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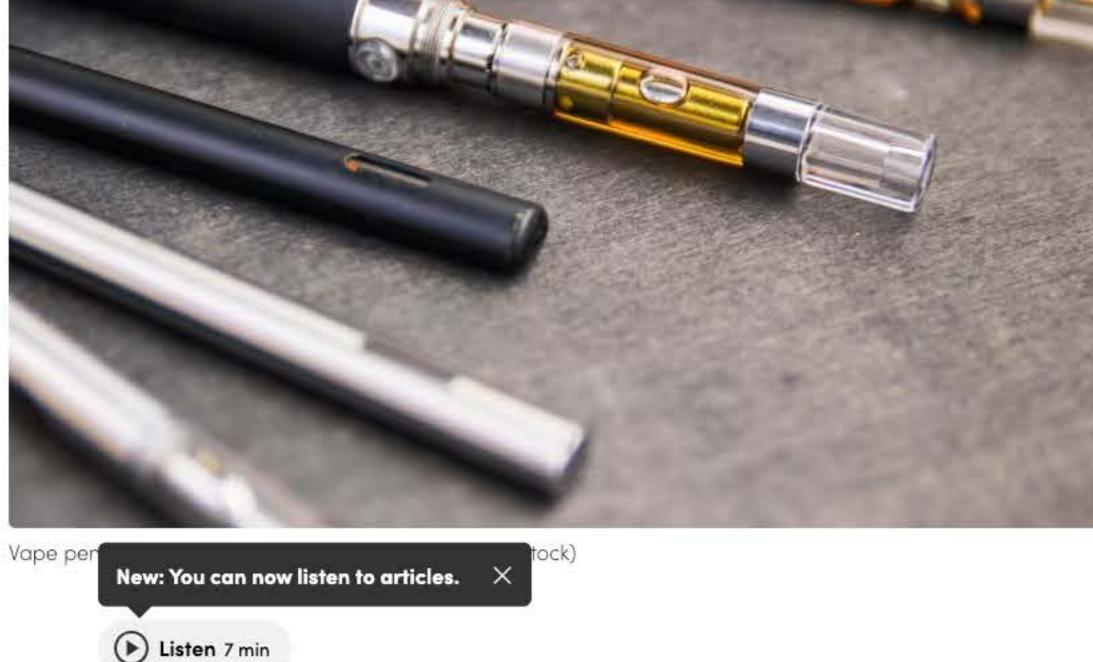
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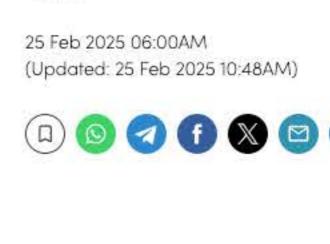
Commentary

Don't 'wait for the problem to get bigger':

Singapore

Growing alarm in Singapore over vapes being used to take drugs Authorities have seized vape pods containing cannabis.





Natasha Ganesan

SINGAPORE: Lawmakers, social service providers, parents and even youths in Singapore have increasingly raised concerns over the use of vaping devices to

consume illegal drugs.

controlled drug.

Singapore.

cannabis were also seized during a raid.

the Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA).

spokesperson reiterated.

alone. Last Tuesday (Feb 18), Member of Parliament Christopher de Souza asked what was being done to combat the "emerging trend" of drug traffickers concealing

controlled drugs within vapes, particularly at Singapore's checkpoints.

contain substances such as etomidate and ketamine.

The topic has been brought up in parliament on multiple instances in this year

were working closely on detection, deterrence and and pre-arrival screening measures. He also said such cases remain the minority of all drug seizures.

Mr de Souza's question came on the tail of MP Wan Rizal asking, earlier in the

Etomidate is an anaesthetic agent classified as a poison, while ketamine is a

In January, several other MPs also raised questions on the government's

month, about support for adolescents found using drug-laced vapes, which can

In a written reply, Law and Home Affairs Minister K Shanmugam said authorities

assessment of the risk of vapes being used as an apparatus for drugs, and whether the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) would consider categorising these vapes and their associated paraphernalia under the same legal framework as the drugs themselves.

