

State seeking educators to nurture talents for SMEs

By DAVID TAN

METRO NEWS

Monday, 11 Sep 2023



Jagdeep speaking during the Industry-Academia Collaboration Workshop in Batu Kawan. – Photos: CHAN BOON KAI/The Star

PENANG is looking to recruit educators from colleges, universities and the manufacturing industry.

Deputy Chief Minister II Jagdeep Singh Deo said there was a shortage of educators.

“There’s a mismatch. There are more people requiring education than educators.

“We want to recruit from institutions and industries to conduct lessons on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and vocational subjects.

“We need to nurture more talents and further develop a skilled labour force in the small and medium enterprise (SME) industry.



(From left) Choong, Tan, Prof Pasby, Saw and Phillip discussing how to create a sustainable talent pipeline for SMEs.

“This will allow the state to maintain its position as the Silicon Valley of the East.”

Last year, Penang recorded a growth of 13.1%, followed by Selangor (11.9%), Pahang (10.8%) and Kuala Lumpur (9.2%).

All four states outperformed the national growth rate of 8.7% in 2022, contributing significantly to the country’s overall progress.

Jagdeep, who was speaking at the Industry-Academia Collaboration Workshop, said SMEs accounted for most businesses worldwide and were vital to job creation and global economic development.

“In emerging economies, formal SMEs contribute up to 40% of the national income in terms of gross domestic product (GDP).

“When informal SMEs are included, these figures skyrocket.

“The World Bank also estimates that 600 million new jobs will be required by 2030 to accommodate the world’s growing workforce.

“This makes SME development a top priority for many governments worldwide.

“We know that SMEs are the backbone of the Malaysian economy.

“The country has more than a million SMEs accounting for 97% of the country’s businesses, 38% of GDP and 48% of total employment.”

He said the Madani Economy Framework would grow, and more industries, including SMEs, would naturally expand as demand increases.

“It’s a globally competitive world out there.

“In our region, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia are becoming more industrialised.

“This will certainly affect Penang’s ability to keep on attracting foreign investment which will in turn, create more jobs in the in-demand sectors.

“With support from the Federal Government through TalentCorp, Penang works to empower our local talents through several initiatives.”

Jagdeep said the New Industrial Master Plan was a sign of policy consistency, with an emphasis on empowering the people in favour of human capital development.

“However, the journey towards a thriving SME ecosystem requires a concerted effort to ensure that we are equipped with the right resources including the right people.

“Our vision for Penang 2030 is not merely an abstract dream.

“It is a comprehensive road-map that demands the collaboration of all sectors and strata of society.

“Within this vision, a sustainable SME talent pipeline serves as the bridge between our aspirations and actual accomplishments.”

Jagdeep said the state must cultivate a workforce with the knowledge and adaptability to drive growth and innovation.

He stressed the need to equip students with not just theoretical knowledge but also practical skills directly applicable to the world of work.

“By fostering stronger ties between academia and industry, we ensure our graduates enter the workforce with a competitive edge.”

According to Jagdeep, local SMEs were more than just economic entities.

“By investing in a sustainable SME talent pipeline, we invest in the fabric of our society as well.

“Let us collaborate, innovate and persevere so that together, we can create a Penang that thrives on the strengths of its SMEs.

“The state hopes this will propel us towards prosperity.”

The workshop's panellists also held a discussion on finding solutions to the issue.

The panellists were TalentCorp industry partnership sector head Brian Choong, Penang Skills Development Centre chief executive officer ET Tan, Peninsula Higher Education Group president Prof Dr Ian Pasby, Smita Association Penang and Kedah director Alexander Saw and Samenta northern region executive committee J. Philip Vincent.

The Industry-Academia Collaboration Workshop was organised by Talent Corporation Malaysia Bhd and held in Batu Kawan.