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Poor demand hampering production of smart cards

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Only about 800,000 Government multi-purpose cards, integrating the identity card, passport and driving licence, have been issued so far since its introduction in April.

"We are capable of producing more of such cards, but the demand is just not there. How can we produce a card if there are no applications for it?" GMPC Corporation Sdn Bhd chairman Datuk Mohamed Jaffar Mohd Ali said.

The smart card, which was recently awarded the World Quality Commitment International Star Award (Gold Category) by the Business Initiative Directions committee based in Spain, is said to be the first of its kind in the world.

The credit-card sized card is installed with an intelligent circuit chip that contains a microprocessor chip to store or process information.

At present, the card could hold personal information normally obtained from the IC, passport and driving licence, but will soon be able to hold health records of the card owner.

"We also have plans to expand the usage of the card to include e-commerce, electronic cash and other multimedia super corridor (MSC) flagship application services," said Mohamed Jaffar, adding that they are also considering using the card as a toll, Touch N Go and LRT charge card.

GMPC is one of the exhibitors at the MSC-Multimedia Asia 2001 exhibition and conference to be held from Sept 6 to 8 at the Putra World Trade Centre.

"We basically want the public to be aware of the existence of the smart card, come forward and apply for it to replace their existing IC and driving licence cards," Mohamed Jaffar said.

He added that visitors to the expo can make an application for the smart card at the GMPC booth and collect their cards within two weeks at the National Registration offices in the Klang Valley.

"All they need to do is to bring their old cards and passport to our counters at the expo. We even have a mini studio for them to take their pictures," Mohamed Jaffar said, adding that applicants can also learn more about the card by watching the video that will be played on the plasma screen.

The new smart card bearing just the IC will cost RM10, whereas RM20 will be charged if the driving licence is also included.

"The smart card has also some security features in it, such as using thumb prints and holograms to prevent forgery. This card is really a prime example of the Government and private sector's success in working together," he said.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is also expected to visit the booth during the expo.

For more information on the exhibitors or the expo can contact Protemp Exhibitions at 03-77272828 or 03-77272566 (fax).

The New Straits Times is the official newspaper for the event.

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