

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 5
RUANGAN : NATION

THE STAR M/S NATION 14/3/2025 (JUMAAT)

Higher GP fees get green light

Announcement on adjustment coming before May, says Health Minister

By FAZLEENA AZIZ
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PETALING JAYA: The government has given its nod to revise the consultation fees of general practitioners (GPs) with an announcement to be made before May.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad (*pic*) said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had given the go-ahead for the revision of the fees.

The National Action Council on

Cost of Living had also agreed to it, he added.

"We are in the final stages of discussion with the government agencies to determine the GPs' consultation fees," he told a press conference yesterday.

At present, the fees ranged from RM10 to RM35 but the Federation of Private Medical Practitioners' Associations Malaysia had sought for it to range from RM50 to RM150.

A March 6 statement from the association said the fees were capped back in 2006, noting that costs had gone up over the years with many smaller clinics having to shut down.

Dzulkefly also spoke yesterday about the requirement for private clinics to display medicine prices starting May 1.

According to him, private hospitals are ready to do so but pri-

vate GPs are only prepared to comply if their consultation fees under Schedule 7 of the Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Act were revised.

"I have given my assurance to the GPs that I will continue to fight for this issue and I anticipate the support from them for the price display rule come May 1.

"The price display will enable patients to make informed decisions about the choices of treatment while pushing for competitive market forces. This will also

indirectly help reduce the issue of medical inflation."

Following a discussion with GPs, he said these clinics would be ready for the price display requirement if there was a revision of the Schedule 7 consultation fees.

In November last year, Dzulkefly told Parliament that the government wanted private healthcare facilities to display medication prices as part of a comprehensive initiative to improve transparency in healthcare costs.



AKHBAR : THE SUN
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NATIONAL

THE SUN M/S 4 NATIONAL 14/3/2025 (JUMAAT)

Health risks of colourful drinks at Ramadan markets

➤ Artificial food dyes and preservatives linked to behavioural changes, allergic reactions and carcinogenic effects: Lecturer

■ BY KIRTINEE RAMESH
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PETALING JAYA: Ramadan bazaars offer vibrant, refreshing drinks but many contain artificial additives that may pose health risks.

Universiti Malaysia Terengganu Food Biochemistry and Biophysics lecturer Assoc Prof Dr Mohamad Khairi Zainol said common artificial colourants include tartrazine for yellow hues, Sunset Yellow for orange, Allura Red for red and pink, and Brilliant Blue for blue and purple.

"Flavouring agents, such as ethyl maltol, which enhances fruity sweetness, benzyl acetate which mimics banana flavour and synthetic vanilla or pandan essence are often used as cheaper substitutes for natural extracts."

The beverages are typically priced at RM3 per cup while takeaway options, which come in larger portions, usually cost around RM5. However, prices may vary depending on the type of drink.

Specialty beverages, such as fresh fruit juices, premium smoothies or drinks with added toppings, can be priced higher, with some

costing RM8 or more per cup.

He warned that beverages containing artificial additives, preservatives and sweeteners could have negative health effects when consumed regularly.

"Tartrazine has been associated with hyperactivity in children and allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. Sunset Yellow has been linked to stomach discomfort while Allura Red has raised concerns over potential carcinogenic effects in animal studies."

Brilliant Blue may cause allergic reactions and digestive issues while synthetic flavouring agents can cause irritation when consumed in large amounts.

He added that long-term consumption of artificial food dyes and preservatives has been linked to behavioural changes, allergic reactions and potential carcinogenic effects at high dosages.

Some preservatives, such as sodium benzoate, may react with ascorbic acid or vitamin C in fruit-based drinks to produce benzene, a known carcinogen.

While the body can break down and eliminate most artificial additives, frequent intake could lead to chemical buildup, affecting liver and kidney functions. Some dyes, such as Sudan Red, have been banned in certain countries due to toxicity concerns.

Mohamad Khairi warned that excessive sugar intake, especially during Ramadan, could have harmful effects.

The rapid spike and subsequent drop in blood sugar levels, commonly referred to as a "sugar crash", could cause tiredness, dizziness and hunger soon after breaking fast.

"Certain artificial sweeteners, such as

sorbitol or sucralose, may lead to bloating or diarrhoea in sensitive individuals."

He suggested using natural alternatives for artificial colourants, namely butterfly pea flowers for blue or purple hues, pandan leaves for green, Roselle or beetroot for red or pink, and turmeric or oranges for yellow.

He recommended using fresh fruit purees from mango, pineapple, orange and lychee to add flavour, honey, dates or stevia as healthier sweeteners, and herbs and spices such as mint, ginger and cinnamon to enhance taste naturally.

Universiti Teknologi Mara Applied Sciences Faculty senior lecturer Dr Azizah Othman said while these drinks provide temporary refreshment, they ultimately make it harder to sustain energy throughout the fasting period.

"High sugar intake increases urine output, which could lead to dehydration."

She said while fasting burns stored fat for energy, breaking fast with sugary foods could lead to rapid fat storage and increase obesity risk.

