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Reframing the Technology Narrative

Technology is undeniably an enabler in the transition to a net-zero future, but it also has its share of sustainability challenges to overcome. As we all know, embracing digital transformation has its benefits beyond a boost to productivity and efficiency as it also ensures wider economic, financial and social inclusion for Malaysia's citizens

Towards Malaysia's golden digital decade

By FAHMI FADZIL

I want to build a Malaysia where every single Malaysian has the ability to contribute meaningfully too, and benefit from the digital economy – with no one left behind.

Our team at the Ministry of Communications and Digital is working hard to expand and future-proof our digital infrastructure in pursuit of this goal, and to ensure that Malaysia's digital technology is able to fulfil its full potential in driving the type of economic, social, and corporate governance (ESG) embodied in the Prime Minister's vision of a Malaysia Madani.

Digitalisation can serve as one of the great equalisers in society. Most of us have in the palm of our hands the computing power our parents and grandparents could only have dreamed of, and access to the literal entirety of human knowledge.

This power however can only be fully realised if the whole of Malaysia has stable, affordable, reliable, and fast access to the internet.

Thus, one of our key priorities is to ensure that those living in the last 3% of populated areas (estimated at over 2,000 sites) without access to internet will be finally connected.

We are working on various technologies, including satellite-based solutions, to achieve this vital goal of full digital inclusion.

We do not take for granted however, the quality of service experienced by the remaining 97% of populated areas. We are fully aware that past inefficiencies have resulted in the equivalent of "digital potholes" on our national digital highway pockets of areas where internet access is unstable and problematic.

With the help of the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), we are deeply committed to tracking down and filling up as many of these "digital potholes" as possible throughout the country.

Making these improvements a priority is a key part of our commitment to ensure that every single Malaysian has stable access to the digital economy.

We have seen multiple instances of how this access has multiplied incomes of Malaysians from a wide variety of socioeconomic backgrounds – letting that untameable spirit of Malaysian entrepreneurship achieve ever more success.

We must now ensure that that opportunity is available to everyone – including the very poorest among us.

To this end, we have announced Pakej Perpaduan for B40 Malaysians, which reduces the baseline price of broadband internet by 22%, and makes high speed mobile data available for as little as RM5 a month.

We cannot possibly speak of a sustainable future if more and more Malaysians are falling victim to vicious scams.

Some estimates put annual losses due to scams in the range of RM2bil to RM3bil. This situation simply can no longer be tolerated.

My ministry is thus working hard in collaboration with the Finance, Home, and Foreign Ministries to provide greater protections and justice for Malaysians who are exposed to scammers.

We will undertake a number of campaigns to ensure that the public has all the knowledge necessary to inoculate themselves from these predators.

In the meantime, MCMC is continuing to block scam numbers every day and the police will continue to hunt down as many of these scammers as possible.

Most disturbing of all are stories of Malaysians being scammed by offers of jobs overseas, and who are essentially kidnapped in other countries, tortured and forced to become scammers themselves.

There is no way we can abandon our fellow Malaysians to such unthinkable fates. Every effort will be made to track down these Malaysians, and all law enforcement and diplomatic channels will be pursued to bring

these Malaysians home safely.

Our ministry's commitment to security also extends to the area of cybersecurity and personal data protection. We are looking to amend and update the outdated Personal Data Protection Act 2010 in order to be more in line with current needs and standards, as we must come down harder on anyone who compromises the personal data of any Malaysian in any way.

Only when we have solved the digital infrastructure and security problems highlighted above will Malaysia finally be in place to achieve the bigger goal of experiencing a "golden digital decade" – by drawing in strategic investments that will grow our digital economy.

Yet we will also have to focus on driving and spurring innovation, as well as train, seek out and retain talent.

By doing much of the above, Malaysia has all the talent and opportunities necessary to be a "digital tiger" within Asean, and indeed, globally.

Much work needs to be done and can be done to inspire the thousands of digital experts and professionals who have left Malaysia to seek better job opportunities abroad to come home, or to make this country their regional base of operations.

For our part, we intend to prove that we are making Malaysia the kind of place where talent is given the appreciation it deserves, and where working together will result in quantum leaps for Malaysia's digital economy.

The robust digital infrastructure we are envisioning stands to be the foundation for growth in key sectors – the economy, education, healthcare, environmental protection and so much more.

Working with all who dream of a better future, we intend to make dynamic, sustainable digitisation the catalyst that will enable Malaysia to achieve its golden digital decade.

Fahmi Fadzil is Malaysia's Communications and Digital Minister, Pakatan Harapan communications director, Keadilan information chief and Member of Parliament for Lembah Pantai.

ESG in the news

Feb 1

• Malaysian companies were found to have an average of more than 50% of women occupying revenue-producing roles, surpassing the global average of 41%.
A tool created to measure a company's progress towards gender equality, the index reveals that overall, Malaysian GEI members displayed a higher percentage of women on boards, at 38%, compared with the global average of 32% in the index.

• **Malaysia Steel Works (KL) Bhd (Masteel)** has raised industry benchmarks as the first "ultra low carbon emission" integrated steel mill in Malaysia, with its inclusion in the FTSE4GOOD Bursa Malaysia Index in December 2022.
In a statement, the integrated steel manufacturer said it decreased its greenhouse gas emissions by 47% from 2017 to 2021, due to the reduction in Scope 1 emissions from the steel-making process as a result of the transition to new steel-making technologies starting in 2018.

Feb 3

• **Engtex Group Bhd** has proposed to acquire a 51% stake in Leading Wonder Sdn Bhd (LWSB) to participate in the clean energy solution.

• The addition of two new-generation liquefied natural gas (LNG) carriers, Seri Damai and Seri Daya, to MISC Bhd's fleet of LNG carriers is a strong start for 2023.
MIDF Research said this represented a step forward in supporting a net-zero future for the LNG industry.

Feb 4

• **Sime Darby Plantation Bhd (SDP)** has been given the nod by the United States Customs and Border Protection (USCBP) to resume its exports of palm oil products to the United States, following a more than two-year ban on allegations of forced labour.
A modified finding by the USCBP cleared the plantation giant of the allegations, specifically involving palm oil and derivative products.

Feb 9

• **Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG)** has announced the implementation of a target operating model, resulting in a new organisational structure and enhanced senior leadership team for better reporting across the group and business verticals.
According to MAG, the new operating model will enable it to deliver its long-term business plan 2.0 in a more cohesive and unified manner, with greater emphasis on transparency and accountability.

