

**STUDENTS FREE TO EXPRESS VIEWS, CRITICISE GOV'T - PM ANWAR  
DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 11 (Bernama) — Students in the country are free to express their views including criticising the government, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said this was to ensure that the group acquired critical thinking skills, in addition to creating a better learning atmosphere.

Anwar said he had also conveyed the matter to Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin and Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek.

“They have also opened up the space and opportunity, especially the Ministry of Higher Education, so that the university is more conducive in terms of allowing points of view to be expressed, with the exception of things that are insulting, racist in nature, or extreme religious beliefs.

“Apart from that, they are given the freedom to criticise the Prime Minister, the government,” he told reporters after attending the ceremony to hand over contributions to the AbuSulayman International Student Fund (AISF) at the International Islamic University of Malaysia (UIAM) here today.

Meanwhile, Anwar, in his speech said Malaysia’s educational institutions should depart from the outmoded manner in which students are restricted from exercising their rights to be critical.

He said schools and universities must allow criticisms based on facts and reasons to nurture creativity and critical minds among students.

“But it must be on condition, they don’t take things easy, criticism must be through reasonable discourse.

“It means you have to have the understanding, you have to learn and view other criticisms before you lend yours,” he said.

At the ceremony, Anwar who is also the former president of IIUM witnessed the handing over of additional funds for AISF from the family of the second rector of IIUM, the late Prof Emeritus Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Abu Sulayman.

IIUM Rector Emeritus Prof Tan Sri Dzulkipli Abdul Razak and the Sterling Management Group president and CEO Dr Yaqub Mirza were also present.

A contribution worth USD300,000 was handed over to Dzulkipli to help international students from various countries who were less fortunate and needed financial assistance in the form of a living allowance.

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