

EXPLORING NEW DISCIPLINES

MAKE SPACE FOR INDUSTRY PLAYERS, VARSITIES TOLD

Synergy needed to develop semiconductor industry in Malaysia, says PM

GEORGE TOWN

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim urged public universities, particularly those in the north, to give ample space for industry players to cooperate in exploring new disciplines related to high-tech industries.

He stressed the importance of synergy between universities, industry players and the private sector, especially in developing the semiconductor industry, as well as the related ecosystems, in line with Penang's position as a semiconductor hub in the region.

He said this was also to meet the country's needs, which required sufficient qualified engineers in high-tech industries, including the integrated circuit design industry.

"Universities must give the necessary space for the industry to come in a more aggressive manner.

"We make the necessary adjustments as time goes by, but (the) best way to educate, train, upscale and rescale is to ensure the synergy, the working collaboration between the industries and the education institutions.

"It is important for the mission of education to ensure this happens at a fast pace and the preparedness to adjust," he said at the launch of the Penang Silicon Design @5km+ in Bayan Lepas near here yesterday.

Anwar, who is also the finance minister, said that while political stability and clear national policies won't have issues in attracting investors, the issue of ecosystems still posed a challenge for them to invest in the country.

"Ensure the basic infrastructure is carried out at a fast pace. What is the training? Whether universities can focus on the new disciplines at a rapid pace.

"So this is to remind USM (Universiti Sains Malaysia), UUM (Universiti Utara Malaysia) and

related centres here in Penang, universities in Perak and Kedah, which could be utilised to ensure that these new disciplines be approved at a fast pace."

He also expressed surprise with the ability of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), which managed to approve the setting up of an artificial intelligence (AI) faculty and start the programme within four months.

At the event, Anwar approved a matching grant of RM50 million for a five-year period, with RM10 million a year, for the Penang Silicon Design @5km+ initiative.

The initiative, which is spearheaded by the Penang government through its main agency, InvestPenang, was created to revolutionise the Malaysian semiconductor industry in line with the National Semiconductor Strategy (NSS).

Anwar said Penang has been known as a semiconductor centre for a long time and this initiative is a momentous occasion in the

industry's history to lift Penang and Malaysia to become a global semiconductor hub.

The total amount of investment for the initiative is projected to be RM120 million for a five-year period, and the state government has provided an allocation of RM60 million to drive this initiative.

At a separate event on Friday, Anwar announced an initial allocation of RM250,000 to support entrepreneurship and digital training for youths under the Penang Muslim League.

He said the allocation aimed to ensure that all opportunities provided by the government were fully utilised, bridging the digital divide between the wealthy elite and the general public.

"I have approved RM250,000 as a basic starting point, which I believe can be used to strengthen efforts focusing on entrepreneurship training.

"I also urge the Penang Muslim League to continue playing an ac-

tive role in education, culture, history and entrepreneurship, especially in the current digital era," he said at the 70th anniversary dinner of the Penang Muslim League at the Setia SPICE Convention Centre in Bayan Lepas.

Anwar also called on youths to sharpen their skills and gain exposure in entrepreneurship, engineering, digital technology and AI to ensure the nation has sufficient experts in line with Penang's status as a leading semiconductor hub in the region.

On the Indian Muslim community's application for Bumiputera status for those born in Malaysia, Anwar said the Home Ministry and its minister, Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail, would review the matter.

"Whether one qualifies or not, they have to observe the normal process. It is an individual application, it's not a time frame. It depends on the individual application." **Bernama**



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim signing his name on a plaque to commemorate the launch of the Penang Silicon Design @5km+ in Bayan Lepas yesterday. BERNAMA PIC