Feb 10

• **Kejuruteraan Asastera Bhd (KAB)** and **PETRONAS Gas Bhd (PetGas)** have entered into a joint venture to co-own and undertake a RM230mil power plant project in Sabah, which will be the sole energy supplier to **Petroliam Nasional Bhd's (PETRONAS)** nearshore floating liquified natural gas facility.
KAB group managing director Datuk Lai Keng Onn said that jointly owning and undertaking this major clean energy project with PetGas highlights their capabilities in the sustainable energy solutions space.

• The United States lifted a year-long ban on the import of goods made by Malaysian rubber glove maker **YTY Industry Holdings Sdn Bhd**, saying the firm has resolved suspected labour abuses.
The USCBP banned YTY products in January 2022 citing reasonable evidence showing use of "forced labour" in YTY's manufacturing operations, including abusive living and working conditions.

Feb 11

• **Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB)** has proposed to collaborate with several major energy players in Thailand to capitalise on rising demand for greener power in the Asean region.
"These collaborations are strategic steps to realise key milestones in our responsible energy transition plan, and our overall sustainability pathway commitment," TNB's president and chief executive officer, Datuk Baharin Din said in a filing with Bursa Malaysia.
He said these collaborations will accelerate the carbon neutrality ambition of the respective partner companies and strengthen the growth momentum for renewable energy (RE) in the Asean region.

Feb 13

• Printed circuit board (PCB) producer **GUH Holdings Bhd** is expanding into the electric vehicle (EV) business to broaden its revenue base.

The group has recently acquired a 70% stake for RM2.1mil in Star Wheels Electronics Sdn Bhd, a company involved in the sales, distribution, manufacturing, assembly and repair of electric scooters, hoverboards and spare parts.

Feb 14

• The government is urged to extend tax incentives for imported battery electric vehicles (BEVs) for a longer period, as this would allow automotive companies more time to meet the strong demand for the latest green vehicle models with zero-emission technologies.

Feb 15

• More electric vehicle (EV)-related incentives are expected to be in the revised Budget 2023, which will be tabled on Feb 24, according to International Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Abdul Aziz.
"Also, opportunities abound in the areas of renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy storage systems and support services for EVs such as EV charging stations, operations and maintenance," said Tengku Zafrul in his speech at the EV Conference 2023 held at the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (Mida) headquarters.

• **RHB Research** has come up with what it calls its environmental, social and governance (ESG) "diamonds" for the year, using criteria that includes a return on equity (ROE) of more than 15%.
The research house said the study found a positive correlation between ESG and the financial performance of both companies and investors in most of the 1,000 research papers published between 2015 and 2020.
"Overall, we estimate that a strong ESG score, high ROEs and superior earnings result in investments with robust long-term returns," it told clients.

Feb 16

• **PETRONAS** is offering 10 exploration blocks and two clusters of discovered resource opportunities for exploration and production under the Malaysia Bid Round 2023 (MBR 2023).
In a statement, PETRONAS stated the 10 exploration blocks on offer are located within the producing Malay, Sabah and Sarawak basins as well as the newly opened Penyu basin.

• **reNIKOLA Holdings Sdn Bhd** has inked four renewable energy power purchase agreements (Reppas) with Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) for a collective five megawatts (MW) of net export capacity for four biogas plants in Pahang.

Under the Reppas, TNB as the distribution licensee has agreed to purchase the renewable energy from reNIKOLA, who is the feed-in approval holder, for a 21-year period. The commercial operation date of these biogas plants is expected to be in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Feb 20

• **Ernst & Young PLT** senior executive director, strategy and transactions Normadiana Mansor said the new National Energy Policy (NEP) launched in September 2022 is a comprehensive policy that sets the tone for the development of the country's plan towards being a low-carbon nation by 2040.

• **The International Trade and Industry Ministry (Miti)** deputy secretary-general of industry, Datuk Seri Norazman Ayub, said there will be EV cars priced from as low as RM120,000 coming to Malaysia in the second quarter of this year.
He added that the government aims to provide at least 10,000 units of public charging facilities by 2025.

Letters & opinions

Hi editor
As the former president of NS Consumers Association, I welcome the comments of Malaysia's Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change Minister, Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad in *The transition to sustainability* article (StarESG, Jan 23).

I like his statement: "Apart from improving energy efficiency, our existing reliance on fossil fuel must be re-examined and with a holistic plan to ensure that Malaysia is powered sustainability and affordably."

I am glad that the Government has started transitioning to targeted subsidies by reducing subsidies for domestic, medium and high-voltage electricity users.

These plans are fitting for the times. Thank you, Minister.

Yours faithfully
Bulbir Singh

Unethical acts, called greenwashing, exist across all industries with many buzzwords, jargons or false advertising to appeal to the increasing interest in sustainable products and services. – iStock image

ESG: Beware of claims on 'green' products

By YAP LENG KUEN

FALSE claims on the environment and so-called "green" products mislead the public into believing that these are sustainable and climate friendly.

These unethical acts, called greenwashing, exist across all industries with many buzzwords, jargons or false advertising to appeal to the increasing interest in sustainable products and services.

The "green" picture that these companies paint may attract more consumers and investors, but in fact, the true value of carbon emissions is falsely reported, leaving an even greater impact on global warming.

Legal opinion is clear – boards that selectively or inaccurately disclose the climate risks their companies face, or leave their climate-related goals just as aspirational targets and commitments, will be exposed to regulatory action and potentially significant fines and other penalties.

"They should explain to the market what those aspirations mean for the company's operations on a practical level and how the company is progressing in its transition and implementation plans," said Climate Governance Malaysia chairman and director Datin Seri Sunita Rajakumar.

There must be zero tolerance on greenwashing – there are some climate claims that have "loopholes wide enough to drive a diesel truck through", said United Nations secretary-general Antonio Guterres at the launch of the report on greenwashing.

"Strengthening the company's corporate sustainability strategy is crucial to ensure that it is not associated with greenwashing," said Business Council for Sustainable Development Malaysia Bhd (BCSD

Malaysia) CEO Roberto Benetello.

Five ways to tackle greenwashing, according to UN experts, include:
> Announcing a net-zero pledge with targets.
> Creating a transition plan.
> Increasing transparency and accountability.
> Phasing out fossil fuels and scaling up renewable energy.
> Using voluntary carbon credits.

"This transition is going to be challenging, given the low commitment from some companies, which could be due to lack of awareness, knowledge and capacity building," added Benetello.

From January 2023, BCSD Malaysia is looking into adopting a new set of membership criteria, as per the ones recently set by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

These cover climate, nature, human rights, diversity, equity, inclusion and non-discrimination as well as transparency and disclosure.

