

# Not a matter of race: Anwar

> 'Decision to keep matriculation quota is to help B40 group'

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The government's decision to maintain the 90% quota for bumiputra students in the Education Ministry's matriculation programme is not a matter of race but to cater to the B40 (low-income) group, PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said yesterday.

The Port Dickson MP said the decision was made to address the Malay community's concerns after the government increased the number of students for the programme.

"I was told that the increase to 40,000 from 25,000 previously had led to worries that it would take away the quota for the Malay students.

"We don't want them to feel like we are taking seats from the Malays.

"For now, we have to accommodate those concerns.

"This is also because in some faculties, Malay participation is substantially lower," he told reporters after being awarded the Global Citizenship Award by Saturna Capital here.

Anwar added that the government should not neglect or marginalise the B40 group.

Education Minister Maszlee Malik had announced that the increased intake for matriculation students was based on a Cabinet decision to get more students into tertiary education and to spread the opportunity to all races.

However, he said the 90:10 quota was maintained as it was in line with the original vision of the matriculation programme, which was to encourage more bumiputra involvement in the science-related fields in public universities.

On another matter, Anwar said he agrees with Prime Minister Tun Dr



Anwar, flanked by Saturna CEO Saturna Jane Carten and chairman Nicholas Kaiser, and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail at a hotel in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.  
- **AMIRUL SYAFIQ MOHD DIN/ THE SUN**

Mahathir Mohamad that the state constitutions of Johor and Terengganu were nullified when the Federation of Malaya was formed, based on the interpretation of the Federal Constitution.

"That is the position we take. Mahathir's claim was based on the interpretation of the national constitution," he said.

Anwar was responding to Mahathir's blog post on Wednesday where he said it is paramount for Malaysians to continue upholding the Federal Constitution instead of a

state's set of laws as any initiative to overrule the supreme code would jeopardise the spirit of the country's formation.

"It was agreed that Malaya would be a democracy where the people would choose the government. The Rulers would be constitutional heads without executive power.

"Their position would be guaranteed by the Constitution which would be the supreme law of the country," Mahathir posted in his official blog chedet.cc.

As such, the premier said all

parties should respect the people's call in upholding the country's democratic system, which ultimately grants power to the winning political party to exercise its duty.

Mahathir said all state constitutions which came into force prior to the 1957 Malaya independence are deemed nullified, hence they cannot override the federal law.

Mahathir's statement was issued two days after the new Johor state executive council was sworn in amid a debate over the Sultan's powers.