah, Sarawak Dan Tugasan-Tugasan Khas), Datuk Armizan Mohd Ali, Menteri Pembangunan Masyarakat Dan Kesejahteraan Rakyat, Datuk James Ratib, Timbalan Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan (Kesihatan Awam) KKM, Datuk Dr Norhayati Rusli dan Pengarah Kesihatan Negeri Sabah (JKNS), Datuk Dr Rose Nani Mudin.

Dalam pada itu, Dr Zaliha juga turut menjelaskan antara faktor kelewatan projek naik taraf Hospital Papar yang dikenal pasti di mana antaranya pandemik Covid-19 menyebabkan projek tertangguh selama tiga tahun.

"Selain itu, antara faktor lain yang dikenal pasti berkemungkinan dari sudut penyediaan pekerja oleh kontraktor dan bahan (untuk pembinaan bangunan hospital) yang menyebabkan pelaksanaan projek ini lewat," katanya.

Dr Zaliha turut menjelaskan projek itu diluluskan dengan kos sebanyak RM98.5 juta membabitkan pembinaan wad dengan pertambahan 84 katil yang merangkumi wad pediatrik, wad wanita dan lelaki.

Selain itu, perkhidmatan yang bakal disediakan kepada pesakit termasuk kecemasan dan trauma, pengimejan (x-ray), farmasi satelit, dewan pembedahan dan jabatan serta perkhidmatan lain berkaitan.

Katanya, keseluruhan kapasiti katil bagi Hospital Papar akan meningkat kepada 161 katil apabila projek ini siap.

AKHBAR : MINGGUAN MALAYSIA  
MUKA SURAT : 6  
RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

## Ikan buntal: Seorang lagi meninggal dunia

Oleh **ADNAN IBRAHIM**  
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**KLUANG:** Kehilangan dua insan tersayang dalam tempoh 14 hari bukanlah sesuatu yang mudah untuk dihadapi apatah lagi hanya kerana berpunca daripada kesilapan pemakanan.

Malah, khabar duka yang diterima oleh Ng Ai Lee, 51, kira-kira pukul 6.30 pagi semalam dianggap sebagai satu mimpi kerana baru kelmarin bapanya, Eng Kuai Sin@ Ng Chuan Sing, 84, dalam keadaan sihat dan masih boleh mengenalinya serta berbuai mesra.

Ujarnya, bapanya juga sempat bertanyakan tentang keadaan ibunya, namun dia terpaksa mengatakan ibu sedang berehat di rumah kerana bimbang boleh menyebabkan pemikiran dan kesihatan terganggu.

“Memang tidak dinafikan bahawa kematian akan berlaku kepada semua, tapi apa yang menyentuh hati adalah puncanya daripada pemakanan yang secara asasnya tidak boleh dimakan,” katanya semalam.

Kuai Sin yang dirawat di Unit Rawatan Rapi (ICU) Hospital Enche’ Besar Hajjah Kalsom (HEBHK), di sini akibat keracunan selepas makan ikan buntal bersama isterinya pada bulan lalu, meninggal dunia semalam menjadikan dia mangsa kedua maut akibat memakan ikan buntal yang sama.

Pada 25 Mac lalu, isteri Kuai Sin, Lim Siew Guan, 83, maut selepas beberapa jam



**ENG Kuai Sin (kanan) dan Lim Siew Guan (kiri) maut selepas keracunan memakan ikan buntal yang dimasak pada 25 Mac lalu.**

menikmati ikan buntal yang digoreng itu.

Menurut Ai Lee, ibu bapanya yang menetap di Kampung Chamak, Paloh, Kluang membeli ikan buntal itu daripada seorang peniaga secara dalam talian sebelum dihantar ke rumah pasangan itu.

Sehubungan itu, dia berharap Kementerian Kesihatan dan Lembaga Kemajuan Ikan Malaysia (LKIM) menguatkuasakan Seksyen 13a Akta Makanan yang secara jelas melarang menjual

atau menyediakan bahan makanan yang tidak sesuai dimakan oleh manusia.

