

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 2
RUANGAN : NASIONAL



Dr Zaliha melawat pameran selepas merasmikan Persidangan dan Pameran Penjagaan Kesihatan Antarabangsa anjuran APHM di Kuala Lumpur, semalam. (Foto BERNAMA)

KKM pertimbang jururawat luar penuhi keperluan swasta

Kementerian Kesihatan, APHM adakan lebih banyak libat urus perhalusi isu

Oleh Farah Marshita Abdul Patah dan Mahaizura Abd Malik
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Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) sedang mempertimbang keperluan mengambil jururawat dari luar negara bagi memenuhi keperluan hospital swasta yang mengalami masalah kekurangan tenaga kerja itu.

Menterinya, Dr Zaliha Mustafa, berkata pihaknya sedang memperhalusi isu dibangkitkan Persatuan Hospital Swasta Malaysia (APHM) dan mengadakan lebih banyak libat urus dengan sektor berkenaan.

"Memang perkara itu dalam makluman KKM. Kita sedang memperhalusi perkara itu dan melihat bagaimana kita boleh lakukan untuk bantu sektor swasta memenuhi keperluan mereka."

"Kita kena buat libat urus bukan sekali, tetapi beberapa kali untuk melihat beberapa perkara membabitkan pengambilan atau keperluan jururawat dari luar untuk membantu sektor swasta meningkatkan perkhidmatan mereka," katanya selepas meras-

mikan Persidangan dan Pameran Penjagaan Kesihatan Antarabangsa anjuran APHM di Pusat Konvensyen Kuala Lumpur di sini, semalam. Yang hadir sama, Presiden APHM, Datuk Dr Kuljit Singh.

Tampung lebih ramai pesakit

Sementara itu, Kuljit berkata, hospital swasta mengalami isu kekurangan jururawat yang serius walaupun menerima permintaan tinggi, namun dengan pengambilan jururawat luar akan membolehkan mereka menampung lebih ramai pesakit, sekali gus membantu kerajaan.

"Dalam tinjauan dibuat APHM pada November 2022 hasil maklum balas daripada 103 hospital, kita memerlukan kira-kira 9,224 jururawat tambahan pada tahun ini hingga 2025."

"Hospital swasta berminat mengambil jururawat yang mendapat latihan di luar negara dan kita sudah membincangkan perkara ini dengan Bahagian Kejururawatan KKM dan meminta pengecualian kepada Klaus 5 garis panduan mengenai pengambilan jururawat asing."

"Kami hanya meminta dua hingga tiga tahun untuk mengisi kekosongan sebelum sekolah kejururawatan tempatan dapat memenuhi permintaan," katanya.

Jururawat berdaftar

Presiden Kesatuan Jururawat Malaya (MNU) Nor Hayati Abd Rashid, berkata Kementerian perlu mengambil jururawat tempatan yang sudah berdaftar de-

ngan Lembaga Jururawat Malaysia sebelum mengambil jururawat luar negara.

Katanya, ketika ini ada banyak institusi swasta yang mempunyai kolej kejururawatan sendiri seperti Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL) dan KPJ Healthcare Bhd (KPJ).

Katanya, semua jururawat berkenaan akan melalui latihan asas selama tiga tahun (diploma) bagi membolehkan mereka berkhidmat sebagai jururawat berdaftar di negara ini.

"Malah, sekarang kita juga mempunyai sejumlah jururawat yang mempunyai sarjana muda dalam sains kejururawatan. Oleh itu, saya yakin jumlah jururawat yang mahir dan bertauliah juga bertambah dua kali ganda," katanya.

Tambah Nor Hayati, antara langkah yang boleh diambil oleh Kementerian adalah mengenal pasti berapa sebenarnya keperluan jururawat dalam tempoh lima tahun akan datang terutama untuk menampung keperluan di hospital swasta.

Katanya, institusi swasta yang menyediakan latihan mungkin boleh mengadakan memorandum persefahaman (MoU) dengan hospital swasta bagi membekalkan jururawat bertauliah untuk diambil bekerja sebaik saja tamat latihan dan dilantik sebagai jururawat dengan nombor pendaftaran dengan Lembaga Jururawat Malaysia.

"Dengan ini mutu perawat kepada pesakit adalah terpelihara dan keyakinan pelanggan akan meningkat," katanya.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 16
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Kertas Putih Kesihatan akan dibentangkan di Dewan Rakyat Jun

Pasukan khas akan ditubuh pantau dasar jangka pendek, panjang

Oleh Ahmad Naim Tahir
dan Mohd Nasaruddin Parzi
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Putrajaya: Kertas Putih Kesihatan (KPK) menggariskan empat tonggak dan 15 strategi reformasi kesihatan akan dibentangkan di Dewan Rakyat, pada persidangan yang akan berakhir 15 Jun ini.

Menteri Kesihatan, Dr Zaliha Mustafa, berkata pembentangan KPK di Dewan Rakyat selepas dokumen berkenaan yang mengandungi perancangan berfasa bagi jangka pendek, sederhana dan panjang, dikemukakan kepada Kabinet minggu depan.

Katanya, KPK antara lain akan menyentuh pelbagai isu, termasuk soal fasiliti dan penjagaan di sektor kesihatan awam, pendigi-

tal sistem penyampaian kesihatan, isu doktor kontrak, skim pekerjaan dan perjawatan serta banyak lagi.

"Kita juga sudah adakan perbincangan dengan Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim dan menteri lain. Terakhir sekali, baru kita bentangkan ke Parlimen dan sudah dapat persetujuan Setiausaha Parlimen untuk dibentangkan pada persidangan Jun ini," katanya.

Memaklumkan demikian pada sesi taklimat bersama media di pejabatnya, di sini semalam, beliau berkata, satu pasukan khas akan ditubuhkan selepas

KPK dibentangkan di Parlimen bagi memantau pelaksanaan dasar itu untuk jangka pendek dan panjang.

Libat urus berterusan

"Biarpun dibentangkan ke Parlimen, program libat urus masih berterusan. Kita masih buka laman sesawang untuk terus dapatkan input dan maklum balas. Kita faham, dalam pelaksanaan nanti, akan ada strategi berubah dan perkara baharu diambil kira dalam sistem kesihatan kita.

"Sebab empat tonggak dalam KPK ini tak berdiri dengan sendiri, sebaliknya saling berhu-

ngan. Malah, langkah permulaan ke arah pelaksanaan gerak kerja menyeluruh KPK juga sudah pun berjalan.

"Dalam sistem perkhidmatan kita sekarang, contohnya sistem penyampaian, sudah dilaksanakan, tapi perlu ditambah baik. Kita juga terima pendigitalan kesihatan. Sebab itu dari segi jangka masa, kita bahagikan kepada tiga keadaan.

"Jangka pendek ialah apa perlu dicapai, jangka sederhana dan jangka panjang. Kita harap selepas 15 tahun, kita akan capai semuanya," katanya menambih KPK juga menumpukan penye-

lesaian segera isu kesihatan termasuk naik taraf hospital dan fasiliti kesihatan yang daif.

Katanya, dalam empat tonggak KPK, ada antaranya yang kita boleh dilaksanakan dengan cepat, manakala yang lain mungkin memerlukan perubahan akta yang akan mengambil masa lama.

"Contoh penyelesaian segera seperti fasiliti daif, itu yang mahu kita tangani. Kita lihat juga, apabila KKM bina hospital baharu, tak boleh bina (bangunan) saja, tapi termasuk fasiliti, peralatan dan sebagainya.

