

PM: Get kids hooked on science

Task force to suggest strategies for piqueing kids' interest in STEM

By RSN MURALI
murali@thestar.com.my

MELAKA: The Education Ministry has been asked to set up a task force to propose ways to stimulate children's interest in science and technology-related subjects, says the Prime Minister.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the subjects were becoming more important with the global focus on green technology, especially in the automotive field.

He said a study found that the interest of children, especially in rural areas as well as the urban poor, in such subjects has deteriorated.

"This is a challenge for us and the country in moving towards green technology and electric vehicles. Based on the latest report, children are now less keen on these subjects, particularly in the B40 bracket.

"I have asked the ministry to set up a special taskforce to stimulate children's enthusiasm in such subjects and in solving the challenge and exploring new disciplines in science and technology," he said when launching the 2023 National Teachers' Day celebration at the Melaka International Trade Centre here yesterday.

The theme for this year's celebration was "Guru Insani Pemangkin Generasi Madani" (Teachers as a Catalyst for the Madani Generation).

The Prime Minister also called on teachers to continue supporting the government's efforts and help boost the people's spirits so that Malaysia could regain its status as a leading nation in the region.

"Let's catapult this country with the strength of its languages, cultures, values and technologies. God-willing, if the teachers are



Passion in teaching:

Anwar (centre) congratulating Nuinda (right) on her award. Looking on is Education Minister Fadhlina. - Bernama

committed and work a little harder, I am sure our future will be bright," he said.

At the event, Datuk Dr Nuinda Alias was named the recipient of the "Tokoh Guru Kebangsaan 2023" award, while Datuk Mazlan Mohamad received the "Tokoh Kepimpinan Pendidikan Kebangsaan" 2023 award.

Earlier, Anwar urged the teaching fraternity to give him time to look into increasing their allowances in line with the effort to strengthen the education sector.

He said the issue of increasing the allowances was a priority to him but added that this depended on the nation's coffers.

"The revenue generated with the economic growth in the first quarter of 2023 and the savings my administration has made by reviewing several projects will be returned to the rakyat. Give me time to fulfil this, but do not ask for it now," he said.

Anwar urged stakeholders in the Education and Finance Ministries to ensure no disruption in the effort to repair dilapidated schools across the country. He said he had instructed both ministries to fast-track remedial measures in the affected schools without administrative hassles.

The Prime Minister also questioned why there were students

attending schools that had poor basic facilities like toilets when the country experienced impressive economic growth.

In February, Anwar, who is also the Finance Minister, announced that the government would prioritise repairing dilapidated schools in the country.

The Education Ministry has identified 289 dilapidated schools in Sabah alone, with 64 deemed unsafe by the Public Works Department.

Also present at the event were Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek and her deputy Lim Hui Ying, and Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Seri Ab Rauf Yusoh.