“Untuk tidak menjadikan perkara serupa berlaku kepada keluarga atau orang lain, akta ini perlu dikuatkuasakan kerana kehilangan ahli keluarga seperti dihadapi saya amat berat untuk ditanggung.

“Kami juga menggesa Pejabat Kesihatan Daerah Kluang (PKD) dapat memberikan jawapan segera hasil siasatan mereka,” katanya.

AKHBAR : KOSMO AHAD

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NEGARA

## 12 projek sakit KKM seluruh negara

**PAPAR** – Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) mengenal pasti 12 projek sakit membabitkan hospital serta klinik kesihatan di seluruh negara.

Menteri Kesihatan, Dr. Zaliha Mustafa berkata, jumlah itu termasuk tiga projek di Sabah iaitu projek menaik taraf Hospital Papar, Hospital Beaufort dan Klinik Kesihatan Sikuati, manakala selebihnya di Semenanjung.

"Seperti projek naik taraf Hospital Papar ini, ia adalah bukti kerajaan sentiasa komited untuk meningkatkan kualiti perkhidmatan kesihatan demi kesejahteraan rakyat di negeri ini khususnya bagi daerah Papar.

"Pembinaan bangunan baharu Hospital Papar ini akan

dapat membantu lebih 100,000 penduduk di daerah ini serta kawasan sekitar bagi mendapatkan rawatan dan perkhidmatan kesihatan terbaik dan lebih selesa.

"Projek ini mula dilaksanakan sejak 23 Mei 2017, namun mengalami kelewatan ekoran pandemik Covid-19, penyediaan tenaga kerja dan kekurangan material.

"Bagaimanapun, pembinaan bangunan ini dijangka siap sepenuhnya pada hujung tahun ini dan akan mula beroperasi pada Mac 2024," katanya selepas mengadakan lawatan kerja ke Hospital Papar di sini semalam.

Turut hadir Menteri Di Jabatan Perdana Menteri (Hal Ehwal Sabah, Sarawak Dan Tugas-Tugas

Khas), Datuk Armizan bin Mohd Ali; Timbalan Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan (Kesihatan Awam), Datuk Dr. Norhayati Rusli dan Pengarah Kesihatan Sabah, Datuk Dr Rose Nani Mudin.

Mengulas lanjut, Zaliha memaklumkan, projek menaik taraf Hospital Papar diluluskan dengan kos sebanyak RM98.5 juta melibatkan pembinaan wad dengan pertambahan 84 katil yang merangkumi wad pediatrik, wad wanita dan lelaki.

Menurutnya, perkhidmatan yang bakal disediakan kepada pesakit termasuk kecemasan dan trauma, pengimejan (*X-ray*), farmasi satelit, dewan pembedahan dan beberapa perkhidmatan lain yang berkaitan.

AKHBAR : SINAR AHAD

MUKA SURAT : 14

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

## KKM kenal pasti 12 projek hospital 'sakit' seluruh negara

**PAPAR** - Sebanyak 12 projek pembinaan hospital dan klinik di bawah Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) dikenal pasti sebagai projek 'sakit' termasuk tiga daripadanya di Sabah.

Menteri Kesihatan, Dr Zaliha Mustafa berkata, tiga projek sakit di Sabah yang dikenal pasti ialah Hospital Papar, Hospital Beaufort dan Klinik Kesihatan Sikuati, Kudat.

"Kita telah kenal pasti 12 projek berstatus projek sakit di seluruh negara termasuk tiga di Sabah manakala selebihnya di Semenanjung dan Sarawak.

"Hospital Papar ini adalah projek lama yang kita kategorikan sebagai projek sakit yang telah diberi anugerah pada 2017 tetapi ada beberapa kekangan hasil daripada taklimat daripada Jabatan Kerja Raya (JKR) dan kontraktor sendiri," katanya selepas lawatan di tapak projek

Hospital Papar di sini pada Sabtu.

