

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 1

RUANGAN : -

RUU Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022

Penyelamat generasi masa depan



Oleh Suzalina Halid
suzalina@bh.com.my

Kuala Lumpur: Rang Undang-Undang (RUU) Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022 bertujuan melindungi generasi muda daripada terjebak dengan tabiat merokok, selain mengurangkan kematian akibat penyakit berkait rokok.

Selain itu, ia juga diyakini dapat mengurangkan peratus perokok di Malaysia kepada kurang lima peratus menjelang 2040 berbanding kira-kira 21 peratus ketika ini.

Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Ja-

maluddin, berkata jika sasaran lima peratus tidak dicapai dalam tempoh itu, negara akan kehilangan dua juta nyawa akibat merokok, termasuk perokok pasif.

"Kita yakin dua juta mampu diselamatkan daripada kematian disebabkan penyakit berkaitan aktiviti merokok, dalam tempoh sehingga 2040 sekiranya RUU Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022 diluluskan.

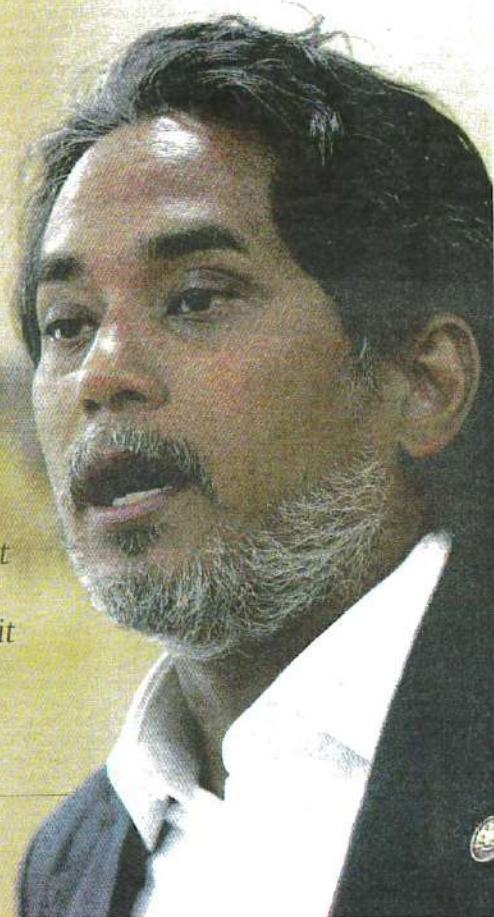
"Setiap tahun banyak nyawa hilang disebabkan kematian pramatang yang berpunca daripada kesan akibat merokok," katanya.

Menurut rekod Pertubuhan Kesihatan Dunia (WHO), tabiat merokok membunuh lebih lapan juta penduduk dunia setiap tahun, termasuk 1.2 juta perokok pasif.

Perokok pasif adalah mereka tidak merokok tetapi menghidu atau menyedut asap rokok yang dihasilkan oleh perokok aktif.

Undang-undang ini juga dapat menurunkan kes tiga penyakit utama akibat tabiat merokok iaitu barah paru-paru, sakit jantung dan penyakit paru-paru tersumbat kronik (COPD)

Khairy Jamaluddin,
Menteri Kesihatan



AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 7

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

RUU Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022

KKM jamin tubuh jawatankuasa bebas

Kaji keberkesanan undang-undang sebelum dikuatkuasakan pada 2025

Oleh Suzalina Halid
suzalina@bh.com.my

Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) memberi jaminan akan menubuhkan jawatankuasa bebas untuk mengkaji Rang Undang-Undang (RUU) Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022, sebelum dikuatkuasakan pada 2025, walaupun penilaian mandatori tidak diperuntukkan dalam undang-undang berkenaan.

Menterinya, Khairy Jamaluddin, berkata KKM akan memberi perlindungan dalam undang-undang terbahit.

Mengulas lanjut katanya, kajian berhubung keberkesanan RUU itu juga akan dilaksanakan jawatankuasa bebas itu selepas tempoh 10 tahun undang-undang itu dikuatkuasakan dengan laporannya di-

bentangkan di Parlimen.

Direkod dalam hansard

"Laporan ini akan dibentangkan di Parlimen dan bukannya kepada KKM, selepas tempoh 10 tahun, kajian sama dibuat sama ada perundangan ini perlu dipinda jika tidak berkesan.

"Saya akan sebut dalam ucapan pembentangan nanti supaya ia direkodkan dalam hansard (penyata rasmi) bahawa menteri memberikan perlindungan jaminan mengenai jawatankuasa bebas ini.

"Mengetahui RUU ini, sebenarnya memang sudah ada Peraturan-Peraturan Kawalan Hasil Tembakau (PPKHT) 2004 contohnya membabitkan kesalahan merokok di tempat larangan.

"Jika sebelum ini, denda maksimum mengikut peraturan itu adalah RM10,000 namun untuk RUU ini ia diturunkan kepada

RM5,000. Cuma daripada aspek penjualan, kita perketatkan undang-undang... jadi kalau masih ada Ahli Parlimen tidak sokong, saya harap jangan ganggu laluan RUU ini," katanya pada sidang media, di sini.

Pada masa sama, Khairy berkata, jaminan sama turut diberikan kepada Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Pilihan Khas Kesihatan, Sains dan Inovasi (PSC) Parlimen, Dr Kelvin Yip Lee Wuen, berhubung penubuhan jawatankuasa terbahit.

Katanya, sebelum ini PSC meminta supaya adanya penilaian mandatori terkandung di dalam RUU itu, selain syor lain jawatankuasa terbahit untuk dipertingkatkan tetapi gantian nikotin, tiada hukuman penjara dan rekod jenayah bagi GEG, selain memperbanyakkan program berhenti merokok dilaksanakan.



RUU Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022

Apakah itu Generasi penamat (GEG)?

GEG merujuk kepada generasi yang dilahirkan pada

1 Januari 2007
dan seterusnya

Generasi ini

TIDAK BOLEH

- ☒ Menggunakan
- ☒ menghisap
- ☒ berada dalam milikan mereka

sebarang produk merokok termasuk rokok elektronik!

Apakah itu RUU Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022?

Satu undang-undang bagi mengawal aktiviti promosi, penjualan, pembelian dan penggunaan sebarang produk tembakau termasuk rokok elektronik/vape serta larangan penggunaan produk merokok kepada generasi yang lahir pada 1 Januari 2007 dan seterusnya

Kenapa Malaysia melaksanakan peruntukan GEG dalam RUU Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022?

- Melindungi generasi muda di Malaysia daripada menjadi mangsa ketagihan produk merokok termasuk rokok elektronik/vape
- Menurunkan peratus perokok di Malaysia, kepada kurang daripada 5% menjelang tahun 2040

Sumber: Unit Kawalan Tembakau, KKM

Pelaksanaan akta dapat turunkan kes 3 penyakit utama

Dari Muka 1

Khairy juga yakin pelaksanaan akta itu kelak juga dapat menurunkan kes tiga penyakit utama berkaitan tabiat merokok iaitu barah paru-paru, sakit jantung dan penyakit paru-paru tersumbat kronik (COPD) akibat merokok.

