

Johor Sultan wants vape shops to be closed
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By FMT Reporters

Tuanku Ibrahim asks politicians to stop pandering to vape businessmen with racial and political threats.

KUALA LUMPUR: The Sultan of Johor wants e-cigarette (vape) shops in the state to be closed, on health grounds, and has asked the state government to act, according to a news report.

In an interview with The Star, Tuanku Ibrahim was quoted as saying: "I want the shops to close down by January 1, and I do not want to hear any excuses."

He also urged politicians to stop pandering to vape businessmen. Umno politicians have defended the business in the face of health ministry action against vape shops. The ministry says nicotine, contained in vape fluids, is a controlled substance under the Poisons Act and categorised as a Class C poison, for which manufacturing and sales licences are required.

The Sultan took politicians to task, saying "Why are we expected to close an eye to such disregard of the law?"

In the interview he was quoted as saying: "This is a question of health and its effects on young people. It has nothing to do with businesses and for sure, it has nothing to do with race. I am greatly disappointed that some people are bringing up racial threats and political threats."

The vape business has been embroiled in political controversy since the health ministry conducted raids on vape shops and seized vape fluids, which contain nicotine. Umno supreme council member Ismail Sabri Yaakob, who is rural development minister, has defended vape sellers, saying the raids would kill the business, which is dominated by young Malay entrepreneurs.

A group of vape sellers have also threatened the Barisan Nasional with the loss of a million votes at the next general election.

However Tuanku Ibrahim questioned why politicians were giving in to such threats. "It is a new business. What kind of businesses were they doing before this? Go back to your previous work," he was quoted as saying.

The Sultan said the state government had the right to invoke local government by-laws to shut down vape shops and ban the sale of all vape products. The Star reported that he had ordered the state executive council to meet next week to hasten the process.

"It is also very clear, under the laws, that these vape outlets cannot sell nicotine. If it is not allowed, then it is not allowed. It is that simple," he said, according to the report.

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