Beliau memaklumkan, perkembangan pembinaan Hospital Papar kini telah berada pada tahap 62 peratus.

"Walaupun agak keterbelakang sedikit daripada jangkaan kita iaitu sebanyak 70 peratus tetapi tetap ada perkembangan dan kami akan terus menjalankan perbincangan serta pemantauan antara KKM, JKR dan pihak kontraktor.

"Kita jangkakan, Insha-ALLAH Mei ini akan ada perkembangan baharu bagi menyelesaikan isu mekanikal, elektrikal dan peralatan serta kita jangkakan hospital ini akan siap hujung tahun ini," katanya.

Dr Zaliha berkata, projek yang menelan kos sehingga RM98.5 juta itu akan memanfaatkan kira-kira 100,000 penduduk di Papar dan sekitarnya.



Dr Zaliha (kanan) ketika melawat projek pembinaan Hospital Papar dalam lawatan kerjanya di Papar pada Sabtu.

AKHBAR : SINAR AHAD

MUKA SURAT : 31

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

# Segera kuatkuasakan undang-undang

Keluarga mangsa mahu penjual ikan buntal dihadapkan ke mahkamah

Oleh NOR AZURA MD AMIN  
KLUANG

**K**eluarga pasangan warga emas yang maut selepas makan ikan buntal goreng berharap pihak berkuasa mengambil tindakan undang-undang tegas terhadap penjual dan pembekal ikan beracun itu. Anak mangsa, Ng Ai Lee, 51, berkata, pihak Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) dan Lembaga Kemajuan Ikan Malaysia (LKIM) perlu menguatkuasakan akta sedia ada serta mengheret mereka yang

bersalah ke mahkamah.

"Seksyen 13A Akta Makanan daripada KKM dan PU. 104 LKIM secara jelas melarang menjual atau menyediakan bahan makanan yang tidak sesuai dimakan oleh manusia.

"Ia untuk mengelak perkara ini berulang kepada keluarga atau orang lain. Akta ini perlu dikuatkuasakan kerana kehilangan ahli keluarga akibat tragedi ini amat berat untuk ditanggung," katanya.

Menurut Ai Lee, khabar duka mengenai pemergian ayahnya, Eng Kuai Sin@ Ng Chuan Sing, 84, di-

terima kira-kira jam 6.30 pagi Sabtu, dianggap sebagai mimpi kerana pada Jumaat, ayahnya dalam keadaan sihat selain masih boleh mengenali ahli keluarga dan berbual mesra.

Ai Lee berkata, ayahnya juga sempat bertanyakan tentang keadaan ibunya, namun dia terpaksa mengatakan sedang 'berrehat' di rumah kerana bimbang

boleh menyebabkan pemikiran dan kesihatannya terganggu.

Ai Lee turut menggesa Pejabat Kesihatan Daerah Kluang (PKD) dapat memberikan jawapan segera hasil siasatan yang dilakukan.

Pada 28 Mac lalu, media melaporkan seorang wanita warga emas berusia 83 tahun maut, sementara suaminya dimasukkan ke unit rawatan rapi (ICU) akibat mengalami keracunan selepas menikmati hidangan ikan buntal di Kluang, tengah hari 25 Mac lalu.

Sementara itu, Exco Kesihatan dan Perpaduan Johor, Ling Tian Soon berkata, meniang sebelum itu itu dirawat di ICU Hospital Enche' Besar Hajjah Kalsom, Kluang.

"Pesakit dipindahkan ke Wad Perubatan pada 5 April dalam keadaan sedar dengan tanda vital pesakit stabil.

"Namun, pesakit masih perlu bernafas dengan bantuan alat pernafasan dan diberi makanan melalui tiub.



