

TO BE TABLED NEXT MONTH

PM: BUDGET TO TACKLE COST OF LIVING WOES

Growth has risen while inflation is under control, says Anwar

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THE government will focus on strategies to ease the rising cost of living in the 2025 Budget, which will be tabled next month

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday said Malaysia's inflation rate remained lower than that of Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia, at two per cent,

"*Alhamdulillah*, since we implemented the Madani Economy, we have seen economic performance rise to 5.9 per cent, and inflation is under control.

"I just returned from Vladivostok, where I met President (Vladimir) Putin.

"Russia's inflation rate is at eight per cent. He was proud that they had managed to control it.

"Even with our two per cent inflation, people say the prime minister is useless," he said at the National Wellness Month celebration here.

Present were Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad and Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Aminuddin Harun.

Anwar compared the country's situation with Turkiye, where its president, Recep Tayyip Erdo-

gan, had directed the finance minister to review and discuss the nation's economic situation.

"President Erdogan asked his finance minister to review and discuss the situation because while Turkiye's tourism sector is doing well, inflation is high.

"Can you guess Turkiye's inflation rate? It is at 40 per cent."

He said Malaysia should not move in that direction and should manage the economy effectively.

Anwar visited Vladivostok, Russia, on Sept 4 and 5 to deliver a keynote address at the Plenary session of the Ninth Eastern Economic Forum.

It was Anwar's first visit to Russia.

At a separate event, Anwar said ensuring comfortable facilities for the people had been a priority for the unity government.

This commitment, he said, was a fundamental aspect of the government's approach to improve the quality of life for citizens.

"The Madani government will prioritise the development of facilities for the people so that the majority can enjoy the benefits of development.

"Landmarks in the cities are important, such as the Twin Towers and beautiful hotels.

"But what about the stalls and small eateries frequented by a larger portion of the population, about 80 per cent, while only 20 per cent visit large and luxurious restaurants and hotels.

"This is why the Madani government is implementing a new approach to be more inclusive.

"In this Madani government, the people and facilities for them are prioritised."

He said this at the launch of the refurbished Seremban Rest and Service (southbound) area, the first sustainable rest stop on the North-South Expressway.

On another issue, he said it was time to monitor food stalls selling sugary items as part of the campaign against excessive sugar consumption.

"If you (traders) serve drinks with too much sugar ... it should not come at the expense of others (health).

"This excess sugar means that the person who sells it contributes to the damage to the body and health of buyers.

"If the customer says, 'it's okay, it's not less sweet' and they want to add sugar, then it is fine."

He said Dzulkefly often said that school canteens were among the places selling the least healthy food.

"It is about controlling the quality of food to ensure children stay healthy."

He called on all parties, including political leaders, the public and non-governmental organisations, to address this issue.

Anwar said Malaysia's highest diabetes rate in Asia was not something to be proud of.

Despite discussions on artificial intelligence, industrial growth and high-quality education, he said, health awareness among Malaysians remained low.

"Let's save our country, our children and our families by controlling our sugar intake.

"We are not asking for a complete ban.

"If you don't have diabetes, you don't need to stop taking sugar, but don't pray to get diabetes."