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Malaysia might levy sintax for soft drinks

July 6, 2014 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau



Singapore: Malaysian Health Ministry is considering on levying 'sintax' for soft drinks. The move is considered to address the high prevalence of diabetes in the country.

Health director general Datuk Seri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said that diabetes was highly prevailing in Malaysia, and such fiscal implementations would help in curbing the disease to some extent.

Mr Abdullah said that the ministry will discourage ministerial meetings from serving soft drinks, starting from his own ministry.

Dr Abdullah quoted that the sugar content in these beverages was studied and its likely impact on the health of the population were being assessed. He expects that the report would arrive in two months. Based on the report, the decision would be made, he added.

He cited that Denmark, Hungary and Mexico had already implemented such measures that effectively reduced the consumption of soft drinks.

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Dr Abdullah revealed that Malaysia spent a 4.6 percent of its gross domestic product on healthcare as 2.6 million adults in Malaysia suffered from diabetes.

Dr Abdullah said that proper counselling for diabetes management must be conducted by healthcare practitioners to help people overcome their limitations and strongly fight the disease.