

RM100 book vouchers out

PM: It is available for students from Year Four to tertiary level

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KUALA LUMPUR: A book voucher worth RM100 will be available for all students starting from Year Four to the tertiary level starting today, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said more details on the voucher, including how to claim it, who is eligible and where it can be used, will be made known after 2pm.

"For this year, we will start with Year Four pupils due to the financial constraints faced by the government.

"The vouchers are also eligible for secondary school, college and university students as well as those in teaching institutes," he said when launching the KL International Book Festival 2024 here yesterday.

Anwar said Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek and Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir will oversee the mechanism on how the vouchers will be distributed.

"Starting tomorrow, we will have the format (of the book vouchers) on how to use them. I hope that this can be completed just in time for this weekend (in time for the book festival)," he added.

Anwar said the vouchers would come with a recommendation list including the works of national laureate Datuk Seri A. Samad Said, Datuk Dr Anwar Ridhuan and the late Datuk Dr Shahnun Ahmad.

"I have suggested that when we give them the leeway to use the vouchers, we also provide a list of classic novels such as (*Hikayat*) *Hang Tuah* or



A boost for reading: Anwar (second left) visiting the KitaSelangor booth at the KL International Book Festival 2024 at World Trade Centre Kuala Lumpur. With him (from left) are Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari, Fadhlina and deputy Education Minister Wong Kah Woh. — ART CHEN/The Star

"These vouchers will at least lighten the students' (financial) burden."

Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir

books written by our national laureates.

"We also proposed that the vouchers be used to purchase

titles on technology because we need our children to understand the basics of digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI).

"We will provide a list of books to purchase and half of the money can be spent on books that they want. Because in the previous arrangement, the books bought were of low quality," he added.

Earlier, KL International Book Festival organising committee chairman Mohd Khair Ngadiron had requested that the government re-introduce the book voucher scheme in order to boost the local book industry.

In 2012, then prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had started the Baucar Buku 1Malaysia (BB1M) scheme to help students

purchase books and academic materials.

When met on the sidelines of the event, Zambry said his ministry will work with the book fest organisers to see if the vouchers can be used at the fair which ends on June 2.

"The book vouchers can be used beyond and after the fair," he said, adding that it will also be distributed by higher education institutions.

"These vouchers will at least lighten the students' (financial) burden," he said.

On a separate matter, Zambry said his ministry is looking at ways to help SPM graduates in East Malaysia attend scholarship interviews and university programmes in the peninsula.