

KERATAN AKHBAR

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BAFFLING

Smoking zones send mixed signals

IT is regrettable that barely a week after implementing the "No Smoking Zone At Eateries", smoking zones to be built next to eateries have been given the green light by the Housing and Local Government Ministry.

This challenges the regulation on the no-smoking zone at eateries by the Health Ministry.

The move contravenes all the effort by the government to reduce the number of smokers and the smoking habit among Malaysians.

It is baffling why such a lifeline has been given to the smokers with the ministry allocating RM1 million for the construction of smoking areas in public areas.

According to the Housing and Local Government Ministry, the smoking zones should be at least three metres from the eateries.

The plan is indeed regressive. It is sending out mixed messages to the young and the public at large as to what is the stance of the government with regard to smoking.

On the one hand, we often say that smoking is bad for health and harmful to the human body, which is also the principal cause of respiratory problems and lung cancer.

On the other hand, smoking zones are allowed, giving the impression that people can continue to smoke.

It is timely to keep reminding people that smoking is linked as the cause of 16 cancers, 25 life-threatening diseases and results in the death of 20,000 Malaysians each year.

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Building more smoking zones near eateries will not help the campaign to tackle and reduce the habit.