

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 11
RUANGAN : KOMENTAR

Akta 852 lahirkan generasi bebas rokok, vape



Pegawai Jabatan
Komunikasi
Korporat,
Pertubuhan IKRAM
Malaysia

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Menjadi rahsia terbuka, kanak-kanak dan remaja secara agresif dijadikan sasaran untuk menjadi pengguna sepanjang hayat rokok elektronik atau vape. Kajian Southeast Asia Tobacco Control Alliance (SEATCA) pada 2023 mendedahkan, 30 peratus pengguna rokok elektronik di Malaysia berusia antara 12-15 tahun.

Trend menghisap rokok elektronik atau vape sedang giat 'dipupuk' di Malaysia amat membimbangkan kerana boleh menjejaskan potensi dan kesihatan mereka.

Walaupun bukti saintifik mengenai bahaya vape semakin bertambah, sebilangan pemegang taruh industri vape terus memperdayakan orang ramai dengan mendakwa vape alternatif selamat kepada rokok tembakau.

Atas faktor ini, industri menyasarkan generasi baharu terutama kanak-kanak dan remaja, melalui strategi pemasaran fantasi vape sebagai gaya hidup moden dan tidak berbahaya, sedangkan hakikatnya vape menyebabkan ketagihan dan pelbagai masalah kesihatan serius.

Penggunaannya boleh mengakibatkan kebinasaan terhadap kesihatan seperti kerosakan paru-paru (EVALI), pneumotoraks, penyakit jantung, te-

kanah darah tinggi dan gangguan pertumbuhan otak terutama kanak-kanak dan remaja.

Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO) turut mendedahkan tiada bukti jelas bagaimana vape mampu membantu berhenti merokok, sebaliknya ketagihan nikotin daripada vape didapati boleh meningkatkan risiko pengguna beralih kepada rokok tembakau.

Penggunaan vape turut berpotensi dijadikan alat memancing pengambilan dadah. Justeru, lebih tepat mengatakan ia adalah permulaan bahaya bagi orang muda tidak pernah merokok dan pengganti berbahaya kepada perokok cuba berhenti merokok.

Walaupun kesan jangka panjang penggunaan vape masih dalam kajian, bukti sedia ada sudah cukup menunjukkan ia boleh mengakibatkan penyakit kronik.

Banyak kajian sains mendapati cecair vape mengandungi bahan berbahaya termasuk nikotin, propilena glikol, gliserin dan bahan kimia toksik lain seperti formaldehid dan logam berat boleh mendatangkan kesan mudarat terhadap kesihatan penggunaannya.

Demi kesejahteraan rakyat, kerajaan perlu sentiasa peka dan proaktif dalam menangani pelbagai strategi digunakan mana-mana pihak berkaitan terutama industri dan pelobi rokok serta vape boleh menjejaskan keberkesanan dasar kawalan tembakau.

Dasar kawalan tembakau berasaskan bukti sain-

tifik terbukti amat berkesan melindungi kesihatan awam dan menyelamatkan nyawa. Oleh itu, penting bagi kerajaan terus memantau dan mengambil langkah proaktif terhadap sebarang usaha boleh menjejaskan keberkesanan dasar bebas rokok kepada rakyat.

Penguatkuasaan berkesan adalah kunci menghentikan penularan gejala vape dalam kalangan generasi muda dan memastikan masa depan negara tidak terancam akibat kemudaratkan produk berbahaya ini.

Ini kerana industri tembakau dan vape mengaut keuntungan daripada produk memudaratkan kesihatan, merosakkan masyarakat dan negara serta merosakkan alam sekitar.

Justeru, langkah kerajaan mengharamkan vape kepada kanak-kanak dan remaja dengan menguatkuasakan Akta Kawalan Produk Merokok Demi Kesihatan Awam 2024 (Akta 852) memperlihatkan keprihatinan dan komitmen serius kerajaan bagi membendung kemerosotan tahap kesihatan awam dan melindungi kesejahteraan generasi akan datang.