"Kekangan yang kita hadapi adalah kewangan. Sebab itu, buat masa ini, kita memutuskan untuk memberi perhatian kepada baik pulih (fasiliti daif). Itulah yang Perdana Menteri sebut supaya 400 fasiliti daif ini diberi keutamaan," katanya.

Dalam menjayakan KPK juga, katanya, KKM bekerjasama dengan Kementerian Pendidikan (KPM) serta Kementerian Pembangunan Kerajaan Tempatan (PKPT) terutama dalam pelaksanaan program kesedaran kesihatan serta perkhidmatan ambulans, khususnya di luar bandar.

Status peralihan fasa ke endemik dinilai semula

Putrajaya: Malaysia akan menilai semula status peralihan fasa ke endemik pada pertengahan bulan depan, kata Menteri Kesihatan, Dr Zaliha Mustafa.

Penilaian itu selepas pengisytiharan kawasan jangkitan COVID-19 tempatan dibuat sebelum ini bagi tempoh enam bulan berakhir 30 Jun. Ia berikutan negara masih berada dalam kawasan jangkitan tempatan, khususnya pada musim perayaan lalu yang menunjukkan peningkatan kes.

"Semakan semula itu perlu bagi membolehkan

Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) menilai hala tuju seterusnya dengan mengambil kira garis panduan dikeluarkan Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO).

"Sekarang, memang kita belum masuk fasa endemik, masih peringkat transisi (peralihan ke endemik) walaupun WHO sudah umum Kecemasan Kesihatan Awam bagi Kebimbangan Antarabangsa (PHEIC) akan berakhir," kata Dr Zaliha pada sesi taklimat, di sini semalam.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
MUKA SURAT : 5
RUANGAN : LOKAL



LUKANISMAN melepaskan nyamuk berwolbachia di Taman Bemban Jaya, Jasin.

Lepas 300,000 nyamuk berwolbachia atasi denggi

Jasin: Kira-kira 300,000 nyamuk berwolbachia sudah dilepaskan di negeri ini, membabitkan Taman Bemban Jaya di sini, sejak Mac tahun lalu bagi mengawal demam denggi.

Taman Bemban Jaya dipilih bagi projek ini berdasarkan kriteria ditetapkan oleh Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) dan Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO).

"Pada fasa pertama, projek ini menggunakan kaedah pelepasan telur nyamuk Aedes berwolbachia dan kini, ia memasuki fasa kedua iaitu fasa pelepasan nyamuk berwolbachia dewasa.

"Bagi fasa kedua, hampir 100,000 ekor nyamuk dewasa berwolbachia akan dilepaskan dengan setiap 10,000 ekor bagi setiap pelepasan selama lapan minggu berturut-turut bermula hari ini (semalam)," kata Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan Lukanisman Awang Sauni semalam.

Lukanisman berkata demikian selepas melakukan

pelepasan nyamuk itu bagi Fasa Dua di Taman Bemban Jaya yang turut dihadiri Pengarah Kesihatan negeri, Datuk Dr Rusdi Abdul Rahman.

Lukanisman berkata, pelepasan nyamuk Aedes berwolbachia ini mampu merencatkan penyebaran virus denggi kepada manusia.

Menurut Lukanisman, KKM akan meneruskan pelepasan nyamuk berwolbachia secara berperingkat bagi mengawal kes denggi, khususnya di negeri yang mencatatkan peningkatan kes.

"Setakat ini, projek ini memanfaatkan 27 lokaliti di Melaka, Kuala Lumpur, Selangor serta Pulau Pinang dan akan diperluas ke Sabah sebagai penyelesaian pengawalan demam denggi.

"Pelepasan nyamuk berwolbachia adalah langkah inovatif bagi menghindari demam denggi selain melalui gerakan berasaskan komuniti melawan denggi seperti Komunikasi Perubahan Tingkah Laku (Combi)," katanya.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
MUKA SURAT : 10
RUANGAN : LOKAL

* Intervensi berkesan tangani isu kesihatan, sosial

Kuala Lumpur: Masyarakat terdedah kepada anasir kesihatan selain isu sosial secara berbeza mengikut lokasi yang dihuni.

Ahli Parlimen Bangi Syahredzan Johan berkata, menangani isu itu memerlukan tindakan intervensi yang berkesan terhadap penduduk mengikut komuniti terbabit.

"Justeru, saya berharap komuniti Bangi juga sihat dan bergerak aktif sempena epidemik kes penyakit tidak berjangkit (NCD) ketika ini.

"Masyarakat yang sihat dan cakna kesihatan akan menyumbang kepada ekonomi dan pemikiran bernas serta mengikut penderaan semasa," katanya.

Beliau sebelum itu merasmikan Majlis *Flag Off* Kembara Mengilham Harapan anjuran Kelab Ukhuwah Kembara Malaysia Bikers (KUKMBikers) di Bangunan Canselor Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) di sini, pada Sabtu lalu.

Turut hadir, Timbalan Naib Canselor (Hal Ehwal Penyelidikan dan Inovasi) UKM, Prof Datuk Dr Wan Kamal Mujani dan Presiden KUKMBikers, Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh.

Sebelum ini, Kemente-



SYAHREDZAN (kanan) dan Mohd Qurbani pada Majlis *Flag Off* Kembara Mengilham Harapan anjuran KUKMBikers di Bangunan Canselor UKM.

rian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) dilaporkan akan memberi tumpuan kepada epidemik kes NCD kerana situasi Covid-19 di negara ini sudah berjaya dikawal.

Beberapa langkah akan diambil KKM untuk menghasilkan rakyat yang sihat sejahtera, termasuk memastikan saringan kesihatan yang ada dalam kerajaan atau badan berkanun di negara ini dapat dimanfaatkan sepenuhnya.

Sementara itu, Dr Sharifa

yang juga Pakar Perubatan Kesihatan Awam menyambut baik kenyataan Ahli Parlimen terbabit.

Beliau berkata, punca masalah kesihatan kronik penduduk berkaitan dengan rokok dan penggunaan gula berlebihan.

Pada majlis itu, KUKMBikers menganjurkan program kembara solo ke Mekah yang pertama diadakan selepas menerima tajaan daripada pihak industri permotoran negara.

Kakitangan Fakulti Sains

Sosial dan Kemanusiaan (FSSK) UKM, Mohd Qurbani Badris yang melakukan kembara solo itu akan memulakan perjalanan dengan melalui pelbagai negara termasuk Pakistan, India, Emiriah Arab Bersatu dan Arab Saudi.

Dalam pengembaraan itu, beliau akan singgah di rumah penuntut Malaysia di negara berkenaan selain turut mengedarkan risalah promosi UKM dan Malaysia kepada penduduk tempatan.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO

MUKA SURAT : 16

RUANGAN : LOKAL

Bentang Kertas Putih Kesihatan minggu depan

Kuala Lumpur: Kertas Jemaah Menteri mengenai Kertas Putih Kesihatan akan dibentangkan di Parlimen minggu depan.

Menteri Kesihatan, Dr Zaliha Mustafa berkata, Kertas Putih Kesihatan itu sudah dibentangkan dan mendapat persetujuan di peringkat Kabinet.

"Kita sudah memberitahu Parlimen, kita akan membentangkannya dalam sesi akan datang ini."

"Saya akan membawa kertas putih yang dipersejuti jemaah Menteri ini minggu depan," katanya pada sidang media selepas merasmikan Persidangan dan Pameran Penjagaan Kesihatan Antarabangsa anjuran Persatuan Hospital Swasta Malaysia (APHM) di Pusat Konvensyen Kuala Lumpur di sini, semalam.

