

Sales Of Ketum Drink Illegal Even For Medicinal Purposes - Police

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By Ahmad Muliady Abdul Majid

KUALA LUMPUR, March 18 (Bernama) -- Sales or purchase of ketum drinks even for medicinal purposes is illegal under the Poisons Act 1952.

Kuala Lumpur Narcotics CID chief ACP Wan Abdullah Ishak said action could be taken under Section 30(3) of the Poisons Act 1952 and those found guilty, jailed and fined not more than RM2,000.

"Even though the sales and purchase of ketum drink is not as heavy as drug trafficking or drug possession, it is still illegal by law," he told Bernama.

While sales of ketum drink in Kuala Lumpur is not serious as compared to northern states of the Peninsular Malaysia, the police took a serious view of the offence and would not hesitate to arrest anyone involved, he said.

Based on police investigations, most of those caught in the federal capital for ketum drink-linked offences involved self-consumption and for sale to close friends, and not for medicinal purposes, noted Wan Abdullah.

He said based on the 2013 and 2014 statistics, Kuala Lumpur police had apprehended 21 ketum drink sellers aged between 19 and 41 in Wangsa Maju and Brickfields.

"We confiscated 18kg of ketum leaves, as well as 80 litres of ketum drink in 2013 while last year, the police seized 28kg of ketum leaves, as well as 115 litres of ketum drink," he said.

Meanwhile, a ketum drink consumer, who wished to be identified only as Zamri, claimed the drink helped to reduce sugar in his blood.

Zamri, 38, said he took one packet of ketum drink once a week to treat diabetes since he contracted the disease, about two years ago.

He also said the price of a packet of ketum drink is sold at between RM10 and RM12, according to its concentration.

Ketum drink became popular in early 2003 as it is said to be addictive due to its content of mitragynine.

Mitragynine is listed under the Third Poison Schedule of the Poison Ordinance 1952 and ketum tree was declared as a prohibited item since January 2003.

Earlier, ketum leaves were used in traditional medicine to assist in the recovery of post-natal women to clear air from the body, as well as to treat back pain.

The attorney-general's chambers and home ministry had been urged to review the law relating to the abuse of ketum leaves so that the matter is listed under the Dangerous Drugs Act, compared to the Poisons Act now which provides for a lighter sentence.

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