Kerjasama erat antara kerajaan dan masyarakat dapat memperkukuhkan usaha ini melalui pantauan berterusan, melaporkan pelanggaran undang-undang, memberi hukuman berat, mengadakan program kesedaran dan pembangunan sistem sokongan untuk individu ingin berhenti merokok.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
MUKA SURAT : 7
RUANGAN : LOKAL



KLIP video tular memaparkan seorang pekerja restoran membersihkan periuk dengan menggunakan penyapu. Gambar kecil, premis diserbu KKM sebelum diarahkan tutup selama 14 hari.

CUCI PERIUK BESAR GUNA PENYAPU

Restoran diarah tutup 14 hari!

Oleh Amir Hamzah Nordin
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Lipis

Sebuah restoran di sini diarahkan tutup selepas tular klip video memaparkan seorang pekerjanya membersihkan sebuah periuk besar menggunakan penyapu.

Arahan ditutup selama 14 hari bermula kelmarin itu dibuat selepas lawatan

mengejut dilakukan pihak Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM).

Pihak KKM turut membuat pemeriksaan di bahagian penyimpanan makanan di restoran terbabit.

Klip video itu dimuat naik oleh pentadbir Facebook Komuniti Anak-Anak Lipis pada jam 5 petang kel-

marin.

Perbuatan pekerja restoran berkenaan dipercayai berlaku di belakang restoran terbabit, sekali gus menyebabkan orang ramai memohon satu siasatan dilakukan oleh pihak berkaitan bertujuan keselamatan, kesihatan dan kebersihan.

Sementara itu, Yang Dipertua Majlis Daerah

Lipis (MDL), Datuk Mohd Hafizi Ibrahim berkata, pihaknya akan mengambil tindakan mengikut peruntukan undang-undang yang ada sekiranya terdapat kesalahan dilakukan di premis berkenaan.

"Penutupan restoran itu dirujuk kepada Pejabat Kesihatan Daerah dan operasi dijalankan oleh Pejabat Kesihatan Daerah bersama Majlis Daerah Lipis," katanya ketika dihubungi.

KKM turut membuat pemeriksaan di bahagian penyimpanan makanan

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
MUKA SURAT : 12
RUANGAN : LOKAL

HUSM miliki mesin ABUS 2.0 bantu saringan awal kanser payudara

Kota Bharu: Hospital Universiti Sains Malaysia (HUSM) di sini, menjadi hospital pertama di Pantai Timur memiliki mesin Automated Breast Ultrasound (INVENIA ABUS 2.0) bernilai RM2 juta untuk pemeriksaan saringan awal kanser payudara.

Naib Canselor USM Prof Datuk Seri Ir Dr Abdul Rahman Mohamed berkata, jumlah peruntukan itu juga membabitkan sebuah bas bergerak yang diperoleh daripada sumber peruntukan dana Kemudahan Projek Khas Klinik Bergerak dan Saringan Kanser yang disalurkan oleh pihak Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi (KPT) pada tahun lalu.

Menurutnya, mesin ABUS 2.0 mula digunakan pada Jun lalu dapat memberikan pemeriksaan yang lebih komprehensif dan tepat, sekali gus meningkatkan peluang untuk pengesanan awal selain rawatan yang lebih berkesan ke-



DR Abdul Rahman (kiri) mendengar penerangan mengenai mesin ABUS 2.0 di HUSM, Kota Bharu.

pada golongan berisiko.

“Mesin ini juga dicipta khusus untuk meningkatkan ketepatan pengesanan kanser payudara sebanyak 35.7 peratus bagi kaum wanita yang mempunyai tisu payudara yang padat dan sukar dikesan melalui prosedur mamogram.

