

Mastery of BM comes first

English use, exam recognition must respect Constitution

LANGKAWI: Mastery of Bahasa Malaysia must come first before calls for greater use of English or recognition of the Unified Examination Certificate (UEC), says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said any demands touching on religious, racial or language sensitivities must respect the Federal Constitution, which designates Bahasa Malaysia as the nation's official language.

He stressed that the constitutional principle regarding the position of the national language would continue to be defended and supported.

"Lately, there have been various demands regarding language; some want to emphasise English, some want recognition of the UEC. This is Malaysia, the Malay language is the official language.

"Anyone promoting another language must remember that the official language must be elevated as a language of knowledge and mastered by all Malaysians," the Prime Minister told reporters after performing Friday prayers at the Nur Al-Hidayah Mosque in Kuah yesterday.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said the dignity of the Malay language must be strengthened in line with its position in the Constitution, and its mastery must be improved among the people, Bernama reported.



Engaging lunch: Anwar mingling with diners during a meal at a seafood restaurant in Langkawi.
- Bernama

He said only after these principles are firmly upheld should proposals to enhance the mastery of other languages or to recognise the UEC be considered.

"If this is clear, then I agree with efforts to increase the use of English.

"But Bahasa Malaysia, as the language of new technology, the language of AI, the language of knowledge, must be strength-

ened, and mastery of it must be good among all the people.

"All streams ... I don't care whether Chinese, Tamil, English, must master the Malay language.

"This is also the condition we impose on international schools.

"They can use English as a medium. However, students must pass and master Bahasa Melayu."

Anwar added that any proposal focusing on a single language or

race while neglecting the national language could create problems.

He reminded all parties submitting language-related proposals to comply with constitutional principles, with priority given to strengthening Bahasa Malaysia.

Earlier, DAP deputy chairman Nga Kor Ming was reported to have said that the party would meet with the Prime Minister regarding UEC recognition.