

**Dr M: Vape equally harmful as cigarettes**  
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Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has regarded electronic cigarettes (e-cigarette) or vape to be equally harmful as cigarettes because of the high nicotine content in the product.

"Believe me, vape is bad and equal to cigarettes. Vape has a nice smell and its tasty. When you smoke cigarette, you just get the smoke smell. But when you vape, you get a nice smell like strawberry and mango.

"The good smell is the way to promote the vape products," he said during his keynote address at the 26th International Federation of NGOs for the Prevention of Drug and Substance Abuse (IFNGO) conference and the concurrent 22nd IFNGO Asean NGOs Workshop in Kuala Lumpur today.

Therefore, Mahathir, who is also the patron of IFNGO Foundation, called on the society especially parents to instil anti-drug war among toddlers and young generation and make them understand that drugs could spoil their health and life.

In making this call, he said a more effective approach needed to be used to tell the young generation that drugs could be used as medicine and should avoid any usage beyond that.

"Parents must tell them drugs will shorten their life and instil positive teachings to hate drugs. If they (young generation) are brought up by believing in the values, they themselves will fight their temptation to use drugs.

"If we all believe in the value system, we will not see drug addicts in our society and we can eradicate the drug-war for good," he said.

Under the British rule, Mahathir (photo) said only rickshaw riders and labourers took opium to ease their tiredness and promote sleep after a hard day-work, but today, people took drugs because they are addicted and wanted to change something in their lives.

"It is worse today because drugs lead to crimes, such as stealing and killing. For example, if a boy has been deprived of money by his mother or father to buy drugs, he would not hesitate to kill them.

"To get drugs, he would steal money and in the process of stealing, if he meets resistance, he would use weapon to kill," Mahathir said.

Mahathir also urged the international community to cooperate to eradicate the distribution of drugs because drugs are cross-border crimes and easily available at borders.

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