Ai Lee (tiga dari kanan) bersama ahli keluarganya melakukan sembahyang untuk mendiang ayahnya, Chuan Sing selepas sidang akhbar di kediaman mereka di Chamek, Kluang pada Sabtu.

"Pada 8 April sekitar jam 5.20 pagi, pesakit telah dikesan dalam keadaan tidak responsif dan bantuan kecemasan telah diberikan serta-merta dengan

kehadiran pegawai perubatan selama 30 minit sebelum diisytiharkan meninggal dunia jam 6.20 pagi," katanya menerusi kenyataan pada Sabtu.

AKHBAR : NEW SUNDAY TIMES  
MUKA SURAT : 5  
RUANGAN : NEWS / NATION

REMOVAL FROM POISONS ACT 1952's LIST

# MMA: MINISTER SAID IT WAS NOT IDEAL

Association finds Dr Zaliha's account of govt's nicotine decision unacceptable

KUALA LUMPUR

**H**EALTH Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa had acknowledged to the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) that the government's decision to exempt nicotine from the Poisons Act 1952's list to tax vape liquids was "not an ideal scenario" as the bill to regulate the sale of smoking products has not been passed.

Its president, Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai, said Dr Zaliha made this admission at a meeting with MMA on April 6, where she revealed that she signed off on the exemption with a "heavy heart".

The meeting, held to explain the government's stance on the matter, was also attended by the Malaysian Pharmacists Society, National Cancer Society of Malaysia, Malaysian Council for Tobacco Control and ministry officials.

MMA found the minister's explanation on the matter to be unacceptable, Dr Muruga said.

He argued that the government could have waited one or two more months for the Control of

Tobacco Products and Smoking Bill 2022 to be tabled and passed before proceeding with the exemption.

"Health concerns must come above all. The government must be accountable for this decision," he said on Friday.

The decision to exclude nicotine from the list means that vape liquids and gels, regardless of their nicotine content, can be legally and openly sold to anyone, including children.

Dr Muruga said the government needed to demonstrate its commitment to the Generational Endgame Policy, which aims to prevent the sale and use of all smoking materials, including electronic cigarettes to people born after Jan 1, 2007.

He said Malaysia could not afford to delay tackling the problem of increasing addiction to vaping.

"All the tax revenue collected from the vape industry might not even be enough to pay for the medical costs to treat health issues caused by vape addiction."

On April 1, the ministry published a gazette notice stating that nicotine-laced liquids and gels used in e-cigarettes and vape products had been granted exemption from poisons control.

Following this, the Malaysian Council for Tobacco Control accused Dr Zaliha of using her ministerial authority to overrule the Poisons Board, "which had voted against exempting nicotine from the Poisons Act.



The new Papar Hospital was to have been completed in 2021. PIC BY MOHD ADAM ARININ

## 'SICK' PROJECT

# New Papar Hospital to be completed by year end

**PAPAR:** The long-awaited new Papar Hospital will be completed by year end, Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa said.

The construction of the four-storey hospital was announced in 2017, and it was to be completed by 2021.

However, it faced delays due to issues with contractors, as well as the impact of Covid-19.

"As a result, it was categorised as a 'sick project'," Dr Zaliha said after visiting the construction site here yesterday.

She said the project was at the 62 per cent stage, behind the targeted 70 per cent.

She also said the cost of the project had increased from the initial RM84 million due to rising material prices.

Dr Zaliha said it would take a few months to staff the hospital.

She added that there were 12 projects nationwide under the ministry categorised as "sick".

These include Papar Hospital, Beaufort Hospital, and Sikuati

health clinic in Kudat.

Earlier, Dr Zaliha visited the Luyang and Kinarut health clinics.

She is expected to visit Sabah Women and Children's Hospital in Likas.

Present during the visit to Papar Hospital were Sabah Sarawak Affairs Minister Datuk Armizan Mohd Ali, Sabah Community Development and People's Wellbeing Minister Datuk James Ratib, and State Health Director Datuk Dr Rose Nani Mudin.

