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Mahathir-Teleconference

DR MAHATHIR TALKS ON MSC IN COUNTRY'S BIGGEST TELECONFERENCE

KUALA LUMPUR, April 15 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today spent about two hours explaining to fellow Malaysians the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) project in the country's biggest ever teleconferencing link-up.

From a conference room at the Prime Minister's Department, Dr Mahathir briefed participants at 27 other locations nationwide on the project and later fielded questions from 14 of them.

Among those who attended the teleconference were the menteri besar and chief ministers.

This is the first time that Dr Mahathir held a nationwide dialogue using the multimedia application.

Those who posed the questions came from all walks of life including senior government officials, businessmen, teachers, a village head and students.

The questions ranged from how to restrict negative elements in the application of the MSC to how industries located outside the MSC could benefit from the project.

Meanwhile, Telekom Malaysia Bhd chief executive officer Datuk Mohamed Said Mohamed Ali said the company spent about RM3 million to organise the teleconference.

The MSC, designed specifically to attract leading investors of multimedia technologies, covers an area 15 km by 50 km stretching from the world's tallest building in the Kuala Lumpur City Centre south to the new airport in Sepang.

The teleconference drew positive response from the various menteri besar and chief ministers met by reporters after the event.

In ALOR SETAR, Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid said the dialogue had unveiled the "mystery" of the cyber era which was now affecting the lives of the general populace.

Sanusi said the state government was planning various programmes to familiarise the public with computers, including launching such programmes in mosques.

It would also provide multimedia facilities in Public Reading Centres, initially proposed for in five villages.

In JOHOR BAHRU, Menteri Besar Johor Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said administrative dealings between the state government in Bukit Timbalan and district offices will be carried out electronically beginning the middle of the year.

Starting next year, the state will establish a similar link-up with the private sector to enhance performance of government departments and make information from them easily available to that sector.

The state had also identified the area encompassing the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) campus, the Sultan Ismail International Airport in Senai and Bandar Nusajaya to be developed as an IT industry hub named Teknopolis Johor, he said.

In IPOH, Perak Menteri Besar Ramli Ngah Talib said the state government would use MSC facilities to assist in the development of IT industries and expedite implementation of an electronic government in Perak.

In KOTA BAHARU, Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat suggested that the federal government provide a financial grant for Kelantan to help people in the state grasp IT more effectively.

He said pure science classes specially on computer education started the last two years in Sekolah Agama Maahad Muhammadi in Kota Baharu would be expanded to other state-run religious schools.

In SEREMBAN, Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad said the state government had taken steps to explain the MSC to department heads and staff over the last several months.

In KUALA TERENGGANU, Terengganu Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad said the state government would establish a committee to look into opportunities available in IT development.

He said there were already discussions with Telekom Malaysia to wire up the state secretariat in Wisma Darul Iman with fibre optic cables to prepare for the electronic government link-up nation-wide.

In KUCHING, Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud said a Sarawak cyber-village will be developed to complement the MSC now taking shape in the federal capital.

He said the cyber-village will be situated the Sama Jaya High-Tech Industrial Park near Kuching.

"Now we got to get IT experts to assess for us (the creation of such village)," he told reporters here after attending the teleconference. --
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