

New standardised examination at Year 4

> Assessment marks shift towards holistic learning, says Anwar

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PUTRAJAYA: The government will introduce a Year 4 examination in primary schools this year as part of a major overhaul of the national education system.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the examination, introduced under the learning matrix system, marks a shift towards holistic learning.

The system will also be extended to Form 3 students beginning next year.

"Starting this year, we will reinstate the learning matrix system, with the assessment in Year 4 conducted by the Examinations Board.

"Why wait until Year 6? This move allows pupils to be assessed earlier and gives them two years - in Years 5 and 6 - to improve before entering Form 1," he said at the launch of the National Education Plan 2026-2035 at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre yesterday. The Year 4 learning assessment will cover four core subjects: Bahasa Malaysia, English, Mathematics and Science.

Meanwhile, the Form 3 learning assessment will cover five core subjects: Bahasa Malaysia, English, Mathematics, Science and History.

Anwar also said efforts to strengthen

preschool education and Year One readiness are being accelerated.

He added that children are set to begin preschool at the age of five and enrol in Year One at the age of six starting next year, although participation will not yet be made compulsory.

"Children will still be allowed to enter Year One at the age of seven.

"However, we strongly encourage parents who are ready to enrol their children in preschool from the age of five (to do so).

"For preschool education, we are strengthening the entire system, which the Education Ministry has been instructed to take over and standardise."

In a separate announcement, Anwar emphasised the importance of language mastery, reaffirming Bahasa Malaysia as the national language while emphasising English proficiency for global competitiveness.

All schools across different education streams, including international schools, religious schools and institutions offering the Unified Examination Certificate (UEC), will be required to sit for Bahasa Malaysia and History in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM).

He said the move would help resolve long-standing controversies surrounding the national language and put an end to disputes over public university entry requirements.

"I have clarified the language requirements and insisted that all education systems must adopt and make Bahasa Malaysia compulsory according to the ministry's curriculum, including up to the SPM level.

"Without exception, Malaysian students in international schools are required to sit for the Bahasa Malaysia SPM examination as

well as History.

"This requirement also applies to religious schools and Maahad Tahfiz institutions, which involve more than 400,000 students, as well as the smaller controversy surrounding the UEC, even though circumstances have changed."

He also said at the tertiary level, the Higher Education Ministry would roll out reforms to expand access and strengthen digital literacy.

Polytechnics and community colleges will undergo reforms, including wider adoption of digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI), with 10 polytechnics set to be upgraded.

Anwar also said to strengthen inclusive education, all students with disabilities enrolled in public higher education institutions, polytechnics and community colleges will receive full fee exemptions, benefiting an estimated 3,000 students.

He said the measures are part of broader efforts to develop talent, cultivate a strong reading culture and build a knowledgeable, competitive nation for the next 10 years.

Emphasising the need for accountability, he said effective implementation would require commitment at all levels, including ministers, senior officials and education leaders.

"This is a major plan for our country. It is a good and sound blueprint for our children.

"It shows how serious we are about driving change and carrying out reforms in the education sector, to ensure that within the next few years, the quality of our education improves and our children's future becomes brighter."