

Put more funds in research

I HAVE been listening to some of the discussions on the 14th General Election (GE14) on TV and social media and I think very little is devoted to the issue of how to sustain the nation.

We do face many challenges as a nation but, unfortunately, there have been only sprinkles of discussions on the critical issues, for example the digital revolution which is now shaping up the world. The current global concerns, Industry 4.0, artificial intelligence (AI) and the growing importance of biotechnology in influencing the future of business in agriculture and medicine, have only made brief appearances in the campaigns of all parties. This is not reflective of the mentality required of a developed nation which we are supposed to be by 2020, at least by the GDP per capita that has been used as the sole yardstick.

One global concern that has hogged international headlines is whether the world is truly sustainable. How can the world manoeuvre the many threats facing it?

Our nation is not spared from such threats either. Take the threat of climate change as an example. Whether we realise it or not, the impacts of climate change are going to hit us hard too. Do we know how our agriculture sector, such as oil palm and rubber, will be impacted by higher temperature? Do we know whether our water situation will be adversely affected or not? Is there enough research to develop new breeds of rice which can cope with the changing climate and a reduced supply of water? What about the population in areas which may be submerged by rising sea levels? Do we know which areas are most susceptible to such adversities? Are

we ready with the necessary action to respond to such eventualities?

The general election is, in fact, an excellent opportunity to debate on such issues. It is the best time to create better awareness among the population of such imminent threats to their wellbeing. We should all be made to realise that unless appropriate actions and strategies are put in place, the nation may even be doomed.

We may look at some hints of the actions from the more developed economies of the world. There, the focus is on education and research as their key strategies to manage the impending threats. Most of these countries know that climate change and demographic adjustments may lead to increasing depletion of key resources. And this will give rise to greater competition among the world economies.

That explains why much empha-

sis is directed towards investing in education and research. Education will generate the right talents for the country while research by the competent talent force will produce the right ideas and innovations to raise the nation's competitiveness.

As a nation, we have done much for education. Sadly, however, the funding for research is still minuscule. If we talk about providing subsidies, then education and research should be the top priority, not fuel. In fact, if we want to put the money collected from the GST to good use, then more should be channelled into education and research.

**PROF DATUK DR AHMAD
IBRAHIM**
Fellow Academy of Sciences
Malaysia
UCSI University

LAMPIRAN 2
THE STAR (EVENTS) : MUKA SURAT 12
TARIKH : 8 MEI 2018 (SELASA)

THE International Invention, Innovation & Technology Exhibition (Itex) is Malaysia's longest-running invention, innovation and technology exhibition.

Now in its 29th year, the exhibition will be happening from May 10 to 12 at Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

Organised by Malaysian Invention and Design Society (MINDS), which is also celebrating its 30th anniversary, some of the highlights of the event include start-up talks, pitching and networking sessions as well as "Ignite Your Creativity Banquet".

"My interest in invention was sparked in 1974, when I was first posted to Universiti Sains Malaysia.

"My research led me to making a discovery, which was later patented. The whole experience made me realise that I had to pass on this idea of discovery to others, and that the best way to prepare Malaysians for the future is to be creative," said MINDS president and academician Tan Sri Prof Dr Augustine S.H. Ong.

"If we want to be an advanced nation, it is essential to have an interest in things and create new things. We cannot rely on technology transfer or joint ventures to develop our nation; we must come up with new ideas ourselves."

This idea eventually led to the setting up of MINDS, whose main objectives was to encourage Malaysian inventions and innovations, and assist in bringing local inventors' ideas to society and the marketplace.

