

# Fresh model for our schools

## Tests to be conducted in Year Four and Form Three, says PM

By **ARFA YUNUS**  
arfayunus@thestar.com.my

**PUTRAJAYA:** Malaysian school-children will have to face a centralised national assessment test at the primary level again, but this time it will be in Year Four.

The new national assessment system, with tests administered by the Examinations Board, will begin this year, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said.

Students will again be tested at the Form Three level from 2027 while schooling will also begin earlier. Children will enrol in pre-school at the age of five and enter Year One when they are six, starting from 2027.

Anwar said the changes mark the return of a matrix system aimed at strengthening early academic foundations and identifying learning gaps before pupils transition to secondary school.

"Starting this year, we will reinstate the Malaysian learning matrix system, which is an assessment or examination system to be conducted by the Examinations Board for Year Four primary school pupils," he said when launching the National Education Plan 2026-2035 yesterday.

He also questioned the rationale of waiting until Year Six to



**What lies ahead:** Pupils from SK Serdang viewing an interactive exhibit after the launch of the National Education Plan 2026-2035 at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre. — AZMAN GHANI/The Star

formally evaluate pupils' academic performance.

"Teachers should remember that there will be Year Four assessments this year. Why should we wait until Year Six?" he said.

Under the revised framework, assessments will focus on four core subjects - Bahasa Melayu, English, Mathematics and Science.

At the Form Three level, the test will include History.

"The focus of the Malaysian learning matrix will be Bahasa Melayu, English, Mathematics, Science and History," Anwar said.

He explained that introducing assessments in Year Four would allow weaknesses to be identified early, giving schools two full years - Year Five and Year Six - to provide targeted support and improvement before pupils enter secondary school.

"This means we conduct assessments, and over the next two years - Year Five and Year Six - we can make improvements and position our children better, before they enter Form One," he said.

Anwar stressed that the move

to enrol children in school at the age of six would not be compulsory in its initial year, adding that parents will be given a choice if they feel their child is not ready.

"In 2027, parents may choose to enter their children into Year One at six or seven years old," he said.

He said parents are encouraged to start preparing now by enrolling their children in pre-school at the age of five, adding that the entire pre-school system will be placed under the Education Ministry and streamlined accordingly.

"At five, children will enter pre-school, and at six, Year One," he said.

He also called for an uncompromising war against bullying in the education system, saying it must be treated with the same seriousness as the fight against corruption and drug abuse.

He said there must be zero tolerance for practices that undermine values and humanity, warning that bullying - even when involving only a small group - was sometimes taken too lightly by educators.

"We must have the same resolve as when we wage war against corruption and drugs. The evil practice of bullying destroys the identity and culture of schools," he added.