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PM kicks off sports day with call to live healthy

STAY ACTIVE: Sports will make you more productive and healthy, says Najib

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MALAYSIANS should adopt an active lifestyle to be healthy and productive at work, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said.

There were too many Malaysians living a non-healthy lifestyle, leading to them suffering from obesity, which was a serious health issue, he said.

"We must realise that hypertension, diabetes and cardio-vascular diseases can be avoided with a healthy lifestyle.

"There should be no excuse. If I can do it, then why can't you? Make exercise an integral part of your lifestyle, and it will lead to a healthy body and mind, with improved work productivity for the country.

"I, myself, am a sports enthusiast and practitioner. I have a personal physical trainer to ensure that I remain healthy," he said at the launch of the National Sports Day

in the Pavilion shopping centre in Bukit Bintang here yesterday.

National Sports Day will be celebrated for the first time on Oct 10, and will be observed on the second Saturday of October each year.

"My message is this: if you love yourself and your family, then, make sports a part of your lifestyle. Even if there is no stadium, you can exercise by jogging or walking. Better still, if you work out with sports equipment," he said.

National Sports Day, the prime minister said, was to honour athletes the same way others celebrated Teachers Day or Workers Day.

"But sports is unique, as it involves mass participation of all levels of society. Millions of Malaysians can be involved, irrespective of age, ethnicity or religion. Sports encourages nation-building and promotes unity among the races," he said.

Najib said he wanted Malaysia to be known as a sporting nation in the long run, as it had a large population, comparable with countries like Australia.

"But Australian sports is way ahead. We can do it, too. We already have champions like world No. 1 Datuk Lee Chong Wei in badminton and world squash queen Datuk Nicol Ann David.

"In earlier years, we had the likes of (Tan Sri) Dr Mani Jegathesan in sprints, and many others.

"But now, our talent base is very limited, and we are not thorough (in sports development).

"There are no quality replacements for the sporting greats."

The prime minister said sports

would be promoted at all villages and districts nationwide — from Padang Besar in Perlis to Johor, and across the South China Sea in Sabah and Sarawak.

Meanwhile, Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the countdown to National Sports Day would kick off with the "Get Fit" roadshow in Kuching in two weeks.

"We want to keep the momentum going with various awareness activities lined up nationwide, and by establishing hotspots for people

to exercise.

"It will involve three million Malaysians from schools, universities and the public.

"Our target is to get at least 10 per cent of Malaysians to be involved in sports of any kind. The mass participation will help unearth new talent."

Khairy said sporting goods companies and fitness clubs would be invited to promote their equipment and services during sales carnivals.

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