



MMA slams new govt attempt to delay tobacco bill

Association president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz questions why there was now a constitutional objection although the bill had previously been tabled in the Dewan Rakyat.

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A proposed new law to control smoking and vaping was postponed after it was scheduled for a second reading in the Dewan Rakyat last month. (AP pic)

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Medical Association has accused the government of making a fresh attempt at delaying a bill to regulate smoking and vaping by claiming a provision in the bill might be unconstitutional.

MMA president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz said the government had ample time to review all angles of the bill thoroughly and consult with all involved, including the attorney-general's chambers.

“Claiming that the bill is unconstitutional now smacks of yet another tactic by the government to delay or stymie the tabling of the bill,” she said, as the bill had been scheduled for a second reading in the Dewan Rakyat on Oct 10.

Azizan was responding to a report today that the attorney-general, Ahmad Terrirudin Salleh, had considered an age provision in the bill to be unconstitutional.



Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz.

The bill was to control smoking and vaping by those born in or after 2007 and the sale of cigarettes and tobacco products to that age cohort, a move that has been called the generational end game.

Azizan said the MMA was disappointed with the government's handling of the Control of Smoking Products for Public Health Bill 2023.

"The health ministry should show leadership by doing everything it can to ensure, in the best interest of public health, swift passage of the bill to enable strict regulation of the smoking and vaping industry," she said.

"Instead, what we are seeing are more delays and roadblocks caused by the government themselves," she said in a statement.

She also urged the health ministry to immediately relist nicotine gels and liquids as controlled substances under the Poisons Act or risk eroding the public's trust.