Sehubungan itu, Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) berharap semua Ahli Parlimen dapat memainkan peranan mereka dengan menyokong RUU itu apabila dibentangkan untuk bacaan kali kedua di Dewan Rakyat, esok.

Jika diluluskan kelak, undang-undang ini akan berkuat kuasa pada 2025.

"Tidak banyak RUU di Malaysia yang boleh menyelamatkan sehingga dua juta nyawa rakyat... kita sudah pun membelanjakan lebih RM6.2 bilion pada 2020 untuk merawat tiga penyakit utama akibat tabiat merokok.

"Kalau kita mengambil tindakan kos rawatan tiga penyakit itu, ia dijangka mencecah RM8.8 bilion pada 2030 sedangkan cukai yang kita kutip daripada jualan

rokok hanya sekitar RM3 bilion.

"Tiada nilai ambang atau jumlah minimum yang selamat bagi rokok, ini adalah fakta saintifik... benda lain kalau ia diambil secara sederhana ia tidak memudaratkan seperti gula atau garam namun ia berbeza dengan rokok.

"Makan garam atau gula secara berlebihan anda seorang sahaja yang sakit, begitu juga arak, berbanding merokok yang memberi kesan kesihatan terhadap orang lain (perokok pasif)," katanya.

Berikutan itu, Khairy berharap isu pasaran haram rokok, vape dan penguatkuasaan tidak dijadikan alasan oleh Ahli Parlimen untuk tidak menyokong RUU itu.

Rabu lalu, Khairy membentangkan RUU Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022 bagi bacaan kali pertama membabitkan tiga peruntukan untuk menangani masalah merokok.

Iaitu, melarang pembelian dan penjualan produk tembakau atau e-rokok kepada mana-mana individu yang lahir pada dan se-

lepas 1 Januari 2007, keperluan pendaftaran produk merokok.

Peruntukan ketiga membabitkan kuasa menteri melarang sebarang bentuk produk merokok sekiranya terdapat situasi akut atau kritikal yang membahayakan nyawa, kesihatan atau keselamatan penduduk akibat penggunaannya.

Kawal selia produk e-rokok

Malaysia dan New Zealand adalah dua negara pertama yang membawa RUU GEG ke Parlimen masing-masing, minggu lalu.

Ketika ini, Malaysia tidak mempunyai undang-undang khusus untuk kawal selia produk tembakau, e-rokok dan vape. Rokok ketika ini dikuatkuasakan mengikut Seksyen 36 Akta Makanan 1983.

Khairy berkata, dengan pelaksanaan undang-undang itu kelak, ia bukan sahaja membolehkan kawalan rokok ada undang-undang sendiri, ia turut membenarkan kerajaan mengawal selia produk e-rokok dan vape yang berada secara tidak sah di pasaran negara kerana tiadanya pe-

raturan khusus mengawalnya.

"Tiada mekanisme perundangan untuk kawal selia rokok alaf baharu ini, sebab itu RUU ini diperlukan kerana vape sebuah industri yang tidak terkawal justeru melalui RUU ini ia bukan sahaja untuk GEG tetapi juga mengawal selia e-rokok dan vape.

"Selama ini kita kehilangan cukai sehingga RM1 bilion setahun sejak 10 tahun lalu disebabkan pasaran e-rokok dan vape yang berada di luar lingkungan undang-undang. RUU ini juga dapat sokongan industri vape kerana mereka mahu dikawal selia dan tak nak wujud dalam keadaan melanggar undang-undang.

"Pada mulanya badan bukan kerajaan (NGO) kesihatan minta kita haramkan vape (sepenuhannya) tetapi ia adalah sukar, maka saya berkompromi untuk melaksanakan GEG dan mereka akur untuk kita kawal selia vape," katanya memaklumkan proses RUU ini sudah dimulakan KKM sejak 12 tahun lalu.

Kerajaan dijangka dapat mengutip cukai sebanyak RM500 ju-

ta hingga RM1 bilion setahun daripada industri vape apabila ia dikawal selia melalui perundangan.

Bagaimanapun, katanya, penggunaan e-rokok dan vape tetap tidak akan dibenarkan dalam kalangan GEG kerana KKM menolak kaedah pengurangan kemudaratkan (harm reduction) dan tidak mahu golongan yang belum mula merokok terjebak dengan rokok alaf baharu.

Beliau juga memberi jaminan apabila undang-undang itu dilaksanakan kelak tidak akan menyebabkan golongan GEG yang melakukan kesalahan memiliki rekod jenayah ataupun dikenakan penjara, sebaliknya dikompas maksimum RM50 sahaja, manakala denda maksimum RM5,000 jika dibawa ke mahkamah.

"Tiada penjenayahan (melalui undang-undang ini kepada GEG) malah sebelum ini di bawah peraturan kawalan hasil tembakau 2004, hanya kompas dikenakan bagi kesalahan penggunaan rokok bagi mereka di bawah usia 18 tahun," katanya.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
 MUKA SURAT : 15
 RUANGAN : NASIONAL

RUU Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022

JKPK mahu pelaksanaan selaras hak kanak-kanak

Jawatankuasa bimbang peraturan disalah guna termasuk beri hukuman tidak setimpal kesalahan

Oleh Latifah Arifin
 latifah@bh.com.my

Kuala Lumpur: Jawatankuasa Pilihan Khas Hal-Ehwal Wanita, Kanak-Kanak dan Pembangunan Sosial (JKPK) berharap badan itu diberi peluang untuk menilai sama ada larangan, liabiliti dan penguatkuasaan Rang Undang-Undang (RUU) Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022 selaras dengan Konvensyen

Hak Kanak-Kanak (CRC) Pertubuhan Bangsa-Bangsa Bersatu (PBB) yang diratifikasi oleh Malaysia pada 1995.

Pengerusinya, Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said, berkata pihaknya kluatir fasal mengenai penguatkuasaan RUU itu yang mungkin terdedah kepada penyalahgunaan, memandangkan ia membabitkan golongan bawah umur termasuk kanak-kanak.

"Merujuk kepada RUU Kawalan Hasil Tembakau dan Merokok 2022 yang dibentang dan dibaca kali pertama di Parlimen pada 26 Julai lalu, JKPK menghargai aspirasi Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) untuk mencapai generasi penamat (GEG) bagi produk tembakau demi kesihatan rakyat.

"Namun, pihak JKPK kluatir fasal mengenai penguatkuasaan RUU akan membuka ruang un-

tuk penyalahgunaan dan salah tafsir serta hukuman yang tidak setimpal dengan kesalahan," katanya.

