

TRANSFORMATION

'Digital, healthcare innovation key to high-income nation status'

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is intensifying its commitment to digital transformation and healthcare innovation with key initiatives to boost digital economy and improve healthcare system, aiming to secure its position as a high-income nation.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Malaysia's ambition was to lead the region's digital and healthcare advancements.

He stressed the importance of the healthcare sector under the New Industrial Master Plan 2030 (NIMP 2030), citing Malaysia's role as Asean chair in 2025 as a platform to strengthen regional healthcare frameworks.

"We are fully committed to advancing the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) and leading initiatives to establish more efficient and integrated regulatory frameworks in healthcare," he said at the closing of the International Medical Device Exhibition and Conference 2024 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre yesterday.

Outlining Malaysia's goals to enhance healthcare through digital integration, modern technology and high-tech medical manufacturing, Anwar said these efforts included improving infrastructure, strengthening patient care systems, and adopting artificial intelligence (AI) and In-

ternet of Things (IoT) technology to support the Health Ministry.

He also stressed the importance of updating procurement processes to reflect these changes.

"Despite the nation's financial constraints, we have allocated the second highest budget for the Health Ministry in 2025, focusing on upgrading healthcare quality and adopting advanced digital systems."

Parallel to these healthcare initiatives, Anwar launched the National AI Office (NAIO), which aims to streamline digital efforts and enhance the digital ecosystem.

He said the digital economy

was set to contribute 23 per cent to the gross domestic product next year, with potential to rise to 25.5 per cent by 2030.

NAIO will coordinate efforts to improve digital literacy across government sectors, education and the public.

Anwar said the transition to a high-income economy depended on the acceleration of digitalisation across all sectors, including education, transport and health.

"The new AI Office is a vital step in driving Malaysia's AI development through collaboration between the public and private sectors.

"We need a paradigm shift,

transcending old bureaucratic approaches, to ensure systemic change and attract significant investments."

He also underscored the importance of values and ethics in digital transformation, aligning with the Madani framework which prioritises sustainability, integrity and wealth sharing.

Addressing digital gaps among the population, Anwar said the role of ministries such as the Higher Education and Human Resources ministries was to ensure that AI would not lead to job displacement, but instead provide opportunities for skills training and career development.