



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim speaking to students after the launch of the Malaysia Semiconductor Academy of Malaysia IC Design Park 2 programme in Cyberjaya. yesterday. NSTP PIC BY AIZUDDIN SAAD

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

# PM: WE MUST EXPAND TRADE BEYOND ASEAN

**'We must boost ties with economies that have technological edge, markets for our exports'**

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**M**ALAYSIA must expand trade ties beyond Asean by attracting investments from around the world, particularly in high-tech sectors like semiconductors and artificial intelligence (AI).

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said this was crucial to ensure Malaysia remained one of the region's leading and most competitive trading nations.

He said Malaysia's strategic direction in the digital economy must extend beyond the region, engaging partners from all regions around the world, including the United States, China, Europe, Africa and Latin America.

"Asean cooperation will remain important in enhancing intra-regional trade and collaboration. But to accelerate our digital transformation, we must strengthen ties with other economies that have the technological edge and markets for our exports.

"Malaysia and Asean will only succeed if we increase trade and start giving importance to new disciplines, including the digital sector and AI," he said at the launch of the Malaysia Semicon-

ductor IC Design Park 2 programme here yesterday.

Present were Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari and Deputy Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Aiman Athirah Sabu.

"We have to strengthen our network with the US because they have the power. Our exports are high. Their imports from Malaysia are big, too," he added.

Anwar officiated at the launch of the Advanced Chip Testing Centre, which would serve as a key catalyst in Malaysia's efforts to develop a comprehensive semiconductor ecosystem, from design to testing and validation.

He said about 25 per cent of US electrical and electronics and semiconductor needs were sourced from Malaysia, involving a trade value of about RM200 billion.

"Thousands of supply chains, dozens of thousands of workers. That's the scale we are dealing with. But we also have a foundation called centrality, which is essential to sustain this growth."

He said Malaysia's efforts to attract investors from major global markets were showing results, with increasing confidence from international firms in the country's governance, security and infrastructure.

"Recently, one of the largest investment groups from New York visited us. Initially, they made small commitments, but after witnessing the success of our teams, from the Investment, Trade and Industry Ministry to our security forces, they were convinced of Malaysia's potential."

He said Malaysia must continue to provide the right incentives

and environment to attract investors and ensure that the country's digital transformation benefited all sectors of society.

He said Malaysia's success in developing its semiconductor industry hinged on its ability to produce a highly skilled talent pool capable of meeting the speeds of global investors.

He said while good policies and infrastructure were vital, nurturing talent remained the most challenging and critical component in ensuring a strong and sustainable semiconductor ecosystem.

"The biggest challenge is the talent pool. What is the point of having infrastructure, policies, facilities and incentives if all the expertise comes from abroad?"

"While we benefit from global collaboration, we want to build our internal strength."

On another matter, Anwar said US President Donald Trump had praised the efficiency and professionalism of Malaysia's security forces during his recent visit for the Asean Summit.

"Our teams, including police, demonstrated efficiency during the visits of the US president and Chinese premier. Both were impressed with our security and safety management.

"I remember President Trump requesting permission to meet the inspector-general of police to personally express his appreciation for the commendable performance of our security forces."

Anwar also assured the public that he was in good health.

"I am good. Look at me," he said when asked about his condition, giving a hop before leaving the event.