2024 Budget: UTM upbeat of meeting govt aspiration to explore AI field

By OMAR AHMAD - October 14, 2023 @ 12:31pm

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) is tasked with setting up of the country's first AI learning centre. - NSTP file pic

JOHOR BARU: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) is upbeat that the university can meet the unity government's aspiration in exploring and tapping into the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies to stimulate the economic growth of the country.

Responding to the announcement by the government on the setting up of the country's first AI learning centre in UTM, its vice-chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Ahmad Fauzi Ismail said the university has a substantial number of experts of more than 100 people in the AI field from various faculties.

"The experts are academicians from Computing, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Built Environment and Surveying; Management faculties as well as Razak Faculty of Technology and Informatics," he said in a statement today.

During the tabling of the 2024 Budget yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced the setting up of Malaysia's first AI learning centre, namely the [AI Faculty in UTM](#) with an initial allocation of RM20 million.

Ahmad Fauzi, in the same statement, provided brief information on the structure of UTM's AI learning centre.

"The AI learning centre under the AI Faculty will adopt a multidisciplinary approach in harnessing the potential of AI and transform it into a catalyst for innovation in various fields such as manufacturing, finance, healthcare, agriculture, renewable energy, security, economy, and climate change," he said.

"UTM is optimistic that this faculty is capable of advancing human civilisation according to the principles as outlined in the Malaysia Madani concept," he said.

He also recorded his appreciation to Anwar and the Higher Education Ministry for entrusting UTM with such aspirations in an effort to realise the targets set under the Madani Economy Framework.

The country, said Ahmad Fauzi, needs to move swiftly to spearhead future-focused areas in line with the digital transformation boom.

"UTM is also a public university at the forefront of the field of AI. We have various research and centers of excellence, such as the Center for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (CAIRO), Big Data Center (BDC), IJN-UTM Cardiovascular Engineering Centre and the Institute of Human Centered Engineering (iHumEn).

"In addition, UTM has already developed numerous AI-based innovations, including robotics applications for various industries, medical and healthcare applications, and smart software," he said.