

'Include digital have-nots'

pg. 2

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Anwar: Effort to democratise technology must be on the agenda

PETALING JAYA: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim says for the country to become a digital economy powerhouse, "digital have-nots" must be included in the agenda.

He said the digital gap would not exist if efforts were made to democratise technology.

The digital gap is a term to describe a divide between those who have easy access to technological tools and those who do not.

Speaking at the Digital Native Agenda 23 (DNA23) launch at the All Asia Broadcast Centre in Bukit Jalil yesterday, Anwar said he had seen efforts to bridge the digital gap with applications that catered to those in the lower-income group.

"I will not share this concern of an increasing (digital) gap if the government and companies involved embark on a reform," he said.

DNA 23 is aimed at recognising challenges and seizing opportuni-



Sharing his views: Gobind (left) speaking during a dialogue session at the DNA23 launch at the All Asia Broadcast Centre in Bukit Jalil while Anwar looks on. — Bernama

ties in the digital world.

Access to technology, Anwar said, could enhance the income and living conditions of rural folk, some of whom relied on selling local items

as a source of income.

"For example, the Rungus community in Sabah uses technology to introduce their beadwork to a larger international community," the

PKR president said.

He cautioned that ignoring segments of society, especially those living in rural areas, would only invite a backlash.

In order to expand access to technology to a wider community, Anwar said the industry should be looking at efforts undertaken in parts of India and China instead of looking at more developed cities like New York.

Anwar also said although technological advancement was occurring at lightning speed, the welfare of humanity must be prioritised.

Also at the event was Communications and Multimedia Minister Gobind Singh Deo, who shared tips on how his ministry could enhance the national digital economy.

He said the digital economy contributed to 18.3%, or RM247.1bil, of the national economy in 2017, adding it was expected to rise to 20% next year.