

Government Mulls New Regulations To Tackle Abuse Of Ketum - Dr Subramaniam
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PUTRAJAYA, April 3 (Bernama) -- The government is mulling over the possibility to implement new regulations to tackle the abuse of ketum leaves and juice, which has become a worrying trend among the public.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S.Subramaniam said ketum leaves and juice could now be categorised as a dangerous drug as it could cause severe addiction.

As such, he said the ministry would convene a special meeting with the Home Ministry, Pemadam (the Malaysian Drug Prevention Association), and other relevant quarters soon to discuss the possibility of implementing the regulations.

"We will find the best possible way to control abuse of ketum leave and juice and to study whether the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952 is the best channel for the purpose.

"What is more worrying is the fact that the young people are now the biggest consumers of ketum juice, while the older generation consume it as traditional medication," he told reporters here Friday.

Dr Subramaniam said the ministry had tabled the amendment to the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952, which would list ketum leaves as a dangerous drug, at the Dewan Rakyat last Wednesday.

The proposed amendment also includes restriction of importation, exportation, possession, cultivation, ketum business and to provide a jurisdiction in regulating the production and matters relating to the leaves.

"Right now, ketum leaves are listed under Section 30 (3) of the Table 3 of the Poison Act 1952 and action that can be taken against those involved are limited.

"So, the amendment will also enable ketum leaves to be listed in the First Schedule of the Dangerous Drugs Act, which also lists other crops like marijuana, cannabis and poppy plants," he explained.

Ketum, or its original name 'kratum' is a plant of the Rubiaceae family, which is abundant in the northern states of the peninsula.

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