Turut hadir, Presiden APMH, Datuk Dr Kuljit Singh.

Sementara itu, Dr Zaliha berkata, Rang Undang-Undang (RUU)



Kerajaan akan meneliti pelbagai perkara termasuk sama ada mengharamkan vape atau tidak"

Dr Zaliha

Kawalan Produk Merokok bersama peruntukan Generasi Penamat (GEG) turut dibentangkan di Parlimen dalam masa terdekat.

Katanya, kerajaan juga akan meneliti pelbagai perkara termasuk sama ada mengharamkan vape atau tidak seperti dilaksanakan Singapura dan Thailand.

"Dari sudut kesihatan awam kita kena jaga, jadi kita (akan) lihat analisa dan statistik bagaimana negara luar (boleh) memainkan peranan mereka membuat polisi terhadap vape," katanya.

Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) sedang mempertimbangkan untuk mengambil jururawat dari luar negara bagi memenuhi keperluan hospital swasta yang mengalami masalah kekurangan jururawat.

Menterinya, Dr Zaliha Mustafa berkata, pihaknya sedang memperhalusi isu dibangkitkan Persatuan Hospital Swasta Malaysia (APHM) dan mengadakan lebih banyak libat urus dengan sektor berkenaan.

"Memang perkara itu dalam makluman KKM. Kita sedang memperhalusi perkara itu dan melihat bagaimana kita boleh lakukan bantu sektor swasta dalam memenuhi keperluan mereka."

"Kita kena buat libat urus bukan sekali, tetapi beberapa

Pertimbang jururawat luar negara kerja di hospital swasta



Kita sedang memperhalusi perkara itu dan melihat bagaimana kita boleh lakukan untuk bantu sektor swasta"

Dr Zaliha

pa kali untuk melihat beberapa perkara membabitkan pengambilan atau keperluan jururawat dari luar untuk membantu sektor swasta meningkatkan perkhidmatan mereka," katanya

selepas merasmikan Persidangan dan Pameran Penjagaan Kesihatan Antarabangsa anjuran APMH di Pusat Konvensyen Kuala Lumpur di sini, semalam.

Turut hadir, Presiden APMH, Datuk Dr Kuljit Singh.

Sementara itu, Dr Kuljit berkata, hospital swasta mengalami isu kekurangan jururawat serius walaupun menerima permintaan tinggi, namun dengan pengambilan jururawat luar akan membolehkan mereka menampung ramai pesakit sekaligus membantu kerajaan.

"Dalam tinjauan yang dibuat APMH pada November

2022 hasil maklum balas daripada 103 hospital, kita memerlukan 9,224 jururawat tambahan pada tahun ini hingga 2025."

"Hospital swasta berminat mengambil jururawat yang mendapat latihan di luar negara dan kita sudah membincangkan perkara ini dengan Bahagian Kejururawatan KKM dan meminta pengecualian kepada Klausula 5 garis panduan mengenai pengambilan jururawat asing."

"Kami hanya meminta dua hingga tiga tahun untuk mengisi kekosongan sebelum sekolah kejururawatan tempatan dapat memenuhi permintaan," katanya.

AKHBAR : KOSMO

MUKA SURAT : 5

RUANGAN : NEGARA

'Kertas Putih dibawa ke Jemaah Menteri'

PETALING JAYA - Kertas Putih Kesihatan yang merupakan satu pelan reformasi sistem kesihatan di negara ini akan dibentangkan dalam Mesyuarat Jemaah Menteri minggu depan.

Menteri Kesihatan, Dr. Zaliha Mustafa berkata, dokumen itu kemudian akan dibentangkan dalam sesi Dewan Rakyat.

"Kertas ini kena bentang di Kabinet, baru boleh bawa ke Parlimen," katanya pada Persidangan dan Pameran Penjagaan Kesihatan Antarabangsa anjuran Persatuan Hospital Swasta Malaysia (APHM) di Pusat Konvensyen Kuala Lumpur, dekat sini semalam.

Kertas Putih Kesihatan merupakan usaha kerajaan untuk pembaharuan dalam sistem perbelanjaan pembiayaan kesihatan dalam mewujudkan sistem kesihatan terbaik antara fokus dalam dokumen itu.

Penubuhan Suruhanjaya Perkhidmatan Kesihatan antara

ra cadangan yang dibangkitkan melalui Kertas Putih Kesihatan dalam menaik taraf pentadbiran sistem kesihatan negara.

Ujarnya, kementerian sedang mempertimbang keperluan mengambil jururawat dari luar negara bagi memenuhi keperluan hospital swasta ekoran isu kekurangan jururawat.

"Kita sedang memperhalusi isu dibangkitkan APMH dan mengadakan lebih banyak libat urus dengan sektor berkenaan dan sedang perhalusi perkara itu dan lihat bagaimana kita boleh lakukan untuk bantu sektor swasta memenuhi keperluan mereka," katanya.

Terdahulu, Presiden APMH, Datuk Dr. Kuljit Singh berkata, hospital swasta mengalami isu kekurangan jururawat yang serius walaupun menerima permintaan tinggi dan pengambilan jururawat luar membolehkan mereka menampung lebih ramai pesakit, sekali gus membantu kerajaan.



HOSPITAL swasta berminat mengambil tenaga kerja dari luar negara berikutan isu kekurangan jururawat ketika ini. - GAMBAR HIASAN

AKHBAR : KOSMO
MUKA SURAT : 16
RUANGAN : NEGARA

40 peratus perokok tegar golongan B40 – CAP

GEORGE TOWN – Dianggarkan kira-kira 40 peratus perokok tegar di negara ini terdiri daripada kumpulan B40, manakala golongan remaja berusia antara 13 hingga 17 tahun pula didapati memilih untuk menghisap vape berbanding rokok konvensional.

Presidennya, Mohideen Abdul Kader berkata, mengikut statistik, kira-kira 40 peratus daripada perokok adalah dalam golongan B40 berbanding 31 peratus daripada kumpulan M40 dan lima peratus pula kategori T20.

"Sebanyak 20 batang rokok dijual pada harga kira-kira RM17 sekotak dan pembelian dua kotak rokok bersamaan dengan 10 kilogram (kg) beras, sebotol minyak masak 5kg atau 2kg paha ayam.

"Pembelian makanan akan memberi manfaat kepada seluruh ahli keluarga dengan menambah baik khasiat pemakanan dan kesihatan mereka," katanya dalam satu kenyataan, di sini semalam.

Menurut Mohideen, jumlah penghisap vape dalam kalangan remaja terutama pelajar sekolah pula dilaporkan semakin meningkat dan bilangan menjadi berganda sehingga 14 peratus berbanding merokok iaitu sebanyak 6.2 peratus.

Menurutnya, ketika ini terdapat 17,000 perisa e-rokok yang boleh diperolehi menerusi pembelian dalam talian dengan menyasarkan pelanggan kanak-kanak dan remaja.

"Perokok mestilah merebut peluang untuk menghentikan tabiat merokok atau menghisap vape memandangkan keadaan ekonomi semasa, yang mana setiap Ringgit dikira untuk memastikan makanan berada di atas meja.

"Dengan ketidakpastian dalam ekonomi global, pengguna mestilah mengamalkan sikap berhemat dalam belanjawan keluarga dengan mengutamakan makanan, bukannya produk tembakau yang berbahaya," ujarnya.

