

'NATION A SUCCESSFUL SEMICONDUCTOR HUB'

PM attributes its regional success story to excellent supply chain, infrastructure and ecosystem

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Malaysia becoming a semiconductor hub in the region is a success story, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday.

"We are successful because, firstly, we have the infrastructure in place. Beyond that, it is also the excellent supply chain and the ecosystem. The ecosystem means that we have the right workforce," he said at the opening of the RM3 billion expansion project for the X-FAB semiconductor manufacturing facility at the Sama Jaya Industrial Park here.

He said a major challenge was getting experts from leading semiconductor industries.

"They always say yes. We have a very disciplined workforce.

"But we have to continue with the synergy between the industry and universities to ensure universities move away from traditional academic training and use the experience and expertise of the industry."

He thanked universities that have set up artificial intelligence faculties, which he pushed for.

"While we have the expertise in universities, there has to be collaboration and synergy with the experience of industries. Industries know what kind of training is needed."

He said the policy of both the federal and state governments was to find talent in the competitive global semiconductor market.

"Stronger customer demand for X-FAB wafer products, for example, means more cutting-edge technology is needed."

He thanked X-FAB for having confidence in Malaysia, particularly in Sarawak, by investing RM3 billion to expand its facility.

"My job as prime minister is easier when you have a state government as progressive as Sarawak's under Premier Tan Sri Abang Johari Openg."

He said the federal government



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Sarawak Premier Tan Sri Abang Johari Openg launching the expansion of the X-FAB facility in Kuching yesterday, BERNAMA PIC

had to push other states, like getting their agenda and vision right and improving efficiency.

X-FAB Group chief executive officer Rudi De Winter said the expansion would increase the facility's monthly capacity by 10,000 wafers and more than double the capacity for the popular 180nm BCD-on-SOI technology.

He said the new manufacturing line would serve global customers in the automotive, industrial and medical sectors and strengthen Malaysia's value proposition in these manufacturing sectors.

Abang Johari said the Sarawak Semiconductor Roadmap 2030 was expected to attract more than RM2 billion in public and private sector investment.

He said the roadmap included initiating strategic collaborations with more than 10 global industry leaders and would create 3,000 high-skilled jobs.

"It will commercialise new intellectual properties and train 3,000 local graduates through talent development initiatives."

He said one of the roadmap's initiatives is to establish the SMD Advanced Chip Integration Centre on a 4ha site at the Sama Jaya Industrial Park through SMD Semiconductor Sdn Bhd, a government-linked company tasked with workforce training and developing Sarawak's semiconductor ecosystem.

He said the centre was the result of a strategic collaboration between SMD Semiconductor, Compound Semiconductor Applications (CSA) Catapult and the Welsh government.

"This will form the backbone of a globally connected research and development ecosystem, anchored here in Sarawak but reach-

ing across borders. It will position Sarawak as a hub for high-value semiconductor activities, including the creation of intellectual property, cross-border collaboration with global partners and nurturing of both local and international talent."

He said the Sama Jaya facility would accelerate local capabilities in advanced semiconductor design, integration and innovation, ensuring Sarawak was not just a participant but a competitive leader in Malaysia's semiconductor industry.

"The Sarawak government, through SMD Semiconductor Sdn Bhd, is collaborating with X-FAB in Dresden, Germany, as well as Cambridge Microelectronics and CSA Catapult, to develop new compound semiconductor-based chips using Gallium Nitride (GaN).

"This partnership will enable SMD Semiconductor to design and develop a Sarawak-owned chip, leveraging the potential of GaN technology for next-generation applications."

Abang Johari said the longer term plan was to transfer this advanced technology to Sarawak, thus strengthening process capabilities and expanding production capacity at X-FAB Kuching.

He called for federal support to help Sarawak develop its semiconductor ecosystem under the Silicon Vision and the National Semiconductor Roadmap.

"We believe this partnership will accelerate our efforts to build local talent and develop intellectual property, chip design and production in Sarawak."

He said the Sama Jaya Free Industrial Zone had attracted RM15.4 billion in foreign and domestic investments.