

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 1
RUANGAN : MUKA HADAPAN

Produk cecair, gel nikotin dikeluarkan daripada Akta Racun 1952

Ibu bapa bimbang kanak-kanak terdedah kepada e-rokok, vape

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Kuala Lumpur: Tindakan kerajaan mengeluarkan produk cecair atau gel nikotin daripada kawalan di bawah Akta Racun 1952 bagi membolehkan pelaksanaan cukai ke atas cecair vape, berkuat kuasa semalam, mencetuskan kebimbangan banyak pihak.

Orang ramai, khususnya ibu bapa menerusi hantaran di Twitter dan Facebook, menyatakan kluatir tindakan kerajaan itu akan menyebabkan anak mereka lebih mudah mendapat akses kepada e-rokok atau vape, dan terjebak dengan tabiat serta ketagihan menghisap vape.

Nasional 8



AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 6
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Rancangan mogok doktor kontrak bukan penyelesaian

Jemaah Menteri setuju tubuh Jawatankuasa Peringkat Tertinggi selesaikan isu

Oleh Saadiah Ismail
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Putrajaya: Jemaah Menteri bersejajir menubuhkan Jawatankuasa Peringkat Tertinggi bagi menangani isu doktor kontrak yang menjadi topik hangat dalam negara ketika ini.

Menteri Kesihatan, Dr Zaliha Mustafa, berkata persetujuan itu dicapai Jemaah Menteri kelmarin, dengan jawatankuasa itu akan menggabungkan beberapa kementerian dan agensi, termasuk membabitkan Ketua Setia-

saha Negara, Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali.

Beliau berkata demikian melalui satu kenyataan semalam, susulan desas-desus kemungkinan mogok oleh doktor kontrak pada 3 hingga 5 April ini.

Selain itu, terdapat juga catatan di Instagram menggesa doktor kontrak seluruh negara tampil menyertai mogok berkenaan atau meletak jawatan secara beramai-ramai pada 1 April.

Dalam pada itu, beliau menegaskan tindakan mogok yang dirancang kumpulan doktor kontrak itu bukan jalan penyelesaian terbaik bagi menyelesaikan semua permasalahan yang timbul.

Ditangani secara berhemah

Sebaliknya, katanya, semua masalah itu perlu ditangani dengan pembabitkan bersama secara lebih profesional dan berhemah.

Dr Zaliha berkata, penjawat awam sama ada berjawatan tetap mahupun kontrak masing-ma-

PM jamin masalah doktor kontrak selesai dalam 3 tahun



sing tertakluk kepada integriti penjawat awam dan Etika Perkhidmatan Awam.

"KKM berpandangan mogok bukan jalan penyelesaian terbaik terhadap apa juga permasalahan yang timbul berkaitan dengan profesion pegawai perubatan atau mana-mana skim profesional yang lain.

"Sebaliknya perkara ini perlu dilihat dengan teliti memandangkan perkhidmatan kesihatan adalah suatu perkhidmatan yang kritikal kerana ia membabitkan nyawa manusia dan kesejahteraan rakyat," katanya dalam satu kenyataan semalam.

Kumpulan dikenali Mogok Doktor Malaysia sebelum ini berkata lebih 8,000 doktor kontrak akan melakukan mogok antara 3 hingga 5 April dengan mengambil cuti perubatan/kecemasan sebagai protes terhadap sistem tidak adil dan gaji rendah dalam sektor penjagaan kesihatan awam.

Kumpulan itu juga memberi amaran terdapat 3,000 doktor kontrak akan meletak jawatan daripada KKM pada 1 April.

Selain penyerapan semua doktor kontrak ke jawatan tetap tanpa sebarang syarat atau temu duga, kumpulan itu mendesak kenaikan gaji pokok dan kadar on-call untuk pakar perubatan dan pegawai perubatan.

Mereka juga mahu KKM menyelesaikan isu kekurangan pakar pegawai perubatan dan pegawai perubatan siswazah dengan segera.

Hartal Doktor Kontrak yang pernah terbabit dengan gerakan mogok pada 26 Julai 2021 me-

maklumkan pihaknya bersama sekutunya tiada kaitan dengan mogok terbaru yang akan diadakan itu.

Dalam pada itu, Dr Zaliha berkata, KKM sedar isu doktor kontrak ini adalah isu lama dan sudah diwarisi sejak kerajaan dulu akibat lambakan keluaran doktor di pasaran.

KKM juga, katanya, dari semasa ke semasa mengambil tindakan antaranya mewujudkan perjawatan tetap, memberi penajaan latihan kepakaran atau latihan lanjutan, kenaikan pangkat secara *time-based*, peluang kenaikan ke gred khas dan mewujudkan gred UD56 untuk pakar perubatan dan sebagainya.

"Skim kesihatan yang lain juga diambil peduli dan ditambah baik," katanya.

Rabu lalu, Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim memberi jaminan isu doktor kontrak dapat diselesaikan dalam masa tiga tahun lagi.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 8
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

RUU kawal selia produk merokok dibentangkan Mei

Langkah pastikan kawalan menyeluruh sediaan cecair nikotin dalam vape

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Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) akan membentangkan Rang Undang-Undang (RUU) baharu yang mengawal selia semua produk merokok, termasuk bahan merokok yang mengandungi nikotin.

Menteri Kesihatan, Dr Zaliha Mustafa, berkata RUU itu bertujuan memastikan terdapat kawalan menyeluruh terhadap sediaan nikotin atau gel mengandungi nikotin di dalam cecair rokok elektronik atau vape.

Beliau berkata, KKM menasarak

kan untuk membentangkan RUU itu pada sidang Dewan Rakyat pada Mei ini.

"KKM sudah menjalankan sesi libat urus berkenaan dasar yang ditetapkan di bawah RUU baharu ini, termasuk peruntukan Generasi Penamat Rokok (Generational Endgame, GEG) kepada semua pihak berkepentingan seperti ahli Parlimen, pertubuhan bukan kerajaan (NGO), badan profesional dan pihak lain berkaitan," katanya dalam satu kenyataan, semalam.

Dr Zaliha, berkata pada masa sama, KKM akan mempergiatkan kempen advokasi kesedaran bahaya merokok, termasuk penggunaan rokok elektronik atau vape melalui Pelan Generational Endgame Anti Rokok (GEGAR).

Katanya, GEGAR akan meneruskan pelaksanaan program pencegahan merokok dan intervensi berhenti merokok di sekolah dan

institusi pengajian tinggi melalui kerjasama Kementerian Pendidikan, Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi, Yayasan Sukarelawan Siswazah, Majlis Belia Malaysia dan NGO berkaitan.

"KKM sangat prihatin atas kebimbangan, reaksi dan maklum balas yang diterima di media massa susulan pengecualian cecair atau gel mengandungi nikotin untuk rokok elektronik atau peranti pengewapan elektronik daripada Senarai Racun dalam Jadual Pertama, Akta Racun 1952 (Akta 366).

"Pengecualian berkenaan adalah selaras dengan keputusan pembentangan Belanjawan 2023 pada 24 Februari lalu oleh Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, bahawa kerajaan akan mengenakan duti eksais ke atas produk cecair atau gel mengandungi nikotin yang digunakan untuk rokok elektronik dan vape," katanya.



Dr Zaliha Mustafa



Kerajaan semalam melaksanakan cukai ke atas penjualan cecair vape untuk rokok elektronik (e-rokok) pada kadar 40 sen setiap mililiter (ml).

Dakwa guna kuasa

Sementara itu, Pengerusi Majlis Kawalan Tembakau Malaysia (MCTC), Dr M Murallitharan, mendakwa Dr Zaliha menggunakan kuasanya untuk mengetepikan keputusan sebulat suara Majlis Kawalan Tembakau Malaysia (MCTC), yang menolak nikotin dikeluarkan dari Akta Racun 1952.

