

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 15
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Keluarkan nikotin dalam Akta Racun

KKM nafi perjudikan kesihatan kanak-kanak

Seremban: Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) menafikan tindakan mengeluarkan produk cecair atau gel nikotin dalam Akta Racun 1952 sebagai langkah memperjudikan kesihatan kanak-kanak di negara ini.

Sebaliknya, Menteri, Dr Zaliha Mustafa, berkata kesihatan kanak-kanak sentiasa menjadi keutamaan kementerian berikutan golongan itu dianggap cukup penting sebagai pewaris generasi masa depan.

"Tak timbul masalah apabila kita mengeluarkan nikotin daripada Akta Racun 1952 bermakna ia bukan lagi racun dan kita mengabaikan kesihatan kanak-kanak.

"Apa pun, menjadi keutamaan kepada kementerian untuk menjaga kesihatan kanak-kanak (kerana) kesihatan anak-anak ini penting," katanya selepas Majlis Perasmian Kajian Kohort Seremban Diabetes (SeDia) di Hotel Royal Chulan, di sini, semalam.

Beliau berkata demikian mengulas langkah KKM mengeluarkan nikotin dalam Akta Racun 1952 yang mendapat bantahan beberapa pertubuhan bukan kerajaan (NGO).

Malah, pakar kesihatan mahu kerajaan menarik balik pengecualian cecair vape bernikotin daripada senarai bahan terkawal Akta Racun 1952 buat sementara

ra waktu, demi melindungi kesihatan awam dan masa depan masyarakat, khususnya kanak-kanak.

Kes ke mahkamah

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

Amrahi dalam satu kenyataan dipetik berkata, cadangan mengeluarkan nikotin daripada akta berkenaan akan memudaratkan kesihatan dan keselama-



Dr Zaliha melawat reruai selepas Majlis Perasmian Kajian Kohort Seremban Diabetes di Hotel Royal Chulan, Seremban, semalam.

(Foto Azrul Edham/BH)

tan rakyat Malaysia dan bukan untuk kepentingan negara.

Dalam pada itu, Dr Zaliha enggan mengulas lanjut mengenai bantahan terhadap tindakan KKM itu memandangkan ia sudah menjadi kes mahkamah selepas dibantah beberapa NGO.

"Kes itu (mengeluarkan nikotin dalam Akta Racun 1952) sudah masuk ke mahkamah dan saya tidak mahu bersikap prejudis mengenai perkara ini.

"Kita tunggu dan tengok macam mana kemudian (keputusannya)," katanya.

AKHBAR : SINAR AHAD
MUKA SURAT : 3
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Masalah kemudahan kesihatan, sekolah daif jadi tumpuan kerajaan

CHANGLUN - Kerajaan akan terus memberi tumpuan kepada usaha untuk menyelesaikan segera masalah kemudahan kesihatan dan sekolah daif di seluruh negara.

Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim berkata, pihaknya memberi penekanan terhadap isu itu demi kebajikan rakyat, sekali gus meningkatkan mutu kesihatan dan pendidikan negara.

"(Pada) tahun ini juga, sebanyak RM1.4 bilion (diperuntukkan untuk) selesaikan segera (baiki tandas, bumbung dan dinding sekolah daif) yang mana Jabatan Kerja Raya (JKR) boleh buat, JKR buat. Yang mana Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah (PPD) boleh buat, PPD buat."

"Tetapi jangan beritahu saya tidak bolehbaiki tandas di semua sekolah di negara kita termasuk di Kedah. Di Kubang Pasu kalau ada sekolah, tandas yang tidak dibaiki dan perlukan peruntukan lagi, beritahu pejabat daerah," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian pada Majlis Ramah Mesra Perdana Menteri bersama Warga Masyarakat Daerah Kubang Pasu di tapak projek pembinaan

Masjid Baharu Changlun di sini pada Sabtu.

Anwar berkata, pejabat daerah kemudiannya boleh menghubungi pihaknya bagi memaklumkan tentang keperluan tersebut.

