

Malay Mail : Scratch-and-win contest days numbered

Written by Administrator

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Yesterday, Deputy Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk S. Veerasingam, said the ministry has yet to submit the proposal to ban scratch-and-win contests to the Cabinet. We are amending and finalising the draft proposal. It's important that all aspects are well considered before it is submitted to the Cabinet. He said the proposal will only be presented to the Cabinet for further action, once it is ready. However, he could not say when the report would be ready. Veerasingam was responding to The Malay Mail's query following the July 20 article in which he was quoted as saying that the ministry would propose to the government to ban scratch-and-win contests to prevent more people from falling victim. He had said that the ministry had prepared the draft proposal to be presented to Parliament for debate. The proposal is aimed at preventing companies and individuals from organising scratch-and-win contests, which are aimed at duping consumers. He had also added that the contests, which bring organisers huge gains in a short period, should be banned as it painted a poor image of the direct-selling business. Following that, on July 24, several NGOs applauded the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry's proposal to ban scratch- and-win contests. Muslim Consumers Association project director Noor Nirwandy Mat Noordin, Federation of Malaysian Consumers Association chief executive officer Indrani Thuraisingham, and Consumers Association of Subang and Shah Alam president Datuk Jacob George collectively agreed that it is about time that such a decision was made by the ministry. Nirwandy had suggested that the ministry establish an emergency response team and a dedicated phone line for consumers to relay information when they are approached by contest organisers. George also had lamented the fact that although the media keeps on highlighting the matter, many still fall for these scams. Seven out of 10 complaints received by Cassa every week involve this issue. George had proposed that establishments such as supermarkets come together to eradicate this scheme by rewarding consumers who shop at their places. He had also said that the government needs to consider adding penal sanctions besides the ban.