

# MATRICULATION FOR 10As SPM STUDENTS

Cabinet made this decision to address issue of fairness in education, says PM

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Students who obtain 10As and above in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination will be guaranteed a place in any matriculation programme regardless of race or locality.

In announcing this, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the details would be disclosed by Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek today.

He said the decision was made by the cabinet last Friday to address the issue of fairness in education.

"The issue often becomes controversial when students pass SPM, but face limited educational opportunities.

"To address this problem, the cabinet convened last Friday to examine the proposals and consider solutions that do not overlook any group of students.

"The government has decided that starting this year, all our children who obtain excellent results, specifically 10As and above, will be guaranteed a place in the matriculation programme by the government."

He said this at the closing of the National Training Week in Bukit Jalil yesterday.

The programme, established in 1998, is a preparatory programme for Bumiputera students to qualify them for undergraduate studies in science, technology and professional arts at local and international institutions of higher learning.

Since 2005, the selection process has been done through a race-based quota system, where 90 per cent are reserved for Bumiputera students and 10 per cent for non-Bumiputera students.

Anwar said the Bumiputera quota system for the matriculation programme under the Education Ministry would remain



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim (second from left) speaking to participants at the closing of the National Training Week in Bukit Jalil yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

unchanged.

He said this decision did not challenge Article 153 of the Constitution, which relates to quotas in respect of services and permits for Malays and natives of Sabah and Sarawak.

He said this decision was made to ensure that all excellent students received the best opportunities to further their studies.

"This decision was made to guarantee opportunities for underprivileged children from urban, rural and remote areas.

"While we ensure that students with 10As from all races are admitted to matriculation centres, we will continue to uphold the Bumiputera quota policy to ensure that no underprivileged urban children are left behind.

"This government recognises excellence, without exception regarding race or locality, and guarantees a place for them in matriculation programmes."

He added that the Education Ministry and the Higher Education Ministry would work together to detail the methods and implementation of this policy.

Anwar said he hoped that the government's decision would not be politicised.

"The government is always striving to enhance access to and quality of education while ensur-

ing that the Bumiputera quota system and the principle of meritocracy are preserved for the benefit of all students."

In **Nibong Tebal**, Fadhlina hoped there will not be any concern about maintaining the matriculation quota, following Anwar's announcement.

She said his announcement was a guarantee that educational opportunities would be ample and that it would ensure everyone got a place in tertiary institutes.

"We want to express our gratitude to the prime minister for this significant and important announcement.

"This is an assurance that outstanding SPM students will receive and higher education this year. It's a guarantee provided by the prime minister himself."

She said she and Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir would continue to discuss matters relating to fairness in educational opportunities.

Fadhlina said: "*Insya Allah*, we will coordinate with the Higher Education Ministry to make a follow-up announcement on this matter.

"This is to ensure that there are education opportunities for everyone, regardless of their background or ethnicity."



Fadhlina Sidek