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MMA wants nationwide audit of hospital infrastructure after Sabah power failure

By Sheena Rajendaran

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The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) wants the Health Ministry to conduct an immediate nationwide audit of critical hospital infrastructure following a reported power failure during surgery at a Sabah hospital. - NSTP/ASWADI ALIAS.

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) wants the Health Ministry to conduct an immediate nationwide audit of critical hospital infrastructure following a reported power failure during surgery at a Sabah hospital.

Its president, Dr Sivanaesan Letchumanan, said the incident, if confirmed, was unacceptable and raised serious concerns over patient safety and the reliability of essential hospital systems.

"No patient should have to undergo surgery under such conditions, while doctors should not be forced to compromise patient care because of failures in essential hospital systems," he said in a statement today.

He said reports of recurring air-conditioning breakdowns, electricity and water supply

disruptions, and failures of backup power systems were particularly alarming.

"These are not minor maintenance issues. They can directly affect patient safety, infection control and the delivery of timely medical care," he said.

Dr Sivanaesan said the ministry should investigate the reports and conduct an urgent nationwide audit, particularly of operating theatres, intensive care units and delivery rooms.

Hospitals experiencing such failures should be prioritised for immediate remedial action, he added.

"Patient safety cannot depend on the resourcefulness of doctors working around failing infrastructure," he said.

He said healthcare professionals must be provided with safe and reliable facilities to deliver the standard of care expected by Malaysians.

A doctor at a Sabah hospital was previously reported to have used a mobile phone flashlight to stitch up a patient after a power outage interrupted a routine operation in the obstetrics and gynaecology department.

Zahir Hassan (PH-Wangsa Maju) told the Dewan Rakyat on Nov 17 that the incident was compounded by the absence of a functioning uninterruptible power supply (UPS).

He also highlighted recurring breakdowns of the hospital's operating theatre air-conditioning system and disruptions to electricity and water supply, which had affected operations.