# Control nicotine addiction, council tells govt

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Malaysian Council for Tobacco Control (MCTC) wants the government to take proactive measures to control nicotine addiction among Malaysians.

This came in response to the recent amendment to the Poisons Act 1952, which legalised nicotine-laced products, overruling the decision of the Poisons Board.

Yesterday, MCTC chairman Dr Murallitharan Munisamy outlined measures that should be

implemented to safeguard the health of Malaysians.

The council demanded the government protect citizens by limiting their exposure to nicotine-laced products.

"Limiting nicotine exposure in e-cigarette devices could be achieved through collaboration with agencies and ministries, given the lack of health legislative tools to curb harm," he said.

He called on the government to expedite the tabling of the Control of Tobacco Products and

Smoking Bill, which includes comprehensive measures for vaping and electronic cigarettes, prohibiting their use to those under 18 years of old.

"The prime minister has given his commitment that this will be done in the next parliamentary sitting in May. We implore that this timeline be adhered to."

He said the government, through the Health Ministry and agencies, needed to create a comprehensive strategy to control nicotine addiction, which is ex-

pected to rise exponentially.

"Education campaigns need to be strengthened and significant resources must be devoted to this move. Equally important is the widening of cessation services and the provision of services to people addicted to nicotine.

He said MCTC had engaged with stakeholders, including Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa, on April 6 but was disappointed as the government refused to reconsider what he called a "poorly thought-out move".

"The minister had stated in the meeting that she had carried out the move with a 'heavy heart', but had to do it due to 'economic considerations'. People's lives are invaluable and incomparable to some paltry ringgit, which can be earned through other mechanisms not designed to harm the health of Malaysians."

He also highlighted the lack of preparedness of other government agencies in collecting the tax on e-cigarettes and vaping products.



AKHBAR : NEW SUNDAY TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 12

RUANGAN : NEWS / NATION

MENTAL ANGUISH

## 'We need more mental health professionals'

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The government has been urged to ramp up the provision of mental health and psychosocial services, as well as train more professionals in the field.

Befrienders KL patron Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye emphasised the need for this following the proposed amendment to the Mental Health Act 2001 (Act 615), which requires crisis intervention officers who have apprehended a suicidal person to send him for psychiatric assessment within 24 hours.

Lee said as a suicide attempt is an emergency, it is essential that the person be treated immediately.

"It is therefore crucial to strengthen our mental health facilities as well as train more mental health professionals.

"Apart from psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, counsellors, and social workers play an important role in providing continuous treatment," he said yesterday.

As of 2018, there were only 410 psychiatrists in the country, with

an average national psychiatrist to population ratio of 1.27:100,000, which is significantly lower than the World Health Organisation's recommended ratio of one psychiatrist per 10,000 population.

On April 4, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform) Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said tabled the Mental Health (Amendment) Bill 2023 for the first reading in the Dewan Rakyat.

The bill proposes to allow crisis intervention officers to apprehend any person who attempts to commit suicide.

The officers include those from the police, Social Welfare Department and Malaysian Civil Defence Force.

Lee stressed that the relevant ministry should look into providing mental health training for crisis intervention officers and first responders, such as firefighters and police officers, so that they are better equipped to manage suicidal individuals.

He also emphasised the impor-

ance of researching ways to retain skilled professionals in Malaysia.

Lee hailed the government's decision to decriminalise suicide as a "step forward for Malaysia" in reducing the stigma surrounding suicide and curbing the number of such cases.

He expressed support for the government's proposal to impose a moratorium on Section 309 of the Penal Code, which penalises suicide attempts.

"Decriminalising suicide can encourage more open conversation, and this can reduce the judgment and discrimination faced by people with mental disorder.

"By doing so, we can encourage more people to seek the help that they need."

Lee added that it was time to reinstate the long-defunct National Suicide Registry.

