

AKHBAR : KOSMO
MUKA SURAT : 6
RUANGAN : NEGARA



PERSEMBAHAN pesawat pejuang Sukhoi Su-30MKM (M52-16) milik TUDM sempena LIMA'25 di Langkawi baru-baru ini.

Petugas perubatan 'tulang belakang' juruterbang pesawat

Oleh NUR AMALINA AZMAN

LANGKAWI – Di sebalik kehebatan seorang juruterbang pesawat pejuang yang mampu melakukan aksi aerobatik mengagumkan penonton, ada sekumpulan doktor perubatan yang sentiasa berusaha keras bagi memastikan keselamatan dan kesihatan mereka.

Pakar perubatan penerbangan ini diketuai Kolonel (Dr.) A. Saravanan yang memimpin sekumpulan doktor Angkatan Tentera Malaysia (ATM) sepanjang Pameran Antarabangsa Maritim dan Aeroangkasa Langkawi 2025 (LIMA'25).

Mereka juga telah memulakan tugas sejak Januari lalu bagi memastikan acara tersebut berjalan lancar.

Menurut Saravanan, sebagai seorang pakar, beliau akan memberikan pendapat profesional mengenai keselamatan juruterbang yang akan terbang rendah semasa melakukan aksi aerobatik.

Katanya, antara aspek kese-

lamatan yang turut dilihat adalah kren pembinaan tinggi yang berada di Langkawi perlu direndahkan atau dihentikan penggunaannya semasa persembahan udara dijalankan.

"Kita bermula dengan lawatan tapak antaranya melihat kawasan-kawasan yang akan digunakan oleh pasukan helikopter SAR (cari dan menyelamat) bagi memastikan kawasan tersebut selamat, dan boleh digunakan sekiranya ada bencana.

"Selepas itu, kita adakan SAREX (search and rescue exercise) di darat dan air sebagai simulasi sekiranya ada bencana berlaku semasa hari sebenar," katanya.

Jelasnya, terdapat tiga pasukan berbeza dalam penugasan perubatan, pasukan ambulans, pasukan helikopter SAR serta satu pasukan yang bertugas di klinik aero perubatan (aero-medical) yang sentiasa bersedia menghadapi sebarang kemungkinan semasa LIMA'25 berlangsung.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 11
RUANGAN : NATION

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Ban vaping to curb addiction crisis

Experts urge govt to act swiftly as number of teen vapers keeps surging

By TEH ATHIRA YUSOF
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PETALING JAYA: With more than half a million Malaysian teenagers vaping, health experts and child rights activists are warning of a youth addiction crisis brewing under the government's watch.

They are calling for a nationwide ban on e-cigarettes to curb rising underage vaping.

In a statement signed by 40 health and child rights professionals issued yesterday, there was also a plea for the government to reinstate the Generational End Game to achieve a smoke-free generation.

"The Malaysian government has delayed the need for a vape ban. Despite numerous calls for a complete ban on health and social grounds, the government continues to focus on regulation and enforcement," said Datuk Dr Amar

Singh HSS (pic), consultant paediatrician and child disability activist, who is one of the signatories.

He said while the government has opted to regulate the industry, introducing an excise duty on nicotine-containing vape liquids in 2023, the financial gains do not justify public health risks.

The government had collected RM141.1mil in tax revenue between 2021 and 2024.

Malaysia's vape industry is estimated to be worth RM3.5bil, involving small and medium enterprises in retail and manufacturing.

Dr Amar cited the 2022 National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS), which found that among school students aged 13-17, 14.9% used e-cigarettes or vapes (23.3% male and 6.2% female).

"This suggests that of the approximately 2.7 million children aged 13-17 in 2022, around 400,000 were vaping.

"Today, that number has likely



surpassed 500,000 and continues to grow rapidly.

"In addition, the 2023 NHMS and 2023 Global Adult Tobacco Survey found that 5-5.8% of adults were also using electronic cigarettes," he said.

Dr Amar said access to and promotion of vape products among young people is widespread, with such products often sold near school premises.

"Even primary school students are showing interest in vaping.

Most youths think it is 'cool' and probably harmless, especially since the government has chosen not to ban it," he said.

While calling for a ban, Dr Amar acknowledged that without robust enforcement and harm reduction strategies, the move could create a black market.

"This black market could lead to the circulation of unregulated products with greater health risks and potentially revive conventional smoking," he warned.

The group also advocated for public awareness campaigns, education and stricter regulations and enforcement once a ban is in place.

"This would include ongoing, comprehensive public health campaigns to educate youth about the risks of vaping.

"We also need enhanced enforcement against illicit sales, including those via informal, online and cross-border channels.

"Additionally, there should be support strategies for adults who have switched from cigarettes to vaping, to help them quit smoking altogether," it said.

The group highlighted that Malaysia's stance on vaping contrasts starkly with that of several Asean countries, including Singapore, Thailand, Brunei and Laos, where vaping has long been outlawed.

Domestically, concerns have also emerged over illicit substances in vape liquids.

Several states such as Johor and Kelantan have completely banned the sale of vape products, while Kedah will stop issuing new licences for vape shops.

Terengganu and Perlis will jump on the bandwagon to ban the sale of vape products on Aug 1.

However, in the absence of a federal ban, vape products remain widely accessible through online platforms and informal channels.