Learn to benefit from tech

By CHRISTINA CHIN
educate@thestar.com.my

THE Communications and Multimedia Ministry is making sure that all schools are wired up with internet speeds suitable for future-driven content.

Conventional jobs are being taken over by machines. We will have to look at re-skilling a huge section of society and the workforce so that they can keep up with the change, its minister Gobind Singh Deo said.

“We’re going to have different jobs in future. There’s an urgent need for us to figure out and re-configure our education system. That comes under the Education Minister but my ministry is responsible for building the infrastructure,” he told StarEdu before the Asian Strategy & Leadership Institute (Asli) “Towards Media Freedom and Combating Fake News in Malaysia” talk at Sunway University on Sept 26.

He said education is key to Malaysians benefiting from internet connectivity and the ministry is looking at how it can bring education, in respect of technology, to schools.

Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), he said, has come up with MyDigitalMaker—a programme that brings computer programming, artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics, to classrooms.

“It gets students excited about technology and what it has to offer. We’re building on that now. Many people have approached us asking if we are prepared to expand the programme, so MDEC is looking into that,” he said the ministry is also hoping to bring some international programming schools here.

“We’ve looked at different programming schools around the world. I’ve seen a few that are very exciting.

“Hopefully we can bring them to Malaysia because computer programming schools are popular these days. We’re not going to say who they are now because discussions are ongoing but I’d like to see more focus on connectivity and e-learning systems in our education system.”

He said education in technology isn’t just limited to the young—it’s across the board. Even those with degrees and are already working, and the elderly, need to learn how they can use tech to their advantage. If given connectivity and infrastructure, they can use tech to improve their livelihood.

He said conversations about what tech can do and how people can use smartphones and devices like tablets and computers in a way that benefits them, must take place. Besides using these devices to surf the Internet, watch videos and go on social media, the public must look at how tech can improve their lives.

In the past, prices of broadband were very high, so the ministry’s push to make sure prices come down and speeds go up was to enable more people to start using broadband.

We are moving to a time where everybody will be dependent on technology. People need to be connected, he said.

“I envision a Malaysia in which we have quality broadband and connectivity across the country. And if you have access to the Internet, you’ll need to know how to use technology to your benefit. So infrastructure, technology and education are equally important.

“For example, look at e-commerce platforms—how do you learn about fintech and the different areas which will impact your daily lives using the Internet. That’s what MDEC is trying to do,” he said, urging telcos to find more ways of assisting different communities such as the disabled.

The ministry, he said, is in discussions with telcos on sponsoring educational programmes or providing facilities for these groups to have better access to technology.

“I met a group of people who were using e-commerce to run businesses. That initiative was run by a non-governmental organisation and it was very useful because many people with different abilities came, learned how to trade online and were able to make a decent amount of money from it.

“I’ve asked some of the telcos to see whether they can assist by scaling up important programmes like these and maybe even offering tuition classes to educate the public,” he said, adding that the companies have been very supportive.