With accurate data on suicide, stakeholders would be able to design targeted suicide prevention strategies and policies, he said.

He also urged academicians and experts in the mental health



Firefighters pacifying a person attempting suicide in Johor in 2020. FILE PIC

field to conduct more research and studies to create suitable evidence-based intervention and rehabilitation programmes.

Lee reminded those in need that help is available at Befrienders KL at 03-76272929 (24/7) and Talian HEAL at 15555.

Calls to decriminalise suicide attempts began in 2020. The following year, the Health Ministry gave its backing, especially since

the Covid-19 pandemic had led to mental anguish among people around the globe.

At the height of the pandemic and when the country was under lockdown, it was reported that the police had received 638 reports of suicide between January and July 2021, an increase of 143 per cent from the 262 cases reported in the same period in 2020.

AKHBAR : SUNDAY STAR

MUKA SURAT : 7

RUANGAN : NATION

## Children mourn father's death in puffer fish tragedy

By VENESA DEVI  
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**KLUANG:** The husband of an 83-year-old woman, who died from puffer fish poisoning last month, had asked about her shortly before he himself passed away, says their daughter.

Ng Chuan Sing @ Eng Kuai Sin, 84, who went into a coma and had been fighting for his life after consuming the same fish, did not know that his wife had died.

"My father woke up from an eight-day coma.

"The first person he asked for was my mother. We told him she is resting at home.

"We did not tell him the truth because we were worried that he could not take it but we had a feeling that he knew my mother had died. He cried," said the daughter Ng Ai Lee, 51.

She said after spending more

than 10 days at the Intensive Care Unit, Ng was transferred to the normal ward last Thursday.

"He looked fine and talked to me like usual.

"He asked about my mother again and we still hid the sad news from him, telling him that mom was okay and asked him to focus on his own health and recovery," she recalled the last meeting with her father on Friday evening.

Ng died at 6.10am yesterday.

Ai Lee said according to the hospital, his cause of death was pulmonary embolism, a blood clot in an artery that blocks blood flow to the lung.

At a press conference held at the couple's home later, Ai Lee called for justice for her parents.

"I hope the Kluang district health office will speed up investigations into their tragic deaths.

"Those responsible for their

death should be held accountable under the Malaysian Fisheries Development Authority Act 1972 and the Food Act 1983.

"I also hope the government will beef up enforcement and help to raise public awareness on puffer fish poisoning to prevent such incident from happening again," she added.

Ng and his wife Lim Siew Guan, 83, consumed the fish they bought from a trader on March 25, unknowingly that it was the deadly puffer fish.

The couple began experiencing breathing difficulties and shivers.

Several hours later, Lim died of food poisoning with neurological manifestation resulting in respiratory failure and irregular heart rate, possibly due to toxin ingestion.

Asked if the family has gotten an apology from the fishmonger, Ai Lee answered "no".



**Filial farewell:** Ai Lee (third from right) and her siblings paying their respects to their late father Ng. — THOMAS YONG/The Star

AKHBAR : SUNDAY STAR  
MUKA SURAT : 10  
RUANGAN : NATION

10 Nation

SUNDAY STAR, SUNDAY 9 APRIL 2023

## Dr Zaliha: 'Sick' hospital projects to get treatment

By MUGUNTAN VANAR  
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**KOTA KINABALU:** Among the 12 Health Ministry hospital development projects nationwide that are delayed, three are in Sabah.

Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa said these three "sick" projects in Sabah were Papar Hospital, Beaufort Hospital and the Sikuati health clinic in Kudat.

Based on the latest update, she said the construction of Papar

Hospital was delayed by about three months while Beaufort Hospital was delayed by 18 months and the Sikuati health clinic by almost nine months.

She said the three projects were among the 12 "sick" projects under the ministry across the country.

As for the Papar Hospital extension, Dr Zaliha said the RM98.5mil project that began in 2017 was only 62% completed.

