

 KUALA LUMPUR: The body of a woman who died in Kedah just five months after her wedding has been lying in a morgue here for 107 days and Suhakam commissioner Shaani Abdullah will return to Serdang Hospital today in the hope of finding a way to lay the matter to rest. The Kedah hospital's autopsy report has yet to be released and father's request for a second post-mortem has been rejected by the court. He is making another application to the court today. The father wants a second autopsy because he said he saw signs of physical abuse on the body of Pakiam Subramaniam, 23. When Shaani was at Serdang Hospital on Saturday, he was not allowed to see the body and was told to get the permission of the Director-General of Health. We need to see the body to decide what action to take, including whether to convene an inquiry. We wrote to the D-G on Saturday citing the Suhakam Act which empowers us to investigate complaints and said I would be back tomorrow (today) at 3pm. Government authorities must honour the Act or they are making a mockery of the law, said Shaani, who was investigating the report lodged by lorry driver M. Subramaniam, 52, on Friday alleging discrepancies in Pakiam's cause of death and the authorities' inaction. On Feb 23, The Star reported Subramaniam's application for a second post-mortem to be conducted at University Malaya Medical Centre. In his application, he said that at the time of Pakiam's arranged marriage on Sept 10 last year, she was of sound health, physically and mentally, and she had gone to live with her in-laws in Padang Serai, Kedah. On Feb 12, he received news that she had died and went there to bring back her remains. Subramaniam claimed his son-in-law said Pakiam had died after taking medication for stomachache. Subramaniam told Suhakam that they saw her nose had been broken and she was missing some teeth, said Shaani. He claimed there were also injuries on her body smeared with turmeric powder and some swelling. On the Kedah hospital's autopsy result, Shaani said it was pending. The autopsy notes two old scars but says the cause of death (COD) was pending; it's the same for COD in the death and burial certificates! Shaani said Serdang Hospital had refused to conduct a second autopsy without a court order. But the court rejected Subramaniam, saying he should wait for the first report. He is making his third application tomorrow. Shaani said Subramaniam had also complained that the Bukit Puchong police refused to accept his report, telling him to go to Kedah, in direct contravention of the Inspector-General of Police's statement that reports could be lodged anywhere. It was only after he went to Bukit Aman that they called back and accepted his report.