Beliau yang juga Pengarah Urusan Persatuan Kanser Kebangsaan Malaysia (NCSM) berkata, majlis berkenaan sebulat suara menolak nikotin dikeluarkan daripada akta itu bagi melindungi orang ramai daripada ketagihan nikotin.

"Seharusnya, apa yang perlu dilakukan oleh menteri adalah membentangkan dan meluluskan akta untuk mengharamkan rokok, rokok elek-

tronik (vape) dan semua alat merokok kepada golongan yang lahir selepas 2007 seperti yang dibentangkan Menteri Kesihatan terdahulu, Khairy Jamaluddin.

"Akta berkenaan mempunyai peraturannya untuk mengawal selia penggunaan vape yang menghalang penggunaannya ke atas remaja bawah 18 tahun.

"Bila akta ini sudah diluluskan, barulah dikeluarkan nikotin daripada Akta Racun," katanya kepada BH.

Beliau menambah, Dr Zaliha sebelum ini memberi jaminan akan memperjuangkan akta berkenaan, namun ia tidak berlaku seperti dijanjikan.

"Menteri kata nak bentangkan, minggu lepas pun cakap nak bentangkan, tapi yang berlaku adalah sebaliknya.

"Sekarang ini, melihatannya kerajaan hanya peduli mengenai wang dan bukan kesihatan rakyat, mahupun kanak-kanak," katanya.

'Tindakan beri isyarat halalkan vape, e-rokok'

Dari Muka 1

Rata-rata terkejut dan kecewa dengan keputusan kerajaan yang memperuntukkan nikotin, termasuk tembakau, tampalan dan gula-gula getah, cecair dan gel nikotin, dikecualikan daripada Akta Racun 1952, susulan pelaksanaan cukai ke atas penjualan cecair vape untuk rokok elektronik.

Mereka berkata, kerajaan seharusnya lebih tegas mengawasi penggunaan produk nikotin dan bukan hanya mementingkan kutipan cukai berikutan banyak kajian membuktikan kemudaratan bahan itu kepada kesihatan.

Pengguna Twitter @fairuz_azmi83, mempersoalkan apa sebenarnya sudah berlaku di sebalik penguatkuasaan cukai ke atas penjualan cecair vape untuk e-rokok.

"Rakyat Malaysia benar-benar terkejut dengan keputusan dibuat kerajaan ini, ibu bapa semuanya risaukan anak. Apa su-

dah jadi sebenarnya," katanya.

Khairy Basri melalui komen ditinggalkan di Facebook BH Online percaya tindakan kerajaan itu secara tidak langsung ibarat memberi isyarat menghalalkan vape dan e-rokok.

Muhammad Hasraf Nizar pula berpendapat, penetapan cukai yang memberi isyarat seperti menghalalkan vape dan e-rokok itu sebagai suatu yang bertentangan dengan dapatan kajian mengenai risiko akibat pengambilan bahan itu.

"Kementerian Kesihatan sendiri telah buat kajian cecair yang masuk ke dalam badan itu boleh menjadi penyebab masalah kesihatan, masalahnya bila KKM beritahu 'result' (hasil kajian) cecair ini bermasalah, kerajaan boleh pula nakankan cukai," katanya melalui Facebook.

Selain itu, tidak kurang juga yang memuat naik komen dalam nada menyindir mendakwa kerajaan lebih mengutamakan hasil cukai berbanding kesihatan rakyat, selain 'memuji' perokok sebagai penyumbang kepada

pendapatan negara.

Menuruti notis warta Kerajaan Persekutuan semalam, kerajaan melaksanakan cukai ke atas penjualan cecair vape untuk rokok elektronik (e-rokok) pada kadar 40 sen setiap mililiter (ml) menerusi notis warta Kerajaan Persekutuan.

Warta berkenaan menyebut, pengecualian itu terpakai ke atas tampalan dan gula-gula getah nikotin, yang didaftarkan di bawah Peraturan-peraturan Kawalan Dadah dan Kosmetik 1984.

Dapat akses mudah

Sebelum ini, nikotin dengan pengecualian kepada tembakau, diklasifikasikan sebagai racun Kumpulan C, yang hanya boleh dijual doktor dan ahli farmasi.

Sementara itu, Public Health Malaysia, sebuah laman advokasi kesihatan di Twitter menyedut, tindakan mengecualikan nikotin daripada Akta Racun sebelum meluluskan Rang Undang-Undang Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022

akan menyebabkan kanak-kanak mendapat akses tanpa halangan kepada produk vape yang mengandungi nikotin.

Katanya, tindakan itu bertentangan dengan keputusan sebulat suara oleh Lembaga Racun, yang berfungsi sebagai penasihat Menteri dalam hal racun.

Tambahnya, keputusan 'menghalalkan' jualan vape itu bertujuan untuk mengutip cukai daripada cecair vape bermula 1 April.

"Rasmi. Cecair vape kini 'halal' di Malaysia. Tanpa sebarang kawalan, sesiapa sahaja, termasuk kanak-kanak boleh menjual, membeli dan mempromosi vape.

"Pelajar boleh beli tanpa kawalan. Vape menyebabkan ketagihan dan risiko kesihatan," katanya.

Presiden Persatuan Farmasi Malaysia (MPS), Prof Amrathi Buang, sebelum ini dilaporkan menggesa kerajaan menolak cadangan memberikan pengecualian nikotin kepada produk cecair atau gel nikotin daripada kawalan di bawah Akta Racun 1952.

Dalam satu kenyataan, beliau berkata, cadangan sedemikian akan memudaratkan kesihatan dan keselamatan rakyat Malaysia dan bukan untuk kepentingan negara.

Presiden Persatuan Perubatan Malaysia (MMA), Dr Murugan Raj Rajathurai turut dilaporkan berkata, kerajaan perlu meluluskan undang-undang berkaitan kawalan produk tembakau dan merokok terlebih dahulu sebelum mengecualikan nikotin daripada Akta Racun 1952 bagi tujuan kutipan cukai untuk vape yang mengandungi bahan itu.

Beliau berkata, langkah itu penting bagi menghalang kanak-kanak daripada mendapat akses yang luas terhadap nikotin melalui produk vape.

Beliau berkata, dengan keluasan Rang Undang-Undang (RUU) Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok, baharulah kerajaan boleh memikirkan mengenai kutipan cukai terhadap vape yang mengandungi nikotin.

AKHBAR : KOSMO
MUKA SURAT : 5
RUANGAN : NEGARA

Tubuh jawatankuasa tangani isu doktor kontrak



ISU berkaitan doktor kontrak perlu diselesaikan segera bagi kepentingan semua pihak dalam sektor kesihatan. - GAMBAR FAIL

PUTRAJAYA - Jemaah Menteri bersetuju untuk menubuhkan Jawatankuasa Peringkat Tertinggi bagi menangani isu berkaitan doktor kontrak yang menjadi topik hangat ketika ini.

Menteri Kesihatan, Dr. Zaliha Mustafa berkata, jawatankuasa itu akan menggabungkan beberapa kementerian dan agensi termasuk Ketua Setiausaha Negara (KSN), Tan Sri Mohd. Zuki Ali.

"KKM menyedari isu doktor kontrak telah lama diwarisi daripada kerajaan terdahulu sejak ia diperkenalkan pada 2016 akibat lambakan keluaran doktor di

pasaran ketika itu.

"Isu itu telah dibincangkan di mesyuarat Kabinet pada 31hb Mac 2023 yang akhirnya bersetuju menubuhkan Jawatankuasa Peringkat Tertinggi," katanya dalam satu kenyataan semalam.

Sementara itu, bercakap mengenai mogok doktor kontrak, Dr. Zaliha berkata, pihaknya tidak mempunyai maklumat lanjut berkenaan perkara itu.

"KKM berpandangan, mogok bukanlah suatu jalan penyelesaian terbaik terhadap apa juga masalah yang timbul.

"Sebaliknya, perkara itu perlu

diteliti kerana perkhidmatan kesihatan merupakan suatu perkhidmatan kritikal, ekoran ia melibatkan nyawa manusia dan kesejahteraan rakyat," ujarnya.

