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Top News

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**KUALA LUMPUR** — The Home Ministry is calling on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to assist it in overseeing operations at drug rehabilitation centres.

Its deputy minister, Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed, urged NGOs interested in managing government-owned drug rehab centres to send in their proposals for the ministry's consideration.

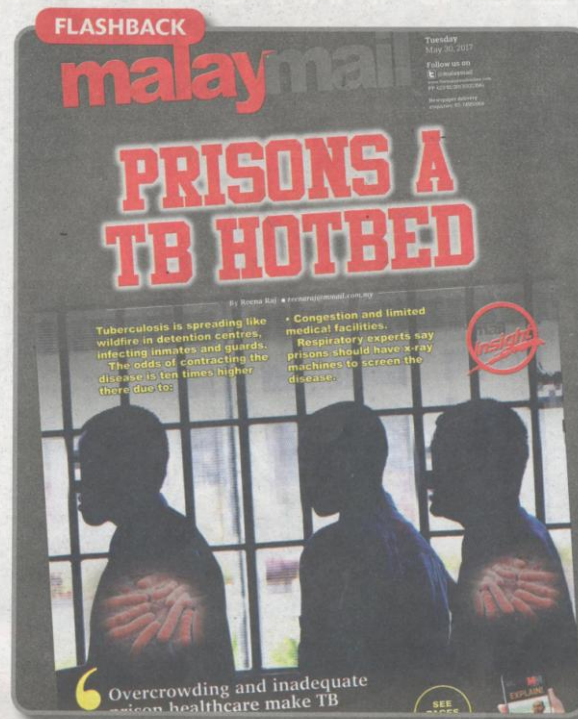
"The National Anti-Drug Agency (AADK) is creating the ideal standard operating procedure for the quality of care in private drug rehabilitation to ensure patients get the right treatment and are not abused," he told *Malay Mail*. Nur Jazlan said the 22 Cure and Care Rehabilitation Centres (CCRC) serving as compulsory detention centres (Puspen) were almost reaching their maximum capacities.

"The ministry can provide the facilities but it is difficult to find responsible individuals or NGOs to run the centres. If there are groups willing to assist it will be good," he said.

He was commenting *Malay Mail's* front page reports on the danger of tuberculosis spreading in prisons and detention centres.

In the first report on May 29, Institute of Respiratory Medicine senior consultant Prof Datuk Dr Abdul Razak Mutallif said that despite the public perception, TB had never been eradicated in Malaysia, and detention centres were an "oven baking these germs".

The second report on May 30 quoted Prof Datuk Dr Adeeba Kamarulzaman, dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Malaya, as saying latent TB cases were



Malay Mail front page report on May 30 on the spread of TB cases in prisons.

high among prisoners and prison officers. She said limited healthcare in prisons and overcrowding had led the airborne disease to spread rampantly within such

enclosed facilities. Besides improving healthcare facilities, Dr Adeeba suggested that drug users who had not committed violent or serious

crimes should not be kept in prisons, but treated for their addiction instead to overcome overcrowding.

Nur Jazlan, who is also the Malaysian Drug Prevention Association (Pemadam) president, agreed that overcrowding in prisons was the main cause of infectious diseases like TB spreading.

"Illegal foreign workers account for 30 per cent of those in prison while drug addicts make up 50 per cent, so if we can reduce the number inmates that will make a difference," he said.

He said the ministry could not cope with the increase in prisoners without additional funds and, as such, tackling the problem of overcrowding was necessary.

The ministry had no problems if drug addicts who had not committed violent or serious crimes were sent to rehabilitation centres instead of prisons, but it did not have adequate manpower to run these centres.

It was open to the idea of NGOs running the rehabilitation centres and receiving funding from the ministry and be evaluated using the Key Performance Index (KPIs).

"Public-private sector partnership in treatment of drug addicts is another option being considered to build and upgrade new facilities," he said.

There are an additional 40 Cure and Care Service Centres which give people the option of coming in voluntarily and providing psychosocial intervention and, in selected centres, provide Methadone Maintenance Therapy (MMT).

Cure and Care Rehabilitation Centres, on the other hand, utilise an approach of total abstinence for those sent there.

Both the Cure and Care Rehabilitation Centres, and Cure and Care Service Centres are managed by National Anti-Drug Agency.