

Education gets a boost



By [Nor Ain Mohamed Radhi](#) - August 3, 2023 @ 3:03pm



RM35 million will be used to improve Internet access at all public universities under the Malaysian Research & Education Network programme. - File pic credit (NSTP)

THE RM55.2 billion allocated for the Education Ministry (MoE) and RM15.3 billion for the Higher Education Ministry (MoHE) in this year's 2023 Budget reflected the unity government's priority towards education.

The funds, an increase from RM52.6 billion allocated in 2022 for the Education Ministry and RM14.5 billion for the Higher Education Ministry over the same period,

is to improve the standard of national education and preserve the welfare and wellbeing of educators and students up to varsity level.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Centre of Community Education and Wellbeing educationist Dr Anuar Ahmad said one of the indicators if a government is paying serious attention to the education sector is by looking at the allocation.



"In Malaysia, the provision for the education sector has always been the highest.

"This explains the awareness and seriousness of our country's leadership when it comes to education.

"The continuity can be seen under this unity government, with the amount allocated this year, with more emphasis given to ensuring a comfortable and conducive learning environment for school and varsity students," he said.

Among the allocations for MoE as announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was RM2.3 billion to build the best infrastructure and learning facilities in all schools, which covers RM920 million to upgrade buildings and infrastructure in 380 dilapidated schools including Sabah and Sarawak via special procurement for immediate implementation and RM900 million for maintenance of all types of schools, including national primary schools (Sekolah Kebangsaan or SK), Chinese national-type primary schools (SJKC) and Tamil national-type primary schools (SJKT).

The maintenance includes toilets, wiring, drainage and replacement of furniture and damaged equipment in classrooms and hostels.



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Anuar added it is crucial to bridge the educational infrastructure gap between schools.

"It is no longer only between schools in the urban and rural areas, but also schools within the same district.

"Some schools have sufficient equipment, some do not. Thus, it is hoped that the allocation provided would also address this issue."



RM900 million will be channeled to the maintenance of all types of schools, including toilets, wiring, drainage and replacement of furniture and damaged equipment in classrooms and hostels.

In the 2023 Budget, the government also announced that seven schools will be built at a cost of RM560 million.

Among the schools are SK Paya Dusun in Terengganu, SMK Denai Alam in Selangor, SMK Nabalun in Sabah and SMK Dudong in Sarawak.

The allocation was also to equip schools that have students with special needs with disabled-friendly facilities.

To address malnutrition among schoolchildren caused by poverty, which can affect their physical and cognitive growth, the government allotted RM777 million to provide nutritious food under the Supplementary Meal Plan (RMT), which benefits 700,000 students.

Another RM108 million was for the ministry's Pre-school Food programme, to benefit more than 240,000 pre-schoolers.

The government will also supply schools and educational institutions under the ministry with 50,000 laptops this year, in line with the thrust in improving digital capabilities.

"The provision of laptops would help teachers emphasise teaching and learning elements based on the digitisation of education," Anuar said.

As for MoHE, RM436 million will go to improving infrastructure and replacing damaged equipment at public institutes of higher learning.

In addition, RM35 million will be used to improve Internet access at all public universities under the Malaysian Research & Education Network programme.

This digitalisation effort is expected to increase accessibility to innovative, flexible and world-class quality learning for all stakeholders, no matter where they are.

A total of RM428 million was also allocated to MoHE and the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry to promote research and development activities.

A National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) loan repayment discount of up to 20 per cent from March 1 to May 31, was also offered to borrowers.

In addition, PTPTN loan borrowers with a monthly income of RM1,800 and below can apply to defer repayment for six months from March 1 onwards.

Meanwhile, for the 2024 Budget, Anuar said more emphasis should be given to the digitisation of education, continuous improvement of dilapidated schools, construction of new schools and recruitment of new teachers.

"We are set to place digitisation of education as one of the goals for the country's education after Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025.

"Hence, more focus should be given in terms of providing infrastructure, equipment, suitable software and teachers' training."

He added that the government must also continue to address dilapidated schools, the shortage of new schools in urban areas, and the recruitment of new teachers.

The public can visit this [website](#) to find out more about how to take part in the initiatives and explore many more measures that the government is offering to the people.