

PM: Muslim world must prioritise STEM

CAIRO: The Muslim world is at risk of being left farther behind without decisive and sustained investment in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, warned Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

In fact, he said it is essential for the Muslim world to strengthen STEM education from the earliest years possible and to dramatically increase research and development investment and prioritise transformative fields like biotechnology, chemical sciences, and information technology.

"These sectors are critical not only to economic growth but to address urgent issues - from healthcare crises to environmental degradation - that cannot wait for tomorrow's solutions.

"The digital economy poses yet another urgent challenge.

"As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the Muslim world must prioritise investments in cybersecurity, digital infrastructure, and information and communications technology skills.

"We must establish strong cybersecurity frameworks, build resilient digital infrastructures,

and ensure that the next generation is prepared to navigate and shape a rapidly evolving digital landscape," he said during his public lecture titled "Stronger Together: A Vision For The Muslim Ummah Through Tech, Social and Economic Empowerment" at the Al-Azhar University here last Sunday.

The lecture was also attended by the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Al-Sharif Shaikh Prof Dr Ahmad Muhammad Ahmad At-Tayyeb, Foreign Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan, Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, and Malaysian Ambassador to Egypt Datuk Mohd Tarid Sufian, according to Bernama.

Anwar stated that it is equally crucial for the Muslim world to engage in large-scale, transnational collaborations in science, as well as joint ventures in fields such as space exploration, astronomy, marine science, and high-performance computing.

This is as these fields are now considered necessities rather than mere luxuries.

"These ambitious projects offer our nations the chance to devel-

op cutting-edge technologies, improve economic security, and demonstrate the power of a united ummah," he explained.

Anwar also urged the Muslim world to remember Azhar Al-Sharif's traditional role as a centre for reform, a source of knowledge and creative thinking, and most importantly, a defender of the ummah against colonialism while preserving and asserting the ummah's Islamic identity.

He said Al-Azhar Al-Sharif had made significant contributions to the Islamic world, and Muslims in the Malay archipelago especially, had greatly benefited from the university, whose graduates have always been formidable in defending the faith and knowledge, and instilling the spirit and essence of Islam in their communities.

The Prime Minister was scheduled to hold a meeting with his Lebanese counterpart Najib Mikati and Kuwait's Crown Prince Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, yesterday.

According to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office, the meeting will take place before the Extraordinary Summit of the Arab-Islamic States in Riyadh.

The statement indicated that

the meeting's agenda is likely to address the brutality of the Zionist regime and the tensions in the West Asian region.

In the meeting with Najib, Anwar will express Malaysia's support for Lebanon, which is now facing Israeli aggression.

"Malaysia was also directly affected by the tension in Lebanon following the incident of the Israeli attack which resulted in the injury of six members of the Malaysian Battalion (Malbatt) in the south of the country," according to yesterday's statement.

Anwar will also discuss the proposal to expel Israel from the United Nations.

In a meeting with the Crown Prince of Kuwait, Anwar is expected to discuss the cooperation between the Asean Summit and the Gulf Cooperation Council, given that Malaysia, as next year's Asean chairman, will host the summit in 2025.

Anwar arrived in Riyadh from Cairo yesterday morning to attend the Extraordinary Summit of the Arab-Islamic States before returning to Cairo to continue a series of pre-planned engagements with the Malaysian and Egyptian delegations.