Within a company, the board plays a key role in determining how their company embeds and integrates sustainability into their corporate strategy and operations.

"Leaders should cultivate the right behaviour as well as have the right knowledge and competency to be able to identify and determine if organisations are misleading their stakeholders," said Institute of Corporate Directors Malaysia president and CEO Michele Kythe Lim.

Companies can protect themselves through:
> **Having the right culture and values.** Building customer trust is key to long-term success.

The right behaviours should be determined within the organisation, especially in the reward and remuneration system.

In determining board and senior management remuneration, the

'Setting carbon prices of US$50-100 per tonne by 2030 ensures only businesses compatible with a low-emissions transition will survive and remain profitable,' said Sunita.

'Leaders should cultivate the right behaviour as well as have the right knowledge and competency to be able to identify and determine if organisations are misleading their stakeholders,' said Lim.

'Strengthening the company's corporate sustainability strategy is crucial to ensure that it is not associated with greenwashing,' said Benetello.

Malaysian Code on Corporate Governance encourages organisations to consider the company's performance in managing material sustainability risks and opportunities.

> **Ensuring sound governance.** At every level, there should be the right checks and validation.

Starting with the board level and directors, they should have more than sufficient grasp of the business, topic or product and service to be able to ask the right questions and pursue the right course of action.

> **Going beyond compliance.** companies that take the initiative to go beyond box-ticking or mere compliance with regulations and rules, are those that stay ahead of the curve.

> **Investing in people and enablers such as technology.** The right people are required to effectively track, manage, operate and govern companies as well as product lines while staying competitive and ahead of regulatory requirements.

> **Setting goals and targets.** Malaysian public listed companies across financial institutions, energy, property development to technology sectors, have taken the lead in supporting the country's goal to be a carbon neutral nation.

The updated Sustainability Reporting Framework by Bursa Malaysia also encourages the provision of assurance (which instils confidence that what a company says about its performance has been subject to proper scrutiny), for sustainability disclosures.

Building capacity is important, so is raising awareness, as there is no simple, magical solution to resolve the related issues.

Institutional memory, a repository of information, should be put in place so that businesses, especially

SMEs, are not constantly reinventing the wheel.

Enhanced reporting and disclosure is vital to allocators of capital – investors, lenders and insurers – to establish if capital should be directed to businesses that are part of the ecosystem of solutions towards net zero.

Regulators should mandate shadow pricing on carbon that puts a price on carbon, thus helping a company prioritise low-carbon investments.

The High-Level Commission on Carbon Prices, a World Bank initiative, recommends carbon prices of US$50-100 per tonne by 2030 to keep global warming below 2°C.

This will ensure that only businesses compatible with a low-emissions transition will survive and remain profitable, said Sunita.

More countries are putting a price on carbon through carbon taxes or emissions trading schemes, but emissions are still priced too cheaply.

In respect to greenwashing, organisations should find a balance between managing their sustainability goals while communicating on their transition plans or strategies.

A company that misleads its stakeholders to cash in on the growing demand for sustainable products and services risks, among other things, reputational loss, continued detrimental environmental and social impact, business continuity as well as the setting of negative precedents and wrong behaviours.

Regulators, stakeholders and organisations will need to come together, continue to elevate their knowledge on sustainability and ESG practices, and ensure that everyone is doing his part in driving a sustainable planet.

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COVER STORY 7

Moving tech forward, sustainably

By StarESG team
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WITHIN the focus on the environmental, social and governance (ESG) agenda, sustainable digitisation and digital decarbonisation are two pillars that remain underserved.

While sustainable digitisation is the process of embedding sustainability in the entire digital transformation process, digital decarbonisation is the removal of carbon emissions associated with existing digital infrastructure such as websites.

These aspects are still nascent, as the majority of stakeholders are unaware of the carbon cost of software at present. Many still believe that digitisation always equates to going green, said Greenie Web founder Ian Chew.

"We need to correct this partial truth. It is a commonly held belief that digitisation automatically equates to sustainability. That is not true.

"There are many instances where digitisation can reduce carbon emissions, but also many instances when it leads to more carbon emissions," he emphasised.

The key to this, he said, is building awareness by introducing the nuances of the situation that has been oversimplified to many people.

He explained, "In getting corporates and the public to digitise, there may have been a previous 'over-sell' of what technology can do. This may include the exaggeration that technology will make your processes green, regardless of the situation. That is something that needs to be corrected."

The next step is to take action, as Chew stressed that every second of delay translates to another gram of avoidable carbon emission being released into the atmosphere.

"The intricate link between data usage, energy consumption and digital carbon emissions – what I call the DEC (data, energy, carbon) nexus – will form the cornerstone of sustainable digitisation and digital decarbonisation.

"In a world flooded with data, starved of clean energy and increasingly concerned about carbon emissions, I believe that the winners of tomorrow's economy will be those who can delicately balance data, energy and carbon emissions for governments, corporates and individuals," he said.

Given the ubiquity of software in the 21st century and how it cuts through all nations, industries and cultures, Chew said that the decarbonisation of software can make a true impact at all levels of society due to its immense scale.

This is because a single change in a website's codebase to make it eco-friendly can lead to amplified decarbonisation by the masses who visit the webpage.

He added, "There will come a time when the decarbonisation of hardware and physical infrastructure will plateau due to technological barriers.

"At that point in time, while governments, companies and individuals await technological breakthroughs, the next most viable alternative to decarbonise – the next lowest hanging fruit – would be digital decarbonisation. And I believe such a time is nearing."

Accordingly, sustainable digitisation and digital decarbonisation are the focus areas for Singapore-based climate tech startup.

Although the idea for the startup came to Chew in 2009 during his first coding class in secondary school, he worked on it as a side project until its formal incorporation in 2021, reason being the tremendous increase in internet usage around the world during the pandemic due to work-from-home trends, virtual tourism and e-commerce, along with the increase in interest in sustainability and ESG from all levels of society.

"Our vision is to create a society where sustainability and technology are intimately intertwined and cross-enabling. I believe that technological sustainability is the future of sustainability and ESG," he said, noting that it will be the next frontier in climate tech.

Given the public good to both industry and society, governments are naturally incentivised to take the lead, which he said bodes well as government action generates media attention for widespread awareness building and sends a strong signal for corporations and society to follow suit.

"In Malaysia's context, Greenie Web is pleased to share that government officials we have spoken to have been open minded and receptive to the concepts of sustainable digitisation and digital decarbonisation," he said.

