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Fortifying digital defence

New cybersecurity academy to harness TVET

New workforce wave: Ahmad Zahid (centre) chairing a National TVET Council in Putrajaya. — Bernama

PUTRAJAYA: With cybersecurity becoming a major threat in the world, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions will be strengthened to produce more experts in the field.

The salaries of these graduates will also be raised to make the field more attractive to youths, says Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He said there are about 26,000 job vacancies in the cybersecurity field.

To meet this growing demand for talent, the government has approved the formation of a new cybersecurity academy.

The academy will be managed by Cybersecurity Malaysia in collaboration with other TVET institutions, Ahmad Zahid said.

"The boom in digital technology is a catalyst to economic growth. But there is a need to enhance our talents in the cybersecurity field.

"Cybersecurity Malaysia and TVET institutions will develop this expertise in the local workforce through a structured programme.

"We have agreed on establishing the cybersecurity academy for this purpose," he said after a National TVET Council (MTVET) meeting here.

The MTVET chairman said the meeting also discussed the mechanism of utilising the additional funding of RM200mil approved by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in June to boost youth participation in TVET fields.

He said the funds would be used for training in fields such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, electric vehicles, electronic technology and wafer fabrication.

Ahmad Zahid said the soon-to-be-revived National Service Training Programme (PLKN) will also have an added feature in its modules incorporating basic TVET programmes.

"These basic courses will be DIY (do-it-yourself) programmes in plumbing, air-conditioning or electrical appliance repair," he said, adding that there is also a dire need for skilled talent in the semi-conductor and electronics industry.

TVET institutions could implement the PLKN modules for their students.

Ahmad Zahid said that to encourage participation in the training programmes, government-linked companies and several private companies have agreed to offer TVET graduates premium salaries of between RM2,500 and RM4,000 – above the country's minimum wage of RM1,500.

However, he said the salaries of the graduates will be determined by their achievement in the Malaysian Skill Certificate (SKM).

Ahmad Zahid said that after discussions with the Malaysia Board of Technologists (MBOT), it was decided that TVET graduates with SKM levels 6, 7 and 8 would be equivalent to tertiary education, with SKM level 8 being considered a bachelor's degree and the holder will be offered the title of technologist.

He said it was also decided that SKM level 1 and 2 would be equal to the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM), and SKM level 3, 4 and 5, the equivalent of a diploma.

"Those with SKM level 5 will be allowed to apply for university places even without an SPM.

"There are five universities that will accept them, namely UniKL, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn, Universiti Teknikal Melaka, Universiti Malaysia Pahang and Universiti Malaysia Perlis."

Ahmad Zahid said similarly, students from tahfiz schools would also be offered places in universities using relevant academic certificates issued by Jakim.

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