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Benchmarking smart solutions to turn vision into reality

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ONE year has passed by since the publicity blitz for the Multimedia Super Corridor began in August last year. Since then, a number of events have taken place with numerous seminars, talks and conferences held with a view to better educate the corporate sector and the public about the MSC's potentials.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has also conducted roadshows to the US, Europe and Japan to highlight the nation's aspirations for the future and how foreign interests can participate in the venture. And along the way, some messages had gotten confused that there is now a real fear of overblown expectations setting standards that cannot be delivered.

As such, it is timely that the event that formally started the MSC media blitz - Multimedia Asia '97 (MMA '97) Conference and Exhibition - should adopt the theme: "Moving MSC from Vision to Reality."

The focus this time is on "benchmarking smart solutions" to dispel the hype and myth that has become attached to the MSC project. Other equally important issues to be discussed are that of trained manpower availability, the overall legal framework and tax issues.

NITC permanent secretary Tengku Datuk Dr Azzman Shariffadeen said in a statement the event will focus on software and multimedia applications and telecommunications.

"The number of exhibitors is rather small but we are targeting for quality rather than quantity," Tengku Azzman said, adding that the event is expected to attract more than 20,000 local and foreign visitors.

Tengku Dr Azzman also said one of NITC's main aims in organising the event is to present opportunities for chief executive officers and other management heads to better understand the MSC project and be encouraged to explore business opportunities within the designated 15km by 50km area.

The four-day event, to be held at the Mines Resort in Balakong, Selangor from Sept 16 has about 100 companies taking part. Among the exhibitors are Cellular Communications Network (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, Telekom Malaysia Bhd, Tenaga Nasional Bhd, Putrajaya Holdings Sdn Bhd and Bernama.

The international event will be opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. It is organised by the National Information Technology Council (NITC) and co-organised by Mimos Bhd, Miller Freeman Sdn Bhd, Multimedia Development Corporation Sdn Bhd and Putrajaya Holdings Sdn Bhd.

Interestingly enough, another critical announcement will be made shortly before the event takes place.

The results of a preliminary study on electronic commerce will be unveiled by the Securities Commission chairman Datuk Dr Mohd Munir Abdul Majid at a conference in Bandar Sunway, Selangor on Sept 2. The report, which will give SC's perception as to how electronic commerce could be implemented in the capital market, will be presented at "The Conference on Electronic Commerce and The Capital Market" at the Sunway Lagoon Resort Hotel.

Munir will present the report in a session titled "Regulatory and Developmental Challenges - A Study Report by the Securities Commission".

The conference, organised by the Securities Industry Development Centre of the SC, will address issues on the role of technology in disintermediation and globalisation, its impact on overall business and the challenges it poses.

Speakers such as Securities First Technology's Jeff Ayton and Mastercard Asia Pacific's Jonathan Gould, will raise subjects like "The Impact of Electronic Commerce on Business Strategy" and "The Multimedia Super Corridor - An Update and Regulatory and Developmental Challenges".

Tengku Dr Azzman, who is also Mimos chief executive, is due to chair one of the panel sessions, whose panelists will include Commerce-Asset Holding Bhd executive director Dr Rozali Mohamed Ali.

Another attraction is the keynote speaker Don Tapscott, the author of international bestseller "The Digital Economy: Promise and Peril in the Age of Networked Intelligence", who will give talk on electronic commerce and the financial services sector.

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