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Gates-Club

"MALAYSIAN BILL GATES" IN THE MAKING

KUALA LUMPUR, March 18 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Young Programmers Club (MyPC) which seeks to create more "Malaysian Bill Gates" was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Bill Gates at the Prime Minister's Department, here, today.

Gates, the Microsoft chairman and CEO, who is here on a one-day visit, had earlier briefed Dr Mahathir on the concept of the Malaysian Electronic Government system which is being formulated by Microsoft to be used at the new federal administration centre in Putrajaya.

MyPC is an initiative by Microsoft (M) Sdn Bhd, New Straits Times Sdn Bhd and Brave and Bold Sdn Bhd, an IT company with Multimedia Super Corridor-status.

Speaking at a news conference later, NST group editor Datuk Abdul Kadir Jasin said that under the MyPC programme, each member would be assigned to a qualified mentor who would give them "special assignments" based on their intellectual, analytical and programming skills.

"They will be provided with computer peripherals by Microsoft to enable them to produce their own software. The idea is to encourage them to come out with various programmes like educational and entertainment programmes... to become future software programmers," he said.

He said that although MyPC had the capability to take in 1,000 children at any one time, only a selective number would initially be enrolled due to financial constraints.

Kadir said Tan Sri Rashid Hussain of Rashid Hussain Bank had agreed to donate RM50,000 to start the activities of the club in which software, training resources and collateral, among other things, would come from Microsoft.

Bold and Brave CEO Derrik Khoo, who was also present at the news conference, said Microsoft had pledged to invest RM1 million in software and manpower over the next three years to support the activities of the club which is the first to be set up in this country.

He said membership of the club was open to children between the ages of 12 and 15.

No fees would be imposed as each child under the programme would be fully sponsored.

"If a particular child has the programming ability, money will not be a problem for him or her as we will seek financial assistance for them," he said.

He said activities of the programme would largely be conducted over the Internet while group meetings would be held at selected venues in the country. -- BERNAMA

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