

PM: A fair and reasonable path

Bumiputra quota to remain as govt opens matriculation to all 10As students

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim assured the nation that the government will maintain the bumiputra quota for Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) holders to continue their studies at the matriculation level.

Anwar, who is also the Minister of Finance, said in a Bernama report that the quota would be maintained as it was enshrined in Article 153 of the Federal

Constitution, which involves the special position of Malays and bumiputras in Sabah and Sarawak.

"We have chosen a path that we believe is fair and reasonable. If they (the students) are citizens and residents of Malaysia, we must support them, but we also accept meritocracy.

"Regardless of race or region, we can guarantee a place in matriculation for them.

"Our bumiputra quota will remain unchanged because this decision is related to the Constitution, ensuring the future of bumiputras so that there is no disparity. Civil servants must understand that we uphold meritocracy, but we also uphold fairness," he said in his speech at the Prime Minister's Department monthly assembly yesterday.

Anwar announced on Sunday that all students who obtained

10As and above in the SPM exam would be guaranteed a place in any matriculation programme regardless of race or region, starting this year.

The Cabinet made this decision last Friday.

He said that although the decision recognised excellence regardless of race and background, the government would also resolutely defend the bumiputra quota.

"I believe this matter will be

explained more thoroughly today. Fadhlina (Sidek, Education Minister) will clarify it more clearly," he said.

He hoped this decision would recognise every Malaysian who excelled in the examination.

"Education is the best vehicle to achieve social mobility. The best, the smartest, the brightest should be encouraged, but the poor should not be marginalised," he said.