

Dubai dishes out gold awards to weight losers (Update)

November 8 2013

Dubai municipality has dished out 2.8 million dirhams (\$762,942) worth of gold in prizes to contestants in a weight-loss challenge, an initiative by the Gulf emirate to fight obesity.

The "Your Weight in Gold" campaign promised one gram of gold for each kilogram shed, provided the contestants lost at least two kilos (4.6 pounds) by August 16, when the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan ended.

Ahmad al-Sheikh, a 27-year-old Syrian architect, claimed the top prize of 63 grams of gold worth 10,048 dirhams after losing 26 kilos.

Sheikh, who weighed 146.7 kilos at the start of the competition, was one of 2,648 winners who together received 16.82 kilos of gold on Thursday.

"I actually registered 15 days later in the campaign and was worried at first, because I thought I lost a head start to all the other contestants," he told the Gulf News daily.

The second and third place winners shed 23 kilos and 22 kilos, respectively.

Gulf News said that those who shed five kilos and above got two grams of gold for each kilo lost, while those shedding 10 kilos and above were entitled to three grams of gold for every kilo lost.

During Ramadan, the faithful refrain from eating, drinking and smoking between dawn and sunset.

But many tend to tuck in heartily after dark, despite warnings that overindulgence can be bad for the health.

Many Gulf countries are struggling to reduce the level of obesity among their populations.

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