Tambahnya, CAP menggesa kerajaan supaya mempercepatkan pembentangan Rang Undang-undang Generasi Penamat (GEG) dengan kadar segera.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 12
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Kerajaan disyor naikkan harga rokok

Capai sasaran Malaysia
Bebas Asap Rokok
menjelang tahun 2045

Oleh RAIHAM MOHD SANUSI
SHAH ALAM

Kerajaan disyor untuk menaikkan harga rokok sebagai langkah mengurangkan penggunaan produk tembakau bagi mencapai sasaran kempen Malaysia Bebas Asap Rokok menjelang tahun 2045.

Penyelaras Kawalan Tembakau, Inisiatif Malaysia Bebas Asap Rokok, Gabungan Persatuan-Persatuan Pengguna Malaysia (Fomca), Muhammad Sha'ani Abdullah berkata, perkara itu boleh dibuat dengan menaikkan cukai ke atas semua produk tembakau yang telah dihentikan sejak tahun 2015 selaras dengan syor Bank Dunia.

Katanya, cadangan itu dibuat bersempena sambutan Hari Tanpa

Tembakau Sedunia 2023 yang disambut hari ini bertepatan 'Kita Memerlukan Makanan, Bukan Tembakau'.

"Sempena Hari Tanpa Tembakau Sedunia 2023 juga disyorkan kerajaan menyegerakan pelesenan semua jualan runcit produk tembakau di bawah Peraturan-Peraturan Lembaga Kenaf dan Tembakau Negara (Pelesenan Tembakau dan Keluaran Tembakau) 2011.

"Kami juga cadangkan supaya penguatkuasaan Peraturan-Peraturan Kawalan Hasil Tembakau 2004 juga diturun kuasa kepada semua pihak berkuasa tempatan (PBT)," katanya menerusi kenyataan pada Selasa.

Mengulas lanjut, Muhammad Sha'ani memberitahu, kerajaan juga dicadang memperuntukkan seluruh kutipan cukai tembakau dan alkohol untuk perkhidmatan rawatan berhenti merokok dan penggunaan alkohol.

"Kami juga menggesa agar Perkara 3.8.2 Kod Amalan Kualiti Udara Dalam 2010 dipinda untuk menjadikan semua tempat kerja menjadi kawasan larangan merokok memandangkan sebarang tindakan merokok di ruang dalaman boleh menjadikan kualiti udara tidak mematuhi



MUHAMMAD SHA'ANI



Kerajaan disaran menaikkan harga rokok bagi mencapai sasaran Malaysia Bebas Asap Rokok menjelang tahun 2045.

aras standard kualiti udara dalam Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO).

"Selain itu, kami mencadangkan supaya papan-papan tanda 'Dilarang Merokok' ditukar kepada 'Kawasan Bebas Asap Rokok' untuk menjadikan wawasan generasi penamat (*endgame*) tembakau suatu usaha positif dan tanggungjawab bersama," ujarnya.

Dalam pada itu menurutnya, statistik menunjukkan satu daripada lima atau 20 peratus kanak-kanak di Malaysia terbanjut tumbesaran mereka.

"Fenomena ini yang menunjukkan isi

rumah di negara ini memerlukan makanan berkhasiat dan ia sesuatu yang mengejutkan jika dibandingkan dengan kadar tabiat merokok di Malaysia yang puratanya sebanyak 21.3 peratus pada 2019.

"Sememangnya ada ketua isi rumah mengutamakan ketagihannya daripada keperluan pemakanan anak-anak dan tanggungan.

"Ini memerlukan usaha dengan pendekatan menyeluruh masyarakat untuk menggalakkan perokok mengurangkan tabiat merokok dan seterusnya berhenti merokok," beritahunya.

Timbang semula bentang RUU kawalan tembakau

SHAH ALAM - Kerajaan digesa mempertimbangkan semula keputusan membentangkan Rang Undang-Undang Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022 yang merangkumi dasar penamat generasi perokok (GEG) dalam sesi Parlimen akan datang.

Wakil Consumer Choice Center (CCC) Malaysia, Tarmizi Anwar berkata, kajian lebih mendalam perlu dijalankan mengenainya yang melibatkan keutamaan pengguna.

"Semua pengguna mempunyai kepentingan dalam mempertahankan kebebasan peribadi dan sivil. Oleh itu, mereka harus diberi pilihan peribadi bagi memutuskan apa yang sesuai untuk mereka tanpa campur tangan berlebihan.

"Kerajaan harus mendidik pengguna dengan maklumat yang benar dan tepat daripada menyebarkan mitos seperti vape dikatakan lebih berbahaya daripada rokok," katanya dalam satu kenyataan pada Selasa.

Tambah Tarmizi, penyelidikan terkini daripada Institut Psikiatri,



TARMIZI

Psikologi dan Neurosains (IoPPN) di King's College London pada September 2022 mendapati bahawa penggunaan produk vape berbanding merokok membawa kepada pengurangan ketara dalam pendedahan kepada toksin yang menggalakkan kanser, penyakit paru-paru dan kardio-

vaskular. Pada masa sama, beliau meminta kerajaan untuk memberi tumpuan kepada keselamatan pengguna.

"Ini kerana insiden rokok seludup di Malaysia adalah tinggi iaitu 56.6 peratus menurut kajian rokok seludup baru-baru ini oleh Nielsen IQ. Ini membimbangkan kerana produk haram ini mengandungi bahan berbahaya yang tidak sesuai untuk diambil manusia.

"Selain itu, rokok seludup ini mudah diakses oleh remaja kerana ia dijual di kedai runcit atau dalam talian. Kerajaan sepatutnya utamakan usaha perangai masalah ini daripada meluluskan RUU yang boleh membawa kepada peningkatan produk seludup," katanya.

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA

MUKA SURAT : 31

RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

Masalah kurang parkir di Hospital Teluk Intan selesai

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TELUK INTAN: Isu kekurangan tempat letak kenderaan di Hospital Teluk Intan dekat sini akan diatasi segera.

Demikian jaminan disuarakan Ahli Dewan Undangan Negeri (ADUN) Pasir Bedamar, Woo Kah Leong yang juga Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Perdagangan Dalam Negeri, Hal Ehwal Pengguna dan Kampung Baru Cina negeri.

Beliau berkata, Ahli Parlimen Teluk Intan, Nga Kor Ming yang juga Menteri Pembangunan Kerajaan Tempatan (KPKT) juga akan memohon peruntukan hampir RM1 juta untuk projek naik taraf kawasan parkir hospital berkenaan.

Menurutnya, untuk menyelesaikan masalah kekurangan parkir di situ, beliau dan Nga Kor Ming telah melawat hospital tersebut baru-baru ini.

Katanya, masalah itu merupakan isu yang menjadi runtuhan rakyat selama ini.

"Hospital Teluk Intan hanya mempunyai tempat parkir yang terhad iaitu tidak sampai 300 petak namun menerima kehadiran pesakit sebanyak 650 orang dan 1,000 staf hospital dalam sehari.

"Keadaan ini amat teruk dan menyebabkan banyak pesakit terpaksa meletakkan kenderaan di Jalan Changkat Jong sebelum memasuki kawasan hospital.

"Hospital Teluk Intan telah mengemukakan cadangan pelan untuk menambah tempat parkir



WOO Kah Leong (tengah) ketika melawat keadaan tapak letak kereta Hospital Teluk Intan yang berdepan pelbagai masalah termasuk kekurangan petak meletak kenderaan.

yang akan memerlukan dana dalam lingkungan RM1 juta.