He added, "We are excited by the feedback we are receiving and look forward to sharing more in due course."

Greenie Web founder Ian Chew

Reframing the technology narrative

The future is digital, but is digital sustainable?

By StarESG team
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TECHNOLOGY is undeniably an enabler in the transition to a net-zero future, but it also has its share of sustainability challenges to overcome.

As we all know, embracing digital transformation has its benefits beyond a boost to productivity and efficiency, as it also ensures wider financial, economic and social inclusion for Malaysia's citizens.

The issue, however, is that technology itself is not sustainable.

Think about it. What is the foundation of today's digital world?

As data grows by leaps and bounds, so too do the data centres that anchor digital infrastructure. To ensure that data centres are up and running 24/7, there's a huge amount of resources involved, be it electricity to power up these facilities or water to cool down servers.

As global provider of critical digital infrastructure and continuity solutions Vertiv Malaysia noted, data centres support many of the digital innovations being used to fight climate change, but data centres also may require their own innovation-driven transformation.

Its data showed that there are more than 2,500 data centres (and counting) globally, run by 275 providers, with 18 million servers deployed.

In 2020, data centres consumed 200 to 250 terawatt hours (TWh) of electricity – or 1% of overall global power usage – and 660 billion litres of water, the latter in the United States alone.

This amounts to a carbon footprint of 0.3% of global emissions and 2% of annual total greenhouse gas emissions.

And data growth is skyrocketing globally, with total worldwide data forecasted to increase to 163 zettabyte by 2025. A zettabyte, for context, is equivalent to 1,024 exabytes. 5G networks will likely increase energy consumption by 150 to 170%.

It's clear that the current state of affairs cannot continue in the search for a more sustainable future.

That said, steps are being taken in the right direction.

In 2021, 37.1 gigawatts (GW) of clean energy agreements were purchased. Organisations are also looking to improve efficiency in power usage effectiveness (PUE) – the ratio of total power used by a facility to the power delivered to computing equipment – to generate additional capacity, up from the 1.57 PUE for an average data centre in 2021.

Some data centre operators are adopting goals based on the vision of a net-zero data centre, seeking to build low-impact data centres, according to Vertiv Malaysia.

It sees data centre operators adopting a multi-tiered sustainability strategy, including using 100% renewable energy as well as energy- and water-efficient solutions, eliminating carbon by moving away from carbon-intensive practices, optimising services and software, alongside implementing circular economy to effectively manage waste streams, recycling and refurbishment.

Upholding fundamental freedoms

Local human rights groups discuss the state of social justice in modern Malaysia, agreeing that there is more room for improvement

By TERENCE TOH

DESPITE the development of various modern conveniences, countless people worldwide are still affected by significant lifestyle and societal issues today.

Problems such as economic inequality, high unemployment, poverty, social exclusion, discrimination and lack of access to facilities still cripple the lives of many, and limit less privileged or developing nations from fully participating in the global economy.

The World Day of Social Justice, celebrated on Feb 20, commemorates the ongoing global effort to overcome these challenges. This annual observation emphasises the upholding of fair outcomes for all through employment, social protection, social dialogue, and fundamental principles and rights. Its 2023 theme is "Overcoming Barriers and Unleashing Opportunities for Social Justice".

Proponents of social justice believe its values augment the operation of societies and economies, and greatly reduce inequality and social tensions.

How does Malaysia fare, however, when it comes to its implementation? Many local experts believe there is still room for improvement.

"The state of social justice in Malaysia is complex and multifaceted. While the country has made significant progress in many areas, there are still significant challenges and disparities that need to be addressed," said Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) chairman Prof Datuk Dr Rahmat Mohamad.

In Suhakam's view, these challenges include economic inequality, limits of access to healthcare and education, diversity and exclusion, issues with the justice system and the empowerment of marginalised communities.

Toh Nyon Nyin, human rights strategist with the Malaysian Centre for Constitutionalism and Human Rights (MCCHR), said that as we progress to a modern world and an economy that focuses on less labour-intensive work more demanding of technology skills, new challenges and opportunities will arise.

"If social justice is not implemented, the gaps between groups in society will further widen, eventually leading to instability. Social justice is now more important than ever to make sure that no one is left behind," she said.

The history of social justice

Often defined as "justice relating to the distribution of wealth, opportunities and societal privilege", modern understandings of social justice are usually guided by principles of equity, access, participation and rights.

While concepts of social justice can be found in the philosophies and beliefs of many creeds and cultures, the idea rose to much prominence in the late 19th and early 20th century American political and legal thought, due to the works of scholars such as John Dewey, Roscoe Pound and Louis Brandeis.

The UN's 2006 document, "Social Justice in an Open World: The Role of the United Nations", states: "Social justice may be broadly understood as the fair and compassionate distribution of the fruits of economic growth".

The creation of World Social Justice Day began in 1995 at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, Denmark. This led to the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, where over 100 global political leaders pledged to fight poverty, achieve full employment, and build stable, safe and just societies. It was also decided that people should be made the centre of development plans.

In a 2005 session of the Commission for Social Development in New York, UN member states reviewed the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, agreeing to cooperate on advancing social development.

As a result, the UN General Assembly declared on Nov 26, 2007 that beginning with the 63rd session of the General Assembly, Feb 20 would be observed annually as the World Day of Social Justice.

The International Labour Organisation adopted the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalisation on June 10 the following year.

According to the aforementioned Nov 26 resolution, the UN General Assembly would

World Day of Social Justice, celebrated on Feb 20, emphasises the upholding of fair outcomes for all through employment, social protection, social dialogue, and fundamental principles and rights. — 123rf.com

'While Malaysia is considered an upper-middle-income country, income inequality remains high, with the top 20% of households earning more than 50% of the country's income,' says Prof Rahmat. — Filepic

The Urban Poverty Eradication Programme aims to uplift the B40 community by providing them with skills training and opportunities to earn an income. — Filepic

emphasise the commitment to promote national and global economic systems based on the principles of justice, equity, democracy, participation, transparency, accountability and inclusion.

In the Malaysian context, Prof Rahmat stated that the Malaysian government had previously created various policies and laws aimed at promoting national social justice. These included the New Economic Policy (aimed at reducing poverty and promoting economic and social justice for all Malaysians), the National Education Policy (aimed at providing equal educational opportunities for all Malaysians) and the National Social Policy (which seeks to address social and economic issues in the country).

While many of them had significant results, Malaysian society was still affected by various social justice challenges, among them being income inequality.