Kenyataan itu dikeluarkan bersama lapan lagi Ahli Jawatankuasa JKPK termasuk Ahli Parlimen Rompin, Datuk Sri Hasan Arifin; Ahli Parlimen Kota Samarahan, Datuk Rubiah Wang; Ahli Parlimen Kemaman, Che Alias Hamid dan Ahli Parlimen Kuantan, Fuziah Salleh.

Pertikai skop kuasa pegawai

Jelasnya, antara kebimbangan JKPK adalah berhubung fasal 24, yang memberi kuasa kepada menteri untuk melantik mana-mana individu untuk menjadi pegawai dalam penguatkuasaan akta berkenaan.

Selain itu, pihaknya turut memberi penekanan mengenai skop kuasa pegawai yang diberi kuasa menyiasat, memasuki pre-

mis, mengambil sampel, menghentikan, menggeledah dan menyita dengan atau tanpa waran dan sebagainya seperti yang diperuntukkan di bawah fasal 24, fasal 26, fasal 27, fasal 28, fasal 32 dan fasal 33.

"JKPK turut gusar kerana penguatkuasaan ini membabitkan golongan bawah umur dan pengendalian golongan ini memerlukan pegawai terlatih dan mempunyai sensitiviti kanak-kanak, selaras norma antarabangsa.

"Fasal 54(1)(b) berkenaan kompaun kesalahan juga perlu diteliti dengan lebih mendalam atas implikasinya ke atas golongan bawah umur," katanya.

JKPK berharap KKM merujuk RUU berkenaan kepada Jawatankuasa Pilihan Khas Kesihatan, Sains dan Inovasi sebelum pembentangan di Dewan Rakyat.

"JKPK turut menyokong syor nombor 13 Jawatankuasa Pilihan

JKPK kluatir fasal mengenai penguatkuasaan RUU itu mungkin terdedah penyalahgunaan, memandangkan ia membabitkan golongan bawah umur termasuk kanak-kanak

Azalina Othman
 Said,
 Pengerusi
 JKPK



Khas Kesihatan, Sains dan Inovasi yang tidak bersetuju dengan cadangan hukuman jenayah yang dikenakan kepada kesalahan yang membabitkan remaja.

"Kami sedia membantu KKM berkenaan RUU tersebut dari perspektif hak kanak-kanak sebelum bacaan kedua di Dewan Rakyat," katanya.

Rabu lalu, Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin memben-

tangkan RUU itu yang mahu mewujudkan generasi bebas merokok termasuk vape bagi mereka yang lahir pada 2007 dan selepasnya.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 17
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Penularan COVID-19

Tak perlu lagi isi Kad Pengembara bermula esok

KKM beri kelonggaran susulan sistem kesihatan pada tahap baik, terkawal

Kuala Lumpur: Berkuat kuasa esok, semua pengembara yang memasuki Malaysia tidak perlu lagi mengisi dan melengkapkan ciri-ciri Kad Pengembara dalam aplikasi MySejahtera, kata Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin.

Dalam kenyataan semalam, beliau memaklumkan kelonggaran itu diputuskan berikutan keadaan sistem kesihatan kini berada pada tahap baik dan terkawal serta bertujuan untuk me-



Pengembara baru tiba di pintu masuk antarabangsa akan melalui pengimbas suhu serta diminta mengamalkan pemantauan status kesihatan sendiri. (Foto hiasan)

mudahkan prosedur kemasukan pengembara ke negara ini.

Pantau gejala

Khairy berkata Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) akan sentiasa menggiatkan aktiviti pemantauan gejala dalam kalangan pengembara di semua pintu masuk antarabangsa (PMA) Malaysia.

"Ketika ketibaan di PMA, sekiranya pengembara dikesan demam

melalui pengimbas suhu ataupun didapati tidak sihat melalui rujukan sendiri oleh pengembara, mereka akan dirujuk untuk pemeriksaan semula oleh pihak kesihatan," katanya.

Khairy berkata selepas penilaian kesihatan dibuat dan sekiranya disyaki menghidap penyakit berjangkit seperti COVID-19, monkeypox, MERS-CoV atau lain-lain, mereka akan dirujuk ke fasiliti ke-

sihatan berhampiran untuk pemeriksaan dan rawatan lanjut.

Justeru, beliau berkata semua pengembara yang baru tiba dari luar negara hendaklah mengamalkan pemantauan status kesihatan sendiri, mematuhi prosedur operasi standard (SOP) ditetapkan dan dinasihatkan ke fasiliti kesihatan berhampiran untuk pemeriksaan sekiranya didapati tidak sihat.

BERNAMA

Jangkitan harian kembali meningkat kepada 4,860 kes

Kuala Lumpur: Sebanyak 10 kematian akibat COVID-19 direkodkan setakat tengah malam kelmarin, dengan angka jangkitan harian kembali meningkat kepada 4,860 kes berbanding 3,926 kes sehari sebelumnya.

Daripada jumlah kematian itu, Selangor merekodkan jumlah tertinggi dengan lima kematian, termasuk satu daripadanya kematian di luar fasiliti kesihatan (BID), diikuti Johor dan Kedah masing-masing dua kes serta satu lagi korban di Sabah.

Sementara itu, laman sesawang COVIDNOW, melaporkan 4,849 kes penularan tempatan dan 11 kes import yang mendapat jangkitan dari luar negara.

Jumlah berkenaan sekali gus menjadikan jumlah kumulatif kes penularan wabak berkenaan di negara ini meningkat kepada 4,672,999 kes termasuk 37,915 jangkitan dari luar negara.

Sementara itu, jumlah keseluruhan angka kematian akibat jangkitan COVID-19 adalah 35,956 kes. Daripada jumlah itu, sebanyak 7,637 adalah kes BID.

48,300 kes aktif

Pertambahan kes baharu itu menjadikan sehingga kini terdapat sebanyak 48,300 kes aktif. Daripada jumlah itu, sebanyak 95.9 peratus atau 46,334 kes sedang menjalani kuarantin wajib di rumah.

Selebihnya iaitu 3.9 peratus bersamaan 1,883 kes masih dirawat di hospital, 23 orang di Pusat Kuarantin dan Rawatan COVID-19 (PKRC), selain 60 pesakit dimasukkan ke Unit Rawatan Rapi (ICU) termasuk 34 daripadanya memerlukan alat bantuan pernafasan.

Dalam pada itu, setakat tengah malam kelmarin, sebanyak 3,836 kes sembuh dilaporkan di negara ini menjadikan jumlah individu pulih daripada jang-

kitan berkenaan adalah sebanyak 4,588,743 kes.

Mengenai kadar penggunaan ICU bagi rawatan COVID-19 di seluruh negara, data menunjukkan sehingga kini ia adalah sebanyak 64.3 peratus, sementara kadar penggunaan keseluruhannya 69.2 peratus.

