

23 APR 2001

Mahathir-8MP (ICT)

ICT INFRASTRUCTURE TO BE UPGRADED TO ESTABLISH M'SIA AS ICT HUB

KUALA LUMPUR, April 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure will be upgraded through several initiatives so as to establish Malaysia as a global ICT and multimedia hub.

He said the initiatives include increasing the capacity of the transmission backbone up 10 gigabits per second and introducing the Network Management System for better service availability.

In tabling the Eighth Malaysia Plan (8MP) at the Dewan Rakyat here, Dr Mahathir said the ICT infrastructure would also be extended to the rural areas to reduce the digital divide.

Among the programmes to be implemented are Infodesa and Internet Desa, which will offer awareness and training courses.

He said that the government would continue to facilitate the introduction of new and innovative services in the communications and multimedia industry.

In addition, he said, performance standards and broad guidelines would be set to protect and promote consumer interests.

Dr Mahathir said the first wave Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) flagship applications would be rolled out in the 8MP after ascertaining their effectiveness.

The smart school concept will be expanded to over 8,000 schools while telehealth will be implemented at various health centres and rural clinics.

He said for the future agenda, the second wave flagship applications would focus on attracting leading edge technology developers and promoting transfer of technology as well as research and development (R&D) activities.

The prime minister also emphasised the need for Malaysians to further strengthen competitiveness and efficiency through technology, skills and innovation in order to build a resilient nation.

He said within a context of a knowledge-based economy, a strategic thrust during the 8MP period would be to accelerate the development of Malaysia's capacity and capability in science and technology, knowledge and skills, promoting innovation and intensifying market-oriented R&D.

Recognising the growing importance of biotechnology as one of the key technologies for the 21st century, he said, efforts would be taken to build up the nation's capability and capacity to harness the use of this technology.

Dr Mahathir said that would entail the formulation of a National Biotechnology Policy to provide a comprehensive and coordinated approach for the development of biotechnology.

In addition, he said, the government would consider the setting up of a Bio-Valley.

-- BERNAMA

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