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CYBERJAYA TO BE WORLD CLASS CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR IT
A Special Report

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KUALA LUMPUR, April 19 (Bernama) -- With a Malaysian child prodigy having made it to Oxford University at the age of 12 recently while another Malaysian is heading the United Nations General Assembly as its president, can Malaysia aspire to see a Malaysian scientist winning the prestigious Nobel prize?

This seems impossible at the moment. But this can become a reality eventually with the establishment of Malaysia's very own centre for technological excellence -- Cyberjaya.

Cyberjaya is a city whereby information technology (IT) and multimedia contents are being developed and tested before they are to be applied as products in the 40km by 15km Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) area.

Occupying some 2,800 ha in the heart of the MSC, Cyberjaya will be the biggest cyber township which will serve as an exclusive hub for research and development activities for the country, and extending to the region and other parts of the world.

Besides having excellent office facilities and business-friendly enterprise zones, Cyberjaya will also have first-class resort hotels, service apartments, hillside houses and condominiums, and top rank shopping and recreational facilities.

At Cyberjaya's heart is a Multimedia University, to be established for undertaking high-level teaching and next generation research in multimedia and information technology.

An infrastructure engineering consultant Ir. Afifi Hj Hassan told Bernama recently that Cyberjaya would be the MSC's dedicated "intelligent city for multimedia companies."

Afifi, who is an electrical engineer, added: "I feel Cyberjaya will be a centre of excellence where future Malaysian IT scientists will be produced."

Cyberjaya, he said, would complement the MSC's basic components development in centralising the IT and multimedia R&D and business activities.

Afifi also said that with many incentives given to local and international organisations as well as investors to encourage greater investment and participation in the MSC, Cyberjaya would eventually become a free trade zone for the multimedia and IT business industry.

"The aim (in having incentives) is for high intensity R&D of multimedia and IT sector," he added.

This, he said, would lead Cyberjaya to become the most important base for the formation of many smart partnerships and strategic alliances between local companies and foreign technology providers.

Deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said recently that the development of Cyberjaya was progressing as scheduled and the completion of its various components would be between 1998 and 2000.

However, Anwar said the development of the basic infrastructure, which include the dedicated highway, express rail link, telecommunications, electricity and water supply, were slated to be ready by next year.

The entire development of Cyberjaya will be undertaken by Cyberview Holdings, which is a consortium comprising Nippon Telegraph and Telephone of Japan (NTT), Telekom Malaysia Bhd, Permodalan Nasional Bhd, the Selangor state government and other yet-to-be determined parties.

To speed up the project, Cyberview Holdings is to get a certificate of

urgency from the relevant authorities to expedite the acquisition of some 750ha of land out of the total of 2,800ha for the initial development of the city.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is expected to officiate the ground breaking ceremony of Cyberjaya in the middle of next month.

On the upstream telecommunications development of Cyberjaya, Afifi said it would be tremendous as its platform would be linked to the more powerful MSC network supported by both underground and elevated fibre optic cables capable of transmitting data at of 2.5 to 10 gigabits per second.

Cyberjaya, he said, when fully completed, can serve as a platform where people in it can "play" and "work" with technology, and always have a motto - "One who controls the most information will be the one who controls the game."

However, Afifi said being appreciative and becoming a mere user of information and its applications would not bring much benefit to the country.

"We must have control or be a contributor to the IT industry," he stressed.

To contribute to the IT industry, he said Malaysians should be qualified in controlling the hardware, and should be able to analyse the derivatives of such technology.

This, he said, could be done through intensive involvement and participation in R&D activities, particularly in the IT and multimedia industries available in Cyberjaya.

"Once we are able to control the derivatives, the end-products or results can be shaped out and tailored to suit applications and commercial requirements," he said.

With this, it can put Malaysia or the MSC ahead in serving the regional and global information business industry.

"If we are able to dictate the needs of the future today and we have the technology available to suit future requirements, it can save us time, energy and money and, most of all, to be in control," he said.

The start towards being in control has begun. Cyberjaya will pave the way along this exciting road map of technological excellence. The attainment of the coveted Nobel prize may not be just a dream. -- BERNAMA

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