"While Malaysia is considered an upper-middle-income country, income inequality remains high, with the top 20% of households earning more than 50% of the country's income. This has led to significant disparities in access to healthcare, education, and other basic services, particularly for low-income and marginalised communities," he said.

Prof Rahmat said that in recent years, there has also been growing concerns about the erosion of civil liberties and the rise of authoritarianism. Issues such as increased crackdowns on dissent and free speech, and the impact of restrictive laws on freedom of assembly, association and the press were a source of worry for many.

"Despite these challenges, Malaysia has made progress in areas such as gender equality, with more women entering the workforce and occupying leadership positions in recent years.

"The country has also taken steps to address human trafficking and to protect the rights of migrant workers.

"However, it is worth noting that even though there's an effort made by the Government to elevate women's role and status in society, there is still stigmatisation against women," he said.

He quoted data released by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) marking more limited opportunities for job advancement for women, as well as substantial cases of domestic violence and violence against women in the country.

To local civil rights group Sisters In Islam (SIS), social justice includes advancing the rights of Muslim women in Malaysia within the framework of Islam, universal human rights principles, and the protection of rights under the Federal Constitution.

"Social justice is important in modern society because it focuses on and ensures equal opportunities for all individuals regardless of their background. Social justice aims to address gender inequalities and discrimination that exist in various places such as educational institutions, Syariah Courts, healthcare and so on," said SIS communications officer Aleza Othman.

She added that the implementation of social justice in Malaysia still needed focus, as was reflected in the flawed handling of issues such as non-payment of child maintenance by fathers, restricted educational access for certain groups, employment discrimination and unilateral religious conversion of children.

Misconceptions on social justice

"One common misconception that people generally have towards social justice is that social rights are not important when it does not affect them. Another misconception is that social justice is a zero-sum game, that when a group demands for fair and equal treatment, those who are already enjoying those rights will lose their rights. The saying 'when you're accustomed to privilege, equality feels like oppression', aptly describes this," said Toh.

Prof Rahmat added that while some believe social justice to be a foreign concept not in line with local values, this was actually very far from the truth.

"Social justice is consistent with the principles of equality, fairness and justice that are found in many religions, including Islam. The idea that social justice is incompatible with Islamic values is a misunderstanding that is often perpetuated by those with a political agenda.

"Social justice has roots in ancient civilisations and is not unique to Western cultures. It has been an important aspect of many cultures and traditions throughout history," he emphasised.

Aleza said other misconceptions include that social justice is unrealistic or idealistic.

"Social justice is a complex and ongoing process, and many steps need to be taken in order to address issues such as gender equality. These include Syariah Court matters where women face many challenges in obtaining their rights such as child maintenance, child custody, polygamy issues and others," she said.

"SIS believes that social justice can only be achieved when all individuals are given equal opportunities and rights and when discriminatory laws and practices are abolished.

"When social justice is realised, it will lead to a more inclusive and equal society as it promotes dignity, celebrates and accepts diversity, and encourages tolerance of all individuals, regardless of their race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or socioeconomic status," she said.

Moving forward

All the organisations mentioned above have been crusading for the advancement of social justice in Malaysia for many years through engagement, advocacy, consultation, dialogues, education, community service, and various other methods.

"Awareness of social justice in Malaysia can be increased through public campaigns and activities. These activities can help to spread this message and cultivate a culture of discussion and openness to accept and understand alternative opinions.

"Encouraging dialogues and discussion on

A file photo of the Kechara Soup Kitchen providing food for the homeless and the urban poor at Petaling Jaya Old Town. Malaysian society is still affected by various social justice challenges, among them being income inequality. — Filepic

Suhakam chairman Prof Datuk Dr Rahmat Mohamad. — Suhakam

social issues such as women's rights can help the public gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and discrimination that women and the marginalised community face," said Aleza.

Toh believes that principles of social justice should also be increasingly embedded in more national health, education and economic policies. Additionally, more human rights education could be implemented to help the public understand their basic human rights.

Ordinary citizens can also do their part by consistently practising the values espoused by social justice.

"For example, as a landlord, one can observe the principles of social justice by not applying racial preference or bias towards his or her tenant.

"In our daily interactions, within our capacity and the different relationships that we have with people of different social groups, we can ensure that social justice is implemented," said Toh.

Disarming the fear of the 'other'

A humanitarian solution is a pragmatic one

By StarESG team
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SCROLL on your usual news outlets and you'll find empathetic compassion and vitriolic distaste in the same comment section of stories related to refugees.

Malaysians have mixed sentiments when it comes to refugees.

For some context, prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 and subsequent movement control orders, Singapore think tank ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute's State of South-East Asia 2020 surveyed the resettlement of displaced Rohingya people in Malaysia.

It revealed that 56.4% of respondents opposed the "resettlement" whereas 43.6% supported it.

That same survey included 1,308 respondents from all 10 Asean member states, including 222 respondents from Malaysia.

It also found that Malaysia had the highest disapproval rate of Asean's response to the crisis in Myanmar's Rakhine State (71.2%), followed by Singapore (68.5%) and the Philippines (64.3%).

In 2021, the Myanmar military junta even drew criticism from then prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad who chastised the United Nations and the Myanmar government for failing to address the Rohingya crisis, which had displaced over a million people in the country.

Rohingyas, of course, are only one segment of refugees. The rest include ethnic Chins, Pakistanis, Afghans, Yemenis, Somalis, Syrians, Sri Lankans, Iraqis, Palestinians and others.

So while we can recognise and empathise with humanitarian crises in neighbouring countries and the dire desperation it can cause on civilians fleeing war and disharmony, why is it a point of contention amongst Malaysians?

A rock and a hard place

According to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 Refugee Convention), as well as the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, the definition of "refugee" has a very specific meaning:

"A refugee is someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion."

But we're not a signatory of the Convention, meaning Malaysia is not obligated to take in refugees.

Despite this narrow definition, misinformation has managed to distort it – causing confusion and fear in some cases. This isn't to say that bad apples don't exist, as they do with every community.

UNHCR spokesperson Yante Ismail said that there are currently no asylum systems in Malaysia. In fact, refugees are mistaken as "illegal immigrants" under Malaysian law and are one of the country's most marginalised and vulnerable communities, with no access to formal work or education.

So, with no way to formally join our economy and no way to return home, refugees are stuck in certain socioeconomic squalor.

