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Koh-PenangNET

PENANGNET WILL BE A BUSINESS AND IT HUB FOR NORTHERN REGION AND IMT-GT

PULAU PINANG, Nov 29 (Bernama) -- Pulau Pinang, through PenangNET, will have the capability to serve as a business, information and information technology (IT) hub to the northern region states and the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT).

Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon said today PenangNET would start operating in phases next January and by 1999 would be fully interconnected by linking the state administration, every branch of the state government, government agencies, business organisations, factories, schools and homes.

"Through PenangNET or the electronic government, the state will be more competitive, more compelling to do business with and to have an informed society," he told a news conference after the launch of PenangNET by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad through teleconferencing.

Dr Mahathir launched it from the National Science Centre in Kuala Lumpur through high speed transmission of voice and video that allowed him to interact with Dr Koh at Dewan Sri Pinang here.

Dr Koh said that besides serving the state, Kedah, Perak, Perlis and IMT-GT, the implementation of PenangNET was also a preparation to connect the state to complement and support the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

"PenangNET will support and supplement the MSC to achieve synergy with the MSC, not to compete with it," he said, adding that it would be more meaningful for the state to communicate with the MSC through PenangNET.

He also said that its implementation was necessary for future development.

To make PenangNET successful and possible, the government would play a big role in raising the consciousness, capability and self-confidence of its staff and the people.

Dr Koh said the state government had allocated RM2.1 million for hardware and related equipment for several government departments and RM200,000 to train its staff in IT next year.

A private sector-led consortium headed by THB Asia Connect Sdn Bhd, Penang Development Corporation (PDC), Public Packages Sdn Bhd, telephone providers such as STW and Binariang Sdn Bhd will set up a joint-venture company, Penang Network Services Sdn Bhd, to spearhead the implementation of PenangNET.

Asia Connect and Public Packages will hold 51 per cent stake in the company, Binariang (5 per cent) and the state government 44 per cent through the PDC).

Dr Koh, State Secretary Datuk Jamaluddin Ahmad Damanhuri and Tongkah Holding director, Mokhzani Mahathir, witnessed the signing of the memorandum of understanding on the venture after the launch.

The PDC was represented by its chairman, Datuk Noor Mokhtar Hanif, Binariang by its executive director for sales and marketing C.Y. Chin, Asia Connect by its chief executive officer Raymond Cheng and Public Packages by its executive chairman C.P. Koay. -- BERNAMA

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