

DON'T REJECT POOR STUDENTS, VARSITIES TOLD

Anwar says students must be allowed to register for tertiary education first

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UNIVERSITIES have been directed not to reject students who cannot afford registration fees.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said students must be allowed to register for tertiary education, while the Higher Education Ministry and relevant department resolve the issue.

"Some families said they had to turn down offers (for their children to further their studies) as they can't afford the RM1,800 fees.

"For the first time in history, I have issued the directive this year. None of our children can be rejected by the universities," he said in his speech at the Finance Ministry's monthly assembly.

Anwar is also finance minister.

He said the National Higher Education Fund Corporation provided a Grant of Loan Advance of RM1,500 each to eligible students to cover a portion of the expenses for undergraduate studies.

The initiative, available to Malaysian students whose parents or guardians are Rahmah Cash Aid recipients, was to ensure that no student is left out from furthering their studies due

to financial problems.

On another matter, Anwar said the RM2,000 incentive payment to all civil servants announced during the tabling of the 2024 Budget last week, was fair and just.

Answering those who had criticised the allocation, he said consideration must be given to the fact that civil servants had been waiting for a revised remuneration scheme for more than a decade.

He said the amount was considered small when compared with the duties handled by government staff.

"Some quarters had questioned the move to reward the civil servants while the country is dealing with a huge debt.

"It is considered small compared with the work (that they do) and the fact that no review (of



The National Higher Education Fund Corporation has provided a Grant of Loan Advance of RM1,500 each to eligible students to cover a portion of expenses for undergraduate studies, pic courtesy of reader

salaries for civil servants) has been done in over 10 years. The study should have been conducted two years ago."

He said due to uncertain politics in the country in the past, the study could only be initiated this year and it would take some time to be completed.

Anwar said he had asked the Public Service Department and Human Resources Ministry to carry out the study in a holistic manner and take into consideration views of all parties involved.

"In the meantime, we have decided to give a short-term reward (to civil servants) early next year."

Anwar, during the tabling of the budget on Friday, had announced an early incentive payment of RM2,000 to all civil servants in Grade 56 and below, including those on contract.

He had said all main public sector employees, including uniformed personnel, as well as government pensioners, would receive RM1,000 each.

These payments would be made in one lump sum at the end of February.

The government is currently conducting a review of the Public Service Remuneration System, with the aim of having this completed by the end of next year.