Katanya, KKM sentiasa mengambil tindakan terhadap permasalahan serta permintaan ditimbulkan petugas kesihatan.

"Antaranya, mewujudkan perjawatan tetap, memberi penajaan latihan kepakaran atau latihan lanjutan, kenaikan pangkat secara *time-based*, peluang kenaikan ke gred khas, selain mewujudkan gred UD56 untuk pakar perubatan," ujarnya.

AKHBAR : KOSMO
MUKA SURAT : 7
RUANGAN : NEGARA

Cecair vape mula dicukai semalam

PUTRAJAYA — Kerajaan ber-setuju mewartakan duti eksais bagi cecair vape dengan kandungan nikotin pada kadar 40 sen setiap mililiter (ml) dalam usaha mengenakan cukai produk cecair atau gel yang mengandungi nikotin.

Pelaksanaan cukai itu diumumkan menerusi notis warta Kerajaan Persekutuan dikeluarkan kelmarin oleh Perdana Menteri yang juga Menteri Kewangan, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Menurut notis warta kerajaan itu, duti baharu itu akan berkuat kuasa 1 April 2023 berikutan bermulanya Perintah Duti Eksais (Pindaan) 2023.

Sebelum ini, ketika perbentangan Bajet 2023, Anwar berkata, kerajaan akan mengenakan duti eksais ke atas produk cecair atau gel yang mengandungi nikotin di mana separuh daripada hasil akan diperuntukkan kepada Kementerian Kesihatan.

Katanya, cecair atau gel nikotin berpotensi mendatangkan hasil kepada kerajaan yang dianggarkan bernilai RM2 bilion berikutan digunakan secara meluas dalam rokok elektronik dan vape.

Sementara itu, Menteri Kesihatan, Dr. Zaliha Mustafa berkata, tampalan, cecair dan gel nikotin bagi membantu menghentikan



KERAJAAN mengenakan duti eksais pada kadar 40 sen bagi setiap mililiter cecair vape.
— GAMBAR HIASAN

tabiat merokok telah dikecualikan daripada Akta Racun 1952.

Ia terpakai ke atas tampalan dan gula-gula getah nikotin yang didaftarkan di bawah Peraturan-peraturan Kawalan Dadah dan Kosmetik 1984.

Sebelum ini, Kementerian Kesihatan turut memaklumkan sedang dalam proses mengeluarkan produk cecair atau gel nikotin dalam Akta Racun 1952 sebelum melaksanakan cukai terhadap penggunaan rokok elektronik (e-rokok) dan vape.

AKHBAR : KOSMO
MUKA SURAT : 15
RUANGAN : NEGARA

Seorang pengguna di Temerloh pula jadi mangsa

'Sosej dibeli di bazar Ramadan berisi ulat'

Oleh AZIZAH SHAFIE

TEMERLOH – Kejadian pencemaran makanan dijual di bazar Ramadan bagaikan tidak berkesudahan apabila seorang lagi pengguna menjadi mangsa selepas kejadian seorang pengguna di Kuantan membeli kari-pap berkulat baru-baru ini.

Kejadian di sebuah bazar di Temerloh kelmarin begitu meloyakan apabila mangsa bukan sahaja 'terbeli' roti sosej dipenuhi ulat malah terdapat ahli keluarganya

telah memakan sosej itu.

Nor Suhaili Ismail, 38, berkata, dia membeli lima ketul roti sosej goreng yang berharga RM3 di sebuah gerai di Temerloh kelmarin sebagai juadah berbuka puasa.

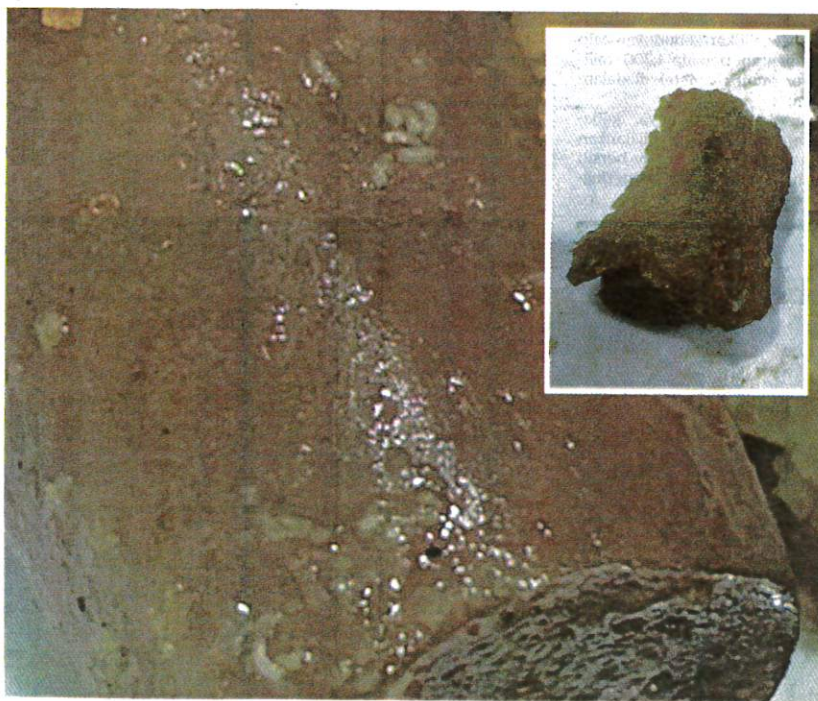
"Masa berbuka puasa, suami dan seorang anak saya telah makan empat ketul roti berkenaan dan tinggal satu lagi roti sosej yang tidak dimakan kerana seorang lagi anak saya hanya mahu makan sosej.

"Apabila buka roti berkenaan saya amat terkejut sekali kerana

nampak benda bergerak, ya Allah yang bergerak itu ulat yang banyak," katanya semalam.

Ujarnya, dia tidak menyangka kejadian berkenaan berlaku pada dirinya kerana sebelum ini hanya mendengar berita pencemaran makanan yang dijual di bazar Ramadan di media massa.

Sementara itu, Pengarah Kesihatan Negeri Pahang, Datuk Dr. Nor Azimi Yunus berkata, pihaknya akan melakukan semakan mengenai kejadian terbaru itu.



SOSEJ di dalam roti goreng (Gambar kecil) yang dipenuhi ulat dalam kejadian di Temerloh kelmarin.

AKHBAR : MINGGUAN MALAYSIA

MUKA SURAT : 1

RUANGAN : MUKA HADAPAN

Doktor kontrak tetap mogok

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PETALING JAYA: Doktor kontrak tetap dengan pendirian melancarkan mogok di seluruh negara esok sehingga Rabu ini sebagai memprotes isu perjawatan mereka yang masih tergantung.

Tindakan itu jika diteruskan dikhuatiri boleh melumpuhkan operasi sektor kritikal seperti unit kecemasan hospital, pesakit luar serta klinik pakar yang berdepan kekurangan kakitangan.

Mereka juga tidak mepedulikan sumpah jawatan yang dilafaz kerana kecewa masalah lantikan ke jawatan tetap belum diselesaikan meskipun sudah

Operasi harian sektor kritikal sistem kesihatan dikhuatiri terjejas

berlanjutan tujuh tahun.

Bercakap kepada *Mingguan Malaysia*, jurucakap Mogok Doktor Malaysia dkenali sebagai Dr. Jamal berkata, beliau tidak menganggap tindakan itu mendatangkan masalah seperti dikenakan potong gaji, disenarai hitam dan dibuang kerja.

"Ini bukan masalah, sekiranya kerajaan akan mengambil tindakan terhadap kami, negara

mempunyai undang-undang. kami akan melantik peguam untuk menyaman kerajaan.

"Kami akan teruskan perjuangan melalui mogok tidak bekerja. Kami telah beri tujuh tahun untuk selesaikan masalah lantikan tetap serta imbuhan yang selayaknya kami peroleh.

