

'Let's fight diabetes together'

PM: Everyone should put a stop to excessive sugar intake

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PUTRAJAYA: Ministries and government departments must set a good example by reducing the sugar intake during their programmes in an effort to repair Malaysia's image of having the highest rate of diabetes cases in Asia, says the Prime Minister.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the responsibility to repair the country's image should not only be placed on the shoulders of the Health Ministry but also every person in the government as well as food and beverage sellers and the public.

Anwar said as a country with a Muslim-majority population, Malaysians must understand the religion's emphasis on a healthy lifestyle.

"Islam stresses leading a healthy lifestyle, but Malaysia is number one in diabetes because we take sugar excessively, including the teh tarik that I had earlier which I couldn't finish because it was too sweet.



Choose to be healthy: Anwar watching a Zapin dance performance at the Karnival Usahawan Desa @Putrajaya in Anjung Floria. - Bernama

"I want the Rural and Regional Development Ministry as well as other ministries to go big on campaigns to reduce sugar intake. We cannot only rely on the Health Ministry to do this.

"I want to see programmes held by all ministries to reduce their sugar intake, even during a feast. Otherwise, I will feel disappointed.

"In Malaysia, our awareness on Islam teachings is high - we have religious talks all the time, but unfortunately, our diabetic rate is uncontrolled," he said when

launching the 2023 Karnival Usahawan Desa @Putrajaya at Anjung Floria here yesterday.

Meanwhile, Anwar - also the Finance Minister - said the government was allocating RM1bil next year for the Madani Community Fund initiative to help rural communities start their own economic projects.

He said each rural community would be given a maximum fund of RM100,000 to start economic projects, such as handicraft or hydroponics.

"The fund is for the penghulu, penggawa or tuai rumah (village chiefs) after holding a meeting and deciding what economic projects are best for their village.

"I want to see the villagers decide and run the projects at a low cost, manage with RM100,000 and see what can be done. If all goes well, we may increase it (the total allocation) to RM2bil.

"Spend prudently and follow the rules. The allocated funds are to be used specifically for its intended purpose, not for the repair of damaged fences or bridges," he added.

Describing the carnival as successful, Anwar said the event had received extraordinary and encouraging response.

"This is our opportunity to reveal the efforts made by the Rural and Regional Development Ministry under the helm of Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and to celebrate entrepreneurs so that they are given encouragement and support both from the government machinery and the people."