In response, Minister of State for Home Affairs Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim said

the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) and Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) have

come across "some" of such cases, which form the minority of vaping activity in

Vaping is regulated by HSA while CNB, which falls under the purview of MHA, is the primary drug enforcement agency. At the start of the year, authorities found several "Kpods" - vape juice mixed with etomidate - among a seizure of over 8,700 vapes and components.

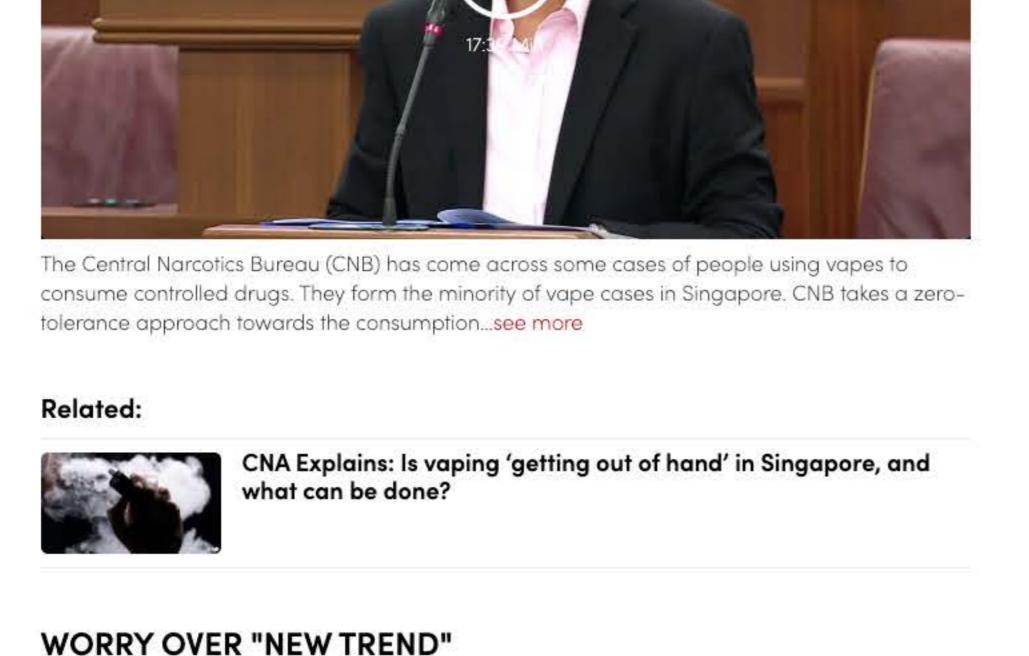
In April 2024, 65 vapes suspected to contain the main psychoactive compound in

cases" where vapes have been used to consume controlled drugs. It added that individuals whose urine is found to be positive for controlled drugs,

"regardless of the mode through which it was ingested", will be investigated under

Responding to CNA's queries, a CNB spokesperson said there have been "sporadic

"The possession of any apparatus or article, including vapes, for the consumption of controlled drugs, is an offence under section 9 of the MDA," the CNB



According to Dr Tan, a 13-year-old was worried about vaping catching on in schools while a 16-year-old was concerned about vaping pods having illegal drugs.

significant problem in Singapore."

"rather than wait for the problem to get bigger".

private-hire drivers say

concerns.

Speaking with CNA, Dr Tan said these secondary school students had heard "secondhand" accounts of such vaping behaviour. He and his volunteers have also

"They are not vape consumers themselves but they have heard of these cases," said

the medical doctor by profession. "Some of them know of friends who have gotten

into vaping, and so they are also concerned (for) their friends."

been approached by students in institutes of higher learning, who voiced similar

During the parliament sitting in January, MP Tan Wu Meng shared with the House

concerns he had heard from young residents in his Clementi ward.

