

Anwar: Streamline course approval

Speed up endorsements of new programmes at HEIs or risk lagging globally, says PM

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KUALA LUMPUR: Shorten the time to approve new courses at higher education institutions (HEIs) or risk falling behind other countries, warns Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said it takes at least six months to introduce a new course as such a move would need to go through multilevel processes and by the time approval is given, the course would only begin the following year.

He said currently if an institution wants to form a faculty of artificial intelligence, it would need to go through the study unit first before going to the department, followed by the faculty and board level before reaching the Higher Education Ministry.

"We would be behind by one year," he said when officiating the Higher Education Ministry's strategy discourse yesterday at the World Trade Centre here.

Anwar said he had done a test case with the Cabinet where a proposal process that once took 18 months was reduced to less than two months, including the submission of the report to the Cabinet committee.

He also said that the process of presenting a report to the Cabinet committee had been set in one week with a maximum of two weeks, when last time, it could take about six months.

"This is what we call speed without setting aside existing processes and regulations," he added.

Anwar also said he wants the leadership of HEIs to be given space to spur new ideas.

He said the move was neces-

sary to ensure these institutions can compete at the regional and global level and produce graduates who are disciplined and of high quality.

On another matter, Anwar said he is not promoting Bahasa Malaysia at the expense of the English language.

Neither is he promoting the language at the expense of the national language.

"Many universities in the world emphasise mastering more than one language," he said.

He added that even though Indonesia and Thailand are strong proponents of their native languages (Indonesian and Thai), their youth in higher education institutions possess a strong command of the English language.

When asked if technical and vocational education and training (TVET) can be introduced from

primary school, Anwar said the idea is still being discussed as there are several implications.

However, he added, the Cabinet committee has agreed that it would begin after Form Three and no longer only after Form Five.

On another matter, Anwar refused to entertain Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's latest accusation that he is an expert in political manoeuvring and forming backdoor governments.

Instead, he advised the former prime minister to look after his health.

"It is okay (tidak apalah). Please look after your health," Anwar told reporters.

Earlier yesterday, Dr Mahathir denied any links to the "Dubai Move", adding in a post on X that he has not visited the city in a long time.

"Secondly, as far as I can remember, making political moves and (forming) back door governments is the specialty of the Prime Minister.

"I'm sure many remember the Sept 16, 2008, move to form a back door government. Then there was also the Kajang Move to appoint his wife to be Selangor (Mentri Besar).

"There (was also political manoeuvring) based on (statements like) 'I have the numbers' and 'strong, formidable and convincing majority'," he said.

The Dubai Move first came to light after Community Communications Department deputy director-general Datuk Ismail Yusop claimed that there was a plot organised by Perikatan Nasional leaders and government backbenchers vacationing in the United Arab Emirates.