

Kedah finalises details on e-textbook

joint venture

STAR 22 AUG 2001
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THE Kedah government is finalising details for a joint-venture project with two private sector companies to produce electronic textbooks or e-books.

Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain said the site for the factory, the first of its kind in the country, and expected to cost about **RM100mil**, had yet to be identified but early plans indicate that it might be located at the **Kulim Hi-Tech Park** or **Bukit Kayu Hitam**.

"This will be a joint-venture project between the state government, which will hold 35% equity, and two private companies holding 40% and 25% respectively.

"We are in the process of finalising details," he told reporters after the opening of the MSC Nationwide Conference 2001 at the **Kulim Hi-Tech Park** yesterday.

Syed Razak said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had given the green light for the factory and the Education Ministry had allocated **RM10mil** to 50 schools in Kedah, Selangor and Pahang to implement the use of e-books.

He said the state had identified five schools to participate in the pilot project and had even trained teachers to handle the e-books.

The selected schools include SM Agama Yan (in Yan), SM Merbok (Merbok), SM Kubang **Rotan** (Kuala Kedah), **SMK** Pulau Nyior (Jitra) and SM **Alor Jangus** (Alor Star).

The e-book, a diary-sized electronic tool, incorporates textbooks, reference materials, exercise and supplementary books into a portal.

The touch colour-screen gadget is portable and easy to use and also comes with a calculator and dictionary.

Syed Razak said the e-books were currently imported from Britain and priced at **RM3,500** each but were expected to cost between **RM800** and **RM1,500** with local production.