"Kerja-kerja naik taraf melibatkan tapak belakang wad yang kini berlubang, berlaku mendeda tanah dan tidak mesra pengunjung dan diharapkan akan menambahkan lagi 300 petak parkir selepas projek dilaksanakan," katanya.

Kah Leong berkata, beliau telah berjumpa dengan Pengarah Kesihatan negeri, Dr. Sirajuddin

Hashim baru-baru ini.

Katanya, Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri memberi komitmen menyelesaikan masalah tersebut untuk kemudahan rakyat.

Sebelum ini, *Utusan Malaysia* menyiarkan laporan mengenai keluhan pengguna perkhidmatan di Hospital Teluk Intan yang berdepan masalah tempat letak kenderaan berikutan kekurangan parkir, menyebabkan mereka meletakkan kereta di

bahu jalan dan bimbang disaman pihak berkuasa atau boleh menyebabkan kemalangan.

Masalah itu berpunca daripada peningkatan orang ramai mendapatkan perkhidmatan rawatan di hospital itu.

Ia disebabkan pesakit yang datang untuk mendapatkan rawatan dari luar daerah ini antaranya Tapah, Bidar, Bagan Datuk, Kampung Gajah dan dari sekitar Teluk Intan.

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA
MUKA SURAT : 32
RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

Pelepasan nyamuk Wolbachia terbukti atasi denggi

JASIN: Kementerian Kesihatan akan melaksanakan pelepasan nyamuk Aedes berbakteria Wolbachia ke seluruh negara ekoran kejayaan program perintis di 27 lokaliti dalam usaha memperkukuh kawalan denggi.

Timbalan Menteri, Lukanisman Awang Sauni berkata, program perintis itu mendapati, kaedah pelepasan nyamuk berkenaan terbukti dapat mengatasi peningkatan wabak tersebut.

Jelasnya, beberapa lokaliti terutama di ibu negara, Pulau Pinang, Melaka dan Selangor menunjukkan tiada kes demam denggi dilaporkan selepas pelepasan dilakukan.

"Kejayaan program perintis membuktikan kaedah pelepasan nyamuk berbakteria Wolbachia telah dapat mengurangkan peningkatan kes denggi di lokaliti terbabit.

"Nyamuk ini adalah satu inovasi dalam menangani peningkatan kes denggi dan ini terbukti apabila tiada kes denggi direkodkan di 27 lokaliti berulang semula.

"Ini kerana bakteria Wolbachia yang disuntik ke dalam telur nyamuk Aedes akan merencatkan pertumbuhan virus denggi dalam nyamuk dan seterusnya menghalang penyebaran virus denggi," katanya dalam sidang akhbar selepas Program Pelepasan Nyamuk Berbakteria Wolbachia Fasa Dua di Taman Bemban Jaya di sini semalam.

Tambah Lukanisman, orang ramai tidak perlu risau mengenai kaedah itu yang telah disahkan selamat terhadap manusia dan alam sekitar oleh Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO).

Menurutnya, di Melaka sebanyak 300,000 ekor nyamuk telah dilepaskan sejak Mac tahun lalu di Taman Bemban Jaya yang dipilih sebagai lokasi pertama pelepasan.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 7

RUANGAN : NEWS / NATION



Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa (left) visiting a booth after officiating at the 29th APHM International Healthcare Conference and Exhibition in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

ADDRESSING SHORTAGE

HIRING OF FOREIGN NURSES ON THE CARDS

Ministry studying issue to meet private sector needs

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THE Health Ministry is considering the recruitment of nurses from abroad to help the private sector overcome the shortage.

Its minister, Dr Zaliha Mustafa, said she was scrutinising the issue raised by the Association of Private Hospitals Malaysia (APHM) and would embark on more engagements with the private sector.

"The matter is being looked into by the ministry. We are looking at how best we can help the pri-

rate sector meet its needs.

"We have to engage the private sector several more times and look at issues involving intakes and the need to bring in nurses to help improve the service," she said after officiating at the 29th APHM International Healthcare Conference and Exhibition here yesterday.

Present was APHM president Datuk Dr Kuljit Singh.

Dr Kuljit said private hospitals had been experiencing a serious nurse shortage, and hiring nurses from abroad would help them attend to more patients and, hence, assist the government.

"The feedback from 103 hospitals in our survey in November last year showed that we would need an additional 9,224 nurses between this year and 2025.

"The private hospitals are keen to hire nurses trained abroad. We have discussed this matter with the ministry's Nursing Division.

and asked for an exception to Clause 5 of its guidelines on hiring foreign nurses.

"We are only asking for two to three years to fill the gap before the nursing schools can meet the demand."

Meanwhile, Dr Zaliha said the Health white paper would be presented to the cabinet next week for approval before being tabled in Parliament.

"It must be brought to the cabinet before we can table it in Parliament."

The Health white paper aims to reform the healthcare system by ensuring its sustainability through a national health insurance scheme.

On whether Malaysia would follow Singapore's and Thailand's footsteps by banning vaping, Dr Zaliha said such a move must be looked at from various aspects, including public health and the economy.

AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 1

RUANGAN : MUKA HADAPAN

Long wait for treatment

A majority of cancer patients in Malaysia seek treatment late even though experts say early diagnosis is key to curbing this killer disease. But the wait for cancer treatment in government hospitals is long, and many patients opt to pay for these tests to be done in private facilities to speed up diagnosis and treatment.

> See reports on page 5 by RAGANANTHINI VETHASALAM and ALLISON LAI



Photo by SS KANESAN/The Star

Limit your time in the sun

With the country sizzling under the hot sun, too much exposure to its ultraviolet radiation can lead to one developing heat-related complications, say experts. To stay safe, wear a hat or use an umbrella.

> See reports on page 4 by FATIMAH ZAINAL

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NATION

'Excessive sun exposure harmful'

Expert: Risks include skin cancer, premature ageing and cataracts among others

By **FATIMAH ZAINAL**
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PETALING JAYA: Too much exposure to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which can increase during the current hot spell, can lead to people developing heat-related complications, experts say.

With the country sizzling under the hot sun and some states recording temperatures of 35°C, health experts urge the public to be cautious about overexposure to UV rays.

Public health expert Prof Dr Moy Foong Ming of Universiti Malaya said the risks or dangers of being exposed to high UV levels include skin cancer (melanoma and nonmelanoma), premature ageing and other skin damage, cataracts and other eye damage,

as well as immune system suppression.

To stay safe, she recommended avoiding overexposure to the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed, breathable hat or using an umbrella.

"Limit your time in the sun, especially between 11am and 4pm," she said, adding that sunglasses and sunscreen can also be worn for extra protection.

Sunglasses should be the ones that provide protection against UVA and UVB rays, while sunscreen should have at least a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15, said Prof Moy.

On the other hand, she pointed out that humans do need some sunlight for the synthesis of vitamin D via the skin.

"Exposure of the face and arms

to the adequate sunlight wavelength (UVB radiation of 290-370 nm) for 15 to 30 minutes, from 11am to 3pm daily, should be enough to maintain adequate vitamin D status," said Prof Moy, citing a 2007 study by Dr Michael Holick.

Meanwhile, a local study found that the overall prevalence of vitamin D deficiency (<20 ng/ml) among Malaysian adults was 67.4%.

Indian participants or 80.9%, had the highest proportion of vitamin D deficiency, followed by Malays at 75.6%, others at 44.9%, and Chinese at 25.1%, said Prof Moy.

"These differences could be due to skin pigmentation and clothing style.

"In addition, avoiding sunlight

and working indoors may also be reasons for inadequate sun exposure for the synthesis of vitamin D," she added.

