

22/04/1997

Over 900 firms apply for MSC special status

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MORE than 900 companies have applied for special status under the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) project, four months after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's US and Japanese road tours to `sell' the MSC idea.

The number is almost double the applications received by the Multimedia Development Corp (MDC) a month ago.

MDC executive chairman Tan Sri Othman Yeop Abdullah said of the 900, 28 companies have shown special commitment to develop their businesses within the corridor.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced last month that 583 companies, including 461 locals, have applied for MSC status.

The special status grants these companies advantages in developing high technology products within the MSC, the 15km by 50km Malaysian test-bed for information technology (IT) and multimedia development.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to embark on another MSC road tour to Europe next month. In January, the Prime Minister toured the US and Japan to promote the corridor. He also chaired the inaugural meeting of the MSC International Advisory Panel.

Othman said to encourage companies to apply for MSC status, the MDC has instituted an automatic acceptance system where only rejected companies are notified within 30 days.

"This put the onus on us to vet the applications as fast as possible," he said during the keynote address at the opening of an ATM (Asynchronous Transfer Mode) workshop in Petaling Jaya.

Othman said Cyberjaya, the planned IT-intensive city located within the MSC, will be officially opened in 1999 as the operations centre for multimedia applications.

He said the IT city would become the centrepiece for multimedia giants in the MSC to operate and locate their regional headquarters.

Cyberjaya will contain various facilities, including the seven pillar MSC applications of electronic government, smart schools, multimedia university, research and development, telemedicine as well as borderless marketing.

ATM is the platform that integrates various broadband communications with existing protocols and will form the backbone of the MSC.

Othman said before 1999, corporations that qualify and are interested to move to Cyberjaya will be given MSC status that would enable them to operate temporarily outside the city but still receive MSC incentives.

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