

We must not remain in our comfort zone, says PM

By KHOO GEK SAN
geksan@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia must not be complacent and continue to remain in its comfort zone, especially when it is competing with countries like Singapore, Indonesia and Vietnam, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He added Malaysia must compare and analyse the unique strengths of its neighbouring competitors, identify challenges, as well as underscore the need for structural changes and improvements in education.

“This includes emphasising

proficiency in languages like Malay, English, Chinese, Tamil, Arabic, French or German while maintaining Bahasa Melayu as the official language,” the Prime Minister said at the Industry Excellence Awards (AKI) 2024 event here last night.

Anwar emphasised the importance of adapting the education system to current demands, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging disciplines by establishing specialised faculties and revising outdated processes.

He warned that the traditional educational system which involves lengthy procedures, might cause Malaysia to fall

behind in rapidly evolving fields like digital technology and AI.

“Therefore, Malaysia must enhance its competitiveness and cannot rely on outdated approaches. I am grateful that several universities have quickly adapted and accelerated their processes to align with these new demands,” he said.

Additionally, he highlighted the importance of TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) programmes, which are designed to be more inclusive and youth-friendly, offering relevant skills and industry experience.

He encouraged industries to adopt TVET programmes, noting

that companies like PETRONAS, Proton and Geely can further expand their involvement. This would enhance the synergy between industry and educational programmes.

Anwar said such collaboration allows industries to define the necessary training and leverage their practical insights over conventional education systems.

On another matter, Anwar said the government holds the responsibility of building internal strength and emphasising the growth of local industries.

While Malaysia benefits from substantial foreign investments and promising trade relations, it

is essential for the government to foster the internal growth of local industries, whether they synergise with or stand apart from foreign industries.

He added that a stable political environment is crucial for making strategic strides, enhancing the country’s prestige, and boosting its potential.

Also present during the event were the Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, and chairman of the AKI 2024 council, Tan Sri Yong Poh Kon.

AKI 2024 saw the participation of over 130 companies competing in 13 categories.