Public health expert Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia said that people will be exposed to UV rays more than usual during the hot spell, which in the long term can be harmful to health.

"A lot of literature has shown the relationship between prolonged UV exposure and skin cancer but very short durations can also cause skin irritation and skin rashes that occur because of the heat in UV light," she said.

She said everyone must be aware of the possibility of heat stroke and heat stress occurring, especially for those who work outdoors and are exposed to the

sun and heat for long periods, such as policemen, Road Transport Department (JPJ) officers, delivery riders and lorry drivers.

"As for children, they can succumb to the heat very fast.

"Parents should take them to healthcare providers if their body temperatures are high to check if they're having fever or heat exhaustion, as these two can mimic each other," she said, adding that children are more susceptible as they are not able to thermoregulate themselves as well as adults can.

Prof Sharifa Ezat also called on policymakers to pay attention to the country's food security, as some other countries are facing decreased food access and security due to the hot weather.

MetMalaysia: Extreme heat brings serious health risks

PETALING JAYA: The higher the Solar Ultraviolet Index (UVI) value, the greater the potential for damage to the skin and eye, and the less time it takes for harm to occur, says the Malaysian Meteorological Department (MetMalaysia).

The UVI, which describes the level of solar UV radiation at the Earth's surface, is set on a scale from zero upwards.

According to the MetMalaysia website, a scale of two and below on the UVI is considered low while three to five is moderate and six to seven is high.

A score of eight to 10 is considered very high, while anything higher than 11 is considered extreme.

On May 21, the Vietnamese National Centre for Hydro-Meteorological Forecast predicted that levels of UV radiation in major cities across the country are expected to peak between eight and 10.

MetMalaysia said the UVI varies throughout the day and in reporting the UVI, most emphasis is placed on the maximum UV radiation level on a given day.

"For MetMalaysia, the UVI is reported hourly from 11am to

Ultraviolet (UV) index range

UV Index 1	UV Index 2	UV Index 3	UV Index 4	UV Index 5	UV Index 6	UV Index 7	UV Index 8	UV Index 9	UV Index 10	UV Index >11
NO PROTECTION REQUIRED		PROTECTION REQUIRED					EXTRA PROTECTION			
> No damage is expected. > You can safely stay outside.		> Some precaution needed for people with sensitive skin. > Seek shade during midday hours. Put on a shirt, use sunscreen and a hat.					> Avoid unnecessary exposure especially during midday hours. > Make sure you seek shade. Shirt, sunscreen and hat are a must.			

Source: MetMalaysia

The Star graphics

"UV radiation may also suppress the immune system, thereby enhancing the risk of infectious disease and limiting the efficacy of vaccinations."

MetMalaysia

4pm," its website said.

It added that small amounts of UV radiation are essential for the production of vitamin D in humans but overexposure to it may lead to short- and long-term adverse effects on the skin, eyes and immune system.

"Sunburn (erythema) is the best known acute effect of excessive UV radiation exposure.

"Over the longer term, UV radiation causes inflammatory reactions of the eye and induces

degenerative changes in cells of the skin, fibrous tissue and blood vessels, leading to premature skin ageing, skin rashes and scaly skin conditions," it said.

MetMalaysia added that chronic effects include skin cancer and cataracts.

"Annually, some 12 to 15 million people suffer blindness from cataracts worldwide.

"According to World Health Organisation estimates, up to 20% of these cases may be caused or

enhanced by sun exposure, especially in countries close to the equator.

"UV radiation may also suppress the immune system, thereby enhancing the risk of infectious disease and limiting the efficacy of vaccinations," it said.

MetMalaysia added that it is a popular misconception that only fair-skinned people need to be concerned about overexposure to the sun.

Darker skin has more protec-

tive melanin pigment and the incidence of skin cancer is lower in dark-skinned people, it said.

"Skin cancers do occur in this group and unfortunately, they are often detected at a later, more dangerous stage.

"The risk of UV radiation-related health effects on the eye and immune system is independent of skin type," it added.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 5
RUANGAN : NATION

It's a waiting game for many

Cancer diagnosis on the rise, but it's a long wait for treatment

By RAGANANTHINI
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PETALING JAYA: Cancer is one of the major killer diseases in the world and the wait is long for treatment at government hospitals.

The long wait is attributed to the shortage of specialists and the limited number of public healthcare facilities offering oncology services.

"It does take a few months," said National Cancer Society Malaysia (NCSM) managing director Dr M. Muralitharan.

"Sometimes getting an appointment for a CT scan takes 12-16 weeks in government (hospitals)," he added.

He said a CT scan, biopsy and immunohistochemistry tests are needed for a cancer diagnosis.

"The wait for these three tests can be up to four to six months in government hospitals," he said.

Hospital Sultan Ismail (Johor), Hospital Kuala Lumpur, Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun (Ipoh), Penang Hospital, Institut Kanser Negara (Kuala Lumpur), Sabah Women and Children Hospital, and Sarawak General Hospital are the cancer centres under the Health Ministry.

There are also university hospitals under the Higher Education Ministry that offer cancer treatment.

Dr Muralitharan said not all hospitals have a specific specialist.

"For example, for colorectal cancer, only certain hospitals will have that specialty," he said.

"For instance, in Perak, you will have to send the patient to the Ipoh Hospital. That means all cases in Perak will have to be referred to the Ipoh Hospital."



Urgent care: The wait for several tests for cancer takes up to six months in government hospital and not all hospitals have specific specialist. — KK SHAM/ The Star

He said only two to three surgeries can be done in a day, adding that doctors may see 20 to 30 cancer cases a day.

"Operations are done only from Monday to Friday, and at government hospitals, it is not every day that a certain department will get an operations theatre.

"Maybe you will get one day a week or two days a week for colorectal (surgery). You can imagine the delay. All this is a system delay," he added.

He said cancer surgeries require highly specialised specialists, which Malaysia lacks.

"80% of our patient load is in government facilities, and only 20% is in the private sector, but about 80% of our specialists are in private hospitals," he added.

Dr Muralitharan said logistics are also another problem.

As most cancer treatment centres are in cities, it is particularly challenging for outstation patients who have to contend with the hardships and costs of commuting long distances.

NCSM has come up with initia-

tives to ease cancer patients' burdens in seeking treatment.

The society offers diagnosis services which cut the wait time for patients and enable them to proceed to the next step, which is to seek treatment at hospitals.

The tests are also offered at a subsidised rate.

NCSM also provides lodging facilities near treatment centres for cancer patients who need a place to stay while undergoing treatment.

NCSM also operates shuttle services from their hostels to the hospitals. Dr Muralitharan said with these initiatives, MOH hospitals have been able to take in additional patients as the beds are provided by NCSM and the service is fully funded by society.

"Our focus area is on cities that have hospitals that treat cancer. The facility in Perak is running. In Penang, we are building a facility which will be completed in July or August," he said.

"The Klang Valley facility has been operating for more than 30 years," he added.

There were 103,507 cancer cases diagnosed between 2007 and 2011. The numbers, however, increased to 115,238 cases in the 2012-2016 period.

In April last year, then-health minister Khairy Jamaluddin reported that the number of new cancer diagnoses is expected to rise to over 66,000 annually by 2030, from 49,000 in 2020.

Cancer claimed 10 million lives worldwide in 2020 and 29,530 lives in Malaysia, according to the World Health Organisation's Global Cancer Observatory.

