

MMA urges immediate relisting of nicotine under Poisons Act after High Court ruling



(Pic credit: MEDIA MULIA/File)

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by ALISSYA ZUNIZAM

THE Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) urged the government to immediately relist liquid nicotine under the Poisons Act 1952 following the High Court's ruling that the 2023 removal of nicotine from the Poisons List was unlawful.

MMA president Datuk Dr Thirunavukarasu Rajoo (*picture*) said the association welcomed the court decision since MMA had participated in the case as amicus curiae and had consistently opposed the delisting since it was gazetted in March 2023.

He said MMA had repeatedly warned that removing nicotine from the Poisons Act before any tobacco control legislation was in place was a reckless move that could expose the public, especially youths, to greater health risks.

The association said it had previously called on the government and the Prime Minister to reverse the decision but its concerns and recommendations were not acted upon.

MMA said the court ruling highlighted a broader issue of health policy decisions being influenced by fiscal considerations instead of medical evidence and expert advice.

According to the association, the Poisons Board had unanimously advised against the delisting but the recommendation was overruled, a move which the court has now confirmed was wrong.

“MMA urges the government not to appeal this ruling. Accept it. Learn from it. No future public health decision should be made primarily for fiscal reasons.

“The health of our children is not a budget line item,” Thirunavukarasu said in a statement today.

The association stressed that Malaysia could not afford for public health decisions to prioritise economic interests over medical expertise, warning that such actions would ultimately affect public well-being.

MMA also called on the government to uphold the principle that expert health advice must be respected and not bypassed when public health is at stake.

It added that the Poisons Board and the rule of law must continue to be upheld in safeguarding public health policies in the country.