Bagi perincian mengikut negeri pula, penggunaan katil ICU tertinggi adalah di Kedah dengan 81.6 peratus; diikuti Johor (75 peratus), Selangor (73.8 peratus), Lembah Klang (72 peratus), Labuan (71.4 peratus), Putrajaya (70 peratus) dan Kelantan (69.6 peratus).

Ini diikuti Kuala Lumpur 67.4 peratus; Perak (66.3 peratus), Negeri Sembilan (65.3 peratus), Sabah (63.8 peratus), Melaka (58.5 peratus), Pahang (55.4 peratus), Perlis (52.6 peratus), Pulau Pinang (53.5 peratus), Sarawak (47.9 peratus) dan Terengganu, 47.6 peratus.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 8

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

KKM jamin semak semula Akta Produk Tembakau dan Merokok

PUTRAJAYA - Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) memberi jaminan kerajaan akan menyemak semula Akta Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022 sekiranya RUU itu diluluskan.

Menterinya, Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar berkata, semakan itu dicadangkan dibuat selepas 10 tahun akta tersebut dikuatkuasakan.

"Perkara ini akan saya sebut dalam pembentangan di dalam Dewan Rakyat Isnin ini agar ia direkodkan dalam Senarai Pernyataan Rasmi (*hansard*)," katanya.

Menurutnya, satu jawatankuasa bebas akan diwujudkan bagi tujuan itu.

"Jawatankuasa ini akan bentangkan laporan keberkesanan akta itu kepada Jawatankuasa Parlimen supaya penambahbaikan boleh dibuat," katanya.

Beliau berkata, langkah tersebut adalah antara syor dan nasihat Jawatankuasa Pilihan Khas Parlimen (PSC).

"Saya harap ahli Parlimen kalau ada yang tidak sokong, jangan ganggu laluan RUU ini," katanya.

Khairy berkata, setakat ini penglibatan dan sokongan ahli Parlimen adalah sangat baik.

"Secara keseluruhan, ramai ahli Parlimen yang menyokongnya. Ada antara mereka membangkitkan isu penguatkuasaan, sokong. Ada yang bangkitkan isu penguatkuasaan, rokok dan sebagainya.

"Saya beritahu kepada mereka yang mana boleh perketatkan, kita akan perketatkan dan ada garis panduan supaya tidak berlaku salah guna kuasa," katanya.

Mengulas mengenai dakwaan ada syarikat rokok (*big tobacco*) melobi ahli Parlimen berhubung dengan RUU itu,



KHAIRY

Khairy Jamaluddin mengakui perkara itu berlaku.

"Ada beberapa ahli Parlimen memberitahu (jumpa wakil syarikat rokok) saya dan cakap jangan risau, mereka akan sokong RUU," katanya.

Tegas Khairy, tindakan syarikat rokok tersebut merupakan kesalahan di bawah *The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control*.

"Mereka tidak boleh melobi atau campur tangan dalam perundangan mana-mana negara tentang kawalan tembakau.

"Kenapa kamu nak jual benda yang boleh bunuh orang dan mereka tahu rokok yang dijual itu boleh membunuh," katanya.

Menjawab persoalan berhubung kenapa kerajaan tidak melakukan tindakan

serupa terhadap arak, garam dan gula yang dilihat turut mendatangkan masalah kepada rakyat, Khairy berkata, tidak ada kuantiti selamat untuk rokok.

"Benda lain kalau ambil dengan sederhana, ia tidak akan memudaratkan.

"Makan garam, gula lebih, ia tidak mendatangkan kemudaratan kepada orang lain. Dia sahaja yang sakit.

"Tetapi rokok, di Amerika Syarikat sahaja, puluhan ribu meninggal akibat asap rokok," katanya.

Tambah Khairy, RUU itu dilihat mampu menyelamatkan dua juta nyawa akibat kematian pramatang menjelang tahun 2040 disebabkan rokok.

"Sebab itu saya merayu kepada ahli Parlimen untuk sama-sama kita luluskan RUU ini daripada kematian pramatang disebabkan perokok, sekali gus ia juga dapat membantu menurunkan kes berkaitan rokok," kata beliau.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 13

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

KKM mansuh keperluan isi Kad Pengembara



Kelonggaran itu diputuskan berikutan keadaan sistem kesihatan kini berada pada tahap baik dan terkawal.

KUALA LUMPUR - Berkuat kuasa 1 Ogos, semua pengembara yang memasuki Malaysia tidak perlu lagi mengisi dan melengkapkan ciri-ciri Kad Pengembara dalam aplikasi MySejahtera.

Menteri Kesihatan Khairy Jamaluddin berkata, kelonggaran itu diputuskan berikutan keadaan sistem kesihatan kini berada pada tahap baik dan terkawal serta bertujuan untuk memudahkan prosedur kemasukan pengembara ke negara ini.

Khairy berkata Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) akan sentiasa mempergiatkan aktiviti pemantauan gejala dalam kalangan pengembara di semua pintu masuk antarabangsa (PMA) Malaysia.

"Semasa ketibaan di PMA, sekiranya pengembara dikesan demam melalui pengimbas suhu ataupun didapati tidak

sihat melalui rujukan sendiri oleh pengembara, mereka akan dirujuk untuk pemeriksaan semula oleh pihak kesihatan," katanya dalam kenyataan pada Sabtu.

Khairy berkata selepas penilaian kesihatan dibuat dan sekiranya disyaki menghidap penyakit berjangkit seperti Covid-19, cacar monyet, MERS-CoV atau lain-lain, mereka akan dirujuk ke fasiliti kesihatan berhampiran untuk pemeriksaan dan rawatan lanjut.

Justeru, beliau berkata semua pengembara yang baru tiba dari luar negara hendaklah mengamalkan pemantauan status kesihatan sendiri, mematuhi prosedur operasi standard (SOP) ditetapkan dan hadir ke fasiliti kesihatan berhampiran sekiranya didapati tidak sihat. - *Bernama*

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

Rokok bukan sumber utama ekonomi negara

PUTRAJAYA: Industri rokok tempatan bukan penyumbang sumber utama ekonomi dan tidak menjejaskan pendapatan negara terutama perolehan cukai.

Dalam nada sinis, Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin berkata, kos rawatan yang ditanggung kerajaan ke atas pesakit membabitkan tabiat merokok adalah besar daripada kutipan cukai diperoleh.

Secara umum, industri rokok sah menyumbang cukai kurang RM3 bilion setahun atau 0.18 peratus daripada Keluaran Dalam Negara Kasar pada tahun lalu berbanding kos rawatan pesakit terbabit yang hampir mencecah RM6 bilion setahun.

Dari segi peluang pekerjaan kerana data Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia pada tahun lepas menunjukkan cuma seramai 1,119 orang terlibat dalam industri tembakau.

Justeru, ujarnya, Rang Undang-undang (RUU) Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022 adalah perlu bagi

mengawal selia industri tersebut dan membina generasi penamat (GEG).

