

'Let industry players lead TVET training to ensure skills stay relevant'

By **SANDRA SOKIAL**
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

KOTA KINABALU: Technical and Vocational Education and Training programmes must become more flexible and industry-driven to better meet market demand, especially in regions anticipating new investments and emerging sectors, says the Prime Minister.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said training should no longer be bound by rigid structures, and instead allow industry players the freedom to design and implement

programmes that equip trainees with practical, job-ready skills.

"If a company needs 200 skilled workers, let them train these youths themselves. What matters is that the training is relevant and directly linked to employment opportunities, even if the certification comes from the company rather than a ministry.

"We need to close the gap between what central agencies are teaching and what the industry actually needs," he said at the launching of the first phase of the Esteel Enterprise Sabah Sdn Bhd project.

Also present were Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor, Green Esteel Group chairman You Zhenhua, Esteel Enterprise Sabah Sdn Bhd managing director Nick Xu Yihang and group director Jiang Hairung.

The Prime Minister said the traditional model, where training institutions operate independently of industry input, risks producing graduates whose skills do not align with real-world needs.

"We must stop burdening industries with bureaucracy and outdated technical rules. Think about the future of our youth."

He shared successful collaborations in the Johor-Singapore Economic Zone and Melaka as examples where industry and academia jointly shape training to meet market needs, adding that such models should be introduced in Sabah, particularly in light of upcoming large-scale investments.

Referring to the state's upcoming green steel project, Anwar said such initiatives should become a showcase of sustainable and inclusive development, stressing the need to prioritise local participation.

"Training is one thing; there

must also be roles for local sub-contractors and vendors.

"We want this to be a model that delivers benefits to the community," he said.

Anwar told ministries not to impose unnecessary technical hurdles.

Instead, he said, they should support efforts in building a future-ready workforce, reiterating the Federal Government's commitment to supporting Sabah's development through meaningful collaboration and policies that empower local talent and industry.