Lung cancer was identified as the most common cause of death in 2020 worldwide, with 1.8 million fatalities, followed by colon and rectum (916,000 deaths), liver (830,000 deaths), stomach (769,000 deaths), and breast (685,000 deaths).

The data also revealed that in Malaysia, lung cancer accounted for the highest number of deaths with 4,509 fatalities, followed by breast cancer (3,503), colon (2,035), liver (2,050) and leukaemia (1,481).

Ease and early access to treatment facilities crucial

PETALING JAYA: As more cancer cases are diagnosed at a later stage, it is crucial to ease access to diagnostic and treatment facilities, according to experts.

They also advised that early intervention is crucial to increasing the patients' chances of survival and cure.

The National Cancer Society Malaysia (NCSM) managing director Dr Muralitharan Munisamy said this can be done through collaborations with the private sector.

"It will be critical for us to speed up diagnosis and begin treatment," he said.

"In terms of short term solutions, what we need is access to targeted therapies. We still haven't been able to turn the clock back; more than half of our cancer cases are being diagnosed at a late stage.

"At the late stage, we need to give these patients some therapeutic options. That means making treatment available, with targeted therapies as one of the key aspects, especially for patients in public hospitals," he added.

Apart from that, he said psychosocial support is also important.

"Aspects such as mental healthcare, financial and welfare assistance, as well as logistic facilities should also be provided," he said.

He added that a lot could be achieved in the short term through these holistic approaches.

Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) President Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai said the issue of a shortage of personnel for cancer care should also be addressed, as that will significantly cut down on the delay in treatment.

"Of course we need more cancer care centres especially in states where such health services are not available. But before we even consider this, the personnel involved in cancer management — oncologists, surgeons, radiology technologists, psychologists, nurses and occupational therapists — needs to increase," he said, adding that treating and managing cancers require a holistic approach as the disease could have an effect on both physical and mental health.

Dr Muruga also points out that the number of CT and positron emission tomography (PET) scan facilities in the public healthcare is limited.

These facilities are also utilised for other cases aside from cancer.

"The government also needs to look into the issues faced by cancer patients in paying for their treatment.

"Nearly 45% of cancer patients in Malaysia experience financial hardships. Many have also experienced various issues with insurance claims, and this can cause delays in obtaining treatment. With cancer, every second counts, as a cancer patient's condition can very quickly worsen," he added.

Time is of the essence for treatment

By ALLISON LAI
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PETALING JAYA: When her father was admitted to the hospital for abnormal calcium levels in his blood, Zahara Rosli said her family was worried that his cancer had relapsed.

The housewife said the most important tests to find out about her father's condition were a histopathology (HPE) test and a computerised tomography (CT) scan.

"During our discussion with a doctor at Hospital Bukit Mertajam, Penang, he informed us that waiting for a CT scan at the government healthcare facility could take up to six weeks.

"We were given the option to conduct the CT scan at a private hospital," she said.

Zahara, 46, recalled that her father's MRI scan had also previously been performed at a private specialist hospital to avoid the long wait.

She said that with the doctor's referral letter and arrangement, her father was transported to the private hospital.

"My father had the test and scan done right away, and we had the results in about an hour."

"We also got a discount from the private hospital because we were referred by a government hospital," she said.

According to Zahara, the quick test results allowed doctors to determine her father's condition and move forward with his treatment plan.

"Tests showed he had advanced-stage lung cancer that had spread to his bones.

"We could only do our best to lessen his pain and suffering," she said, adding that her father died last October after spending two months in the hospital.

Zahara said she was thankful that her family was able to at least afford the CT scan at the private hospital, which cost a few thousand ringgit.

"We are not blaming anyone because we understand the government hospital's resources are limited due to the high patient load.

"But we are upset thinking about others who are less fortunate and cannot afford to pay," she said.

An engineer who only wanted to be identified as Adam said he had a similar experience early last year at Hospital Tanah Merah in Kelantan.

"I sent my father for a CT scan to determine the stage of his liver cancer."

"I was told after the scan that the results would only be out after two weeks. However, two days before the appointment, the hospital called and asked us to return in two weeks.

"I'm not sure why the results were delayed; maybe the doctors were busy," he said.

Adam said that he then decided to take his father to a private hospital for a CT scan because the senior's condition was deteriorating.

"I was prepared to pay the bill, which the hospital estimated would be RM2,500 at most.

"However, when they discovered that my father had recently had a CT scan, they advised me not to proceed because it could harm the patient."

"I had no choice but to wait despite my father's dire condition," he explained.

Laili Nor, an insurance and takaful agent, said she had several clients who used their medical cards to claim imaging expenses at private hospitals after being advised by their doctors at public hospitals.

"Those suffering from critical illnesses typically require ultrasound scanning, X-rays, CT scans, PET scans, MRIs, and other tests."

"However, an appointment at one of the government hospitals for such procedures could mean months of waiting," she said.

Laili said her clients were able to have the procedures performed at private hospitals and receive the results the same day.

"This enabled them to get faster diagnosis and treatment, such as chemotherapy or surgery, at government hospitals," she said.

Laili said many of her clients are accustomed to receiving care at public hospitals despite having medical insurance coverage.

"The option is there for them to use when they need it," she added.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 14
RUANGAN : VIEWS

Prioritise care and compassion in reforms

THE much-anticipated Health White Paper, which is expected to be tabled in Parliament next month, is a comprehensive proposal to revamp Malaysia's healthcare system.

Whatever criticism it will invite or shortcomings it may have, it is important for Malaysia to undertake comprehensive reforms in healthcare as our society continues to transform dynamically, and to keep abreast of evolving geopolitics, the uncertain global economic environment and potential crisis of climate change.

A significant part of healthcare services for the public good may only have moral benefits and little promise of measurable economic benefits.

So, if the dominant narrative of this reform revolves around pure-

ly financial concerns that favour maximum benefits per ringgit spent, we may end up in an unhealthy situation characterised by spending cuts and reduced investments in critical health infrastructure.

Perhaps an alternative view of national healthcare reform can be used as a third way out should negotiations between the financial sustainability camp and stoic defenders of public services start to break down.

The primary goals for transforming and future-proofing the public healthcare system should be to:

1. Ensure sovereign health security in the face of global threats of pandemics and diseases;
2. Ensure that each household

is able to access the healthcare services needed throughout the lifespan of every member; and

3. Mitigate the future burden to the healthcare system through health promotion and prevention.

Addressing the viability and continued growth of the commercially lucrative health service sector as a significant contributor to national GDP must be considered separately from these three priorities.

At the end of the day, care and compassion must be the dominant factors in handling the reforms. Nothing is to be taken lightly, and due diligence must be performed, backed up by relevant and appropriate data and evidence where necessary.

The people, particularly those who are most vulnerable to eco-

nomie shocks, must never be burdened by their healthcare needs. However, they must also be encouraged to bear some responsibility for their health.

Inevitably, the practice of excess and co-payments may be come into play, but these provisions must be regulated in order to maintain affordability and not allow the practice of ransoming care to continue.

By extension, entitled behaviour should never be entertained across the board and wastage of public funds must be monitored and kept as low as possible.

PROF DATUK DR HANAFIAH HARUNARASHID
Pro vice-chancellor
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THIS year's theme for World No Tobacco Day, "We need food, not tobacco", is relevant to Malaysia although our tobacco farmers began switching over to kenaf cultivation about a decade ago.

The tobacco industry is now focused on pushing the highly addictive nicotine as a substitute.

Consumers should be wary of being hooked to a life-long addiction and subsequently risk chronic non-communicable diseases associated with the habit.