"(Jika) tidak cukup (peruntukan), kita tambah dan selesaikan masalah tandas di sekolah ini," katanya.

Jelas beliau, sebanyak

RM10.1 juta diperuntukkan bagi pembbaikan 40 klinik dan enam sekolah daif daripada jumlah keseluruhan peruntukan di bawah Rolling Plan Ketiga (RP3) Rancangan Malaysia ke-12 (RMK12) di Kedah.

"Bagi daerah Kubang Pasu, kerajaan Persekutuan telah memperuntukkan sebanyak RM1.25 juta bagi kerja-kerja pembbaikan empat klinik dan se-

banyak RM300,000 diperuntukkan bagi pembbaikan sebuah sekolah daif," katanya.

Dalam perkembangan sama, Anwar mengulangi pendirian bahawa kerajaan Persekutuan tidak menoktahkan masalah kemiskinan tegar yang didapati masih membelenggu golongan rakyat tertentu di negara ini tanpa mengira latar belakang, kawasan dan negeri termasuk ne-

geri Kedah.

Sehubungan itu, Anwar meminta agensi kerajaan Persekutuan dengan kerjasama kerajaan negeri dan pihak berkuasa tempatan (PBT) supaya mengambil tindakan yang sewajarnya bagi mencapai matlamat tersebut.



Anwar beramah mesra dengan penerima sumbangan semasa Majlis Ramah Mesra bersama Masyarakat Daerah Kubang Pasu di Tapak Projek Pembinaan Masjid Baharu Changlun pada Sabtu.



AKHBAR : SINAR AHAD
MUKA SURAT : 10
RUANGAN : NASIONAL



AKHBAR : NEW SUNDAY TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 9

RUANGAN : NATION / NEWS

JUDICIAL REVIEW

'KIDS' SAFETY IS OUR PRIORITY'

Removing nicotine from Poisons list does not mean ministry is neglecting kids, says Dr Zaliha

MOHD AMIN JALIL
SEREMBAN
news@nst.com.my

THE Health Ministry has denied allegations that removing nicotine from the Poisons Act 1952 is akin to gambling with the health of children.

Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa said the safety of children was the ministry's priority.

She, however, declined to elaborate, saying it was a court case after non-governmental organisations (NGOs) filed a judiciary review against the move.

"The case (the removing of nicotine from the Poisons list) is now in court. I do not wish to be prejudicial, so we'll have to wait and see what the outcome is.

"Whatever it is, the ministry's priority is the health and safety of children.

"It does not mean that by removing nicotine, we are saying



Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa visiting an exhibition booth after officiating at the launch of the Seremban Diabetes (SeDia) Cohort in Seremban yesterday. PIC BY AZRUL EDHAM

nicotine is no longer a poison and that we are neglecting the health of our children."

She said this after officiating at the launch of the Seremban Diabetes (SeDia) Cohort here yesterday.

Dr Zaliha was commenting on the ministry's move to remove nicotine from being classified as

a poison under the Poisons Act 1952. The move was criticised by NGOs.

Health experts have called on the government to withdraw the move to exempt liquid nicotine for vape devices from the Poisons Act 1952 in the interest of children's safety and that of the next generation.

Malaysian Pharmacists Society president Professor Amrahi Buang urged the government to reject the proposal to exempt liquid nicotine and nicotine gel from being listed in the Poisons Act 1952. Amrahi said the move could endanger people's health and was not in the best interest of the nation.

AKHBAR : SUNDAY STAR

MUKA SURAT : 2

RUANGAN : NATION

Priority to upgrade health clinics and schools

CHANGLUN: Priority will be given to upgrading health clinics and dilapidated schools to improve the quality of education and health facilities in the country, says the Prime Minister.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the government would focus on overcoming issues related to health facilities and dilapidated schools nationwide to ensure the well-being of the people, as well as fulfil the need for quality education and healthcare.

"This year alone, the government has allocated RM1.4bil to repair damaged roofs in schools, toilets and walls.

"The Public Works Department will do their part and the district education offices will do their part ... but don't tell me toilets in all affected schools cannot be repaired, including in Kedah.