“Pada masa sama, kaedah ultrasonografi 3D yang

menggunakan radiasi non-ionizing ini turut selamat untuk digunakan kepada wanita hamil,” katanya selepas perasmian mesin ABUS 2.0 dan Pelancaran Bulan Kesedaran Kanser Payudara (Pink October) 2024 Peringkat Hospital USM di Auditorium Hospital USM, semalam. Mengulas lanjut, Dr Ab-



Saya berharap agar penggunaan mesin ABUS 2.0 ini dapat dimanfaatkan sepenuhnya”

Dr Abdul Rahman

dul Rahman berkata, bagi memudahkan pemeriksaan saringan awal kanser payudara kepada masyarakat, mesin ABUS 2.0 ini juga akan diletakkan di dalam bas khas untuk dibawa ke program komuniti dan klinik bergerak sekitar negeri Kelantan.

“Saya berharap agar penggunaan mesin ABUS 2.0 ini dapat dimanfaatkan sepenuhnya oleh doktor, jururawat, juru x-ray perubatan serta kakitangan yang terbabit dalam usaha memberikan perkhidmatan terbaik kepada pesakit dan masyarakat amnya,” katanya.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
MUKA SURAT : 13
RUANGAN : LOKAL

PELAKSANAAN AKTA 852

8,500 premis diberi amaran: Menteri

Kuala Selangor: Sejumlah 8,500 premis di seluruh negara diberi amaran kerana melanggar Akta Kawalan Produk Merokok Demi Kesihatan Awam 2024 (Akta 852) yang berkuat kuasa pada 1 Oktober lalu.

Menteri Kesihatan Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad berkata, kesalahan itu dikesan menerusi 283 operasi khas selama lima hari berakhir Sabtu lalu memabitkan 4,481 penguat kuasa Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM).

"Kita tidak mengambil tindakan penguatkuasaan seperti mengenakan kompaun sebaliknya hanya memberi amaran berbentuk literasi, pencerahan dan penjelasan.

"Bagaimanapun, sepanjang operasi itu tindakan penguatkuasaan dikenakan terhadap 12 perokok atas kesalahan merokok di tempat larangan. Bagi kesalahan merokok itu kita



DR Dzulkefly menampal poster 'Dilarang Merokok' di hadapan premis ketika mengadakan Tinjauan Mesra Premis Bersih dan Bebas Asap di Puncak Alam, Kuala Selangor.

mengambil tindakan tegas mengikut peraturan sedia ada," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian selepas Program Tinjauan Mesra Premis Bersih, Bebas Asap (BeBas) peringkat negeri Selangor di sini,

kelmarin.

Akta 852 yang diwartakan pada 2 Februari lalu berkuat kuasa serta-merta dan berfasa bermula 1 Oktober lalu serentak dengan peraturan-peraturan serta perintah di bawahnya

yang bertujuan mengurangkan kemudaratan akibat merokok dan penggunaan lain-lain produk tembakau termasuk rokok elektronik atau vape terutama dalam kalangan golongan muda.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 18
RUANGAN : PENUAT JIWA

18

Penguat
Jiwa
#healing

TELUS & TULUS
Sinar
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TELUS & TULUS • MATA DAN TELINGA RAKYAT • PEMACU PERUBAHAN

SELASA 8 OKTOBER 2024 • SINAR HARIAN



Dr Alizi Alias
merupakan Konsultan
Psikologi Organisasi
Penasihat Soul Fitness WUIF
Pengerusi Psikospiritual
IKRAM (P.S.I)
Ahli Majlis Persatuan
Psikologi Malaysia (PSIMA)

Tangani pesakit mental di tempat kerja



Statistik Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia pada 2017 menyatakan hampir 30 peratus orang dewasa dan 12.1 peratus kanak-kanak mengalami masalah kesihatan mental. -*Gambar hiasan*

Penyakit mental adalah penyakit kronik yang tidak nampak dan ramai tidak tahu bahawa pesakit mental layak mendapat kad orang kurang upaya (OKU) daripada jabatan kebajikan masyarakat (JKM).

Sesetengah majikan boleh menerima tanpa syarat jika pekerja mempunyai penyakit kronik fizikal dan diberi bantuan sewajarnya, tapi masih ramai yang sukar menerima pekerja yang mempunyai penyakit kronik mental.

