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States urged to go ahead if IT applications can be implemented

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STATE governments can implement their own multimedia flagship applications even before the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) is proven to be successful but they must ensure these applications are complementary in nature.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it would be counter-productive if the applications can only be used in one state and not linked up with other applications, especially with the MSC.

"If the states think that their IT applications can be implemented, then go ahead. But other applications such as the implementation of smartcard technology (at state level) will have to wait. Smartcard technology needs a lot of investment and also some standardisation.

"It is better to wait for a standard format before the states starts its implementation," he said at a nationwide video-conferencing session involving 28 link-up stations in every state, including the Pas-led Kelantan, yesterday.

Dr Mahathir was asked by Ahmad Ikram Abdullah of the Terengganu State Secretary office on whether state governments, which already outlined their own multimedia applications, need to wait to implement the flagships until the MSC is proven successful.

In his reply, the Prime Minister said: "It depends ... some need to wait but some can go ahead. For example, the provision of kiosk under the electronic government flagship can be implemented as there are pressures from the public sector ... this is too important for us to wait."

Dr Mahathir said State governments and the private sector can also develop "cybercities" but it will not be given the same privilege as "Cyber Jaya", the cyber city located within the MSC's 15km by 50km area.

"We can develop cyber cities approved by the State Government or developed by the private sector but the facilities specifically given for projects for the MSC, including incentives such as flexibility to employment of foreign knowledge workers, are restricted within the corridor," he added.

Nevertheless, he said if the Government approved the development of cyber cities outside the MSC, foreign multimedia companies may not come in to invest in the corridor but look at other locations which may be cheaper for them to invest.

"However, we can coordinate other towns, which are dubbed as a cyber city with the MSC. The outsiders can still communicate and obtain information with the MSC but the incentives will be restricted to those operating within the corridor," he added.

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