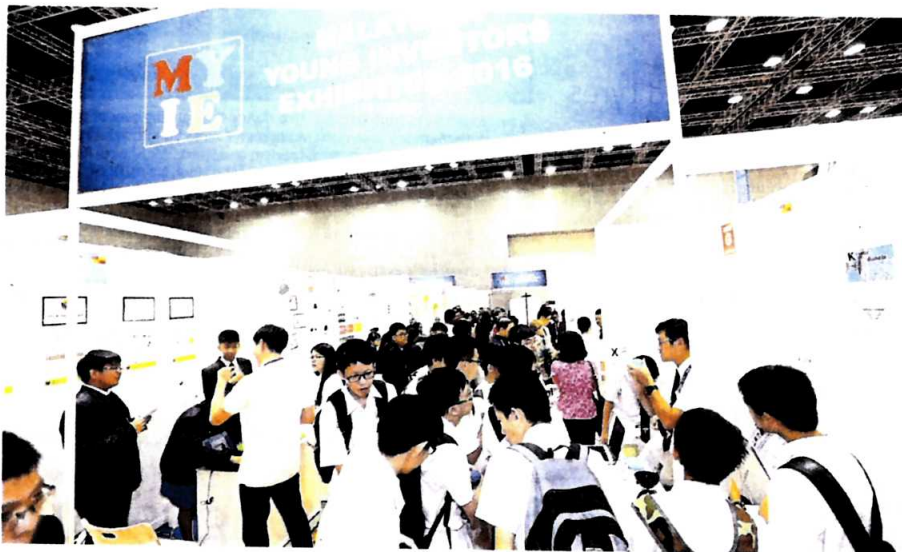
In the first invention exhibition, then known as Mindex in 1989, there were only 50 inventions to showcase.

Today, Itex has established itself as an important platform for giving recognition to inventors and inventions, and connecting inventors with investors.

A number of inventions that were introduced to the world at Itex events have gone on to become

Exhibition returns with more than 1,000 inventions

Event this week to feature various products from over 20 countries



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products that better the lives of people.

Under the strategic partnership of MINDS with trade and lifestyle exhibition organiser C.I.S Network Sdn Bhd, more than 1,000 new inventions have been featured in the past six years.

This year, more than 1,000

inventions from over 20 countries such as China, Thailand, Poland, Iraq, South Korea and Russia, among others, will be showcased, with the aim of helping inventors meet prospective investors and give these inventors recognition for their work.

More than 100 judges with

various expertise will evaluate the inventions.

Itex is the region's leading exhibition showcasing new inventions, technologies and products, targeted at securing investment, manufacturing and commercialisation prospects and partners.

The exhibition is open to any

inventor, be they school or university or students, from research institutes, start-ups or corporations.

It is held concurrently with the World Young Inventors Exhibition, incorporating the Asian Young Inventors Exhibition and the Malaysian Young Inventors Exhibition.

Develop workers' innovative skills to stay competitive

MANILA: Malaysian employers are urged to continuously develop their employees' innovative skills to remain competitive and profitable for the future, especially in facing the Industrial Revolution 4.0.

Bank Kerjasama Rakyat Malaysia Bhd chief human capital officer Farid Basir said employers collectively shoulder the responsibility of preparing their employees to take on the 9-to-5 working world challenges.

He was speaking at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Confederation of Employers (ACE) regional conference here.

Representing Malaysia as a council member of the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF), Farid shared various research studies that indicated innovation as the most important job skill required to endure the 21st cen-

tury and the future.

"In simple terms, employees at all levels need to develop their innovative skills. These include competencies like creativity, communications, critical and strategic thinking, and problem-solving, in order to find and develop creative solutions to the complex world we live in," he said at the conference themed "Asean Employers: Empowering People, Prioritising Skills".

"Two reasons why these skills are becoming increasingly important are due to the changing nature of work and the rapid pace of such changes," said Farid, adding that as transformative change sweeps through the working world, in-

vesting in skills' development and training systems are also becoming more significant than ever.



Farid Basir

Farid said Bank Rakyat had started adopting design thinking – a distinguished methodology that many global companies apply when approaching unmet needs of their customers, converting them into innovative opportunities.

"Bank Rakyat has started responding to disruptive innovations via design thinking. Disruptive innovations like fintech computer programmes and other technology used to support or enable banking and financial services – e-commerce and big data, to name a few, leave

organisations with little choice but to innovate.

"Design thinking systematically helps us view problems and challenges as business opportunities. When customers are unhappy (the unmet needs), it is actually a positive feedback," he highlighted.

ACE was established in 1978 in Singapore and is represented by employers' organisations in Asean to optimise liaison, cooperation and representation in labour and social legislation, industrial relations and practices among themselves and in relation to the international community.

Its five founding members are the Employers' Association of Indonesia, Employers Confederation of The Philippines, Employers Confederation of Thailand, MEF and the Singapore National Employers Federation.