

Cops 'yes' to medical ketum

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Bukit Aman accepts legalisation of hemp cultivation

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KUALA LUMPUR: Bukit Aman will abide by any decision by the government regarding the growing of hemp and ketum for medical purposes, says Datuk Ayob Khan Mydin Pitchay.

However, the Bukit Aman Narcotics Crime Investigation Department (NCID) director noted that the government would have to take into account various aspects, including amending certain laws, before a final decision could be made on the matter.

"The government has to conduct an in-depth study as well as consid-

er the views of experts.

"I was told that laws such as the Poisons Act have to be re-looked at while the issue of land (which is under the purview of state governments) should also be addressed.

"In short, it is still a long process before a final decision can be made on this issue," he told a press conference at Bukit Aman yesterday.

"Another aspect is the cost to rehabilitate addicts.

"We have about 130,000 addicts nationwide and 25% of them or 36,000 are at rehabilitation centres.

"The cost to cover the food for each addict is RM45 per day. It will amount to more than RM500mil a year," he said.

Furthermore, government rehab facilities are not equipped to treat ketum addicts and they have to be sent to privately-run ones.

"So who is going to cover the cost? That is among things that have to be considered," he said.

On Sunday, Deputy Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Zahidi Zainul Abidin said a discussion on allowing the growing of hemp and ketum for medical purposes would be conducted with Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin.

"However, I would like to stress that this is not an approval to just consume ketum water, but only for its use in the medical field. The

public must not be confused," he said.

"The demand for hemp and ketum is very high in the international market and there are currently three countries that are the main producers of hemp."

On April 12, the Medical Cannabis Caucus (MCC) said it held a meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob to discuss policy issues related to the hemp industry, medical cannabis and ketum for use in Malaysia.

It added the Prime Minister had given a positive response to the issues raised, and that the matter would be discussed further at the Cabinet meeting.