

ACCELERATING TRAINING'

BUDGET TO PRIORITISE HIGH-TECH SKILLS

AI, semiconductors among key focus areas in meeting pressing need for new talent, says PM

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THE government will prioritise efforts to develop new high-skilled talent in emerging technologies under the 2026 Budget.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said artificial intelligence (AI) and semiconductors would be among the key focus areas in meeting the pressing demands of high-tech industries.

"This will be one of our priorities in the upcoming budget next month, *InsyaAllah*.

"We have to look again at the achievements and what is needed to provide support so that it can be accelerated at an even faster pace (involving) the training and well-being programmes needed to elevate the dignity and capabilities of our children," he said of the budget, which will be tabled on Oct 10.

Anwar was speaking after opening the 2025 International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities here.

Present was Higher Education Minister Dr Zambray Abd Kadir.

Anwar said the move was cru-

cial to support major investments by international companies such as Infineon Technologies, which had invested in Kulim, Kedah, adding that it would also ensure that Malaysia could supply the skilled workforce as required.

He also commended universities and ministries for fast-tracking the establishment of AI faculties, breaking through bureaucratic hurdles that previously delayed approvals for new programmes.

He recalled challenging Zambray more than two years ago to establish an AI faculty immediately to meet emerging needs.

"Traditionally, this university was also bound by the usual process, a paper from the department would go to the dean, then to the board of studies.

"I would then have to bring it to the Higher Education Ministry, which would take six months to review the finances, and only after a year and a half would approval finally be granted. That was the old way.

"That is why I increased the allocation, not from the existing provision but by adding more, to meet the demand."

Anwar said talent development programmes in AI, digital technology and electrical and electronics must be accelerated to prevent the country from lagging behind in global competition.

"This change is too fast. All parties must move in line with current needs to ensure that our children are prepared with the right skills and meet the needs of the

"industry," he said.

On another matter, Anwar said investor confidence in Asean had not been negatively affected by the political turmoil in Indonesia and Thailand.

He said he hoped investors would continue to maintain their trust in the region, as southeast Asia was the most peaceful region in the world.

"As far as we know, matters have largely settled in Thailand with the new prime minister, and we wish them well... stability is the most important factor.

"Similarly, yesterday (Tuesday), I spoke by phone with (Indonesian President) Prabowo (Subianto). (The) situation in Indonesia has returned to normal and is relatively stable," he said.

Asked about the standing of former Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra as an informal Asean adviser now that he is serving a one-year prison sentence, Anwar said he would discuss the matter with new Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul.

"He (Anutin) has agreed to hold further discussions during his upcoming visit.

"There is no need to make any immediate decision until he (Anutin) arrives shortly, when we will talk about cooperation between Thailand and Asean.

"Thaksin's role remains limited as he is not free to express his views in full," he said.

Thaksin yesterday began his first day in prison after a court ruled that he had improperly served a previous jail sentence while in hospital.