She recommended water infused with cucumber, lemon or mint, fresh fruit juices without added sugar, and coconut water for electrolyte replenishment.

"Grass jelly drinks and barley water also help cool the body and aid digestion."

She underscored public education on the dangers of artificial beverages and the benefits of natural alternatives through community talks and social media campaigns.

"Authorities should introduce incentives, such as discounted stall fees for vendors selling healthier options, and a 'healthier choice' label to help consumers identify nutritious alternatives."



SELETAR, SINGAPORE
Right: Berjaya

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 6

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

BERITA HARIAN MIS 6 NASIONAL 14/3/2025 (JUMAAT)

80 sijil kelahiran sah dikeluarkan dalam tiga tahun

Seorang pengamal undang-undang disyaki jadi orang tengah, dalang sindiket

Oleh Nor Azizah Mokhtar
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Putrajaya: Sindiket pemalsuan dokumen kelahiran yang dibongkar Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara (JPN) dan Suruhanjaya Pencegahan Rasuah Malaysia (SPRM), kelmarin dipercayai sudah memperdaya JPN untuk mengeluarkan 80 sijil kelahiran sah dalam tempoh tiga tahun.

Menteri Dalam Negeri, Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail, berkata siasatan awal mendapati sindiket didalangi seorang pengamal undang-undang wanita berusia 55 tahun bersama tiga lagi individu.

Terdahulu, katanya, JPN dengan kerjasama SPRM menerusi Ops Tumpang menahan 10 individu, termasuk dua wanita berusia antara 30 hingga 70 tahun dalam serbuan serentak di beberapa lokasi di empat negeri iaitu Putrajaya, Selangor, Pulau Pinang dan Perak.

"Empat daripada mereka, termasuk seorang pengamal undang-undang disyaki orang tengah antara ejen dan pemohon, dipercayai dalang utama sindiket pemalsuan dokumen ini. Enam

16 kena tahan disyaki rasuah daftar sijil lahir warga asing



Keratan akhbar BH semalam.

lagi dikenal pasti sebagai pemaklum kelahiran.

"Serbuan hasil risikan JPN selama setahun dalam usaha mengesan rangkaian sindiket yang disyaki lebih tiga tahun beroperasi menjual sijil kelahiran sah di pasaran gelap," katanya pada sidang media di pejabat JPN, semalam.

Yang turut hadir, Ketua Setiausaha Kementerian Dalam Negeri, Datuk Awang Alik Jeman serta Ketua Pengarah JPN, Badrul Hisam Alias.

Modus operandi sindiket

Modus operandi sindiket ini adalah menggunakan individu yang bertindak sebagai pemaklum kelahiran dengan mengemukakan dokumen kelahiran palsu di kaunter JPN ketika pendaftaran lewat kelahiran.

Difahamkan, sindiket itu dipercayai mengupah individu untuk bertindak sebagai 'pemaklum' bagi mengaburi pihak JPN ketika membuat pendaftaran lewat kelahiran.

Mengulas lanjut, Saifuddin berkata, siasatan mendapati sindiket menghasilkan dokumen kelahiran palsu yang direka dan ditiru bagi menyamai pengesahan rasmi daripada fasiliti kesihatan swasta yang berdaftar dan beroperasi secara sah.

"Selepas sijil kelahiran sah diperolehi, ia dipercayai akan dijual di pasaran gelap kepada ibu bapa atau penjaga yang mempunyai anak jagaan yang tidak mempunyai pengenalan diri dan kewarganegaraan Malaysia.

"Setakat ini, kita percaya sindiket ini sudah mengeluarkan 80 sijil kelahiran yang sah dengan menggunakan dokumen kelahiran palsu dikeluarkan enam klinik dan hospital swasta di empat negeri terbabit," katanya.

Saifuddin berkata, sindiket ini juga dipercayai mempunyai rangkaian dalam dan luar negara serta berkemungkinan besar terbabit dalam penyeludupan kanak-kanak dari luar negara yang tidak mempunyai dokumen diri dan dijual kepada ibu bapa berkenaan. Namun, siasatan lanjut sedang dijalankan.

Katanya, kes disiasat mengikut Seksyen 36(1)(b), Akta Kelahiran dan Kematian 1957 (Akta 299) kerana disyaki mengemukakan maklumat palsu semasa pendaftaran kelahiran.

Jika sabit kesalahan boleh dikenakan hukuman denda tidak melebihi RM20,000 atau penjara tidak melebihi tiga tahun atau kedua-duanya.

Kes sama dijangka disiasat mengikut perundangan lain bawah bidang kuasa SPRM.