Humane solution

Giving refugees "protection" here means giving space for private sectors, non-governmental organisations, civil society, international organisations and relevant communities to collaborate in helping refugees access healthcare, education and life skills so that they are not a burden.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Strategic Studies and International Relations senior lecturer Dr Hoo Chiew-Ping – who is also a lecturer in Strategy and Diplomacy Programme at UKM and adjunct lecturer in Defence Studies at the Malaysian Armed Forces Defence College (MAFDC) – was quoted in the media that there are several ways we can manage refugees in the country.

Some of the options she mentioned included:

> Signing and ratifying the Convention.

> Working with foreign governments that accept refugees to expedite the relocation of Rohingya people arriving in Malaysia.

> Coordination with various humanitarian and local NGOs to provide for the Rohingya people to ensure they do not burden the government and societies where they set up their communities.

> The ongoing aid to the Cox Bazaar in Bangladesh to accommodate displaced Rohingya people from Myanmar.

Locally, the UN refugee agency UNHCR is working with the government via an ongoing joint task force to create a framework for managing refugees, including how the government can be involved in the issuance of refugee documentation.

A great example of this collaboration working was healthcare, whereby the UNHCR and the Malaysian government collaborated to support the country's Covid-19 response in preventing infection from spreading among communities.

Last September, then home minister Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainudin said people who are registered could also benefit from job opportunities and training.

Former foreign minister Saifuddin Abdullah agreed that allowing refugees to work would show Malaysia to be "really humanitarian in our approach" and augment its workforce, according to a report by Channel News Asia (CNA).

Refugee protection does not mean refugees will stay indefinitely nor does it mean giving them land or handouts. Simply understanding their plight will give lawmakers and the general public a nuanced approach that is both humane and pragmatic.

Data breaches: A guide for Malaysian businesses

What to do if your company is experiencing a data breach

By SANDRA LEE

OVER the past several years, Malaysian organisations have increasingly become the targets of vicious cyberattacks with notable data breaches and data leaks continuing to make national headlines.

A data breach is when an organisation's sensitive, confidential or protected data is taken from a system without verified authorisation and is then usually exposed or sold on the dark web. In the case of ransomware attacks, hackers will break in, steal and encrypt data, denying the owner of the data access to until a ransom is paid. The data could also be used for extortion with the cyber criminals threatening to expose the data if the ransom isn't paid.

Last November, it was reported that personal data of five million passengers and employees of a low-cost airline was leaked, after being hacked by a cybercrime group known as Daixin Team. In another case, more than 800,000 users' personal data was allegedly sourced from the nation's Election Commission's database and put on sale on a popular database marketplace. Another example of a major incident this year, a leading online payment provider also experienced a cybersecurity breach that extracted Malaysians' credit card details from online transactions.

Given the rise and scale of data breaches taking place, Malaysia's new Communications and Digital Minister Fahmi Fadzil has urged businesses that collect and hold data to constantly monitor and improve aspects of cybersecurity by ensuring system infrastructure, databases and networks are updated and secured appropriately.

While prevention is the key when it comes to data protection, the prevalence of cybercrime indicates that it is not a case of if an organisation gets hit by a cyber-attack, but when.

With that in mind, here is a quick outline of the steps to take when a data breach occurs.

1. Record what has happened
Start by documenting what you have found and the steps you took to include this as part of your risk assessment. This will be helpful when you need to report the incident to the authorities. Also, don't try and remove forensic evidence as this will be needed in the post-incident investigation and remediation.

2. Contain the breach
Find out what has happened to the affected data. If you are able to recover the affected data quickly, move to secure your systems and patch vulnerabilities that may have caused the breach. This will help to prevent multiple breaches from occurring. If possible, mobilise your breach response team immediately to support you.

3. Assess the risk and impact
As work progresses to contain the breach, assess what is at risk of further harm and who could be affected. Properly assessing the incident will allow an organisation to respond to public enquiries and determine the next steps. Factors such as the number of

Sophos Greater China, South-East Asia and Korea managing director Sandra Lee.

individuals impacted, the identity of the victims, the type of personal data involved, should be taken into consideration.

4. Report the incident
Report the incident to the relevant stakeholders and supervisory authorities as they can provide advice on the remedial steps. Also alert the impacted individuals so they can take precautionary steps to prevent further harm or risk to themselves

As a communication tip, it is helpful to provide sufficient information so that the victims are able to understand the impact of the data breach, how their security may be compromised and what they need to look out for.

Based on the recent cyberattacks, organisations are reminded that security breaches have significant implications including disruptions to operations, costly remedial fees, hefty fines and reputation loss. This is why it is critical for organisations to implement technical and organisational measures to build a strong cybersecurity defence to reduce the risk of potential data breaches.

With the demand for skilled cybersecurity resources at an (understandably) all time high, many organisations are turning to cybersecurity as a service to help fill the security gap. Services such as Sophos Managed Detection and Response allow organisations to outsource their security needs to an expert team of threat hunters that can monitor their environment 24/7.

As Malaysia's digital transformation continues to escalate, data and information are imperative to business operations and sustainability, organisations have a have a duty of care to their customers to uphold the integrity and security of the data and information that they are entrusted to with.

Sandra Lee is the managing director for Greater China, South-East Asia and Korea from Sophos.

An ecosystem overhaul
Beyond the physical infrastructure, however, lies more challenges.

The National Tech Association of Malaysia (Pikom) chairman Ong Chin Seong went on to say that there is generally more awareness and investment of resources in ESG across Malaysia-based multinational corporations, public-listed companies and government-linked companies, as well as the local large, medium and small enterprises that participate in the global supply chain.

However, he pointed out that despite growing interest in ESG, the awareness and investment by most small and medium enterprises (SMEs) remain in its infancy.

"Narrowing the gap requires a better understanding of 'where to invest' and the 'know-how', amongst other things. While we laud the message by the government to prioritise ramping up the nation's participation in technology and green economy, the nation needs to have a pool of talents that can be subject matter experts in ESG as a sustainable workforce of the future," he stressed.

This builds on his rationale that the quest to achieve sustainability has to encompass a wider spectrum in addition to technology adoption, such as energising levers across business models, business ecosystems, business processes, people empowerment, organisational culture, regulatory framework and environmental preservation, among others.

"In addition, the interconnection and alignment of people, process and technology are crucial to ensure we are building a sustainable world. While technology makes it possible, people make it happen," he opined.

Moreover, it is also important for better metrics and data to benchmark Malaysia's tech industry against its peers, even as the ESG ecosystem increasingly expands with new players to complete the loop.

Against this backdrop, Ong said it is crucial for industry associations such as Pikom to actively assist its members to navigate the challenging landscape.To do so, it has set up an ESG committee to increase the awareness and encourage

adoption of ESG practices in Malaysia.