"Sudah tentu kami mengangkat sumpah jawatan sebagai doktor, tetapi ini tidak bermakna kami mesti patuh terhadap diskriminasi dan penindasan dengan doktor-doktor lantikan tetap. Saya ingatkan, mogok ini tidak melibatkan sebarang perarakan atau perhimpunan," katanya di sini, semalam.

Bersambung di muka 2

AKHBAR : MINGGUAN MALAYSIA

MUKA SURAT : 2

RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

Minda Pengarang

AZNAN BAKAR



Bila nak selesai isu doktor kita?

SEJAK Pilihan Raya Umum Ke-14 (PRU14) pada 2018 dan hingga kini sudah empat kerajaan dan empat perdana menteri menerajui negara, namun isu yang membabitkan doktor tidak juga selesai.

Ia memberi gambaran bahawa isu membabitkan doktor kontrak ini sangat rumit, lebih rumit daripada masalah-masalah negara yang lain hinggakan walaupun setelah bertahun-tahun ia tetap menjadi duri dalam daging kepada sistem kesihatan negara.

Terbaharu, seramai 10,000 doktor kontrak di seluruh negara akan menyertai mogok esok. Jika ia menjadi kenyataan maka ia boleh melumpuhkan sistem kesihatan negara.

Penganjur kempen mogok ini pula awal-awal lagi sudah menasihati orang awam supaya tidak mengunjungi hospital awam dan klinik-klinik kesihatan pada Isnin hingga Rabu.

Pada pertengahan bulan lalu, pusat-pusat kesihatan dan hospital di England terpaksa membatalkan beribu-ribu janji temu pesakit ekoran tindakan doktor-doktor muda mogok selama 72 jam.

Hal yang sama akan berlaku di Malaysia jika mogok yang dirancang ini menjadi kenyataan. Malah orang ramai juga hairan kenapa isu ini berlaku kepada profesyen kedokteran yang bukan sahaja sentiasa dipandang tinggi dan dihormati tetapi juga sangat penting kepada masyarakat.

Cara ia dikendalikan seolah-olah memberi gambaran Malaysia ini melimpah ruah dengan doktor dan khidmat daripada kumpulan kontrak ini tidak penting. Ia sedikit sebanyak turut mendedahkan kepincangan dalam sistem kesihatan kita.

Sedangkan sejak isu itu dibangkitkan kira-kira tujuh tahun lalu, pelbagai cadangan telah dikemukakan termasuk menubuhkan Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Kesihatan. Tetapi semuanya ibarat mencurahkan air ke daun keladi. Segala janji untuk menyelesaikan isu ini sekadar kata-kata manis tanpa makna.

Kadang-kadang kita terfikir apakah keutamaan kerajaan dalam memberi penyelesaian isu yang membabitkan kepentingan awam ini. Ramai tertanya-tanya, ketika kerajaan boleh menghabiskan berbilion ringgit untuk membeli jiwa rakyat ketika pilihan raya melalui pelbagai sumbangan, bantuan dan imbuhan, kenapa isu doktor kontrak ini tidak diselesaikan secara tuntas?

Jika isu ini selesai ia secara tidak langsung akan menyelesaikan masalah kekurangan doktor di negara ini terutama di luar bandar. Mungkin ramai tidak tahu bahawa majoriti hospital kerajaan di negara kita tidak ada pakar. Jika ada pun jumlahnya tidak ramai menyebabkan senarai menunggu untuk mendapatkan rawatan pakar termasuk pembedahan sangat lama, hingga ada yang meninggal dunia tanpa sempat mendapat rawatan.

Kita tertanya-tanya apa jadi dengan doktor kita hingga memaksa mereka turun ke jalanan bagi menyatakan protes dan mendapatkan pembelaan. Kenapa begitu sekali nasib mereka yang bergelar doktor di nagara kita.

Seperti kata sumber yang menggerakkan mogok ini: "Doktor kontrak sekarang ibarat tisu pakai buang. Semasa Covid-19 melanda, kami yang bermandi peluh malah ada meninggal dunia tetapi sekarang dibuat macam sampah, hak-hak kami tidak didengari."

Aznan Bakar adalah Pengarang Utusan Malaysia dan Minggu Malaysia

SKIM GAJI DOKTOR PERUBATAN LANTIKAN KONTRAK DAN TETAP

	Pegawai Perubatan Siswazah Kontrak (HO)	Pegawai Perubatan Kontrak (MO)	Pegawai Perubatan Tetap (MO)
Gred	UD41	UD41	UD44 ke atas
Gaji bulanan	RM2,947	RM3,397	RM3,611
Cuti Separuh gaji	Tiada	Tiada	Ada
Cuti belajar	Tiada	Tiada	Ada
Cuti menjaga anak	Tiada	Tiada	Ada
Pembiayaan Perumahan Sektor Awam (LLPSA)	Tiada	Tiada	Ada
Program Ijazah Sarjana	Tidak tersedia	Tiada	Ada
Hadiah Latihan Persekutuan (HLP)	Tidak tersedia	Tiada	Ada

Doktor kontrak tetap mogok

Dari muka 1

Pegawai Perubatan Gred UD43 bekerja di ibu negara itu berkata, pihaknya enggan lagi termakan janji-janji manis kerajaan meskipun Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim bulan lalu memberi jaminan isu doktor kontrak akan selesai dalam tiga tahun lagi.

"Maaf, kami tidak akan termakan sebarang janji lagi. Janji hanya janji seiring peralihan tiga kerajaan sebelum ini. Masa kami sudah terbuang sangat lama.

"Penindasan terhadap doktor kontrak, waktu kerja yang terlalu panjang, gaji terlalu rendah yang sepatutnya menjadi isu utama untuk kerajaan selesaikan," ujarnya.

Semalam, Menteri Kesihatan, Dr. Zaliha Mustafa dilaporkan berkata, Kabinet bersetuju menubuhkan Jawatankuasa Tertinggi bagi menangani isu

doktor kontrak yang mengabaikan beberapa Kementerian dan agensi ekoran daripada rancangan mogok esok.

Kelmarin, akhbar ini melaporkan, penganjur kempen mogok doktor kontrak menasihati orang awam supaya tidak mengunjungi hospital awam dan klinik-klinik kesihatan esok hingga Rabu ini kerana mereka mungkin terpaksa menunggu lama untuk mendapatkan rawatan.

Mereka mendakwa, lebih 10,000 doktor perubatan dan doktor pelatih akan mengadakan protes dengan mengambil cuti perubatan atau kecemasan secara beramai-ramai.

Ketidakpuasan hati dalam kalangan kakitangan perubatan terutama doktor kontrak dilihat semakin meruncing apabila tular surat yang memaparkan Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (JPA) enggan mempertimbang kadar

bayaran bagi sistem tugas atas panggilan sebanyak 50 peratus.

Ketika membentang Rang Undang-Undang (RUU) Perbekalan 2023 bagi bacaan kali kedua di Dewan Negara baru-baru ini, Anwar berkata, Kementerian Kesihatan menerima peruntukan kedua terbesar dalam Belanjawan 2023, iaitu RM36.3 bilion, termasuk peruntukan RM3 bilion setahun untuk lantikan baharu secara tetap dan kontrak, bagi lebih 1,500 pegawai perubatan, pegawai pergigian dan pegawai farmasi.

Pada November 2021, Kementerian Kesihatan memaklumkan, seramai 4,186 daripada 10,583 pegawai perubatan kontrak yang sudah tamat perkhidmatan wajib ketika itu, sudah dinilai dan diperakui untuk lantikan tetap oleh JPA dan 3,586 daripada jumlah itu membabitkan lantikan pegawai perubatan.

AKHBAR : MINGGUAN MALAYSIA

MUKA SURAT : 6

RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

Doktor letak jawatan tidak yakin janji KKM

PUTRAJAYA: Gesaan kumpulan Mogok Doktor Malaysia untuk meletak jawatan beramai-ramai bermula semalam, disokong beberapa doktor kontrak dan ada yang menyatakan sudah berbuat demikian sebelum kempen itu dilancarkan.