Mungkin kerana masalah majikan masih ada stigma bahawa penyakit mental ini hanya dalam minda sahaja atau disebabkan oleh masalah kerohanian.

Tinjauan Kebangsaan Kesihatan dan Morbiditi (NHMS) 2023 mendedahkan seramai sejuta atau bersamaan 4.6 peratus penduduk Malaysia berusia lebih 15 tahun mengalami isu kemurungan. Ini belum mengambil kira jenis penyakit mental selain kemurungan.

Statistik Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) pada 2017 menyatakan hampir 30 peratus orang dewasa dan 12.1 peratus kanak-kanak mengalami masalah kesihatan mental. Statistik ini mungkin meningkat pasca-pandemik. Sebanyak 30 peratus ini mungkin sekarang sedang bekerja di jabatan kerajaan dan syarikat swasta sekarang dan cemerlang dalam bidang masing-masing tapi sengsara di dalam tanpa sokongan majikan.

Ini kerana penyakit mental ada tahap ringan, sederhana dan teruk. Pekerja yang mengalami penyakit mental tahap ringan dan sederhana pun kadang-kadang mengalami masalah kesihatan teruk sekali-sekala dan memerlukan cuti.

Pekerja yang mengalami penyakit mental tahap teruk ramai juga yang mampu cemerlang disebabkan mereka komited makan ubat, hadir sesi psikoterapi dan bijak mendapatkan sokongan sosial serta mengamalkan aktiviti penjagaan sendiri (*self-care*).

Mereka berhak untuk cemerlang di tempat kerja dengan bantuan majikan dan rakan sekerja. Laporan berkaitan kesihatan mental pekerja di Malaysia bertajuk *Workplace Mental Health - The Business Costs*.

Menurut laporan berkenaan, isu kesihatan mental di kalangan pekerja di

Malaysia dianggarkan melibatkan kos RM14.41 bilion kepada majikan terutama melibatkan kehilangan produktiviti pekerja. Ini merangkumi tiga aspek iaitu pertama RM3.28 bilion; Tidak hadir akibat simptom penyakit mental adalah teruk, kedua RM9.84 bilion; Bekerja pada hari simptom penyakit mental adalah teruk (*presenteism*) dan terakhir RM1.34 bilion; Penggantian pekerja kerana masalah kesihatan mental.

Kalaupun majikan secara sukarela membelanjakan sebanyak RM1 bilion untuk intervensi penyakit mental, mungkin organisasi di Malaysia dapat menjimatkan kerugian sebanyak RM14 bilion.

Majikan mungkin tidak tahu, mungkin ahli keluarga mereka dan sahabat mereka sendiri mengalami penyakit mental tanpa mereka sedari.

Berikut adalah cadangan intervensi peringkat primer, sekunder dan tertier yang

boleh dilakukan oleh pihak majikan:

Intervensi primer (pencegahan)

- Hilangkan atau kurangkan faktor stres dalam struktur, polisi, budaya organisasi dan gaya kepimpinan.
- Wujudkan struktur, polisi, budaya organisasi dan gaya kepimpinan mesra kesihatan mental.
- Wujudkan program kesejahteraan (*wellness program*) yang *evidence-based*, bukan sekadar ikut trend.

Intervensi sekunder (pengurusan)

- Latih skil pengurusan stres kepada pekerja dan pengurus.
- Latih pertolongan cemas psikologi atau *psychological first aid* (PFA) kepada pekerja dan pengurus.
- Latih skil pertolongan cemas kesihatan mental atau *mental health first aid* (MHFA) kepada pekerja dan pengurus.

Intervensi tertier (pemulihan)

- Wujudkan penyesuaian dan sistem sokongan pekerja pesakit mental.
- Wujudkan manfaat perubatan atau insurans atau takaful berkaitan perubatan psikiatri serta program bantuan pekerja atau *employee assistance programme* (EPA) yang sistematik dan menyeluruh.
- Wujudkan program kembali bekerja atau *return-to-work* (RTW) yang mengambil kira aspek psikologi untuk memudahkan pesakit mental yang lama bercuti adaptasi semula secara pantas apabila kembali bekerja untuk terus cemerlang.

