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Mahathir-MSc

MAHATHIR:IT ONLY GOES NATION-WIDE AFTER IMPACT STUDY IN MSC

KUALA LUMPUR, April 15 (Bernama) -- Nation-wide application of the information (IT) and multimedia technology will only be considered after a scrutiny of their impact within the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Limiting IT and multimedia applications only to the MSC first was necessary to ensure effective checks on undesirable impact it might create, he said.

Dr Mahathir said this when explaining the MSC from a conference room at his office here to a nation-wide audience of 13,000 during an unprecedented video teleconferencing.

"...We don't want the multi-media (technology) to be applied nation-wide lest there are adverse affects. If there is something adverse we can control it since we are limiting it to the MSC," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the MSC could be expanded nation-wide upon acquiring the know-how to check the attendant negative impact of the IT and multimedia technology.

Through the MSC the government would seek to overcome such impact including finding ways to filter out pornography sent via the Internet, he said.

Although a system for that purpose was currently available, he said, it was not yet perfect and has flaws that needed to be corrected.

"I reckon there is a need for an international convention to control information sent out through the Internet," he said.

Nonetheless the public should accept that it was difficult to control information sent out through the Internet, he said.

The public should exercise wisdom in putting the technology to good use by reinforcing self-control, he said.

The MSC, a 50 sq km zone devoted to the development of IT and multimedia products and services, covers the Kuala Lumpur City Centre, the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang and the new federal administrative capital in Putrajaya.

A guarantee of no censorship over information obtained through the Internet within the MSC is among the 10 guarantees the government commits to companies operating there.

Replying to a question from one teleconference participant, Dr Mahathir said implementation of some of the MSC flagship applications may have to wait until the MSC progressed to a later stage.

The general use of smart card, for example, could only be facilitated upon availability of a certain standard for its application including by other countries to ensure compatibility, he said.

But notwithstanding that, the government would continue providing electronic kiosks to enable public dealing with government departments and cut down on their staff recruitment, he said.

The prime minister said although the bill of guarantees and certain incentives were only committed to MSC companies, firms outside it could also undertake research and development (R&D) activities there.

He said cyber-cities, to be developed in the other states, would be linked to the MSC although they would not enjoy special incentives, unlike the MSC companies.

A 10-year tax holiday is among the incentives offered to MSC companies.

The others are duty-free imports of multimedia equipment and R&D grants

for local small- and medium-sized companies.-- BERNAMA  
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