"In the Kubang Pasu district, if there are school toilets that have not been upgraded or need more allocation, inform the district office and the district office will contact me.

"(If there's) not enough allocation, we will add and solve the issue (of school toilets)," he said in his speech during a meet-and-greet session with the people of Kubang Pasu at the site of a new mosque in Changlun here yesterday, Bernama reported.

Anwar said for Kedah, the government had set aside RM10.1mil to repair or upgrade 40 health clinics and six dilapidated schools.

AKHBAR : SUNDAY STAR
MUKA SURAT : 5
RUANGAN : NATION

'Don't buy these medical devices'

MDA: 200 unregistered products are being openly sold in the market

By RAGANANTHINI VETHASALAM
raga@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: Long after the Covid-19 threat has been contained, unregistered medical devices such as facemasks, test kits, examination gloves and oximeters continue to be openly sold in the market.

Also found sold in the market – both at walk-in shops as well as online platforms – are digital infrared thermometers, plano (coloured contact lenses), condoms, first-aid kits and blood lancets.

The Health Ministry's Medical Device Authority (MDA) has found some 200 unregistered medical devices in recent raids.

MDA says there will be more raids coming up.

As of June, the MDA has already conducted three raids on the distribution of unregistered medical devices.

"All cases will be charged in court, possibly by this year," the MDA noted in a statement to *The Star*.

According to the statement, devices such as ankle support,

compression socks and kinesiology tape were also being sold to unsuspecting consumers.

"Most of these items have been imported from countries such as China, Thailand, Korea. These items are distributed by the local suppliers and some of the devices were imported directly by the users who purchase the medical devices via online platforms," the MDA said.

The Medical Device Act requires all such items to be registered with the MDA before they are placed on the market, and establishments such as manufacturers, authorised representatives, distributors and exporters are required to be licensed.

All medical devices will also be subjected to assessment by a conformity assessment body to ensure they meet the essential requirements prior to registration.

Those who are found to have breached the laws will be subjected to warnings, suspension of their licences, seizure of the unregistered devices or even charges under the law.

Concurring with the MDA,

Association of Malaysian Medical Industries (AMMI) executive director Ching Choon Siong said unregistered and counterfeit medical devices were being widely sold via social media and e-commerce platforms.

"The most common items are contact lenses, N95 respirators, surgical masks, Covid-19 test kits and other In-vitro diagnostic (IVD) test kits," he said.

These devices could be imported via false declaration, he added.

"The sale of unregistered and counterfeit medical devices creates confusion and is dangerous to the public with its low quality, ineffectiveness, and unsafe track record," he said.

To protect public health and safety, AMMI members and industry players are working closely with MDA to ensure medical devices sold in Malaysia are of high quality, effective and safe to use by the public, Ching said.

On June 13, the MDA raided a company in Batu Pahat, Johor, for selling unregistered medical devices to pharmacies and private clinics. Items worth more than RM300,000 were seized

What can consumers do to avoid buying unregistered medical devices?

■ Check the authenticity of the medical devices you want to buy by looking for the registration number of the product on the item.

MDA 000X00X00

■ For registered medical devices, the registration number should start with MDA followed by a serial number.

■ Consumers can also do a Registered Medical Device Search at <https://mda.mda.gov.my/frontend/web/index.php?r=carian>

■ Avoid buying unverified medical devices from online sellers or social media platforms. If you have to buy please ask the seller for proof of registration of products.

TheStargraphics

in the raid.

Earlier in March, another company in Puchong, Selangor, was raided, with 1,285 units of blood

pressure monitoring devices and nine units of infrared thermometers worth RM111,233 being seized.

Unverified medical devices, medicines sold online

PETALING JAYA: Unregulated and unregistered medical devices and medicines are easily available to customers at their fingertips.

The *Star's* check of ecommerce platforms found that blood lancets and contact lenses, for instance, were being sold openly, with some sellers indicating that the items were not registered with the Health Ministry's Medical Device Authority.

Medicines must be registered and approved for sale or use by the Drug Control Authority.

