

## MMA questions PAC ruling over defective Covid-19 ventilators

By **Shahrin Aizat Noorshahrizam** - October 31, 2023 @ 12:24pm



*A file pic showing a nurse at a hospital in Kuala Lumpur, attending to a Covid-19 patient. - NSTP file pic*

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) raised concerns over the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) statement that no parties will be held accountable for the procurement of defective Covid-19 ventilators.

MMA president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz said the absence of proper documentation in such a critical time as the country was facing the Covid-19 pandemic was indeed troubling.

"If Pharmaniaga Logistics Sdn Bhd (PLSB) did not have the experience in the procurement of medical equipment, (then) all the more, proper documentation should have been insisted upon for transparency and accountability.

"How 104 out of 136 delivered ventilators were unusable without any party being held accountable demands a thorough explanation for the Malaysian public," she said in a statement today.

Dr Azizan also said this issue not only involves a substantial amount of public funds but may also have significantly impacted the management of severe Covid-19 cases in the country.

"It is imperative that this issue is not brushed aside, and we must insist on complete accountability," he added.

Dr Azizan also said that this highlights the urgent need for robust emergency procurement policies to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in the future.

Yesterday, the PAC revealed that no action can be taken over the defective Covid-19 ventilators supplied to the government, following the absence of a written agreement between the Health Ministry and Pharmaniaga Logistics Sdn Bhd (PLSB).

In the report published on its website, PAC said PLSB was also instructed to make advance payments for ventilators following its existing relationship with the ministry, despite not having experience and expertise in medical equipment procurement.

In April this year, Health Minister Dr Zaliha Mustafa reportedly said that nearly 2.8 million Covid-19 vaccine doses which cost around RM81.4 million had expired as of Feb 28.

She said the expired vaccine doses from various brands were stored at the ministry's facilities and storage warehouse for vaccine purposes.