In Malaysia, double the number (14%) of teenagers (13-17 years old) are vaping compared to smoking (6.2%).

There are 17,000 flavours of cigarettes available online targeting children, who should be consuming more fresh fruits instead of fruit-flavoured electronic cigarettes.

The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) therefore urges the government to speed up the passage of the Control of Tobacco Product and Smoking Bill.

Smokers must seize the opportunity to stop smoking or vaping in view of the current economic situation where every ringgit

counts to put food on the table.

A pack of 20 cigarettes costs a minimum of RM17; smoking two packs can buy 10kg of rice or a 5kg bottle of cooking oil or 2kg of chicken thighs. Food purchases will benefit the entire family by improving their nutrition and health.

Cigarettes are still comparatively cheaper than the escalating cost of food now. There has been no tax increase on tobacco since 2017.

Although it was thought that

the low fertility of soil in Kelantan is a limiting factor for the cultivation of food crops, research shows it is possible to have yields of one to three tonnes of dried maize. Another study showed chilli can also be grown. In other words, some food crops can be grown in Kelantan and Terengganu.

MOHIDEEN ABDUL KADER
President
Consumers' Association of
Penang

We need food, not nicotine addiction

AKHBAR : THE SUN
MUKA SURAT : 1
RUANGAN : MUKA HADAPAN

Vape temptations

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PETALING JAYA: Concerned parents and educators are calling for tighter controls on the packaging and sale of vaping products to minors to prevent a rise in vaping among teenagers.

They pointed out that the colourful designs and fruity flavours available on the market are masking the health dangers of vaping.

A 41-year-old mother, Nalini Veeraiah, recently expressed shock when her nine-year-old son asked her for a vape device.

"The colourful design made it attractive to him. He was curious about vaping after having seen others doing it," she said, adding that it was a good thing that her son approached her and did not buy it on his own or through his friends.

Nalini wants the government to step in to ensure that minors do not have access to such products.

Chemistry teacher Haslinda Samsuddin, 38, said vaping among school students is on the rise and spot checks are conducted regularly to ensure that vaping devices are not brought to school.

"The well-being of children at school is important to the board, which prohibits the sale of harmful items such as e-cigarettes and junk food," she said.

"Our discipline teachers conduct spot checks on students twice or thrice a week."

Haslinda said the checks were in addition to programmes her school holds annually to raise awareness on the dangers of smoking and ensuring a drug-free lifestyle among students.

"Given the prevalence of social media and various environmental factors, children may be

Parents, educators want tight curbs on packaging and sale of e-cigarettes to keep them away from minors

vulnerable to certain influences that can impact their behaviour and beliefs.

"It is important for parents to be aware that vaping, in particular, has been linked to addiction, and can have adverse effects on a child's social development," she added.

Azry Ghazali, 67, a former parent-teacher association president of a primary school in Klang, felt that colourful vape devices look more like toys and are becoming more appealing to youngsters.

"Vaping among primary and secondary school students is a serious issue that requires continued attention and action by the authorities," he said.

"While the government has taken steps to address the problem, parents and teachers must also play a role in educating young people about the dangers of vaping."

"The authorities should conduct random checks on shops such as stalls and supermarkets near schools. They could be selling these products to students."

Following the removal of liquid nicotine from regulation under the Poisons Act 1952, the vape industry has experienced accelerated growth. This is said to have led to more assertive marketing tactics aimed at younger groups, including minors.

Lawyer Kokila Vaani Vadiveloo called for the

industry to be regulated, and suggested that vape retailers ensure age verification protocols are followed when selling such items.

"It is disheartening to note that current Malaysian laws do not explicitly allow or explicitly ban e-cigarettes or vaping devices," she said.

"Therefore, e-cigarettes and vaping devices exist without any regulations to govern their use or reduce their harm to vulnerable children or teenagers."

"The Control of Tobacco Product Regulations 2004 is known to govern the sale, distribution and advertising of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes. According to these regulations, it is an offence to sell or supply any tobacco products, including vape products, to individuals under the age of 18."

"Retailers selling vape products must train employees to understand age verification protocols and keep accurate records of sales. Providing training to employees on age verification procedures could also be helpful in preventing accidental sales to minors."

Kokila Vaani urged retailers to prominently display signage warning against sales to those



who are underage, limit access to vape products on the sales floor, request identification from all potential customers, and implement strict record-keeping protocols.

"It is also crucial for retailers to keep accurate records of sales transactions, including the date, time and details of each sale. This documentation can serve as evidence of compliance and may be required in case of inspections or audits," she added.

AKHBAR : THE SUN

MUKA SURAT : 2

RUANGAN : NEWS WITHOUT BORDERS

Infected mosquitoes released to combat dengue

JASIN: The Health Ministry will expand the programme of releasing Wolbachia-infected mosquitoes to states that have seen an increase in dengue fever cases.

Deputy Health Minister Lukanisman Awang Sauni said the programme has so far involved 27 localities in Malacca, Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, and Penang, and will be expanded to Sabah as part of dengue-control measures.

"In Malacca, 300,000 mosquitoes have been released since March last year, with Taman Bemban Jaya selected for this programme based on the criteria set by the ministry and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

"In the first phase, the project used the method of releasing eggs of Aedes mosquitoes carrying the Wolbachia strain, and now it is entering the second phase, which is the release of adult mosquitoes with Wolbachia."

He was speaking after releasing the mosquitoes under the second phase at Taman Bemban Jaya yesterday.

He said under the second phase, nearly 100,000 adult mosquitoes with Wolbachia would be released, 10,000 per release, for eight consecutive weeks starting yesterday.

On the impact of the mosquito release, Lukanisman said no case of dengue fever was reported from the locality in the 21st epidemiological week, demonstrating a very positive result.

"In addition to no cases being reported, the density of Aedes mosquitoes with Wolbachia has reached the ministry's target of 80%. The second locality in the state will be selected in accordance with ministry and WHO regulations.

"Monitoring will be carried out in addition to providing information to the community on a continuous basis so that they do not kill these mosquitoes, as it is one of the safest and most effective methods of combating dengue outbreaks."

Malacca had 385 dengue cases reported as of May 27, including one reported active outbreak.

A total of 15 outbreaks were registered for the 21st epidemiological week, 13 of which were controlled outbreaks, one recurrent outbreak and one hotspot. - Bernama

AKHBAR : THE SUN
MUKA SURAT : 3
RUANGAN : NEWS WITHOUT BORDERS

Health White Paper needs Cabinet nod

KUALA LUMPUR: The Health White Paper will be taken to the Cabinet next week for approval before being tabled in Parliament, said Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa.

"It must be brought to Cabinet before we can table it in Parliament," she said after officiating the Association of Private Hospitals Malaysia (APHM) International Healthcare Conference and Exhibition here yesterday.

The Health White Paper is the beginning of the journey of reforming the health system. One of the strategic thrusts is to ensure the sustainability of healthcare funding by diversifying funding sources for health, where special focus is given to the development of a national health insurance scheme.

When asked whether Malaysia will follow in Singapore and Thailand's footsteps in imposing a ban on vaping, Zaliha said such a move must be looked at from various aspects, including public health and the economy.

Commenting on the shortage of nurses at private health institutions, Zaliha said the situation was likely due to distribution problems and required reallocating measures.

She said one of the things that needed to be looked into is the recruitment of nurses from abroad to help overcome shortage.

Earlier, APHM president Dr Kuljit Singh said based on a survey in November 2022, an additional 9,224 nurses are needed from 2023 to 2025. - Bernama