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MSC-Card

MSC TARGETS SMART IDENTITY CARD BY YEAR 2000

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LOS ANGELES, Jan 13 (Bernama) -- Your identity card is envisaged to get "smart" by the year 2000 as part of plans to develop Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

The ubiquitous IC which Malaysians aged 12 years and above keep in their wallets and handbags will then become a national multipurpose card which can serve not only as a national identity card but also as an electronic purse for buying small ticket items or a credit card, telephone card and even as a club membership card.

The smart card, due to be commercially released before the end of the decade and eventually issued to all Malaysians, will ultimately be used in all electronic transactions with the government.

These details are contained in a handbook on the MSC produced by the Multimedia Development Corporation (MDC), which is described in the handbook by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as a "fully-empowered one-stop super shop" wholly focused on ensuring the unconditional success of the MSC and its companies.

The MDC is coordinating the current working visit by Dr Mahathir to California and later to Japan to promote the development of the MSC among top executives of American and Japanese companies involved in multimedia products and services.

The national multipurpose card is one of seven "flagship applications" which have been identified for development by 2000 in order to rapidly catalyse the MSC's growth and accelerate Malaysia's progress towards leadership in the Information Age, the handbook said.

The other six are electronic government, smart schools, telemedicine, research and development clusters, borderless marketing centres and worldwide manufacturing webs.

In his message in the handbook, the Prime Minister described the MSC as a bold initiative to develop a regional launch site for companies developing or using leading multimedia technologies.

He said the MSC aimed to revolutionise how the world does business by unlocking multimedia's full potential by integrating ground-breaking cyberlaws and outstanding information infrastructure in an attractive physical environment.

He added that the MDC would shape the MSC into Asia's technology hub, a place where innovative multimedia developers and users can harness Malaysia's unique competitive advantages in developing products for regional and global markets.

The handbook said the MSC's high capacity global telecommunications and logistics infrastructure would be built upon its 2.5-10 gigabit digital optical fibre backbone and the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

The new policies and cyberlaws, meanwhile, would be designed to enable and encourage electronic commerce, facilitate the development of multimedia applications and position Malaysia as the regional leader in intellectual property protection, the handbook said.

Companies wanting to join the MSC can apply to the MDC for "MSC Status" which would entitle them to operate tax-free for up to 10 years or to receive a 100 per cent investment tax allowance and enjoy other incentives and benefits backed by the Malaysian government's Bill of Guarantees, it said.

Among other things, the Bill of Guarantees commits the government to

companies with MSC Status to provide a world-class physical and information infrastructure, allow unrestricted employment by local and foreign knowledge workers and ensure freedom of ownership by exempting companies from local ownership requirements.

Other commitments are to give the freedom to source capital globally for MSC infrastructure and the right to borrow funds globally, provide competitive financial incentives, become a regional leader in intellectual property protection and cyberlaws, ensure no Internet censorship, provide globally competitive telecommunications tariffs, tender key MSC infrastructure contracts to leading companies willing to use the MSC as their regional hub and to provide a high-powered implementation agency to act as an effective one-stop super shop.

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