This has drawn a lot of interest from its members, but he acknowledged that there is still a lot more to be done to collaborate with other stakeholders, such as members, partners, academic institutions, regulatory bodies and government agencies to ensure that the nation's ESG journey is all-inclusive.

"In an age of dramatic technological advances, we wish to see local tech companies to grasp the opportunity to innovate and hopefully provide access to various ESG digital platforms and solutions to the wider ecosystem.

"At a global level, there are various alliances and bodies driving sustainability frameworks and disclosure standards. Technology, together with political, economic and societal will, are necessary to underpin the ESG ecosystem and sustain it," he shared.

Sustainable digitisation, digital decarbonisation
Moving forward, Greenie Web founder Ian Chew suggested that there must be a two-pronged focus: Sustainable digitisation – embedding sustainability during digital transformation – and digital decarbonisation, removing carbon emissions associated with existing digital infrastructure, such as websites.

Noting that sustainability and ESG are fairly recent concepts for the majority of society where raising awareness is key, he highlighted that inflationary pressures on the horizon may lead companies that are not fully dedicated to sustainability to cut ESG-related expenditure the moment that budget cuts are necessitated.

Lastly, amongst organisations that are true believers in ESG and sustainability, some are still very focused on physical infrastructure decarbonisation and by extension, exclude or de-prioritise digital decarbonisation.

He said, "Some companies have still not started taking a holistic approach to decarbonisation and this is certainly a challenge."

As for the sustainability of the electrical and electronic products we use in our daily lives? Now, that's another conversation to be had.

National Tech Association of Malaysia (Pikom) chairman Ong Chin Seong

Approaching technology sustainably

By MAHADHIR AZIZ

THE digital economy contributes to almost a quarter of Malaysia's GDP and will continue to be a key driver of Malaysia's development moving forward. As the world grapples to address the sustainability impact of economic development, the digital economy can play a crucial role in the nation's shift to more sustainable economic practices. Studies show that digital technology solutions can positively contribute to 103 out of the 169 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and that the rapid advances in these technologies are helping to accelerate our transition to a net-zero future.

New estimates from the World Economic Forum reveal that digital technologies, at scale, can enable up to a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 in the highest-emitting sectors. Industries can draw on a range of technologies to decarbonise their operations and value chains, including:

> Foundational technologies such as big data analytics.

> Decision-making technologies such as artificial intelligence or machine learning and digital twins.

> Enabling technologies such as cloud, 5G, blockchain and augmented reality.

> Sensing and control technologies such as the internet of things, drones, and automation.

While every business' digital transformation will look different, the use of real-time data to enable sustainable decision-making, new-skilling opportunities for workforces to accelerate digitalisation, and collaboration both internally and across the value chain will be core to success.

Various studies also suggest that the global digital economy contributes up to four percent of global GHG emissions annually. As digitalisation becomes more pervasive, the digital technology sector will need to manage its own carbon footprint, while it helps to increase productivity levels across the economy.

The Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) recognises these dual drivers impacting the digital economy – the increasing role that digital technologies will play in ensuring a sustainable, inclusive and ethical digital economy; and the need for digital companies to embrace environmental, social, and governance (ESG)-friendly practices for their own growth and longevity.

Over the years, a plethora of scale-up programmes has been put in place to support the growth of tech companies in Malaysia and beyond. These programmes have produced global companies that are actively deploying a range of digital solutions, many of which contribute to a more inclusive and greener economy.

This year, MDEC is putting greater emphasis on channelling ESG-related business opportunities to digital economy companies. We are addressing this sustainability imperative in several ways, including through advocacy, to build a collective movement to combat climate change. In order to achieve our aim, all companies, from tech giants to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), must play their part.

There is clear evidence that sustainable transformation is already underway in Malaysia. Through the introduction of Malaysia Digital (MD) in 2022, MD-status companies are highly encouraged to align their operations to the government's ESG goals. To this end, we are collecting ESG-related data from MD-status companies via the half-yearly MD Industry Survey. This is spurring ESG awareness amongst these companies while providing MDEC with a baseline understanding of their progress against sustainability indicators.

The latest MD Industry Survey involving all active MD-status companies showed that 53% are already committed to ESG, with a further 19% likely to commit within two years. Respondents have made significant strides in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, with women making up 48% of employees. Businesses are also embracing the development of ESG-friendly productsand services. These account for 83% of expenditure on research and development and 64% of local, and 84% of export, sales.

The environment is the first area that comes to mind for many businesses. However, MDEC recognises that some, particularly SMEs, may find it difficult to relate climate change complexities to their operations. In response, in 2022, MDEC developed the Malaysia Digital Climate Action Pledge (MDCAP), in partnership with the UN Global Compact Network Malaysia & Brunei, to inspire digital businesses to take practical steps to reduce their carbon footprint.

We have received a positive response to date to MDCAP, with over 70% of signatories being SMEs, and will be expanding the programme this year. Conducting operations in an environmentally responsible manner is the most popular commitment, which 77% of companies have signed up for. This year, MDEC will be extending MDCAP to more companies, while we partner current signatories to fulfil their pledges and disclose the impact of their actions.

To close, in her book *Gloom to Boom*, Dr Andrea Bonime-Blanc – a global governance, risk, ESG, ethics, cyber and crisis strategist – addresses the concept of ESG having a fourth pillar for technology. Let us pick up this idea and better understand the intersection of technology with ESG, working it like any other ESG pillar.

Mahadhir Aziz is chief executive officer of Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC).

Sustainability highlights of Budget 2023

Good governance above all

Compiled by CHOW ZHI EN
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THE revised Budget 2023 tabled on Feb 24 by Prime Minister and Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim emphasised the importance of good governance in actualising plans aimed at helping everyday Malaysians and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME); green initiatives; and digital advancements – whilst reducing our government debt and tackling extreme poverty.

Here are some of the environmental, social and governance (ESG) highlights from the re-tabled Budget sorted into ESG pillars.

Environmental

> Electricity tariffs for domestic users and SMEs will be maintained, with tariffs for large corporations – except for those in the food and agriculture sectors – to be raised.

> Expansion of travel bus programme (MyBAS50 Unlimited Travel Pass) to encourage use of public transport whilst maintaining the My50 monthly LRT pass which continues to benefit nearly 180,000 urban commuters.

> Allocation of the Ecological Fiscal Transfer for Biodiversity Conservation (EFT) to state governments will be increased to RM150mil per year.

