

**Anwar: M'sia not ready to make English a 'must pass'**

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**By Ram Anand**

The time is not yet right for the Education Ministry to make passing English in public examinations compulsory, opined Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim.

Anwar said for that to happen, the government must focus on making the facilities available first.

"This (a compulsory English pass) will burden students because the facilities and teachers are not up to the mark yet," he said.

He was speaking at a press conference after delivering a keynote address at a conference on the Islamic resurgence.

Anwar said that in any masterplan, the issue of further strengthening the command of the Malay language as the national language among students must be addressed first.

"They must start by uplifting Bahasa Melayu as the official language, not only in terms of command, but also in terms of quality," he said.

"But this has not been resolved yet," he pointed out.

He said that the country's leaders are disconnected from the grassroots, and that is why they are unable to fathom the differences in the facilities between urban and rural schools, which would make it difficult for the latter if English were to be made a compulsory pass subject.

"Compulsory to study I agree, increase the quality of English command I agree, must pass though is in an uncertain period, the quality of teachers, facilities, including in vernacular schools - must all be looked at first," he said.

"I don't think it's fair to make it a must pass before the facilities are fully in place," he added.

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