"It is a bit behind time. It should be about 70% completed

by now," she told reporters yesterday after she visited the project site in Papar about 40km from here.

She said that one of the reasons for the delay was the Covid-19 pandemic, as the project could not be carried out for about three years.

"But there are also other factors and these include contractors having problems getting workers as well as building materials.

"We will continue to monitor the situation and hold discussions

with the Public Works Department, contractors and other stakeholders to ensure the project moves forward," she added.

Dr Zaliha said she was hopeful that various problems related to mechanical and electrical issues would be resolved by next month and the project completed by the end of the year.

She said she hopes the extension of the Papar Hospital would be operational by March next year.

"The new Papar Hospital building will be able to benefit more than 100,000 residents around the area," she added.

The upgrading of Papar Hospital involved the construction of a ward to provide an additional 84 beds, as well as a paediatric ward, a women's ward, and a male ward.

In addition, the hospital would be better equipped with emergency and trauma services, imaging, satellite pharmacy and other facilities.

AKHBAR : SUNDAY STAR  
MUKA SURAT : 11  
RUANGAN : NATION

SUNDAY STAR, SUNDAY 9 APRIL 2023

Nation 11

# Govt reminded of repercussions

## Adhere to timeline for tabling Tobacco Bill, says tobacco control group

**PETALING JAYA:** The timeline for the tabling of the Control of Tobacco Products and Smoking Bill in Parliament must be adhered to without further excuses now that the nicotine liquid and gel have been taken off the Poisons List, says the Malaysian Council for Tobacco Control (MCTC).

"The government needs to table the Control of Tobacco Products and Smoking Bill as per its original intent and content as quickly as possible.

"The Prime Minister has given his commitment that this will be done in the next Parliament meeting in May, and we implore that this timeline be adhered to without further excuses," it said in a statement here yesterday.

Within the Bill, it added, were

comprehensive measures for vaping and electronic cigarettes including key measures prohibiting its use by those under 18 years of age.

MCTC's statement came in the wake of a meeting held between the Health Minister and various groups following weeks of criticisms against the removal of the nicotine liquid and gel from the Poisons List, which was signed off by Dr Zaliha Mustafa.

During the meeting, Dr Zaliha was reported as saying that the sign-off was done with a "heavy heart".

The meeting was also attended by the Malaysian Pharmacists Society, National Cancer Society of Malaysia, Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) as well as

ministry officials.

The removal, which came before the tabling of the Bill, allows for excise duty for liquids with nicotine content at 40 sen per millilitre to be imposed from April 1.

For the long-term, the MCTC said the government through the Health Ministry and other agencies would need to announce a comprehensive strategy to contain and control nicotine addiction which will continue to rise exponentially now with this removal.

"Education campaigns need to be strengthened and significant resources devoted to this move.

"Equally important is the widening of cessation services and the provision of services to members of the public who are addicted to nicotine, irrespective of whether

they are using conventional cigarettes or e-cigarettes.

"A roadmap and national level-control plan needs to be announced post-haste, with adequate funding and implementation mechanisms to ensure that it is carried out," said MCTC.

Describing the removal as the damage is done, it said the impact of this on the health of all Malaysians would continue to grow every day.

"The MCTC is deeply concerned with the dangerous precedent that this has set where the health of Malaysians, especially since children and young people have been put at risk merely for the idea of raising revenue.

On Friday, MMA president Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai said it

found the ministry's explanation on the matter to be unacceptable.

"The government could have waited just one or two more months for the Bill to be tabled and passed first before proceeding with the exemption of nicotine from the Poisons Act.

"Health concerns must come first above all," he said.

Describing that there was no use crying over spilled milk now, he said: "The horse has bolted, but the government must be accountable for this decision and show that it is committed to the Generational End Game (GEG) which seeks to prohibit the sale and use of any form of smoking material, including electronic cigarettes or vape products, to individuals born on Jan 1, 2007, onwards."