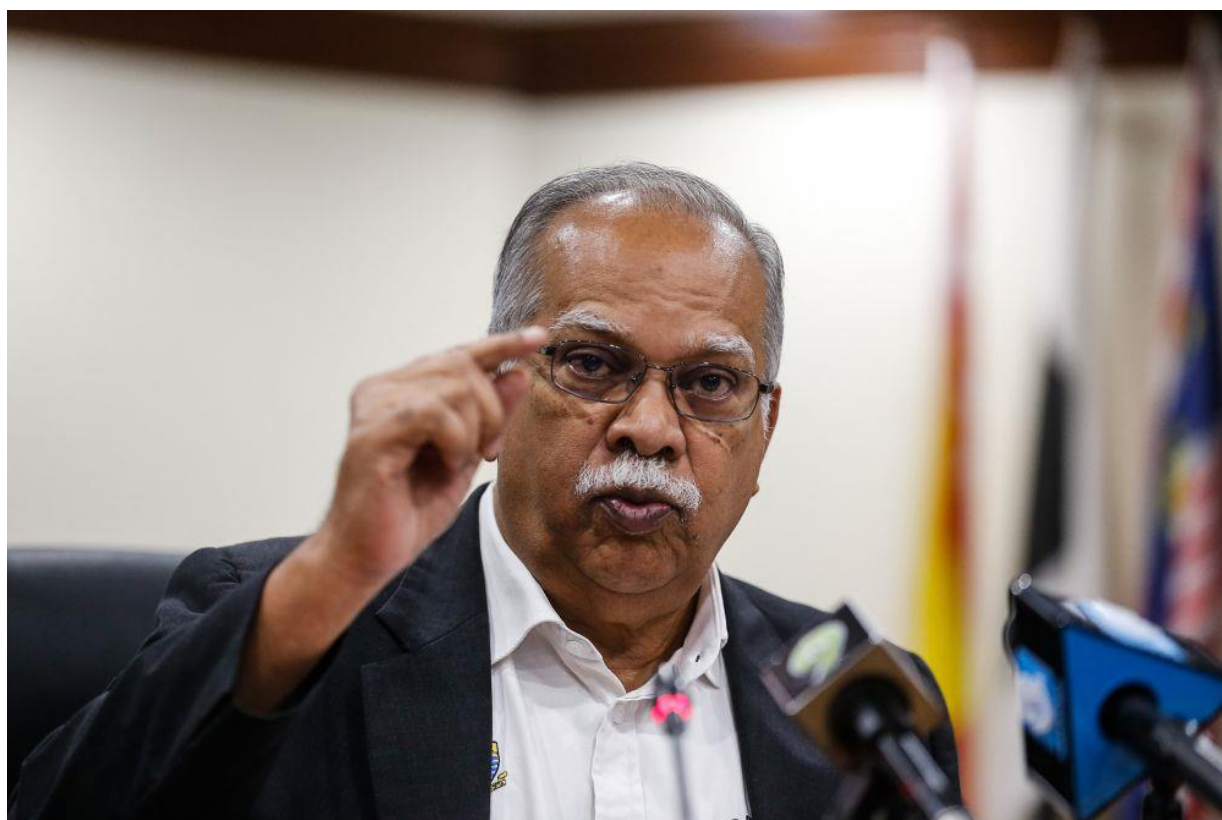


Ramasamy slams doctors' group for downplaying bullying at govt hospitals

Wednesday, 11 May 2022 01:14 PM MYT
BY OPALYN MOK



Penang Deputy Chief Minister II P. Ramasamy speaks to the press during a press conference at Komtar, George Town January 8, 2021. — Picture by Sayuti Zainudin

GEORGE TOWN, May 11 — Penang Deputy Chief Minister II P. Ramasamy slammed the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) for trying to downplay bullying of trainee doctors at government hospitals.

The Penang lawmaker accused MMA president Dr Koh Kar Chai of not being in touch with reality with regards to these cases.

He said Dr Koh seemed to agree with bullying and that certain kinds of harsh treatment of housemen were unavoidable because of the pressure faced by senior doctors while on duty.

“I find it shocking and beyond belief that the MMA seems so callous to the degree and intensity of bullying that has been brought to the surface by a recent suicide case of a doctor at the Penang Hospital,” he said in a statement today.

Ramasamy pointed out that two years ago, another doctor attached to the Penang Hospital took his life.

“It is not the number of suicide cases, but an acknowledgement that there is something seriously amiss in the government hospitals,” he said.

He said the focus should not be on the number of bullying cases reported but whether the government can allow bullying to take place at government hospitals.

“I don’t understand why the MMA has to downplay the incidents of bullying such as those taking their own lives as more of an aberration than the norm,” he said.

He stressed that it was not an aberration but a systematic practice of bullying and humiliation of young doctors over the years.

Ramasamy claimed that it was the tolerance of bullying in government hospitals that has given rise to the malicious culture.

Yesterday, Dr Koh reportedly said workplace bullying must be clearly defined, otherwise, instructions related to work that were deemed unacceptable to a junior doctor could be misconstrued as bullying.

However, he stressed that MMA does not condone outright bullying especially where there is misuse of power to create physical, social and mental harm.

Meanwhile, Penang state exco for health, Dr Norlela Ariffin, who had brought up the bullying cases in the Penang Hospital to the Health Ministry last week, named five doctors known as ‘bullies’ at the Penang Hospital.

She stressed that they were not specifically related to the most recent suicide case of a junior doctor since the case is currently under investigation.

The houseman, who started working at the Penang Hospital on April 4 this year, fell to his death from a high rise building on April 17.