

AI the great equaliser, says Anwar

PM: Tool can be a common force to spark innovation and improve ties

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KUALA LUMPUR: The developmental divide in different parts of the country will be bridged with Artificial Intelligence (AI), says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

“AI will not be a tool for the few. It will be a force for all; powering better governance, sparking innovation and improving lives.

“Through our AI Nation Framework, we will ensure that AI works for every Malaysian, in every corner of the country,” the Prime Minister said.

He said technological advancement would also help empower small businesses and communities across Asean.

“For Asean, this is a generational opportunity.

“With over 700 million citizens,

a rapidly growing digital economy and an extraordinary diversity of cultures and languages, our region is uniquely placed to shape AI in ways that are inclusive and ethical,” he said when launching the Asean AI Summit 2025 here.

He also said the vision to harness AI should not simply be to catch up with the rest of the world, but also to be a leader.

This, he said, could be done by offering a model of innovation grounded in trust, rooted in equity and shaped by South-East Asian values.

“The true measure of AI's success is not in the sophistication of its technology, but in its ability to meaningfully uplift the lives of our *rakyat*,” he added.

Anwar said the Malaysian government was committed to digital

transformation.

At the centre of that transformation is Malaysia's ambition to be an AI Nation.

Anwar also launched Malaysia's first large language model (LLM) called “Ilmu”.

“Ilmu” - short for *Intelek Luhur Malaysia Untukmu* - is a multi-modal AI model that can process and generate text, voice and images.

The model, fully developed by YTL AI Lab, tops all frontier models in understanding the Malay language, outperforms Llama 3.1 in real-world problem-solving and equals GPT-4o in handling complex instructions.

YTL AI Labs also announced the Ilmu AI Accelerator Programme in partnership with Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), which is open to Malay-

sian start-ups, SMEs and global solution providers.

Digital Minister Gobind Singh, who was present, said Malaysia was committed towards making the national AI vision inclusive for all citizens.

“In 2024, a report by the United Nations and International Labour Organisation observed that there is an AI divide, where high-income nations benefit from AI advancements, while low- and medium-income countries lag behind.

“The ministry's strategy is to close this divide,” he said in his speech.

Gobind also said the ministry was working to expand free AI literacy programmes and building homegrown innovation ecosystems.

“Affordability and access are

equally critical.

“If only a select few can use and shape AI systems, then it is only that select few who will influence decisions we make.

“We want every Malaysian to have the means and skills to guide AI,” he added.

Asean secretary-general Dr Kao Kim Hourn said the inaugural Asean AI Summit demonstrated that the bloc could forge more pathways that make AI a driver of peace, prosperity and progress.

“Let us seize this opportunity to build an AI-powered Asean economy aligned for a future where technology empowers all,” he said.