

'Focus on digital economy'

Anwar: It will open up opportunities for new types of careers

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BANGI: The rise of digital economy can cause many to lose jobs but it will also open up opportunities for new types of careers, said PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

To overcome job displacement, he said workers should upskill themselves, as disruption was coming faster than ever now.

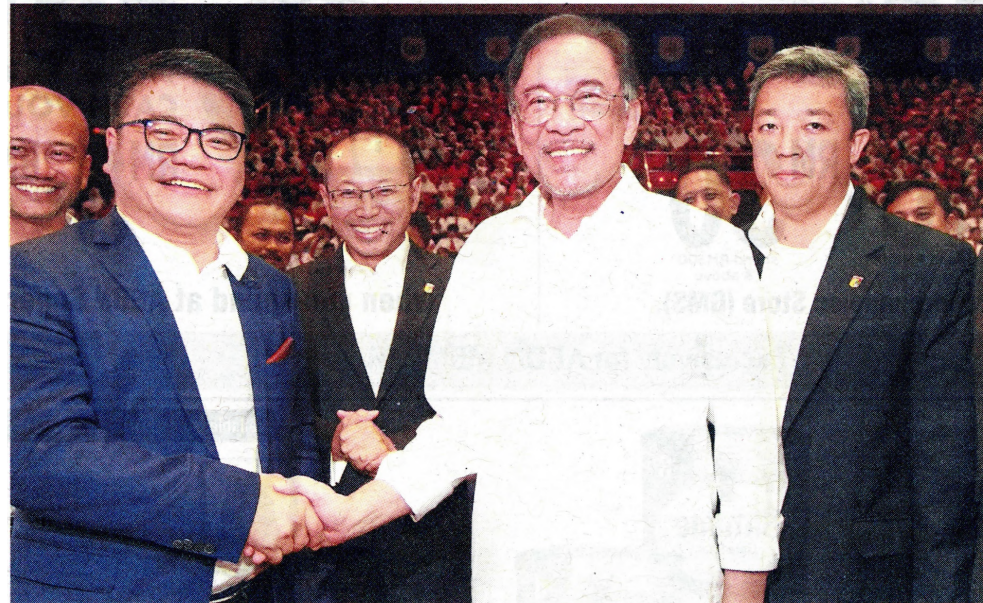
Anwar also joked that he too was disrupted, having been sent to prison just as he started learning about emerging technologies.

He was speaking at the Digital Dialogue Series held at the National University of Malaysia (UKM) yesterday. The series is part of the Digital Native Agenda 23 (DNA23) initiative aimed at educating Malaysians on the need to keep up with global trends.

Tencent Holdings senior executive vice-president Lau Seng Yee, who also spoke at the forum, predicted that as the world moves towards a digital economy, ideas and technology will be a nation's primary export, not physical resources or capital.

He said by 2025, a common focus for many economies will be on white collar jobs that use Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Lau also predicted that modern factories will depend more on 3D printing rather than the traditional



Meeting of minds: Anwar shaking hands with Lau as VIPs look on, including UKM vice-chancellor Prof Dr Mohd Hamdi Abd Shukor (right). - NORAFIFI EHSAN/The Star

assembly line to produce consumer products.

Lau, 54, is also Tencent group marketing and global branding chairman. He is the highest ranking Malaysian in the Beijing-based company. He has recently been selected to join the sovereign wealth Khazanah Nasional's board of directors.

"Our country's future doesn't rely on how we can develop the domestic economy, it hinges on the international digital economy," he said.

A UKM alumni, Lau shared about how his interest in AI led him to tech companies and eventually Tencent Holdings, even though his degree was not in the same field.

He added that anyone could get into the field even if they had a foundation in something else.

Part of the Tencent top management steering committee since 2006, Lau served 11 years as the president of Tencent Online Media Group before assuming dual chairmanship corporate roles in 2017.

The forum, which attracted hundreds of students, also featured Naluri Hidup chief executive officer Azman Osman Rani and Malaysian Global Innovation & Creativity Centre (MaGIC) CEO Dzuelira Abu Bakar who talked on life lessons and digital entrepreneurship.

It was organised by BMT Management Consulting in partnership with Star Media Group, video-on-demand service dimsum and the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute.