

SHISHA 'HARAM', says Perlis fatwa panel

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UNHEALTHY TREND: Popularity of substance among students prompts decision

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THE Perlis Fatwa Committee yesterday issued an edict banning the sale and smoking of shisha (flavoured tobacco) in the state. The ban may gather momen-

tum as Perlis' move to declare it *haram* (forbidden in Islam) has also received the support of Johor Islamic Religious Council adviser Datuk Noh Gadut, who called for a nationwide ban.

The Mufti of Perlis, Datuk Dr Juanda Jaya, said after an oath-taking ceremony of the state assemblymen here yesterday that the decision to declare the sale and smoking of shisha as *haram* was made at the Perlis Fatwa Committee's meeting in Kota Kina-

balu on Monday.

"We hope that the state government and the Kangar Municipal Council (MPK) will immediately enforce this ban as we are concerned that it will become an unhealthy trend in the long run.

"We noticed that this substance is popular among students, especially those at institutions of higher learning in Perlis."

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Shisha ^{NST 29/6/13} ^{MS 4.} worse than cigarettes, says council

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Dr Juanda said a letter had been issued to the state government and MPK to act against those who defied the ban.

"We have decided that it is haram to sell or smoke shisha in any form. We hope all parties will abide by the ruling."

Malacca and Kelantan were the first to ban the sale of shisha in 2011.

The Malacca government implemented the ban after a French Anti-Tobacco Agency's report revealed that a single puff of shisha contained the same amount of carbon monoxide as smoking 52 cigarettes.

The decision to ban the sale of shisha, was made in 2009 and implemented in 2011.

In Kelantan, the ban was confined to Kota Baru when the municipal council banned all food outlets from allowing shisha smoking at their premises in February that year.

Noh said shisha smoking should be banned nationwide on religious grounds and that it had been brought to the National Fatwa Council's attention.

"The syariah panel had discussed the matter but there has yet to be a final say."

Noh said he felt that shisha should be deemed haram as other than being a waste of money, it was even more hazardous than cigarettes.

National Fatwa Council chairman

Tan Sri Dr Abdul Shukor Husin said a decision whether to declare shisha "haram" or otherwise would be made soon.

He said the council was working with the Health Ministry to study the implications of smoking shisha.

"The study is in the final stage. Once it is ready, we will have a solid basis for a decision to be made on its use among Muslims."

Shukor said the ministry had conducted a study based on shisha

produced in West Asia.

"The study currently conducted involves shisha produced locally as it could be different from the ones produced in West Asia."

Shukor said the fatwa committee was entitled to ban shisha and Perlis residents must abide by the edict. **Additional reporting by Mohd Nasarudin Parzi and Mohd Fahmi Mohd Yusof**

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Tan Sri Dr Abdul Shukor Husin
National Fatwa Council chairman

Some believe that shisha should be banned nationwide on religious grounds as it is supposedly 'more hazardous than cigarettes'. Pic by Nik Hariff Hassan