Bercakap kepada *Utusan Malaysia*, seorang doktor gigi kontrak, Ashvinaa Jeyabalan berkata, beliau tidak lagi percaya masa depan kerjayanya dengan Kementerian Kesihatan.

Beliau yang sudah berkhidmat selama tiga tahun memberitahu, sebagai seorang doktor gigi di Kementerian Kesihatan, mereka perlu melakukan banyak tugas lain yang tidak ada kena mengena dengan bidang penjagaan kesihatan dan rawatan.

"Pada asalnya saya mahu menyambung tempoh kontrak dua tahun lagi untuk jawatan tetap, tetapi saya mendapat tawaran lebih baik di sektor swasta, jadi saya ambil keputusan untuk tidak menghadiri temuduga bagi jawatan tetap itu," katanya di sini semalam.

Ashvinaa berkata, beliau sebelum ini ada membuat permohonan untuk diletakkan di bahagian pakar, namun pihak penguurusan memberitahu langkah itu perlu tunggu masa lebih lama.

Menerusi satu hantaran di Instagram akaun @mogokdoktermalaysia, mereka mendakwa lebih 8,000 doktor kontrak akan mengadakan protes dengan mengambil cuti perubatan atau kecemasan secara beramai-ramai Isnin ini.

Sementara itu, jurucakap Hartal Doktor Kontrak memberitahu, pihaknya tidak pasti kesahihan gesaan peletakan jawatan doktor kontrak beramai-ramai.

AKHBAR : SINAR AHAD

MUKA SURAT : 10

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Setuju tubuh jawatankuasa tangani isu doktor kontrak

PUTRAJAYA - Jemaah Menteri telah bersetuju menubuhkan Jawatankuasa Peringkat Tertinggi bagi menangani isu doktor kontrak yang menjadi topik hangat dalam negara ketika ini, kata Menteri Kesihatan, Dr Zaliha Mustafa.

Menurutnya, persetujuan bagi menubuhkan jawatankuasa yang akan menggabungkan beberapa kementerian dan agensi termasuk penglibatan Ketua Setiausaha Negara, Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali itu dicapai oleh Jemaah Menteri pada Jumaat.

Beliau berkata demikian dalam kenyataan dikeluarkan pada Sabtu susulan desas-desus kemungkinan mogok oleh doktor kontrak pada 3 hingga 5 April ini dan kemunculan catatan Instagram yang mengesakan doktor kontrak seluruh negara tampil menyertai mogok berkenaan atau meletak jawatan secara beramai-ramai pada 1 April.

Dr Zaliha berkata, Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) tidak mempunyai maklumat lanjut mengenai mogok itu, bagaimanapun berpandangan mogok bukan satu penyelesaian terbaik terhadap masalah berkaitan profesion perubatan atau mana-mana skim profesional yang lain.

"Sebaliknya, perkara ini perlu ditimbang dengan teliti kerana perkhidmatan kesihatan adalah perkhidmatan kritikal, melibatkan nyawa manusia dan kesejahteraan rakyat," menurut kenyataan itu.

Beliau berkata, kerajaan dari masa ke masa telah memberi respons terhadap permasalahan dan permintaan yang ditimbulkan oleh anggota kesihatan, antaranya mewujudkan perjawatan tetap, penajaan latihan kepakaran atau latihan lanjutan, kenaikan pangkat secara *time-based*, peluang kenaikan ke gred khas dan mewujudkan gred UD56 untuk pakar perubatan dan sebagainya.

Katanya, KKM sentiasa peka dengan masalah dan permintaan yang ditimbulkan serta memastikan ia diteliti, sesuai dengan isu semasa dan diberi penyelesaian sewajarnya berdasarkan kepada kemampuan ekonomi negara.

"Justeru, mogok bukan penyelesaian terbaik dan selaku penjawat awam, sama ada berjawatan tetap atau kontrak, mereka tertakluk kepada integriti penjawat awam dan Etika Perkhidmatan Awam," kata Dr Zaliha. - *Bernama*

Kerajaan kuatkuasakan cukai cecair vape

Sementara itu, nikotin termasuk tembakau, cecair dan gel nikotin dikecualikan daripada Akta Racun 1952

Oleh NAZRIN ZULKAFLI
SHAH ALAM

Cukai ke atas penjualan cecair vape pada kadar 40 sen setiap mililiter (ml) bagi rokok elektronik yang mempunyai kandungan nikotin berkuat kuasa pada Sabtu.

Pelaksanaan cukai tersebut diumumkan menerusi satu notis warta Kerajaan Persekutuan yang dikeluarkan oleh Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim pada Jumaat.

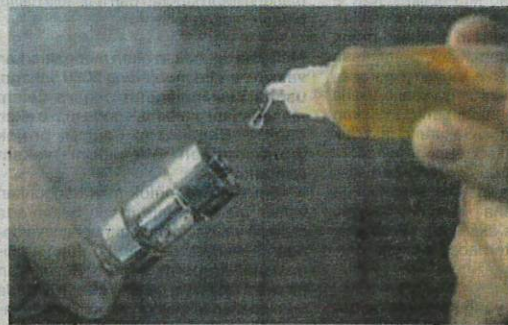
Berdasarkan notis warta tersebut, duti bahu itu berkuat kuasa berikutan bermulanya Perintah Duti Eksais (Pindaan) 2023.

Pada 24 Februari, *Sinar Harian* melaporkan kerajaan bercadang mengenakan duti eksais ke atas produk cecair atau gel mengandungi nikotin yang digunakan untuk rokok elektronik dan vape.

Jelas Anwar yang juga Menteri Kewangan dalam pembentangan Belanjawan 2023, dianggarkan sehingga RM2 bilion mampu dihasilkan melalui duti eksais tersebut berikutan penggunaan yang meluas.

Menurut Anwar, pelaksanaan duti tersebut adalah langkah untuk tidak menggalakkan penggunaan rokok elektronik itu.

Sementara itu, satu warta berkenaan nikotin termasuk tembakau, tampalan dan gula-gula getah, cecair dan gel ni-



Cukai ke atas penjualan cecair vape pada kadar 40 sen setiap mililiter (ml) bagi rokok elektronik yang mempunyai kandungan nikotin berkuat kuasa pada Sabtu. - Gambar hiasan

kotin dikecualikan daripada Akta Racun 1952 telah dikeluarkan oleh Menteri Kesihatan, Dr Zaliha Mustafa.

Warta tersebut memaklumkan, pengecualian berkenaan terpakai ke atas tampalan dan gula-gula getah nikotin yang didaftarkan di bawah Peraturan-peraturan Kawalan Dadah dan Kosmetik 1984.

Dr Zaliha menjelaskan, lanjutan pengecualian itu, sediaan cecair atau gel mengandungi nikotin untuk tujuan merokok menggunakan rokok elektronik atau peranti pengewapan elektronik kini adalah suatu barangan berduti eksais dan dikawal di bawah Akta Eksais 1976 (Akta 176).

Beliau berkata, bagi memastikan terdapat kawalan menyeluruh terhadap sediaan nikotin atau gel mengandungi nikotin di dalam cecair rokok elektronik atau vape, KKM akan membentangkan Rang Undang-Undang (RUU) baharu yang akan mengawal selia perkara tersebut.

Jelasnya, KKM menyasarkan untuk membentangkan RUU baharu tersebut dengan segera pada Mesyuarat Kedua,

Penggal Kedua, Parlimen Kelima Belas yang dijadwalkan pada bulan Mei 2023.

"KKM telah menjalankan sesi libat urus berkenaan dasar yang telah ditetapkan di bawah RUU baharu ini termasuk peruntukan Generasi Penamat Rokok kepada semua pihak berkepentingan seperti ahli Parlimen, badan bukan kerajaan, badan profesional dan pihak lain yang berkaitan," katanya.

