

Anwar warns against serving alcohol at govt functions

SEPANG: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has made it clear to Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing and his ministry that the serving of alcohol at government events must never be repeated.

Anwar said the explanation provided by the Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry (Motac) that alcohol was served only after the official programme at the Global Travel Meet 2025 had concluded was unacceptable, as the government holds a firm policy against alcohol at official functions, without exception.

"Motac explained that the alcohol was served after the official

event ended (at the World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur). But it was still part of the same event.

"We have issued a stern warning to the minister and the ministry. Regardless of the fact that the programme had concluded, it is still entirely inappropriate," he was* quoted as saying to Bernama after sending off Pakistan Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif at the Bunga Raya Complex at KLIA yesterday.

The Prime Minister also warned government leaders and agencies not to take such matters lightly.

"I want to remind all members of the Cabinet and the entire government machinery that there is

no room for negligence on this issue," he said in responding to the controversy surrounding the Oct 1 dinner event held at a hotel in Petaling Jaya.

Several photos from the gala dinner that was paid for by the private sector showed the minister and guests holding alcoholic drinks.

Motac pledged in a statement yesterday to learn from the controversy and prevent such incidents from happening again.

The ministry said it took full responsibility for the confusion and misunderstanding that caused unease.

"The ministry takes this as a

lesson and will make sure that similar incidents do not happen again.

"The ministry will also ensure that all programmes under its supervision comply with established guidelines and ethical standards," it said while thanking the Prime Minister for his advice and support.

"The ministry will continue to improve communication and implement ongoing improvements in carrying out its responsibilities to the people and the nation," it added.

Tiong clarified that Tourism Malaysia did not oversee the serving of alcohol at the gala, as the

catering was managed by a private sector company. Additionally, he noted that the dinner was not included in Tourism Malaysia's official programme.

Tourism Malaysia's role during the dinner was limited to launching the Visit Malaysia 2026 events calendar.

The co-hosts of the gala dinner - the Malaysian Indian Travel & Tours Association (Mitta), the Malaysian Inbound Chinese Association (Mica) and the Malaysia My 2nd Home Consultants Association (MM2HCA) - had also expressed regret to Tiong and Motac over the incident.