"Ini belum lagi ketirisan pasaran haram jenayah penyeludupan yang menyebabkan kerajaan menanggung kerugian cukai hampir RM5 bilion setahun," katanya pada sidang akhbar di sini.

RUU itu bakal dibentangkan di Dewan Rakyat pada Isnin ini untuk bacaan kali kedua sebelum dibahas dan pengundian pada keesokan hari dengan penguatkuasaan bermula pada 2025.

Ketika ini dianggarkan terdapat hampir 5.4 juta perokok di seluruh Malaysia dan RUU tersebut juga buat julung kali meliputi penjualan vape yang selama ini bebas tanpa ada kawal selia.

"Saya tahu ada pemain industri tembakau cuba melobi Ahli-ahli Parlimen menolak RUU ini namun kita berharap tolong fikir masa depan GEG menikmati hak sihat tanpa sakit," katanya.

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA
MUKA SURAT : 8
RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

THR mampu hentikan tabiat merokok

Oleh ROSALINDA MD.SAID
rosalinda.said@mediamula.com.my

PETALING JAYA: Kira-kira 89 peratus rakyat Malaysia percaya kaedah pengurangan kemudaran tembakau (THR) mampu membantu menghentikan tabiat merokok dalam kalangan perokok.

Badan pemikir bukan kerajaan, Datametrics Research and Information Sdn. Bhd. (Dare) berkata, penemuan itu hasil kajian dilakukan oleh TGZ terhadap responden dalam kalangan perokok dan bukan perokok.

Pengarah Urusan Dare, Pankaj Kumar berkata, daripada jumlah itu, seramai 77 peratus bersetuju yang vape merupakan alternatif praktikal sebagai pengganti rokok sekali gus membantu perokok mengurangkan dan akhirnya berhenti daripada aktiviti berkenaan.

Katanya, vape merupakan antara kaedah THR selain tembakau tanpa asap dan beg nikotin.

Malah, kaedah berkenaan dalam masa sama mampu membantu kerajaan mengurangkan kos rawatan penyakit yang disebabkan rokok.

"Walaupun 71 peratus responden mengakui sukar untuk berhenti merokok, namun dua pertiga daripadanya yakin vape membantu mereka berhenti mahu pun mengurangkan tabiat berkenaan.

"Malah, menurut responden, vape juga merupakan yang paling praktikal berbanding pendekatan lain," katanya dalam laporan itu.

Menurut laporan Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO), kira-kira lapan juta kematian direkodkan di dunia berpunca akibat rokok sama ada barah, penyakit kardiovaskular, strok dan lain-lain berkaitan kulit serta gusi.

Pankaj berkata, penggunaan vape dikenal pasti 95 peratus kurang mudarat berbanding rokok tradisional berdasarkan kajian yang dilakukan oleh agensi kesihatan awam, Public Health England.

Di samping itu, katanya, lebih 50,000 perokok dilaporkan berjaya berhenti merokok dengan bantuan vape.

Dalam pada itu, beliau berkata, Malaysia memerlukan strategi tepat termasuk peratu-

ran dalam memanfaatkan sepenuhnya potensi vape sebagai produk yang dapat mengurangkan kemudaran seperti mana langkah yang dilaksanakan di New Zealand dan Singapura.

Menurutnya, kerangka peraturan mesti ditentukan dengan baik di samping mengambil kira manfaat kesihatan awam.

"New Zealand merupakan antara negara di dunia yang terbuka menerima e-rokok dan mempromosikan peranti itu sebagai satu cara untuk rakyatnya berhenti merokok," katanya.

Baru-baru ini, Kabinet meluluskan Rang Undang-Undang (RUU) kawalan tembakau dan merokok yang melarang aktiviti merokok dan pemilikan sebarang produk berkaitan rokok termasuk jenis elektronik bagi generasi muda yang lahir selepas 2007.

Polisi dikenali sebagai *Generational End Game* (Generasi Penamat) itu telah dibentang di Parlimen, namun, langkah drastik yang diambil itu mencekutkan seribu satu persoalan mengenai keberkesanannya terutama dalam beberapa situasi terkini di negara ini.



KAJIAN mendapati lebih 50,000 perokok dilaporkan berjaya berhenti merokok dengan bantuan kaedah pengurangan kemudaran tembakau.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 1

RUANGAN : NEWS/STORY OF THE DAY

'MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION'

HEALTH Minister Khairy Jamaluddin is appealing to MPs to support the Tobacco and Smoking Control Bill, or generational endgame law, that will be tabled in Parliament tomorrow for the second reading. The bill, which bans smoking and prohibits the ownership of tobacco and vaping products by those born in 2007 and after, will save an estimated two million lives up to 2040 and safeguard future generations.

» REPORTS BY ADIB POVERA ON PAGE 5

PIC BY ASYRAF HAMZAH



AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NEWS/NATION

10 DEATHS

4,860 new Covid-19 cases reported

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia logged 4,860 new Covid-19 cases on Friday, an increase from 3,926 cases the day before.

According to CovidNow and Github data, 4,849 were local transmissions and 11 were imported.

The bulk of the cases were reported in Selangor with 1,649 infections, and 1,466 in Kuala Lumpur. Other states reported under 300 cases.

Ten deaths were recorded on Friday, including one brought-in-dead case.

Five deaths were reported in Selangor, two each in Johor and Kedah, and one in Sabah.

The death toll now stands at 35,956 since the pandemic began two years ago.

There were 48,300 active cases and 3,836 recoveries reported



People queuing to get a Covid-19 vaccine booster shot at a vaccination centre in Pavilion Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur, on Friday. PIC BY DWEE AH CHUN

on Friday.

Of the active cases, 46,334 were undergoing home quarantine, 23 were at Low-Risk Covid-19 Quarantine and Treatment Centres, 1,883 were hospitalised and 60 were warded at intensive care units. A total of 34 patients in the ICU were ventilated.

As for Covid-19 vaccination, 2,583,627 adults aged above 60 have received one dose of the booster vaccine, and 151,356 have received the second booster dose.

A total of 16,137,432 adults have

received one dose of the booster dose and 336,661 have been administered with the second booster shot.

For adolescents aged 12 to 17, 2,883,960 have completed their vaccination, with 45,762 having taken their first booster dose and 237 their second booster dose.

Meanwhile, for children aged five to 11, 1,496,301 have completed their vaccination.

In total, 27,444,054 people have completed their vaccination with 16,184,192 having taken their first booster shot.

ON MYSEJAHTERA APP

Traveller's Pass not needed from tomorrow

KUALA LUMPUR: Starting tomorrow, travellers entering the country will no longer need to submit details and complete the Traveller's Pass feature on the MySejahtera application.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the relaxation followed the development of the country's current health system, which was good and under control.

The relaxation would also facilitate the entry procedures of travellers to Malaysia, he said.

However, he stressed that the ministry would continue to monitor travellers who exhibited symptoms of Covid-19, monkeypox, MERS-CoV and other infectious diseases before referring them to health facilities for further treatment.

