

Lifting barrier on matriculation to ease racial tensions – Anwar

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Removing the barrier that prevented top-scoring non-Malay students from joining government matriculation programmes is to ease racial tensions, said Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

The move would also provide justice to all Malaysians regardless of race, he added.

“(The barrier removal) will lower tensions the Education Ministry faces every year.

“Sometimes, in such matters, the controversy heightens political temperature and causes social and racial tensions. Hopefully, the announcement can help,” the premier said.

He was speaking during a monthly gathering with Prime Minister’s Department staffers today.

Anwar announced the decision on Sunday, affirming that students scoring 10As and above in SPM would be eligible for the matriculation programme.

The programme serves as a government-provided pre-university course, as an alternative to STPM.

The programme allocates 90 percent of its spots to bumiputera students, reserving the remaining 10 percent for non-Malays.

Anwar said the education ministries will later release the details of how this quota will co-exist with the lifting of restrictions for top scorers.

Won't affect bumi privileges

Elaborating, Anwar stressed that the decision would not compromise bumiputera privileges as per Article 153 of the Federal Constitution.

He noted concerns about minority rights and bumiputera guarantees, especially for those in poverty.

“Therefore, we strive for a fair and rational approach. If they are citizens and fellow Malaysians, we must support them,” he said.

Anwar emphasised that while the government values meritocracy for the country's progress, it prioritises justice for all, including marginalised communities.

“To make this country progress, it means we must uphold meritocracy. The best, the brightest, and the most excellent should be encouraged.

“But we must also not sideline the poor and the marginalised. I do not want to be apologetic in defending this,” he added.

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