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Malaysian business website expects more subscribers

Kang Siew Li

THE newly-launched Malaysia Trade X-Change on the Net - an Internet website on the country's business community - is expected to draw at least 1,000 subscribers in its first year of operations.

The website, which was given a big boost when it was launched recently by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is a joint effort between the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (NCCIM) and Orinet Business Systems (M) Sdn Bhd.

In an interview with Business Times, Orinet Business Systems owner and managing director Za'ba Hasrin said some 100 Malaysian companies are already listed on the website.

"That's why I believe it will not be difficult for us to achieve the targetted 1,000 subscribers by the end of next year," he said.

Za'ba said NCCIM and his company have been developing the website for some six months.

"The overall objective of the Trade X-Change is to link local entrepreneurial companies for the exchange of business information and opportunities through the Internet.

"This includes the open exchange of information on technologies, products, human resources and potential investments," he said.

Za'ba said the website will also be accessible to companies around the world who wish to locate suitable Malaysian business partners either for projects in Malaysia or to set up joint ventures elsewhere.

He added that business opportunities can take the form of infrastructure development, heavy industries, light industries, Information Technology, assembly and services.

To participate, Za'ba said, one has to pay a subscription fee of RM5,000 for the first year and RM2,500 a year subsequently.

"A subscriber will be provided with an electronic mail address so that all trade enquiries pertaining to his products and the company can be channelled via the e-mail address.

"He or she will also be provided with a five-page Internet homepage detailing the company's profile and products. The homepage can be accessed by all Internet users," he said.

More importantly, Za'ba said, since the Trade X-Change is part of IBCC-Net, a subscriber's homepage will be seen by the preferred target audience, namely the international business community.

IBCC-Net is a global electronic network on the Internet linking members of the International Chamber of Commerce. The NCCIM is the sole signatory of the IBCC-Net Inter-chamber Protocol for Malaysia and a registered member.

Currently, there are some 10,000 Chambers of Commerce and Industry and National Committees within the IBCC-Net.

NCCIM executive director Adnan Ariffin said the chamber will tabulate and forward all trade enquiries pertaining to any company via its e-mail address for further action.

"Being an interactive website, a subscriber may list his investment requirements on the Trade X-Change when seeking potential investors, joint venture partners or distributors," he said.

Adnan said local companies do not have to sign up with the Trade X-Change immediately, "but we hope that at least they will come to us and list themselves on the website".

He said the potential for business opportunities on the new website will be tremendous, based on the fact that NCCIM itself receives about 15 business opportunities on various industries from overseas investors each day.

There are currently some 30,000 Malaysian business members within the NCCIM which is the governing body for other chambers such as the Malay Chamber of Commerce Malaysia, the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia, the Malaysian Associated Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers.

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