

PM: Stop depending on cartels

Reliance on these groups inflicts losses on the public and country, says Anwar

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BUTTERWORTH: Steer clear of cartel-driven monopolies; that was Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's call to ministries and government agencies.

"Stop relying on cartels. They exist in defence, healthcare and even the Public Works Department.

"Ultimately, the public suffers as these groups drive prices sky-high," he said.

Anwar said reliance on cartels burdened the public and inflicted heavy economic losses on the country.

He said political stability had allowed the government to implement firmer policies to protect public interest and manage national funds with greater transparency.

Although he acknowledged the inevitability of dismantling cartel practices overnight, he asserted that gradual action had started to restore savings to the people.

He cited the poultry industry as an example, saying cartel practices there had previously required about RM1.2bil a year to stabilise prices.



Say cheese: Anwar (centre) surrounded by Seberang Jaya Hospital staff during his visit to the facility. He was accompanied by Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad and Deputy Health Minister Datuk Hanifah Hajar Taib. - Bernama

"Through decisive action, we eliminated this dependency and saved RM1.2bil annually," he said.

Anwar said savings from subsidy restructuring, cartel eradication and reduced leakages had enabled the government to raise public servants' salaries and provide Tunai Rahmah and Sumbangan Asas Rahmah (Sara) assistance without imposing new taxes.

He said efforts to curb cartel influence in government agencies

had to continue so that more people-focused programmes could be implemented for all Malaysians, regardless of race or religion.

On healthcare procurement, Anwar said the government should move away from outdated practices that depended heavily on expensive medicines from Europe and the United States.

"After 70 years, it is time we seriously considered generic medicines. There are safe and

effective alternatives at a fraction of the cost," he said.

He said generics from countries such as India, Brazil, Turkiye and China met health safety standards and could reduce delays caused by prolonged evaluations.

Anwar added that the Health Ministry's shift towards generics had already saved nearly RM900mil.

He warned that as long as the government remained tied to old

systems and cartels, efforts to build new hospitals, upgrade healthcare facilities and open more clinics would be constrained.

Anwar was speaking at the opening of the new building in Seberang Jaya Hospital yesterday. The building was officiated during his official visits to Permatang Pauh, Penang and Kedah.

The nine-storey block houses 316 beds, six operating theatres and seven types of multidisciplinary wards, including intensive care and high dependency units.

With its completion, the hospital's total capacity increased to 729 beds and 11 operating theatres.

Those present included Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow and Bukit Mertajam MP Steven Sim.

In his speech, Chow said Seberang Perai's population of 968,000 required a more efficient and integrated healthcare system to meet future challenges.

Chow said the state government had approved 49 healthcare upgrading projects this year, involving an allocation of RM16.67mil, as well as four new healthcare projects under Rolling Plan 1 of the 13th Malaysia Plan.