

# Postpone SPM 2020, students plead

Many claim online fatigue, lack of time and school closure affected their preparations

By SANDHYA MENON  
sandhyamenon@thestar.com.my

**PETALING JAYA:** Postpone the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) 2020 examinations for a fairer playing field, students from the affected batch have urged the Education Ministry.

The students, who contacted *The Star* to air their grievances, said there were many reasons to do so, including online fatigue, lack of time to revise, and to be fair to students affected by the floods.

Schools were initially required to hold trial exams when they reopen tomorrow, but the ministry said they no longer had to do so in a list of frequently asked questions regarding operations of educational institutions under it that was updated yesterday.

It said last Saturday that only students allowed back were those sitting for the 2020 SPM, Sijil Vokasional Malaysia, Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia, Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia, Sijil Tinggi Agama Malaysia and Diploma Vokasional Malaysia as well as other international level exams certified by the ministry.

Sally Nur Dinie Lim, a SPM 2020 candidate from a secondary school in Selangor, said she was worried she wouldn't have enough time to revise for her papers.

"We are facing a tough situation



#### Safety first:

Personnel from the Labuan Fire and Rescue Department in full PPE gear as they conduct a disinfection exercise at the Labuan Vocational College ahead of its reopening tomorrow. — Bernama

due to the pandemic; we've not had much face-to-face time with our teachers to prepare for the exams and we must also think of the SPM candidates who are flood victims," she said.

Another SPM 2020 student who only wanted to be known as Maya said she and her friends were holding out hope that the exams would be extended by a month at least.

This would give us time to revise and prepare for the exams.

"Many students' mental health is also affected.

"It's fair to allow us a little extra time because at least 60% of our subjects were covered online and subjects like Additional Mathematics, Mathematics and Accounts are really hard to learn online," she said.

However, not all students want the SPM 2020 exams postponed.

Muhammad Izz Irfan, a SPM 2020 student from a secondary school in Selangor, is calling on the ministry

to instead use the SPM trial results or predicted grades as the final result.

He said he was exhausted from online learning, something he and his friends had been experiencing over the past year.

"It has been extremely tough to study at home, without face-to-face classes with my teachers.

"These are some of the suggestions I proposed to the ministry on how SPM 2020 should be conduct-

ed, based on how Cambridge used forecast results as official IGCSE 2020 results; continue SPM trials for states that have not finished or conduct it yet award candidates predicted grades based on several pieces of evidence that could then be used as the actual grades for SPM 2020; and make SPM 2020 optional and not mandatory for every candidate," he said.

Meanwhile, students have launched a petition on *change.org* calling for a deferment of the SPM 2020 exams.

The petition has garnered 39,569 signatures as of press time.

An anonymous reader claiming to be an SPM 2020 candidate wrote to *The Star* saying that since the launch of the petition, hundreds of comments were received from SPM 2020 students who said they were mentally exhausted.

"This is so worrying. We sincerely hope the authorities will look into this matter," said the student.

Parent Action Group for Education Malaysia chairman Datin Noor Azimah Abdul Rahim said students should be allowed to opt out from attending school and not be reprimanded for being absent.



For another view:  
See page 11