

# Experts back early closure of restaurants

By **JUNAID IBRAHIM**

newsdesk@thestar.com.my

**PETALING JAYA:** Limited access to late-night eating due to shorter operation hours will be healthier for Malaysians, says Universiti Putra Malaysia's Prof Dr Barakatun Nisak Mohd Yusof.

The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences deputy dean also said that while it would not completely solve the obesity issue in Malaysia, shortening the operating hours for eateries would help reduce late-night eating among the people.

"This, in turn, has the potential to foster healthier eating habits and promote better sleep habits.

"Ultimately, individual health outcomes are subject to personal habits and choices, underscoring the importance of mindful eating practices and lifestyle decisions," she said.

Prof Barakatun said there was evidence that showed the negative effects of late-night meals, including weight gain, sleep disorders and digestive issues.

"A recent study published in *Nutrition and Diabetes* in February, drawing upon data from 41,744 participants in the US National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, revealed associations between night eating and increased risks of cancer and diabetes-related mortality.

"Moreover, consuming food after a busy day often leads to overeating, with some studies indicating that individuals who eat late at night exceed 40% of their daily energy requirements," she said, adding that the surplus calorie intake posed a significant risk factor for obesity.