Dr Zaliha berkata, KKM akan mempergiatkan kempen advokasi kesedaran bahaya merokok termasuk penggunaan rokok elektronik atau vape melalui Pelan Generational Endgame Anti Rokok (Gegar).

"Ia adalah dengan meneruskan pelaksanaan program pencegahan merokok dan intervensi berhenti merokok di sekolah dan institusi pengajian tinggi melalui kerjasama bersama Kementerian Pendidikan, Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi, Yayasan Sukarelawan Siswazah, Majlis Belia Malaysia dan badan-badan bukan kerajaan yang berkaitan," jelas beliau.

AKHBAR : NEW SUNDAY TIMES
 MUKA SURAT : 4
 RUANGAN : NATION / NEWS

NewSundayTimes • APRIL 2, 2023

4 | NEWS / Nation

NICOTINE EXCLUDED FROM POISONS ACT 1952

TOBACCO BILL TO BE TABLED NEXT MONTH

After backlash over nicotine deregulation, health minister gives assurance that law will include controls over vapes

ILYIA MARSYA ISKANDAR
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THE Health Ministry will table the Control of Tobacco Products and Smoking Bill 2022 in Parliament next month to ensure comprehensive control over nicotine-laced products.

Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa said the bill would regulate the manufacture of all smoking products, including electronic cigarettes or vape.

"The ministry conducted an engagement session regarding the policies under this new bill, including the Generational End Game (GEG) provision, to all stakeholders and relevant parties.

"The ministry aims to present this bill immediately at the second term, second meeting of the

15th Parliament, which is expected next month."

It was reported yesterday that the Health Ministry approved the removal of nicotine from the list in the Poisons Act 1952 to legalise nicotine-laced products and allow for them to be taxed.

A gazette notice published on Friday included the amendment to the Poisons Act, with an additional clause that allows nicotine to be used in the "preparation of a kind used for smoking through the electronic cigarette and electric vaporising device, in the form of liquid or gel".

The Poisons (Amendment of Poisons List) Order 2023 was signed by the health minister.

Another gazette notice published on Wednesday spelt out an amendment to the Excise Duties Act 1976, which allows for nicotine-vape liquid or gel to be taxed at RM0.040 per ml.

The order, which came into ef-

fect yesterday, was signed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who is also finance minister.

The news was greeted with brickbats.

The Malaysian Council for Tobacco Control said deregulating nicotine made it easier for underaged children to obtain nicotine products, and consumers of vape products said vape products were now RM5 to RM8 pricier.

On Friday, the *New Straits Times* reported that the Health Ministry and Finance Ministry were at odds over the proposal to remove liquid nicotine from the list of poisons.

A source told the NST the Finance Ministry was pushing to expedite the legalisation of nicotine-laced vape products, which would allow the government to tax them and boost income amid flagging government revenue.

However, the Health Ministry wanted the GEG law, which will ban people born after a certain year from buying nicotine products, to be passed before the vape industry is legalised to safeguard youths from nicotine addiction.

The Poisons Board's meeting

on Wednesday — chaired by the Health Ministry's Pharmaceutical Services senior director Norhaliza A. Halim, who is the Poisons Board co-chairman — rejected the proposal from the Finance Ministry to remove nicotine from the list of poisons.

Two health groups, the Malaysian Medical Association and Malaysian Pharmacists Society, also voiced their opposition to the proposal, adding that the government should focus on enacting the GEG before legalising the vape industry.

Dr Zaliha yesterday said delisting nicotine from the Poisons Act is in line with 2023 Budget, in which the government would impose an excise duty on electronic cigarettes and vaping liquids or gels containing nicotine.

Further to this exemption, she said, liquids or gels containing nicotine for the purpose of smoking through electronic cigarettes or electronic vaporisation devices were now an excise duty item and controlled under the Excise Act 1976 (Act 176).

The Excise Act 1976 provides control, among other things, by licensing manufacturing and

warehousing activities.

Those who manufacture excise duty goods without a license may be subject to legal action.

She said the ministry would intensify awareness campaigns against smoking.

"The ministry takes note of the concerns, reactions and feedback in the mass media following the exclusion of liquids or gels containing nicotine for the purpose of smoking using electronic cigarettes or electronic vaporisation devices from the list of poisons in the first schedule of the Poisons Act 1952.

"The ministry will intensify advocacy campaigns to raise awareness on the dangers of smoking, including the use of electronic cigarettes or vaping, through the Generational Endgame Anti-Smoking Plan.

"It will also continue smoking prevention programmes and interventions in schools and higher education institutions, through collaboration with the Education Ministry, Higher Education Ministry, Graduate Volunteer Foundation, Malaysian Youth Council and other related non-governmental bodies."



The Health Ministry will intensify advocacy campaigns to raise awareness of the dangers of smoking. FILE PIC

'No law to bar selling nicotine to kids'

KUALA LUMPUR: Public health groups voiced their concerns that the deregulation of nicotine could see Malaysian children being addicted to the substance.

Malaysian Council for Tobacco Control chairman Dr M. Murallitharan said from yesterday, nicotine would not be governed by any legislation, including the Food Act 1983, which means even children could theoretically have access to it at all times.

This, he said, raised the question of who would be responsible for overseeing the sale and consumption of nicotine.

"We are all irritated because

starting today (yesterday), even a 1-year-old can smoke vape with nicotine without any legal ramifications. No one can be charged, it's legal now. Anybody can put nicotine into anything, sell it, and children can consume it."

Public Health Malaysia, in a Facebook post, said striking off nicotine from the Poisons Act 1952 before passing the Tobacco and Smoking Products Control Bill would result in children having unrestricted access to nicotine-laced vape products.

"Without any controls, anyone — including children — can sell, buy and promote vaping."



Dr M. Murallitharan

Previously, a source told the NST that Dr Zaliha used her ministerial powers to approve an amendment to the Poisons Act 1952 to delist nicotine-laced products — overruling the Poisons Board's earlier decision.

The source also said the Poisons Board, which met on Wednesday, voted against taking nicotine liquids and gels off the list of poisons.

Prices of nicotine vapes spike by RM8 days before deregulation

KUALA LUMPUR: Prices of nicotine-laced products increased by up to RM8 in the days leading up to the deregulation of the substance on Friday.

A banker, Ally Azman, 36, who quit smoking cigarettes three years ago, said the prices of pods — a type of vape device — increased in the past few days.

"A pack of cigarettes cost me RM17.40, so since I took up vaping, I save RM300 per month."

"I buy pods online at RM35 to RM40 a box, but the price increased by RM5 to RM8 since two days ago, when it was rumored that vapes will soon be taxed."

Another vape smoker, S. Sujatha, 52, also expressed her disappointment over the in-

crease in prices.

"I am upset because the RM5 increase is too sudden."

"There should be a 'transition' period, at least until shops have emptied their old stocks," she said.

Hardcore traditional cigarette smoker, Tiffany Lee, 48, however, was delighted by the news and said vape smokers would soon be placed under similar regulations.

"You see people vaping in toilets and air conditioned areas, while smokers are forced into designated areas, usually under the sun."

"We pay premium prices, but get second-class treatment, so now it is fair," said the business owner.

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

HEALTH SERVICE

COMMITTEE TO DEAL WITH CONTRACT DOCTOR ISSUES

Dr Zaliha says going on strike isn't the solution to the problem

PUTRAJAYA

THE cabinet on Friday agreed to establish a high-level committee to deal with issues concerning contract doctors, said Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa.

She said the committee would

include representatives from ministries and agencies, as well as Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali.

There were rumours of a strike by contract doctors from Monday to Wednesday, and the DoctorsMalaysia Instagram page is urging them to join the strike or resign en masse yesterday.

Dr Zaliha said her ministry did not have further information on the strike.

She added it was not the best



Dr Zaliha Mustafa

solution to the problem.

"On the contrary, the move needs to be considered carefully because the health service is a critical one as it involves human lives and the wellbeing of the people," she said.