Selamat menyambut Hari Kesihatan Mental Sedunia 10 Oktober 2024. Utama kesihatan mental di tempat kerja. Rujukan: *Aku Dijangkiti Kehidupan 3.0* (Bab Bolehkah Pesakit Mental Cemerlang di Tempat Kerja oleh Dr Alizi Alias).

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA
MUKA SURAT : 5
RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI



DR. Abdul Rahman Mohamed (kiri) mendengar penerangan mengenai mesin Abus di Hospital USM Kubang Kerian, Kelantan, semalam. - UTUSAN/ ROSLIZA MOHAMED

Mesin Abus bantu kesan kanser payudara lebih awal

KOTA BHARU: Kemudahan mesin *Automated Breast Ultrasound (Abus)* yang ditempatkan di Hospital Universiti Sains Malaysia (Hospital USM) mampu membantu mengesan kanser payudara lebih awal bagi penduduk di Pantai Timur iaitu Kelantan, Terengganu dan Pahang.

Naib Canselornya, Profesor Datuk Seri Dr. Abdul Rahman Mohamed berkata, mesin itu akan ditempatkan di dalam bas khas untuk mudah dibawa dan digunakan semasa program saringan komuniti di kawasan-kawasan kampung.

"Dengan adanya mesin Abus

ini, saya yakin kita dapat menawarkan pemeriksaan yang lebih komprehensif dan tepat, sekaligus meningkatkan peluang untuk pengesanan awal dan rawatan yang lebih berkesan kepada masyarakat sekitar.

"Ia selaras dengan matlamat kita untuk menyediakan perkhidmatan kesihatan yang terbaik kepada masyarakat," katanya kepada pemberita selepas Majlis Perasmian Abus dan Pelancaran Bulan Kesedaran Kanser Payudara 2024 Peringkat Hospital USM di sini, semalam.

Dr. Abdul Rahman memberitahu, mesin ketiga yang ada di

negeri itu boleh mencetuskan pelbagai kecemerlangan dalam bidang akademik, penyelidikan serta berupaya menonjolkan pakar radiologi, surjeri dan patologi ke peringkat lebih tinggi.

Beliau berharap mesin Abus itu dapat dimanfaatkan sepenuhnya oleh petugas kesihatan dalam memberikan perkhidmatan terbaik kepada pesakit dan masyarakat amnya.

"Berdasarkan laporan terkini National Cancer Registry dari tahun 2017 hingga 2021, kanser payudara merupakan kanser utama dan pembunuh nombor satu dalam kalangan wanita," katanya.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 8
RUANGAN : NATION

Expect tax on unhealthy food

SSB likely to be expanded to cover more sugary stuff, say experts

By MARTIN CARVALHO, GERARD GIMINO and HANIS TAN
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PETALING JAYA: Budget 2025 is anticipated to be a "healthy" one with the sugar tax likely to be expanded to cover unhealthy food choices too, say tax and health experts.

KPMG senior adviser on tax policy Dr Veerinderjeet Singh said with the sugar tax introduced previously, a further tax increase on sugary stuff appeared imminent.

"The sugar tax is already there but it only covers a certain scope such as sugary drinks, which are subject to the tax," he said, adding that more unhealthy food items were expected to be taxed.

He said he supported the move to create a healthier society, although he warned about inflationary effects on certain goods.

On the anticipated implementation of the High Value Goods Tax (HVG), Veerinderjeet said it was already announced under the

Run-up to



previous federal budget.

"The challenge is on the scope of the tax and how to define high-value goods.

"Since the announcement last year, there has been a number of engagements with the Finance Ministry which brought the HVG back to the drawing board," he said.

In 2019, the government introduced a tax on sugary drinks, imposing a 40sen per litre levy for beverages containing more than 5g of sugar per 100ml and fruit juices with 12g of sugar per 100ml.

