

Nothing to fear in AI if developed with values, says PM

SERDANG: New technology should not be feared especially artificial intelligence (AI) as it will not dehumanise us if embraced with values, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"The masses must master the basics of AI as not to be left behind by the rest of the world. This will begin with me," said the Prime Minister while officiating the AI for Rakyat programme at the Universiti Putra Malaysia yesterday.

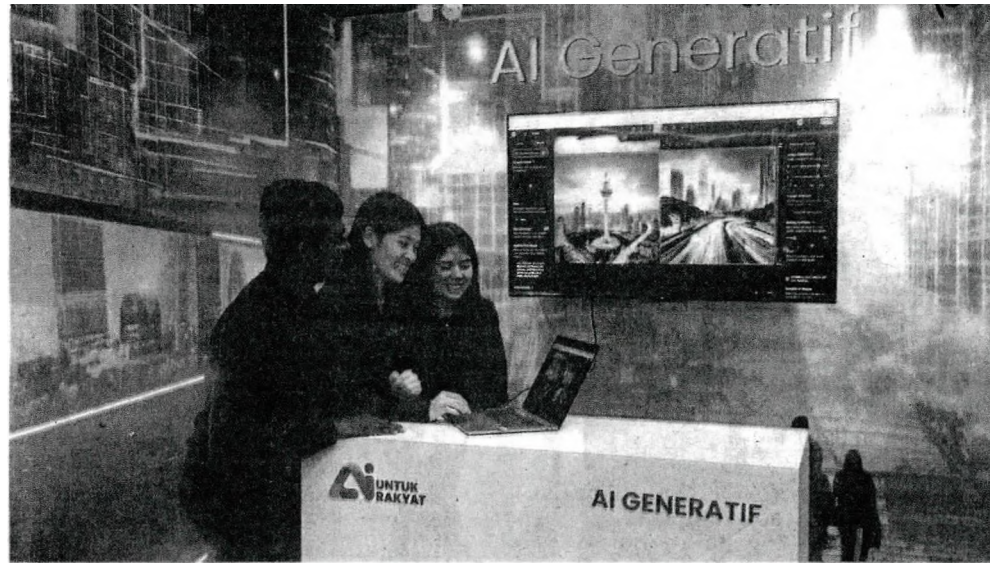
AI for Rakyat is a free self-learning portal designed by the Economy Ministry and Intel to enable the masses to master the basic AI skills in a four-hour module.

With the initiative, the government predicts that at least one million Malaysians would be able to master AI skills in three years.

Also present at the event were Economy Minister Rafizi Ramli and Intel vice-president of manufacturing, supply chain and operations and managing director for Intel Malaysia AK Chong.

Anwar said such a programme was important to address digital divide and digital elitism to ensure that no one is left behind.

"There is this fear that synthetic



New era:

Three youths checking out the AI Untuk Rakyat portal during the launch at University Putra Malaysia, Serdang. - AZHAR-MAHFOF/The Star

humans will take over human beings and our values.

"If those who teach digital subjects such as professors imbued the right values in the teaching of AI skills, then these values would remain.

"The firewall (against loss of values) should start in our homes and be in our education system. It is up to us to keep our values," said Anwar.

The Prime Minister also called

on the various ministries and agencies to ensure that students at all schools and tertiary institutions complete the four-hour module within a month's time.

"Introducing a new technology is like reaching for the skies but it is not difficult for the young.

"If this application is not embraced and accepted now, we would be left behind," he said.

Anwar said he expects the relevant agencies and ministries to

report in a month's time on how many Malaysians are actually able to master AI skills.

Earlier, Rafizi said the AI for Rakyat programme is one of the first steps to making Malaysia as the Asean AI gateway and a global AI hub. He said generative AI is expected to unlock an estimated worth of US\$113.4bil in productive capacity, propelling Malaysia to achieve a high income nation.

"This is equivalent to one-quar-

ter of the country's 2022 gross domestic product.

"Malaysia will launch the KL20 blueprint to place Malaysia as among the top 20 countries globally that offer the best ecosystem to incubate startup businesses.

"To achieve this, there must be a strong support ecosystem, an open policy on data and talents.

"The government ministries and agencies must work together with industry players to reach the masses," said Rafizi.

The minister also said without trustworthy data and secure channels, the products and services driven by AI technology could not be implemented properly.

"To be the regional and a global AI hub, we must be able to create new usages for AI.

"This can only be done if we have the ready and accessible data," Rafizi said, adding that the recently launched Central Database Hub (Padu) is a step towards this.