Meanwhile, she said the government had been responding to problems and demands raised by health workers.

This includes creating permanent posts, sponsoring specialist

training or advanced training, time-based promotions, opportunities to be promoted to special grades and creating the UD56 grade for medical professionals.

She said the ministry was aware of the problems faced by contract doctors and their requests.

She said these were being examined so they could be addressed.

"So a strike is not the best solution.

"As public servants, whether permanent or on contract, they are subject to the integrity of public servants and public service ethics." **Bernama**

ANTI-SMOKING CAMPAIGNS

Poisons Board members urged to quit over nicotine ruling

KUALA LUMPUR: The Consumer Association of Penang (CAP) has called on officials on the Poisons Board to resign after the Health Minister overruled their decision to keep nicotine on the Poisons Act 1953's list.

CAP education officer N.V. Subbarow said the decision to remove it from the list was a "big mistake". He said it disregarded the efforts of teachers and non-governmental organisations, who had worked tirelessly to promote anti-smoking campaigns.

He said this exemption could provide access to electronic cigarettes and vape products containing nicotine to people, particularly children, as well as allow manufacturers to produce such products lawfully.

"CAP calls on Poisons Board members to resign as the government is not listening to them.

"The ministry is 'educating' children, students and youths to take poison.

"We are going to see more vape-aholics," **N.V. Subbarow** he said.

He added that that he received calls from teachers questioning the relevance of anti-smoking programmes as nicotine was no longer considered a poison.

Subbarow urged the ministry to reconsider its decision to ensure a healthier generation.

"I met 5,000 students, who are vapers, and told them that they are taking poisoned liquid. Some gave up vaping.

"Now the students and teachers who listened to us are asking if they can take 'poison'. It's a big setback for us. It's a black day for the nation."

Yesterday, it was reported that the ministry had approved the amendment to the Poisons Act 1952, which removes nicotine from its list of poisons.

This paved the way for the legalisation of nicotine-laced products to allow them to be taxed.

Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa said her ministry would issue a statement on the matter yesterday.

3,000 doctors to quit if not given permanent posts

KUALA LUMPUR: A group of contract doctors says more than 3,000 of them working for the Health Ministry will resign this month after receiving the permanent post-interview results.

A spokesman from Mogok Doktor Malaysia told the *New Sunday Times* (NSU) that as many as 87 per cent of contract doctors were not offered permanent posts.

They would remain in contract and be denied entitlement to many benefits, including pension, he added.

The spokesman said their salaries were lower than those in permanent positions by RM1,000 to RM2,000 per month, even though their responsibilities were the same.

"Contract doctors are not eligible for master programmes. There are no clear and transparent criteria for selection to permanent positions.

"They also have no study and unpaid leave days.

"There are countless benefits that we are being denied," the spokesman said.

Previously, the NSU reported that the Mogok Doktor Malaysia group was planning a three-day strike from Monday to Wednesday.

It had warned the public of longer waiting times at government hospitals and clinics on those dates.

"Dear Malaysians, do not visit any general hospital or klinik kesihatan (public health clinic) from April 3 to 5 as more than



A Mogok Doktor Malaysia spokesman says contract doctors earn RM1,000 to RM2,000 per month lower than permanent doctors. FILE PIC

8,000 contract doctors will go on strike by taking medical or emergency leave as a protest against the unfair system and low wages.

"Your waiting time is expected to be much longer than usual," Mogok Doktor Malaysia said on its Instagram account.

It had claimed that some Napoleons in hospital departments had frozen annual leave and off days on those dates to stop contract doctors from participating in the strike.

However, the spokesman said

these doctors would continue to join despite the warnings.

The group is demanding the absorption of contract medical officers into permanent positions, as well as basic salary increments, higher on-call rates and an automatic reduction in the compulsory service term for medical officers to three years.

It is also calling for a reduction in on-call and work hours for medical officers and house officers, and for specialist shortages to be addressed.

"As per our memorandum, we have been getting low wages for more than 20 years, as low as RM9 per hour for our dreadful on-calls, and our government is planning to eliminate our critical allowance of RM750 per month.

"Please treat contract doctors like human beings before demanding us to work.

"We sacrificed our lives during the pandemic.

"But now we are being forgotten by the health minister and the public," the spokesman said.

AKHBAR : NEW SUNDAY TIMES
 MUKA SURAT : 6
 RUANGAN : NATION / NEWS

'UNEVEN DISTRIBUTION'

'MORE CARDIOLOGISTS NEEDED'

Patients have to endure long waits for surgery, treatment

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IN October 2020, Mohd Yurizani Che Husin, 41, suddenly woke up at 3am with a sharp pain in his chest.

Apart from difficulty breathing, the teacher also had numbness in his fingers, shoulders and neck.

That was when he realised that he was having a heart attack.

He was rushed to Sultan Ismail Hospital in Johor Baru, where he was intubated and given morphine.

Yurizani was sent home four days later after his condition stabilised.

He was told that the hospital would call him to undergo angioplasty — a minimally invasive procedure to widen narrowed or obstructed arteries or veins.

Despite having a full-blown heart attack, that call only came six months later.

Yurizani said it was the longest six months of his life.

"I was worried that I would get another heart attack. The only thing stopping me from going to a private hospital was the cost."

The long waits for medical procedures that heart patients endure is a longstanding issue in the public healthcare system.

This, however, isn't surprising as 90 per cent of heart operations and treatments nationwide are being done by only 61 cardiologists and 14 cardiothoracic sur-



Serdang Hospital consultant cardiologist Dr Asri Ranga Abdullah Ramaiah (inset) says up to 2021, Malaysia had 338 registered cardiologists, with only 37 of them, or 11 per cent, in the Health Ministry. FILE PIC

geons in public and university hospitals.

Serdang Hospital consultant cardiologist Dr Asri Ranga Abdullah Ramaiah said up to 2021, Malaysia had 338 registered cardiologists, with only 37, or 11 per cent, of them with the Health Ministry.

About seven per cent of them are attached to eight university hospitals — Universiti Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak.

The other 82 per cent of them are in private hospitals.

"The ministry has 37 cardiologists, who make up 11 per cent of the total. Yet we are bearing the brunt of cases because most patients can't afford to seek treat-

ment at private hospitals.

"If we take into account our 33 million population, it would be 10 cardiologists per a million people. Seven years ago, the figure was more like seven cardiologists per a million people."

Dr Asri said the main problem was uneven distribution.

"In the Klang Valley, Penang and Ipoh, we have 40 to 50 cardiologists per a million people. But in the east coast, Sabah and Sarawak, the number is fairly small," he said, adding that Singapore's cardiologist-to-population ratio was 50 per million.

The issue of long waiting times for patients is exacerbated by the fact that there are only 14 cardiothoracic surgeons at the seven public cardiac centres in Serdang, Selangor; Johor Baru, Johor; Kota Baru, Kelantan; Kuantan, Pahang, as well as Penang, Sabah and Sarawak.

Of the total, only one specialised in children, Dr Asri said.

The National Heart Institute (IJN), which now has been separated into two wings — public and private — has 12 cardiothoracic surgeons, with only three specialising in children, as well as 15 cardiology consultants.

Cardiologists treat heart attacks and perform diagnostic procedures like angiograms and angioplasty. Cardiothoracic surgeons, meanwhile, perform heart bypass and lung surgeries, repair of heart valves or any surgery related to the chest area.

Dr Asri said the seven cardiac centres conducted 10,000 to 12,000 angioplasty procedures every year. With only 10 cardiologists, Serdang Hospital, he said, performed the highest number of angiogram and angioplasty procedures in Southeast Asia in 2019.

"In 2019, we did 6,386 angiograms and 3,533 Percutaneous Coronary Intervention, or PCI (angioplasty with stenting). Our numbers reduced significantly during the Covid-19 pandemic because we were declared a Covid hospital, so patients didn't come for treatments."

