

'NOT SUSTAINABLE'

# PM CALLS FOR CAMPAIGN TO CUT SUGAR

Diabetes, obesity are major public health challenges, says Anwar

AUDREY DERMAWAN  
SEBERANG JAYA  
news@nst.com.my

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has called for a sustained nationwide campaign to reduce sugar consumption amid rising diabetes and obesity rates. He said Malaysia had among the highest sugar consumption levels in Asia, making diabetes

and obesity major public health challenges.

He said some people were free of disease, but "looked for diseases" through poor eating and lifestyle habits.

"This is bad," he said at the launch of Seberang Jaya Hospital's new building yesterday.

Present were Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow and Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim (centre) posing for a picture with Seberang Jaya Hospital staff in Penang yesterday. With him are Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad and Deputy Health Minister Datuk Hanifah Hajar Taib. BERNAMA PIC

"We spend tens of billions on healthcare, yet people continue to consume excessive sugar. This is not sustainable," Anwar said, adding that prevention must begin in hospitals and government institutions.

He told the Health Ministry to ensure all beverages and food served in hospitals had minimal sugar, with clear educational posters displayed to raise public awareness.

"All hospitals and clinics must show clearly that excessive sugar is prohibited.

"Hospital meals, refreshments

and government functions must be controlled. If we don't start with ourselves, any campaign will fail."

Anwar said efforts to reduce sugar consumption must be consistent, cautioning against complacency over blood sugar levels.

"People say 6.8 is still okay, not yet seven. But if you reduce it to six, then five, that is when the body becomes healthy again," he said, adding that excessive sugar intake and overeating were preventable contributors to diabetes and obesity.

He said government depart-

ments, including those under the Prime Minister's Department, had been instructed to limit sugary food and drinks at official events.

He called on all ministries, hospitals and the armed forces to adopt similar measures.

"We can still have traditional food, but reduce the sugar."

He said the campaign must be part of a broader shift towards preventive healthcare, alongside physical activity and healthier eating habits.

"This is about wellness and it must involve the whole society."