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PETALING JAYA: Higher education institutions should collaborate with industry professionals and specialised organisations to ensure that the use of artificial intelligence (AI) is safe, said AI specialist Girish Ramachandran.

“We are at a crossroads, and it’s imperative not only to prepare students for the future but also to ensure the conscientious and ethical use of AI.”

Girish was responding to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim’s emphasis on Malaysia’s requirement for cutting-edge AI infrastructure to cultivate local talent and drive AI-driven innovations.

“Malaysia has the potential to rank among the top 20 countries in AI,” said Anwar during a meeting with Nvidia Corp CEO Jensen Huang and YTL Power International Bhd managing director Datuk Yeoh Seok Hong.

According to Girish, projections indicate that AI could contribute trillions of dollars to the global economy by 2050, marking a historic turning point.

“While the economic potential of AI is undeniable, so are the ethical considerations surrounding its applications.”

He added that local educational institutions should actively cultivate a culture of responsibility and transparency in the development of AI.

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) has established the country’s first Faculty of Artificial Intelligence, with a Budget 2024 allocation of RM20 million.

Girish said it was made possible due to the

Ensure safe use of AI, says expert

> Vital for higher education institutions to prepare students for future, promote ethical use of technology'

availability of over 100 AI experts across several academic centres at UTM.

“Dedicated modules on AI ethics and responsible usage are integrated into curricula to ensure that students not only master AI technologies but are also conscious of the ethical implications.”

He said to forge partnerships for a secure AI future, it is crucial to recognise the importance of real-world perspectives.

He added that educational institutions should form collaborations with industry experts specialising in AI safety.

Girish emphasised that collaboration among higher education institutions is crucial in integrating dedicated modules on AI ethics and responsible usage in the curriculum.

“Institutions can take several key steps like establishing industry advisory boards comprising AI experts, industry professionals

and safety specialists to offer valuable insights into real-world AI applications.

“These committees could play a crucial role in regularly assessing and updating curricula to reflect emerging safety challenges and advancements in the field.”

He also proposed that institutions should establish open forums, workshops and discussion panels.

Girish said the enrichment of the educational experience through guest lectures, workshops as well as internship opportunities would ensure that students are not only theoretically proficient but also adept at the practical aspects of secure AI development.

“Ultimately, these efforts create a dynamic learning environment, equipping students with the skills needed to navigate the rapidly changing AI landscape.”