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Universities urged to realign courses with IR4.0

by HARIZAH KAMEL

JOB seekers are already finding it difficult to procure a stable job with or without a relevant university degree. But after the Higher Education Department's announcement that 19 public universities are cancelling up to 38 programmes, the government requires them to come up with courses that are aligned with the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR4.0).

Most of the cancelled courses are from the science and engineering programmes despite having 20,130 and 26,706 graduates respectively, based on the Malaysia Educational Statistics 2018.

Jobstore.com founder and CEO Anson Wang said currently the most sought-after jobs are tech-related like programmers and artificial intelligence (AI), as well as jobs related to creativity and designing.

"There is a shift in the job market as it needs talents with excellent technological and creative skills, while many traditional jobs will be obsolete in the future due to full digitalisation.

"Our education system needs to be upgraded to prepare local talents for these future demands so that local and overseas graduates have equal employment opportunities, especially in multinational corporations," he told *The Malaysian Reserve* recently.

SEE P4 COL1

Malaysia returning waste, 240 contain



OUT OF BOUNDS: Containers full of plastic waste at Westports in Port Klang. Negotiations as Malaysia remains firm in its stance of refusing to bear the storage and shipping costs. **SEE P4 COL1**

**10 containers weighing
450MT of illegally
imported plastic waste
were shipped out last May**

by NG MIN SHEN & SHAHEERA AZNAM SHAH

plastic waste in the country so far.

Negotiations are currently underway with the countries of origin to back their waste, Yeo said, as Malaysia remains firm in its stance of refusing to bear the storage and shipping costs.

"60 (containers) have been sent (to the respective countries). But I know, we have (about) 300 plus said, adding that seven containers have been sent back to the US.

SPORTS ►

Man City win to keep

market accessibility level is downgraded from the current '2' rating.

AsiTrader Asia Pacific market strategist Stephen Innes said the absence of a non-deliverable forward (NDF) market in Malaysia is the key issue facing the country's fixed income market.

"The biggest problem facing foreign investors is that they cannot hedge the underlying currency for their bond holding when they need to," he told

consequence of the 1997-1999 Asian Financial Crisis as authorities moved to contain speculation and capital outflows in the domestic financial markets.

Earlier last month, Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) announced further liberalisation of its foreign-exchange (forex) administration policy, alongside other initiatives to boost market access, on the looming risk of Malaysia

BNM's recent announcement that Malaysia will remain on its watch list.

In a research note last week, Innes said Malaysia's weight in the WGB is 0.39%, while assets under management tracking the index is estimated at US\$2 trillion (RM8.38 trillion) to US\$2.5 trillion.

This would translate into a staggering US\$6.6 billion in outflows or 2.3% of Malaysia's GDP if the country had been

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by P1

Malaysia is traditionally a hub for electrical and electronics (E&E), where the industry alone provided close to 800,000 jobs in 2018.

Just as it benefited from the rise of E&E, Malaysia can also expect to benefit from the global phenomenon of digitalisation.

Wang said jobs related to cyber security, big data, data protection, AI, robotics and creativity will see a huge surge in demand and having a degree in those industries is vital.

"It is easier for degree holders to get employed compared to those without a degree," he said.

Academic qualifications will remain an important consideration when assessing candidates.

In LinkedIn's 2019 Emerging Jobs in Malaysia Report, the professional networking site found that the top-five emerging jobs were all related to the tech industry.

The jobs mentioned are data scientist, full stack engineer, drive test engi-

neer, user experience (UX) designer and content writer.

While tech roles are dominating the emerging job market, much is at stake for candidates with degrees unrelated to the tech industry.

In 2016, Malaysia established the world's first Digital Free Trade Zone, a special trade zone which promotes the growth of e-commerce by providing a state-of-the-art platform for small and medium enterprises.

By 2021, the digital transformation will add RM41 billion to the country's economy, while 45% of Malaysia's income will be derived from digital products and services.

Malaysia Digital Economy Corp said the impact of digital transformation on Malaysia's economy is expected to significantly increase by RM400 billion in 2025.

Job seekers must realise that they need to continually broaden their skills to stay competitive.

New jobs are emerging more rapidly, and traditional roles are evolving into

new hybrids including full stack engineers and UX designers who run projects from the technical side and understand the customer-facing aspects of projects.

Higher learning institutions like International Medical University, Universiti Sains Malaysia, HELP University, Universiti Teknologi Petronas and Universiti Teknologi MARA are introducing data analytics curriculum into non-ICT related programmes including accounting, business, education, pharmacy and medical biotechnology.

This is to renew courses to be closely aligned with the IR4.0 and achieve Malaysia's goal of becoming an e-commerce hub of the region.

The LinkedIn report shows that by leveraging on the Internet, AI and other technologies, Malaysia can increase productivity, spur innovation and improve livelihoods.

Demand for a diverse range of tech skills may dominate, but soft skills are significant to get the most from the digital world.