> The federal government has set aside RM38mil for the protection of wildlife such as tigers and elephants, as well as their habitats.

> RM80mil was allocated to improve palm oil sustainability efforts and to counter anti-palm oil campaigns.

> Addition of 1,500 forest rangers which will consist of those from indigenous communities, veterans and police.

Social

> The Social Security Organisation (Socso) will amend its Act to allow the payment of a grant equal to 80% of a worker's insured salary value to encourage women to return to work after maternity (or parental) leave – benefitting an estimated over 130,000 women.

> Members of the B40 group with a household income of less than RM2,500 are eligible for Rahmah cash assistance of up to RM2,500 depending on the number of children.

> Belia Rahmah eTunai initiative for those registered in eKasih to receive food baskets and vouchers for staple food items worth RM600.

>A total of RM300mil will be apportioned to support micro-businesses run by women and youth entrepreneurs, while Bank Simpanan Nasional will provide over RM1bil in financing to MSMEs and hawkers.

> The Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development will establish a Child Development Department to provide comprehensive support for children.

> A special unit under the Sexual, Women, and Child Investigations Division (D11) will be established to combat child pornographic activities and collaborate with various agencies to identify those involved.

> RM8mil will be allocated to strengthen the role of One-Stop Social Support Centres (Pusat Sokongan Sosial Setempat) in providing early intervention for mental health and domestic violence issues.

Governance

> A collaborative approach with local authorities to provide incentives to accelerate investment efforts.

> Spurring direct foreign investments (FDIs) by reducing bureaucracy and expediting approvals.

> Transparency an emphasis in government projects.

> Flood mitigation projects worth RM15bil and Jana Wibawa projects worth RM7bil will be scrapped and re-tendered through direct negotiations.

> The Whistleblowers Protection Act will be amended this year to aid in eradicating corruption and fortifying protections for informants.

> Thorough investigation on several Malaysian politicians named in the Pandora Papers. The Pandora Papers was a data leak involving 2.94TB of data involving former and current government and political leaders from around the world, including Malaysia.

SMALL ACTS ➤ BIG IMPACTS

What to do with obsolete junk

Practise kindness with the waste you cannot avoid

You are not alone if you have a few obsolete or broken electronics sitting in drawers at home. In our lifetime, we've all bought electronic appliances and devices which sometimes get forlornly left in a drawer. Sometimes there is no choice as certain technologies become outdated and obsolete. At the end of the lifespans, these devices (if not disposed of properly) can end up in landfills, rivers and soil, becoming e-waste. This poses a potential danger to our lives as it can affect human health and cause the environmental quality to deteriorate since e-waste comprises toxic elements like mercury, nickel, lead and others. According to research by the Department of Environment (DoE), estimation shows that Malaysia will generate 24.5 million units of e-waste in 2025. As everyday Malaysians, doing our part in minimising e-waste helps to conserve resources and reduces the amount of energy we take from the Earth.

DONATE LARGE APPLIANCE

If you've got a functioning kitchen appliance but you just don't have any use or maybe you got an upgrade, consider donating it to a family, friend or neighbour.

And if you really have to get rid of it, careful disposal is crucial. Some places like IPC Recycling & Buy Back Centre and Senheng e-Waste Recycling Program allow you to bring your devices in for some "green" in return.

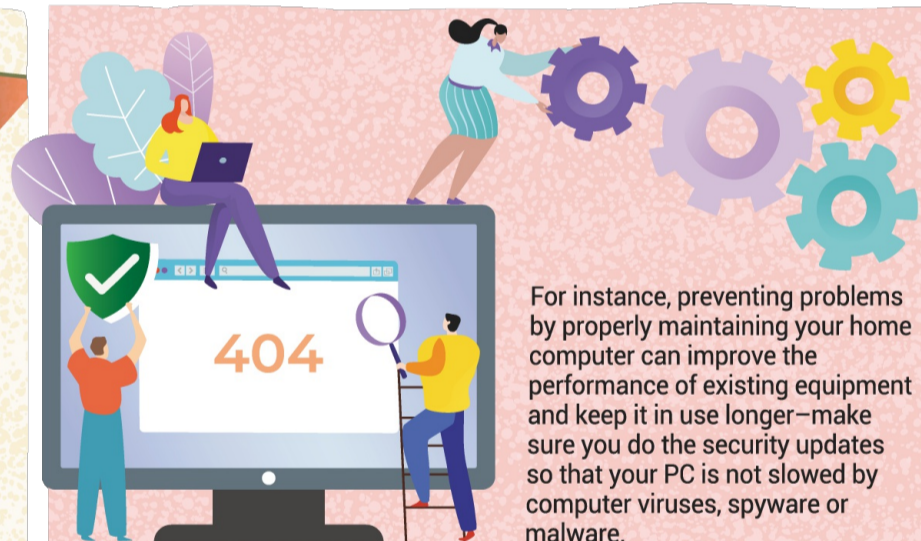Alternatively, the DoE also has a list of e-waste collection points and centres by states in the country on their site at https://ewaste.doe.gov.my/index-.php/about/list-of-collectors/.

There are also private entities you can hire to come and collect your old electronic devices and appliances.

RE-EVALUATE

Do you really need that extra blender? Try finding one device with multiple functions. Instead of buying just a blender, perhaps a food processor would help you nail two birds with one stone.

Since manufacturing these devices with the use of rare materials into their production constitutes a big drain on our natural resources and uses a lot of energy, reusing the precious metals and plastics in old cell phones alone instead of making or mining more would save us extra expenditure of energy.

If you're looking to purchase a new smart device, why not opt to get a second-hand device? Buying used devices is not only healthier for your wallet, but also for the environment since it directly reduces the amount of e-waste that ends up in our landfills.

Maintenance, maintenance, maintenance

Poor maintenance of electronics can lead to a frequent need to acquire new devices or replacements.

For instance, preventing problems by properly maintaining your home computer can improve the performance of existing equipment and keep it in use longer–make sure you do the security updates so that your PC is not slowed by computer viruses, spyware or malware.

Installing the latest patch or update will also keep your devices fairly safe and secure from vulnerabilities and ensure it's not slowed down by software bugs.

EXTEND THE LIFE OF YOUR ELECTRONICS

For your small gadgets like smartphones and tablets, consider getting a case for them to protect them from damage in case of accidents and to keep it clean.

A neat tip to help extend the battery life of your devices is to avoid overcharging the battery. Keeping your device's battery at around 75-85% instead helps the battery keep its charge and reduce its health from depleting as quickly in the long run.