"The ministry will continue to monitor the health symptoms of

travellers at all international ports of entry into Malaysia.

"Upon arrival, if a traveller is detected with a fever through the thermal scanners, or found to be unwell through self-referral by the traveller, they will be referred for re-examination by the Health Department," he said in a statement yesterday.

Khairy reminded travellers arriving from abroad to monitor their health status, comply with the standard operating procedures and go to the nearest health facility for examination if found unwell.

It was announced that Malaysians returning to the country were no longer required to complete the Traveller's Pass feature on the MySejahtera application. Foreigners would still have to complete and submit their details.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NEWS/NATION

LOBBYING IN PARLIAMENT

'TOBACCO LOBBYISTS COMMITTED OFFENCE'

Industry players not allowed to interfere in legal affairs of country on tobacco control, says Khairy

ADIB POVERA
PUTRAJAYA
news@nst.com.my

TOBACCO industry players who were in Parliament to lobby against the generational endgame (GEG) legislation have committed an offence under the Framework Convention of Tobacco Control.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin confirmed that there were tobacco players "lobbying in Parliament".

He also said that a member of parliament had met with someone from the "three big tobacco" companies, but the MP gave an assurance that he would support the Tobacco and Smoking Control Bill.

"According to the (Framework) Convention of Tobacco Control,

interested parties in the tobacco industry are not allowed to lobby and interfere in the legal affairs of any country on tobacco control.

"The MP who met them, however, has pledged to continue supporting the bill. The MP only wanted to hear the explanation (from the tobacco lobbyists)," he said in an interview with the media on Friday.

Khairy, however, did not reveal the identity of the MP or the name of the tobacco industry players.

He said he would fight for the bill to be passed in the current parliamentary sitting.

"Why are you selling something that could kill people? Why?"

"And the big tobacco knows that (what) they are selling (is) something that kills people."

He also responded to critics who asked why the ministry did not pursue similar generational bans on alcohol, sugar or salt.

"Unlike these three items, there is no minimum quantity or threshold that is safe for smoking."

"That is a scientific fact and that is also being held on to (by governments) in other countries," he said.



A sign prohibiting the sale of cigarettes to those aged under 18 on display at a shop in Kuala Lumpur recently. PIC BY EFFENDY RASHID

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 5

RUANGAN : NEWS/STORY OF THE DAY

TOBACCO BILL

MINISTRY: TWO MILLION WILL DIE IF LAW NOT PASSED

Khairy hopes MPs will make right decision and pass the smoking endgame bill

ADIB POVERA
PUTRAJAYA
news@nst.com.my

TWO million deaths in less than 20 years. This is the number of deaths linked to smoking tobacco and nicotine products that the Health Ministry estimates the country will see if nothing is done to eradicate the habit in future generations.

In an interview on Friday, Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the ministry projected that it would cost the government RM8.8 billion by 2030 to treat three major smoking-related diseases — lung cancer, heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

This is almost three times the estimated RM3 billion in tax collected from the sale of tobacco products.

"The ministry estimates that we can prevent two million deaths by 2040 if the Tobacco and Smoking Control Bill is passed in Parliament and the tobacco generational endgame (GEG) is implemented.

"I hope members of parliament (MPs) will make the right decision and choose to save two million lives, save our future generation and protect them from being addicted to smoking cigarettes and products containing nicotine, an extremely dangerous poison," Khairy said.

The bill, which contains a clause to ban smoking and prohibit the ownership of tobacco products by people born in 2007 and after, is scheduled to be tabled for its second reading at the Dewan Rakyat tomorrow.

If the bill is passed, it is expected to be enforced in 2025.

Khairy described the bill as crucial to legalising and controlling the sale of e-cigarettes, which is being conducted "illegally" as the matter was in the grey area of existing regulations.

The government would be able to collect tax once the sale of e-cigarettes is legalised following the passing of the bill.

Khairy said the government had missed out on RM500 million in taxes annually since the sale of e-cigarettes began about 10 years ago.

"This is a conservative estimation, the figure could reach up to RM1 billion (annually). But the government could not collect tax from something illegal."

The sale of e-cigarettes, also known as vape, would remain illegal to people born in and after 2007 once the bill is passed.

Khairy said the ministry be-



Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin speaking in an interview on the Tobacco and Smoking Control Bill in Putrajaya on Friday. PIC BY MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

lieved in tobacco harm elimination instead of reduction.

"E-cigarettes contain nicotine, and nicotine addiction is 80 per cent higher compared with other substances.

"It takes only 10 seconds for smoke from nicotine products to reach our brain and two days for people to get addicted to it.

"It is extremely difficult to stop this habit once people are addicted to smoking."

He said those born in and after 2007 caught smoking would not be criminalised or jailed once the GEG law is enforced.

"Offences under the GEG (for offenders born in and after 2007) will not be registered under the Registration of Criminals (and Undesirable Persons Act 1969)."

He said the proposed maximum fine of RM5,000 for offenders was only a deterrent.

Under the existing practice, he said, underage buyers would be slapped with a RM50 compound under the Control of Tobacco Product Regulation 2004.

"Since 2019, 10,421 compounds have been issued to underage buyers.

"Of the total, only 1.4 per cent, or 145 cases, have been charged in court, with all offenders pleading guilty.

"The average fine issued by the court was RM200 to those who pleaded guilty."

With all the arguments presented, Khairy said there was no reason for MPs not to support the bill.

"Nevertheless, we are confident that the bill and GEG will help us eliminate the smoking habit in the country."

If the bill is passed, an independent committee will be set up to carry out a mandatory evaluation of the effectiveness of the proposed law before it is enforced.

Khairy said the committee would conduct another round of review in the event the law requires amendments 10 years after it has been enforced.

He said the setting up of the

committee was among the recommendations made during his engagement sessions with the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC).

Other recommendations made by the PSC, said Khairy, included for the GEG to be imposed on people born in and after 2008 instead of 2005.

"However, I told the committee that 20,000 people will die if we delay the GEG to apply to people who are born in and after 2008.

"We reached a consensus for the GEG to be applicable to people born in and after 2007, who are now 15 years old."

He said the ministry would hold more engagement sessions with those involved in the tobacco and e-cigarette industries before the GEG is enforced.

The ministry is looking at several mechanisms, such as the use of QR codes and identification card readers, in the implementation and enforcement of the GEG to not inconvenience those unaffected by the law.

Khairy: 20 to 30 years to see impact of smoking endgame law on economy

PUTRAJAYA: It will take 20 to 30 years to see the tobacco generational endgame (GEG) legislation's impact on the economy.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the tobacco industry contributed only RM3 billion in taxes, or 0.81 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP).

Based on a survey conducted by the ministry, Khairy said the loss in productivity caused by smoking would be higher than the industry's GDP contribution if the Tobacco and Smoking Control Bill is defeated in Parliament.

"It will take a long time before the tobacco industry becomes

extremely small after the GEG law is in force.