Under Budget 2024, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced that the levy was to be increased by 10sen to

50sen per litre under the sugar-sweetened beverages tax (SSB).

On Sept 10, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said, a further hike would be announced under Budget 2025.

He said this followed the success in reducing sugar consumption among Malaysians by 9.25% nationwide after a 10sen increase under the SSB in Budget 2024.

Anwar has reminded the people to adopt a healthier lifestyle, particularly with regard to the dangers of excessive sugar consumption in light of the fact that Malaysia has the highest number of diabetes cases in South-East Asia.

On the other hand, the HVG was announced under Budget 2024 and was to have been implemented on May 1 this year, but it was delayed following pushback from several business groups.

The new tax, of between 5% and 10%, was to have been applied to items such as jewellery, watches and cars that exceeded a certain price threshold.

Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (ACCCIM) treasurer-general Datuk Koong Lin Loong backed the move to increase the sugar tax.

"It is good as long as the definition is precise as to what constitutes healthier food," he said.

Apart from sugar content, he said foods with high fat or calorie content should also be subject to some form of levy.

"At the end of the day, it is a matter of personal choice whether a person is willing to pay higher for certain food items," he said, adding that the revenue generated from such taxes could be channelled towards creating a healthier lifestyle among Malaysians.

Malaysia Retailers Association president Datuk Andrew Lim also backed a hike in the sugar tax, including on other food items, to promote healthy living.

"This is a social purpose towards addressing health issues in Malaysia. We are all for it," he said.

Educators urge more funding and support for schools

KUALA LUMPUR: Educators are hoping for the enhancement of digital studies through the Education Ministry's Digital Education Policy in Budget 2025.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) education expert Dr Anuar Ahmad said quality infrastructure is essential for Malaysian education.

"We hope this initiative will be implemented in all schools and not just a select few, supported by significant funding for infrastructure, Internet access, devices, teacher training and more," he said.

He also highlighted the importance of addressing basic facilities in schools, noting that improvements to school toilets for students' comfort have already begun.

He hoped that teachers' offices and rooms would also receive more allocation in the future.

Anuar said increased funding was also needed to assist targeted groups, especially underprivileged students.

This includes school assistance programmes to ensure that all students have access to quality education, *Bernama* reported.

"We cannot establish a quality education system if these groups do not receive adequate support.

"The widening gap between the rich and the poor will lead to significant issues within our education system," he added.

The 2025 Budget, themed "Ekonomi Madani, Negara Makmur, Rakyat Sejahtera" will be tabled in Parliament on Oct 18.

Meanwhile, education activist Mak Chee Kin suggested that direct allocations should be made to Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) for the repair, maintenance and upgrading of school facilities based on their specific needs.

"Many schools are in poor condition, but the current process requires them to apply for assistance from the District Education Offices (PPD) or State Education Departments (JPN), which often delays funding approval," he said.

"If they're fortunate, they might receive aid within a year, but in many cases, it can take years."

To address these issues, Mak suggested cutting down the red tape and allowing schools or PTAs to apply directly to the Education Ministry.

"Approvals should also be granted directly rather than going through JPN.

"It's an open secret that it would be cheaper for schools or PTAs to deal directly with contractors," he added.

Meanwhile, teacher Roziani Mohamad Yusoff, 31, expressed her hope that Budget 2025 will focus not only on students' needs, but also on improving the welfare of teachers.

She called for assistance with teaching resources to create a more conducive and engaging learning environment.

Use revenue to boost healthier food options

PETALING JAYA: Revenue generated from "healthy" taxes in Budget 2025 should be used to increase the affordability of healthier food options, say public health experts.

Universiti Putra Malaysia's Prof Dr Norhasmah Sulaiman said heavier taxes for beverages with higher sugar content could push manufacturers to reformulate products with reduced sugar levels.

"Tax revenue can then be used to subsidise or promote healthier drink options, like unsweetened beverages or sugar-free alternatives, making them more accessible.

