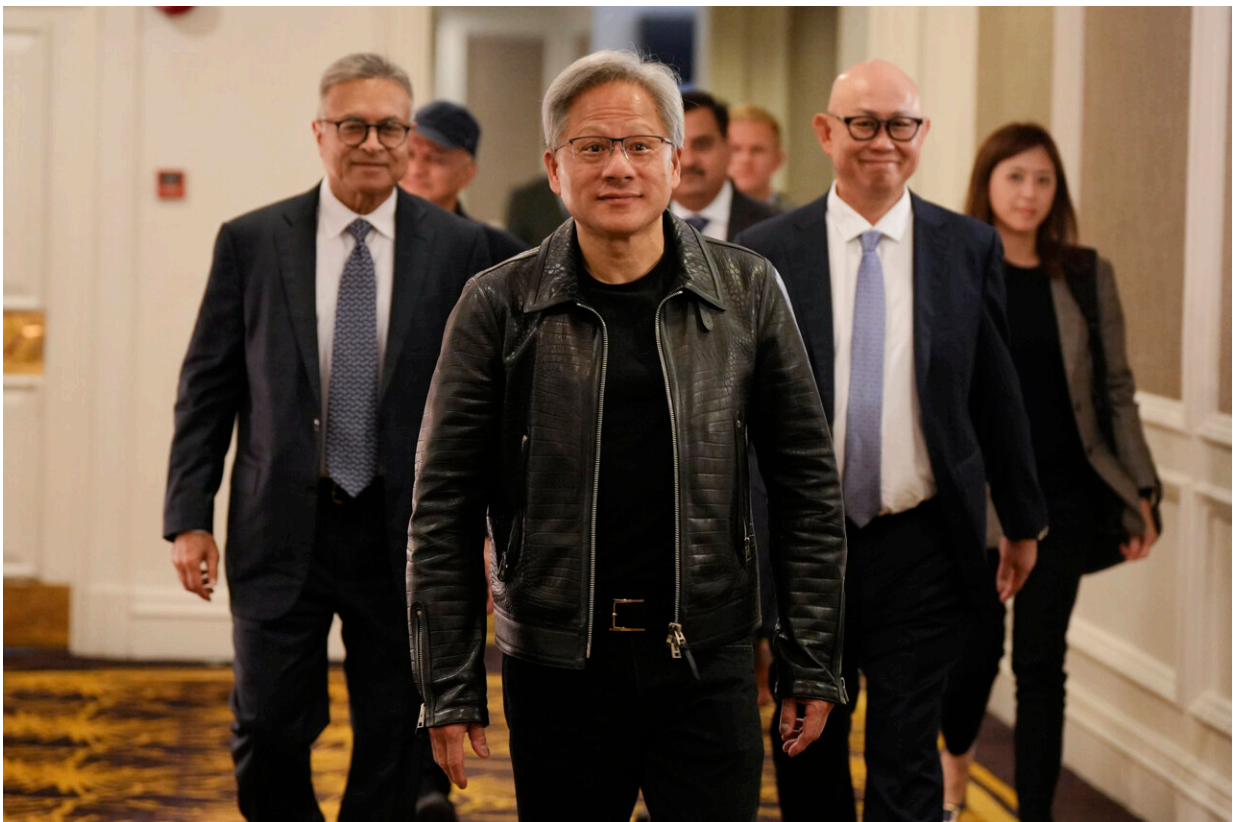


Nvidia CEO suggests Malaysia could be AI 'manufacturing' hub as Southeast Asia expands data centers

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Nvidia CEO and co-founder Jensen Huang, center, arrives for a media round table event at a hotel in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Friday, Dec. 8, 2023. Credit: AP Photo/Vincent Thian

The CEO of technology giant Nvidia said Friday that he views Malaysia as a potential hub for artificial intelligence "manufacturing," though he did not confirm the chipmaker is in talks with a local conglomerate to set up AI data centers in the Southeast Asian country.

Jensen Huang, Nvidia's founder and CEO, told reporters in Kuala Lumpur that the Malaysian conglomerate YTL Corp. could play an important role in setting up AI data centers.

Speaking at a media roundtable, Huang did not confirm reports that Nvidia is in talks with YTL, whose interests span utilities and telecommunications, cement, construction and property development. But he said that "YTL is an extraordinary company and has an incredible leadership and legacy."

Malaysia "is a very important hub for SEA's computing infrastructure. It requires access to land, facilities, power, which is extraordinarily important," he said. "I think YTL could play a great role in that."

Malaysia's expertise in packaging, assembly and other aspects of manufacturing make it well suited for the manufacturing of artificial intelligence, Huang said. He said Nvidia was working with 80 AI startups in the country.

"Here in Malaysia, the data center infrastructure layer of computing, which is one of the most important parts of the AI and the cloud, is very successful here," Huang said.

Southeast Asia will likely be a hub for AI computing because countries need their own AI data centers to refine and transform data into valuable information. Old data processing centers were designed to hold data files and run applications. AI requires use of each place's culture, language, values, literature and common sense, Huang said.

"I don't know plans of every region well, but I have great confidence that Southeast Asia is going to be a very important technology hub. It's already quite excellent at packaging and assembly and battery manufacturing. It's already very good at many aspects of the technology supply chain," he said.

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