"The economic impact will not happen overnight. For example, if you are 18 years old now, you can smoke until the day you die."

He dismissed claims that the GEG law would lead to a rise in illicit cigarette smuggling.

"Logically, the demand for cigarettes will drop when it becomes a norm among people born after 2007 (not to smoke).

"Automatically, the demand for illicit cigarettes will drop when there is a reduction in the demand for cigarettes."

Khairy gave an assurance that

his ministry was working with other ministries and agencies to stamp out illicit cigarettes.

"It does not mean we can't do the right thing just because the illicit (cigarette) market exists.

"In fact, we can do both — pass the GEG law and fight the illicit market at the same time."

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NATION

Traveller's Card not required

PETALING JAYA: Entry into Malaysia has been further eased with travellers no longer needing to fill in the Traveller's Card.

Beginning tomorrow, the requirement to complete the Traveller's Card on the MySejahtera app as part of Covid-19 restrictions will be lifted.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said this was to simplify procedures for those entering Malaysia.

He added that the decision was made with the view that the current healthcare system was at a good and controlled level.

"The ministry will beef up efforts to detect travellers with (unusual) symptoms at all international points of entry," Khairy said in a statement yesterday.

Upon arrival, if a person is detected with fever through the thermal scanner or found to be unwell, they would be referred for an examination by the Health Department.

If there is a case of suspected illness from infectious diseases such as Covid-19, monkeypox, MERS-CoV or others, the traveller would be referred to a nearby health facility for further check-up and treatment, he added.

AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NATION

GEG, a move in the right direction

THE good news is that the long-awaited Tobacco and Smoking Control Bill, also known as the "Generational End Game" (GEG), was tabled in the Dewan Rakyat last Wednesday.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin tabled the Bill for the first reading, conceding that the law will apply to those born from 2007 onwards, and not 2005 as initially proposed.

He said this would allow sufficient time for community education, a solid implementation plan and enforcement.

There are plans to push this Bill, with the second and third readings done, before Aug 4.

If GEG becomes law, those born in and after 2007 will be prohibited from smoking, buying or possessing any type of smoking products, including electronic cigarettes or vape devices, even after reaching the age of 18.

Shopkeepers and cigarette vendors will also be barred from selling such products to this group.

The National Health and Morbidity Survey 2019 estimated that 4.9 million Malaysians aged 15 and above are smokers.

If GEG is passed, the percentage of Malaysian smokers is estimated to be less than 5% by 2040.

But here is the bad news: the bipartisan Dewan Rakyat special

select committee (PSC) on health, science and innovation has recommended that the Bill be postponed by three years.

Although the committee, in principle, agrees with the spirit of the Bill, it disagreed with some of the tabled proposed rules, regulations and punishments.

The committee wants the proposed law to be fine-tuned.

While tabling the new law is the right move to initiate the first step towards introducing the GEG, the challenge now is to set the Bill in the right direction.

According to the PSC, with different concerns raised by stakeholders, the Bill must be reviewed to ensure

the Act achieves its objective without causing unintended consequences.

However, although the PSC proposal to strengthen the law cannot be ignored, the three years postponement suggested is far too long.

While it is crucial that the GEG law is well-defined, if it is to be successful, it cannot be denied that decisive action is also needed to protect the health of the young.

As Khairy pointed out, more than two million lives will be saved within the next two decades if the GEG law to curb smoking is implemented.

He said the GEG could address cases of premature deaths caused

by smoking, as well as reduce smoking-related ailments.

As for the economic impact, while less than RM3bil is collected as tax revenue from the tobacco industry, the cost of three major diseases associated with smoking is estimated to reach RM8bil in 2030.

Noting the concerns of various rights groups, Khairy said GEG offenders would not have a criminal record nor be penalised with a jail term, but they would instead be issued compounds.

With proper enforcement, the GEG can assure a healthier future for our children.

It is now up to our lawmakers to do the right thing.

'Vote for GEG, save two million lives'

The Bill addresses premature deaths caused by smoking, says Khairy

By GERARD GIMINO
gerard.gimino@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: More than two million lives will be saved within the next two decades if the "Generational End Game" (GEG) law to curb smoking is implemented, says Khairy Jamaluddin.

The Health Minister said the Tobacco and Smoking Control Bill was introduced so that Malaysia could address cases of premature deaths caused by smoking, adding that it was also aimed at reducing smoking-related ailments.

"We have already spent more than RM6bil since 2020 to treat three major smoking-related ailments such as lung cancer, heart attacks and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

"The tax collected from cigarettes is only RM3bil," he said.

Khairy compared this to the cost

of treating smoking-related ailments, which is estimated to go up to RM8.8bil by 2030.

He added that there were not many other laws that could save these many lives, so this signalled GEG's importance.

"Let us pass this Bill together," he said, in calling for MPs to support the Bill, which is scheduled to be debated tomorrow.

Under the Bill, those born in and after 2007 will be prohibited from smoking, buying or possessing any type of smoking products, including electronic cigarettes or vape devices, even after reaching the age of 18.

Shopkeepers and cigarette vendors are also not allowed to sell such products to this group of people.

The proposed law is expected to come into force in 2025.

Khairy said GEG offenders would

not have a criminal record nor be penalised with a jail term, but compounds would be issued to them.

"Those found selling the products to the underaged, however, will face stern action which can include a jail sentence," he said.

He added that the proposed maximum RM5,000 fine was mainly a deterrent.

"From 2019, 10,421 compounds were issued to underage individuals purchasing cigarettes, with only 145 going to court.

"The average fine issued by the court was only RM200.

"At the same time, the highest fine issued by the court towards underage individuals purchasing cigarettes (under existing laws) was only RM300," he said.

As for illicit cigarettes, he said his ministry and other authorities would work towards stemming out

the problem.

He noted that some studies from tobacco companies stated that illicit cigarettes made up about 60% of the market while studies from economic experts estimated that it was about 48%.

Khairy said he would be spearheading efforts to flush out the black market for cigarettes while concurrently reducing the overall demand for smoking.

"Just because there is an illicit market, it doesn't mean we should not do the right thing.

We can do the 'Generational End Game' while also fighting the illicit market," he said.

He added that online sales of cigarettes or vapes would no longer be allowed once the Bill was passed.

"Under this law, we can take action through the Communications and Multimedia Commission, among others, as online sales of the

product would be an offence," he said.

He said the ministry would also hold engagements with sundry shops and vape industry players on the best mechanism to ensure the GEG is carried out effectively.

"There are several considerations such as using a QR code, checking identification cards, and also an app to purchase tobacco products," he said, adding that he intended for it to be a seamless process for both sellers and eligible consumers.

The Health Ministry had initially proposed the GEG ban to cover those born on Jan 1, 2005 and later, but recently revised it to those born on Jan 1, 2007 and later.