Kelmarin, media melaporkan

OPS TUMPANG

- Dilakukan Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara (JPN) dan Suruhanjaya Pencegahan Rasuah Malaysia (SPRM)
- Serbuan serentak di Putrajaya, Selangor, Pulau Pinang, dan Perak
- 10 individu ditahan termasuk dua wanita
- 4 ditahan sebagai dalang utama, 6 lagi berperanan pemaklum kelahiran
- Sindiket sudah keluarkan 80 sijil kelahiran



MODUS OPERANDI

- Didalangi empat individu
- Termasuk peguam wanita berusia 55 tahun



- Hasilkan dokumen pengesahan kelahiran palsu
- Ditiru menyerupai pengesahan rasmi fasiliti kesihatan swasta berdaftar



- Upah individu menyamar (ibu bapa) sebagai pemaklum kelahiran
- Buat pendaftaran lewat kelahiran di JPN



- Peroleh sijil kelahiran sah daripada JPN
- Jualan sijil kelahiran dalam pasaran gelap

- Pembeli - ibu bapa atau penjaga yang ada anak jagaan tiada pengenalan diri atau tiada kewarganegaraan Malaysia



Infografik BH

SPRM menahan 16 individu kerana disyaki terbabit rasuah pendaftaran lewat kelahiran bertaraf bukan warga negara kepada warga negara dan pendaftaran kelahiran menggunakan dokumen sokongan palsu.

Timbalan Ketua Pesuruhjaya (Operasi) SPRM, Datuk Seri Ahmad Khusairi Yahaya, dipetik berkata semua suspek berusia

20-an hingga 70-an ditahan dalam beberapa serbuan menerusi Ops Outlander dan Ops Birth ke atas beberapa premis termasuk klinik dan firma guaman sekitar Lembah Klang dan Johor, kelmarin.

Beliau berkata, serbuan itu dibuat hasil risikan hampir setahun dengan kerjasama dan perkongsian maklumat di antara SPRM dan JPN.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NATAION

Ring behind fake birth certs busted

Forged papers linked to kids smuggled from overseas

By ZAKIAH KOYA
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PUTRAJAYA: A syndicate has been found using forged documents to register undocumented children, some of whom may have been smuggled from overseas.

Over the past three years, the syndicate allegedly registered 80 fraudulent birth certificates through the National Registration Department (NRD), falsely declaring undocumented children as Malaysians using fake documents.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the syndicate is suspected of having extensive networks, both in Malaysia and abroad, suggesting a larger operation involving child smuggling for illegal adoption.

The syndicate's operations were exposed through NRD's internal investigations, prompted by officers who suspected something amiss in late birth registrations.

"Investigations revealed that

the syndicate engaged in falsifying birth documents by replicating verification records from registered private healthcare facilities," he told the press at NRD headquarters here yesterday.

"These fraudulent documents were then used to deceive NRD for birth registration purposes."

Also present were Home Ministry secretary-general Datuk Awang Alik Jeman and NRD director-general Badrul Hisham Alias.

Saifuddin Nasution explained that individuals acting as birth informants submitted these fraudulent documents at NRD counters to obtain official birth certificates.

"Once an official birth certificate is obtained, it's believed to be sold on the black market to parents or guardians of children without identification or Malaysian citizenship," he said.

Births registered after 60 days are considered late registrations. Between 2022 and May 2024, it was reported that NRD had 27,280



Protecting the national identity:

Saifuddin Nasution, flanked by Badrul Hisham (right) and Awang Alik, showing the fake MyKad and birth certificates during the press conference in Putrajaya.
— AZHAR MAHFOF/The Star

late birth registrations.

The NRD, in collaboration with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission's (MACC) intelligence division and the Selangor MACC, launched a special operation named Ops Tumpang on March 11.

The operation, conducted across multiple locations in Putrajaya, Selangor, Penang and Perak, resulted in the arrest of 10 suspects.

"Among them, four individuals – including a 55-year-old legal practitioner suspected of acting as an intermediary between agents and applicants – are believed to be the masterminds behind the syndicate."

"The remaining six are identified as birth informants. Authorities also seized RM54,000 in cash from the suspects, which is believed to be proceeds from these illegal activities."

He added that the NRD has not

ruled out further arrests as investigations continue.

"This operation is the result of nearly a year of joint intelligence gathering between the NRD and MACC, with meticulous planning to ensure comprehensive enforcement action," he said.

The case is currently being investigated under Section 36(1) (b) of the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1957 (Act 299) for allegedly providing false information during birth registration.

If convicted, offenders may face a fine of up to RM20,000, imprisonment of up to three years, or both.

Additionally, the case is expected to be investigated under other laws within MACC's jurisdiction.

Saifuddin Nasution assured that the 80 affected cases would undergo a thorough review to ensure that the children involved do not suffer due to the fraudulent

actions of others.

On Wednesday, the MACC arrested 16 individuals – including a civil servant, a medical practitioner with the title Datuk Seri, a legal practitioner, agents and birth registration applicants – in Ops Outlander and Ops Birth.

These individuals are suspected of bribery and the submission of false birth confirmation documents between 2013 and 2018 and from 2023 to 2025.

A total of 12 suspects have been remanded until Sunday, while four others, including the medical practitioner, were released on MACC bail for health reasons after giving their statements.

Saifuddin Nasution reaffirmed the government's firm stance against any attempts to forge national identity documents, stating that strict legal action will be taken to preserve the integrity of Malaysia's identity records.