"Partnerships should also be encouraged between beverage manufacturers from large businesses, as well as SMEs, to reformulate products with less sugar," she said.

Reducing the availability of sugary drinks in schools can also have a long-term impact, she said, adding that private schools too should be no exception when it comes to related policies and guidelines in school canteens.

"The size of products impacted by the sugar-sweetened beverages tax (SSB) should also be regulated," she said.

Prof Norhasmah said in the face of rising food prices and tougher economic conditions, ensuring food security would be important.

"This is so that consumers have access to affordable and nutritious food. Without this, many households may face malnutrition, undernutrition and overnutrition due to reliance on cheaper, low-nutrient foods which can lead to long-term health problems," she said.

Holistic health expert Datuk Dr M. Rajen said tax revenue generated through the SSB could be used to subsidise daily food options like fresh vegetables



Making better choices:

Heavier taxes for beverages with higher sugar content could push manufacturers to reformulate products with reduced sugar levels.

— FAIHAN GHANI/The Star

and fruits.

"It should go towards promoting healthier living, which in turn is a long-term investment for healthcare.

"The ministry too must help consumers make healthier choices, which could mean extra costs.

"However, food should not be seen solely for its price but rather as an investment for long-term health," said the founder of the Holista Group of Companies.

Rajen proposed that the government remove the imposition of the sales and service tax on National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency-approved supplements.

"At the same time, these items should also be eligible for consumers to include in their tax relief for the coming year," he added.

Public health medicine specialist Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh said better screenings against NCDs, and reducing smoking and alcohol consumption, should be

prioritised under Budget 2025.

She also urged businesses to charge cheaper prices for sugarless or sugar-free products.

Prof Sharifa highlighted the presence of hidden sugars in sauces, condiments, energy bars, sports drinks and more.

"Sometimes, there is also no labelling to indicate the sugar content and amounts of artificial sugar in the contents," said Prof Sharifa, who is with Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations chief executive officer Saravanan Thambirajah said any tax increase must consider its impact on consumers.

"A well-defined implementation strategy, public education on healthy living and affordable choices should accompany the taxes so that they do not simply increase the cost of living without promoting meaningful behavioural change," he said.

Consumers Association of Penang research officer S.

Mageswari said limiting the increased tax to solely sugary beverages may drive people to alternative sources of sugar, citing items like ice cream and biscuits.

"That could still lead to overconsumption of sugar and drive consumers to addiction.

"As the increased tax is to curb obesity, diabetes and other health problems, it should focus on taxing high-sugar foods, including drinks where sugar is added," Mageswari added.

A retiree, David Tan, 66, proposed for SSB-generated revenue to be used to make public parks and recreation areas more accessible.

"A public campaign promoting healthier choices should go hand in hand with the tax," he suggested.

Ethan Khoo, 23, said the authorities should keep a close eye on businesses taking the opportunity to raise prices with the increasing taxes.

AKHBAR : THE SUN
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NATIONAL

8,500 premises warned under smoking Act

KUALA SELANGOR: A total of 8,500 premises nationwide have been issued warnings for violating the Control of Smoking Products for Public Health Act 2024 (Act 852), which came into effect on Oct 1.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said the offences were found during 283 special operations conducted over five days, involving 4,481 Health Ministry enforcers, which concluded on Saturday.

"We cannot take enforcement action such as imposing fines at this stage, so we are issuing warnings in the form of literature and explanations," he said during a walkabout on Sunday.

Dzulkefly added that during the operation, enforcement actions were also taken against 12 individuals for smoking in prohibited areas.

"For smoking offences, we can take strict action according to existing regulations," he said.

Act 852, which was gazetted on Feb 2, came into effect on Oct 1, with some aspects being enforced immediately and others to be implemented in stages. - Bernama



Dzulkefly putting up a 'No Smoking' sign in front of a premises at Eco Grandeur in Puncak Alam, Kuala Selangor yesterday. - BERNAMAPIC

AKHBAR : THE SUN
MUKA SURAT : 11
RUANGAN : SPEAK UP

