

MICROSOFT TO INVEST RECORD US\$2.2 BILLION

Tech giant aims to build world-class artificial intelligence infrastructure in Malaysia, says CEO

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MICROSOFT will invest US\$2.2 billion (about RM10.5 billion) over the next four years to support Malaysia's digital transformation, the single largest investment in its 32-year history in the country.

Microsoft chairman and chief executive officer Satya Nadella said the company aimed to build a world-class artificial intelligence infrastructure in Malaysia.

"We want to make sure we have a world-class infrastructure right here in the country so that every organisation, every software developer, every startup, can use it not only to build this country, but also the region. We are really excited about that.

"Whether it is powered by an accelerator from Nvidia or Microsoft's own accelerators, they will all be available in a cloud infrastructure," said Satya during the 'Microsoft Build: AI Day' event here yesterday.

He said Microsoft aimed to have a wider selection of models for its AI infrastructure to enable users to optimise the power of AI.

"We will have the frontier model as well as the open source model. The combination of these excellent models really brings the power back in the hands of developers to optimise for all of the various design considerations.

"Now, you have a selection of models to be able to exercise those design decisions."

The investment includes building cloud and AI infrastructure in Malaysia and creating AI skilling opportunities for over 200,000 people. Through the investment, Microsoft plans to strengthen partnership with the government to establish a national AI centre of excellence and enhance the nation's cybersecurity capabilities.

"We are committed to supporting Malaysia's AI transformation and ensure it benefits all Malaysians.

"Our investments in digital in-



Microsoft chief executive officer Satya Nadella speaking at the 'Microsoft Build: AI Day' event in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. AFP PIC

rastructure and skilling will help Malaysian businesses, communities and developers apply the latest technology to drive inclusive economic growth and innovation across the country.

"Our ultimate mission is empowering every person and organisation in Malaysia to achieve more. At the end of the day, for us is to ensure that the human capital is getting all the skills," Satya said.

Satya met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his delegation in Putrajaya yesterday.

Anwar said Microsoft's investment demonstrated its confidence in the country's strong economic foundation, clear and focused policies, investor-friendly environment and political stability.

In social media posts, Anwar said the investment was in line with and would be a major contributor to the government's focus on developing AI capacity.

"After the courtesy visit, Satya and I then attended the National AI Leadership Forum. We had the opportunity to discuss technology-related matters, namely AI, and the government's plans to prepare the country for this changing landscape.

"May this collaboration between Malaysia and Microsoft bring significant benefits to the country and its people as a whole."

The Investment, Trade and Industry Ministry said the investment, facilitated by the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) and other public agencies, firmly positioned Malaysia as a preferred destination for digital investments.

It would support Malaysia's initiative to embrace new, enabling technology, including AI and generative AI, which could un-

lock US\$113.4 billion in productive capacity in Malaysia.

Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz said the partnership with Microsoft would foster innovation, economic security and inclusivity.

"While our priority is to attract quality investments, we are also looking for partners who can help champion our commitment to empower our SMEs and people through new enabling technology, including AI, so they can also reap the benefits of a more vibrant digital economy in Malaysia."

MIDA said the initiative was part of the Bersama Malaysia commitment that began in 2021.

It said the investment would transform Malaysia into a leading digital hub, starkly enhancing economic growth and inclusivity through innovative technology.

MIDA chief executive officer Sikh Shamsul Ibrahim Sikh Abdul Majid said Malaysia was poised to become a leading digital hub, attracting major tech enterprises.

"As digitalisation increasingly redefines global economies, we welcome Microsoft's announcement of new investment in Malaysia and we look forward to continue to work with Microsoft, a world leader in the digital field, to foster innovation in startups, create jobs and harness the transformative power of AI for the betterment of Malaysia's society.

"AI now stands as a pivotal game-changing technology that impacts us all."

Page 1 pic: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim meeting Microsoft chief executive officer Satya Nadella in Putrajaya yesterday.