"Now, our numbers are slowly catching up. We have 2,500 to 3,000 patients per year and we conduct about 250 to 300 PCI per month. We also conduct 500 to 600 angiogram procedures per month or about 40 cases per day. We're like a machine," he said, adding that the waiting time for angiogram appointments at Serdang Hospital was between nine months and a year.

Meanwhile, the waiting time for coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) or bypass procedure at Serdang Hospital is a year and two months.

Dr Asri said: "There is no proper international standard on how long the waiting time is for CABG but I always group the patients into three categories — critical ones who need surgery within the next two weeks, those whose cases need to be settled within six to eight weeks and the elective

group, within three to six months.

"We sometimes prioritise our patients based on symptoms. If they are in pain, we will prioritise them. But if they are stable, we will ask them to wait. We provide them with medication and tell them to rush to the Emergency Department if they feel any pain."

"But patients sometimes don't understand that. They ignore their pain and wait for their appointments."

"Another issue with making patients wait is that they may change their minds and decline surgery since they have been waiting for too long and they feel okay," he said, adding that there were more than 1,500 cases awaiting CABG surgery nationwide.

Dr Asri, however, said the ministry was taking measures to address the long waits, including training more cardiologists and cardiothoracic surgeons.

"The main trainers are IJN and the Health Ministry. IJN has at least 30 cardiologists in training. Usually, it will take about four years to complete the training."

"The ministry has 50, but the pandemic hampered our training because the doctors had to help with Covid treatment."

"It takes longer to train a cardiothoracic surgeon but last year, we had nine surgeons who passed," he said, adding that the ministry was streamlining training procedures to enable trainees to obtain fellowships, thus encouraging more participation.

He said public hospitals were also outsourcing their patients to universities and private hospitals.

"Serdang Hospital, for example, was given an allocation of RM7.65 million to outsource 170 patients, but we sent only 120 in 2021. One reason was due to Covid-19. Even the hospitals where we sent patients had outbreaks."

"Secondly, as mentioned earlier, some patients waited too long so they think they are okay and refused surgery," he said, adding that they also referred their patients to IJN to offload their burden.

Dr Asri said Serdang Hospital's Cardiology Centre, which began operations on Dec 12, was expected to expedite treatment and reduce the waiting period.

It was reported that the RM546 million cardiology centre would reduce the waiting period from 18 months to just nine months for stable elective cases, while emergency cases would be treated immediately.

	PRAYER TIMES					
	SUBUH (am)	SYURUK (am)	ZUHUR (pm)	ASAR (pm)	MAGHRIB (pm)	ISYAK (pm)
Melaka	6:03	7:11	1:17	4:21	7:20	8:29
Penang	6:09	7:16	1:25	4:25	7:29	8:38
K. Lumpur	6:05	7:12	1:20	4:22	7:23	8:32
Johor Baru	5:57	7:05	1:11	4:16	7:14	8:23
Kuantan	6:00	7:08	1:14	4:17	7:17	8:26
Ipoh	6:07	7:12	1:22	4:22	7:26	8:36

AKHBAR : SUNDAY STAR
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NATION

MOH: New Bill to be tabled

Thorough regulations for nicotine products will be introduced

By TARENCE TAN
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PETALING JAYA: Thorough regulation on all nicotine products will be introduced in a new Bill that is set to be tabled in Parliament next month, says Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa amid continuous criticisms from health and consumer groups over the decision to remove them from the Poisons List.

Yesterday, one of them called for members of the Poisons Board to resign.

Dr Zaliha said the new Bill, dubbed as the "Control of Smoking Products for Public Health 2023" would ensure regulation on nicotine liquids and gel in e-cigarettes and vape products.

"The Health Ministry conducted engagement sessions regarding policies under this new Bill, including provisions under the Generational Endgame (GEG) Bill to all stakeholders such as MPs, NGOs, professional bodies and other related groups," she said yesterday.

The next Parliament sitting will commence on May 22 and will meet



for 11 days until June 15.

In a statement yesterday, Dr Zaliha said the ministry had taken into account concerns raised on social media regarding the decision to exclude nicotine products from the Poisons List.

"This exemption is in line with the decision made during the tabling of Budget 2023 by the Prime Minister, who stated that the government will introduce excise duty on nicotine liquid or gel products used for electronic cigarettes and vapes," she said.

She also said that presently, nicotine liquid and gel were now taxable items, which falls under the purview of the Excise Act 1976.

"The Excise Act has regulatory provisions such as the licensing of manufacturing and warehousing activities involving this industry.

"Anyone who manufactures such goods without a licence can be subjected to legal action," said Dr Zaliha.

At the same time, she said the ministry would increase awareness campaigns regarding the dangers of

smoking by holding smoking prevention and intervention programmes in high schools and higher education institutions.

The exemption of nicotine products was announced in a gazette notice published on Friday.

The ministry said exemption from the Poisons Board had been granted for nicotine liquids and also gels used for e-cigarettes and vape products.

Meanwhile, Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) education officer NV Subbarow said members

Wild west no more: Vape products and e-cigarettes will soon be put under new taxes and controls.



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Ramadan meals around the world
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of the Poisons Board should resign from their respective positions because the government decided to exclude nicotine products in the Poisons List.

He said it was a huge setback for CAP, which has conducted awareness campaigns and programmes on the dangers of smoking.

"It (the removal of nicotine products) is morally unjustifiable.

"The hard work of teachers and NGOs who are fighting for anti-smoking and against nicotine is totally wasted," said Subbarow.

He urged the ministry to reconsider its stance on the issue for the well-being of the future generation.

Committee to be formed to look into issues raised by doctors' strike

By FATIMAH ZAINAL and
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PETALING JAYA: As claims mount of contract doctors going on strike next week, the Health Ministry has announced that a high-level committee will be formed to look into the issue.

Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa said the Cabinet in a meeting on Friday agreed to set up the committee which would include several ministries and agencies, as well as the Chief Secretary to the Government.

This is to deal with issues related to contract doctors that have been making the rounds on social media and the mainstream media, said Dr Zaliha, who also stressed that strikes

were not the best way to resolve issues in the medical field.

She noted that there have been reports that contract doctors would be going on strike from Monday to Wednesday.

"For now, the ministry has no further information on the strike.

"The ministry believes that a strike is not the best solution to any problem that arises relating to the profession of medical officers or any other professional scheme.

"On the other hand, this matter needs to be weighed carefully," she said in a statement yesterday.

She added that this was because health services were critical services that involved human lives and people's wellbeing.

Dr Zaliha said the long-standing contract doctor issue has been

inherited by previous administrations since the contract doctor system was introduced in 2016 to overcome the glut of medical graduates in Malaysia.

However, the ministry has from time to time acted according to the issues and problems raised by members of the medical fraternity, she said.

Among them were creating permanent employment, providing sponsorships for specialist or advanced training, offering time-based promotions, promotion opportunities to special grades and also the creation of UDS6 grades for medical experts.

Other health schemes were also taken care of and improved, she said.

"Therefore, the ministry would

like to emphasise that a strike is not the best solution and any problems that arise must be addressed through mutual involvement in a more professional and prudent manner.

"A civil servant, whether in a permanent position or on contract, is subject to public servant integrity and Public Services Ethics," added Dr Zaliha.

In an immediate reaction, the Mogok Doktor Malaysia (Malaysian Doctors on Strike) group said its planned strike would proceed as usual, adding that there would be "no nego" (negotiation).

"We have lost our confidence in MOH (the Health Ministry). Multiple committees were formed before too, but nothing much has changed. (We have been) disappointed again

and again.

"We are giving time to those who are waiting for their results.

"Once the interview result is out, everyone will resign immediately within 24 hours," said a group representative.

The group had said that 3,000 contract medical officers would leave the ministry in the coming days (and not necessarily on April 1 itself) while 8,000 others would not be present to work from April 3 to 5.

Hartal Doktor Kontrak, in a tweet, while lauding the news of the high-level panel, wanted to know who would be its members.

The group also asked whether staffers from the grassroots level, who would know more about what's happening on the ground, would be roped into the committee.