Watch the video
TheStarTV.com



AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 5

RUANGAN : NATION

Reports by ALIZA SHAH, BENJAMIN LEE and REBECCA RAJAENDRAM

'Vaping could lead teens to drug addiction'

PETALING JAYA: Vaping is a risky habit which could lead teenagers into a world of so-called safe drugs, says addiction therapist Chris Sekar.

"Teenagers will develop a false sense of confidence and control over the habit, which is a delusion," he said.

Chris, who is a member of the Addiction Medicine Association of Malaysia, said there is no such thing as a "safe habit".

"Non-nicotine vape does not have physical withdrawals, but certainly there will be cognitive withdrawals as in anger, depression, loss of focus and family dissension," said Chris, who used to smoke and was once a drug addict.

"It must be noted that juices that

come in cartridges can be laced with THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), thus misleading the young users, especially their parents who think that their teenagers are safe vapers," he said.

Community health physician at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Faculty of Medicine Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh said that more young people could end up smoking cigarettes or even taking drugs if vaping among students is left unaddressed.

"They may use the open pod where they can mix with illicit drugs such as THC."

She called for a stop to selling such devices to youngsters.

Dr Sharifa said that while vaping

might not be as unhealthy compared to traditional combustible cigarettes (CC), there were still risks to it.

"It contains chemicals that can cause lung injury, especially if the person is asthmatic or has poor lung condition."

"These risks are present, but studies have shown the particulate matter emission and volatile organic compound (VOC) are lower than in CC, so in a way, it is considered less harmful compared to CC."

"But it is not meant to be used in recreational activities or for youths to explore," she said, adding that vaping is for smokers who wish to quit the habit.

Dr Sharifa spoke of the dangers

that non-nicotine vape products could have on its users.

"Non-nicotine vape use is of no value whatsoever."

"In fact, it might introduce foreign materials or microorganisms such as bacteria or fungi into the lungs," she said.

She stressed on proper monitoring and regulation of eliquid and ecigarettes.

"In the United Kingdom, the ejuice needs to go through strenuous testing in the lab and monitored by MHRA (Medicine and Healthcare Regulatory Authority)."

"It must meet certain guidelines set up by Public Health England. Unfortunately, this is not done in Malaysia," she said.

A pall on our schools

Students sneak in vape products, puff away in nooks and crannies

PETALING JAYA: Teachers in some schools are struggling to deal with students who are so hooked on their ecigarettes that they would sneak them into classes.

These students have been caught vaping in the school toilet, and when they are questioned, they argue that the vaping device is not a cigarette.

A secondary school teacher from Kulim, Kedah, said some of these cases had gone overboard with the youngsters even vaping inside the classroom.

"They would vape before the teacher gets in, or when he leaves the room," he said.

He said it was tough trying to confiscate the devices as the students argued that these were not cigarettes.

This teacher observed that more youths have been vaping recently, especially female students, as they give in to peer pressure.

"We attempted to help them by calling their parents and giving counselling on the dangers of vaping," he said, adding however, that the number of cases keeps going up despite the school declaring a ban on it.

He blamed it on the presence of a vape shop just a stone's throw away from the school.

"The access to vaping products makes it easier for students to bring their non-smoking friends with them to visit the shop. It isn't long before the others get into the habit as well," he said.

Another secondary school teacher in Bayan Lepas, Penang, found students sneaking their vaping pods into the toilet to "smoke", adding that there have been complaints about the smell of vaping there.



Cause for concern: Students caught vaping often argue that the vaping device is not a cigarette. — FAIHAN GHANI/The Star

"We will seize the pods during spot checks," he said.

As such, he was supportive of the Tobacco and Smoking Control Bill, which would prohibit those born in 2007 and subsequent years from smoking, buying or possessing any type of smoking products, including electronic cigarettes, even after they reach the

age of 18.

Shopkeepers and cigarette vendors are also not allowed to sell these products to those covered under the ban.

The Bill, which was tabled in the Dewan Rakyat last week, is expected to be voted on by the MPs on Tuesday.

A teacher from a religious school

in Alor Setar lamented about this social problem, which he said has disrupted the learning process in schools.

"It has come to a point where students who don't own a pod would steal those belonging to their friends because they too want to try it," he said.

He said students would vape in secluded areas of their hostel or toilets.

When contacted, National Union of the Teaching Profession secretary-general Wang Heng Suan said the situation within school compounds is still under control.

However, he acknowledged that it is "a different story" once students are out of school.

"We can only advise them, but we can't take action (if they vape outside of school)," he said.

Wang said all schools conduct spot checks every once in a while.

"If we catch a student on this, we will call the parents," he added.

Wang also called on parents to pay closer attention to their children's activities.

SMK Cochrane and SMK (P) Bandaraya's Parent-Teacher Association chairman Faizal Mohammad Arshad said that despite strict rules and procedures, including spot checks even in toilets, some students would still attempt to smuggle in their vaping gadgets.

"Schools have issued notices that vape products cannot be brought to schools because they are similar to cigarettes."

"However, there are still students who smuggle them in and hide them," he said, adding that the school would burn vape products confiscated from students during Narcotics Awareness Day.

Electronic ciggie student addicts who have never smoked

PETALING JAYA: They never smoked, nor even touched a cigarette, but 90% of the primary and secondary students interviewed in a survey have admitted to being ecigarette "addicts".

Some of them confessed to having lied to their parents so that they could have some money to buy the devices.

"They asked for extra pocket money from their parents or uncles, claiming that they need it to buy food when they have to stay back for extra class or to buy books or to photostat reading materials," said

Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) education officer NV Subbarow.

CAP, which spoke to about 50 students from 15 primary and secondary schools in both urban and rural areas, found that most of them admitted to spending RM50 to RM60 per month to buy the electronic devices.

Aside from the survey that was held in June, Subbarow said he also learned more about the situation from students he met during anti-tobacco and ecigarette programmes held in various schools

around the country.

Peer pressure was the main reason many of the students got into it, he said.

He said these students viewed smoking cigarettes as a "dirty" habit and that vaping was a more acceptable alternative.

Furthermore, they said ecigarettes were never made illegal for the underage, he added.

"Plus, it comes in various models, colours and flavours. Fruits, bubble gum and candy are the most popular flavours among the survey respondents," he said.

Subbarow said 80% of them did not know that some vape juices could contain nicotine.

"The primary school kids thought they are just inhaling something that is fruity and sweet."

"They didn't think they should be worried about any added chemicals."

"They said vaping makes them happy, so they enjoy doing it," he said.

Subbarow said disciplinary teachers who were interviewed in the survey also confirmed getting complaints from other students

about the smell of vape in school toilets.

Five secondary school teachers said they received complaints about such a smell coming from the male toilets, he said.

The government, Subbarow said, should prohibit the sale of ecigarettes and the use of flavouring juices to minors.

"Now, even small stalls selling magazines, sweets or biscuits are selling vape and ecigarette products."

"They even sell it to children," he claimed.