Parents too are worried about what they see as a "new trend" of vapes containing not just nicotine but illegal substances, said Dr Tan. "If you combine more prevalent vaping with illegal drug suppliers trying to supply drugs through the vaping routes, parents are worried that this could be a

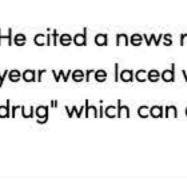
IN FOCUS: How schools and families are combating the problem of vaping among children

More passengers vaping and leaving vapes behind in cars,

He asked if it would be better for agencies to move much more decisively now,

MP Zhulkarnain Abdul Rahim, who sat on Singapore's National Council Against Drug Abuse until the end of last year, expressed similar concerns.

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He cited a news report on how one in six vapes confiscated in British schools last year were laced with animal tranquiliser xylazine - better known as a "zombie drug" which can cause heart attacks, seizures and psychotic episodes.

He acknowledged, however, that in the United States for example, e-cigarettes fall under the Food and Drug Administration agency. "I think countries around the world look at it as a health issue rather than an ... anti-

The "discreet" nature of vaping lends itself to be susceptible to be used for drug

abuse, he added, warning about the risk of vaping becoming a gateway to drugs.

Mr Zhulkarnain said the Government Parliamentary Committee (GPC) for Home

Affairs and Law - which he chairs - also has concerns whether CNB can play a

bigger role that "sends a different messaging from HSA".

purchases of vapes, but advertisements.

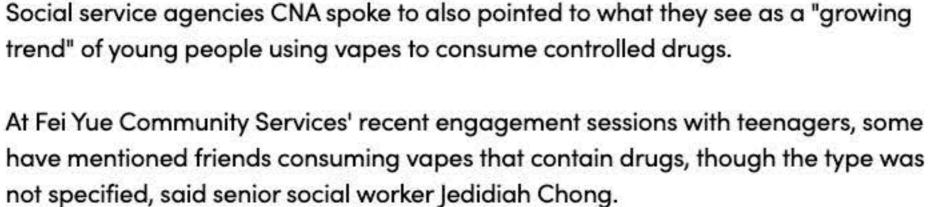
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out vaping in Singapore?

His GPC meanwhile is looking at ways to beef up monitoring of not just sales and

VAPE USERS AS YOUNG AS 12

drug issue."



challenge," he added.

said.

trend" of young people using vapes to consume controlled drugs. At Fei Yue Community Services' recent engagement sessions with teenagers, some

Commentary: How much will enhanced enforcement stamp

as that this cannot be traced by authorities. Youth Guidance Outreach Services' community rehabilitation centre case manager Linus Lim pointed out that it can be difficult to prove the use of controlled drugs

He said youths may be misinformed and misguided into thinking that using vapes

to consume drugs was "safer" and less harmful than taking drugs directly; as well

through conventional urine tests "unlikely". "The accessibility and lack of detectability for controlled drugs in vapes (such as

with vapes, as they are often synthesised with various chemicals, making detection

Care Corner Singapore has also started hearing more about Kpods in recent months, said its senior social worker for youth services Flora Tan.

requiring no preparation and promising a "good kick" with just a few inhales, she

"We are seeing users as young as 12 years old experimenting with Kpods, to 18- to 19-year-olds taking Kpods regularly."

connections, with prices ranging from S\$50 to S\$100 (US\$37 to US\$74), said Ms Tan. She said one way to address vape devices now being used to consume drugs was

But ultimately, she added, cutting down and stamping out vape usage among youths comes from increasing their sense of accountability and awareness.



pore regulate vaping instead of banning it? 00:00 / 26:29

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Kpods) becoming a growing issue among the youth in Singapore, does pose a new

These tend to marketed as a less lethal, more convenient alternative to drugs,

Acquiring Kpods often involves a network of suppliers reached through street

to convey "stronger messaging" that anyone using vapes will be apprehended.

Deep Dive