Authorised drugs will have a registration number which starts with MAL, printed on the label or package, but *The Star* found mifepristone or abortion pills being

sold on ecommerce platforms, and these were being shipped directly from countries such as Vietnam.

Pills marketed as period regulation and breast enhancement tablets are being sold without their trade names, making it difficult for consumers to know their source.

Based on the customers' feedback segment, Mucolytics, which are drugs used for mucus thinning, clearing airways and treating chronic lung and breathing conditions, were also being sold – and in bulk.

Expressing concern over the availability of such illicit medications online, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia public

health specialist Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh said some of these medicines were being marketed as "supplements," not drugs.

"There are a lot of medical devices that are unregistered," she said. "But what is scary are the unregistered medicines. And these are often marketed as being useful for supplementary treatment."

A lot of people were unknowingly buying them, said Prof Sharifa Ezat, because these cost a lot less online than at authorised pharmacies.

She also said the efficacy of such drugs could not be ascertained, adding that they could potentially come with a string of

health hazards.

"In addition, some online sellers are also not licensed to dispense medicines."

"By right, we should not be buying medicines through these illicit sellers or vendors. It can actually have an impact on you. There can be side effects."

"It can damage your body and your system. That means your kidney, your liver or you can get poisoned by it. There are a lot of heavy metals (present in these medicines)," she said, adding that enforcement should be stepped up to clamp down on the sale of such items, especially via online sites.

Prof Sharifa Ezat said some unscrupulous sellers marketed

their products with lofty claims on their effects, adding that when such drugs are not prescribed by licensed medical practitioners, consumers consume these medicines at their own risk.

"Demand for unregistered drugs has grown after Covid-19 due to rising costs."

"The government needs to ensure that drugs are available at relatively cheap and accessible prices."

"Some could be made to be bought over the counter so people can access them easily," she said.

"Pharmacists should also be available at clinics or community centres after working hours to increase access to safe medication."

Using data in the war against diabetes

SEREMBAN: Billions of ringgits are being spent yearly on diabetes, a disease that currently afflicts an estimated 3.9 million adults in the country, according to the Health Ministry.

The government has to spend RM4.9bil a year to deal with problems related to diabetes, which is worrying, said Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa.

She said the 2019 National Health and Morbidity Survey found that the prevalence of diabetes among adults aged 18 and above showed an increase from 11.2% in 2011 to 13.4% in 2015 and then rose to 18.3% in 2019.

Therefore, she said that continuous efforts involving all relevant parties are crucial in efforts to combat the disease, including through the organisation of the SeDia Cohort, which is the collection of long-term data to understand the complex interaction between lifestyle, environment, genetics and socioeconomic development.

She said this to reporters after officiating the Seremban Diabetes Cohort (SeDia) programme, a collaboration between the ministry and the International Medical University, which is the first large-scale cohort study focusing on



diabetes patients, here yesterday, as reported by Bernama.

Meanwhile, Dr Zaliha said her ministry is reviewing efforts to

promote research and development to increase the production of medicines in the country, including by involving

various ministries.

"This will enable reduced dependence on imported medicines," she said.

Ear to the ground: Dr Zaliha (right) speaking to pharmacist Mohd Khairuzzaman Mohd Latif at the Diabetes Cohort programme. — Bernama

AKHBAR : SUNDAY STAR
MUKA SURAT : 11
RUANGAN : NATION

'Only 24.6% of Pahang residents visited govt dentists'

KUANTAN: The rate of usage of government dental facilities by Pahang residents is still low, says state health director Datuk Dr Nor Azimi Yunus.

She said that statistics in 2022 showed that only 24.6%, or one in

four, residents used dental health services provided throughout the district.

"We are urging people to be more aware of the need to maintain dental hygiene and have a check-up – at least once a year, on

their birthdays.

"Remember your birthday, remember a visit to the dentist, because prevention and early treatment can prevent serious dental problems," she told reporters after officiating the state-level

Dental Health Promotion Week here yesterday.

Dr Nor Azimi said there are 73 primary dental health facilities that provide basic dental treatment in Pahang, with 64 operating daily, Bernama reported.