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IAP moves to bridge digital divide

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CYBERJAYA, Thurs. - Members and representatives of the Multimedia Super Corridor International Advisory Panel today discussed measures to narrow the digital gap, especially the role of information technology companies in supporting the emerging economies.

Fourteen panel members and 12 representatives were present at the 6th meeting of the panel, chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The who's who in the IT fraternity will also deliberate on five other topics at the three-day meet - post dot com entrepreneurship; open source system; information security homeland, cyber security and cyber crime; information superiority and combating harmful Internet content.

IAP is a group of leading chief executives and international experts who provide advice and direction to the Government in shaping the MSC.

The MSC project was initiated by Dr Mahathir as part of Malaysia's long-term planning vision to become a fully-developed nation and knowledge-rich society by 2020.

Members and representatives will have a one-on-one meeting with the Prime Minister at Cyberview Lodge tomorrow and on Saturday.

They will also attend the launching of the MSC Flagship Centre and Centre for Health Innovation and Medical Enterprises by Dr Mahathir in Cyberjaya tomorrow.

Among the other programmes to be held in conjunction with the meeting are the MSC Expo at the Mines and the Asia Pacific ICT Awards 2002 Night.

The IAP members present were Acer Group chairman and chief executive Datuk Dr Stan Stih, Cutler & Company managing director Dr Terry Cutler, Silicon Graphics Inc chairman and chief executive Bob Bishop, Stanford University Professor William F. Miller, Cyber Century Forum senior adviser Ambassador Diana Lady Dougan and Sienna Ventures senior partner Dr Gilbert Amelio.

The others were Infosys Technologies Limited board chairman and chief mentor N.R. Narayana Murthy, Heritage Foundation president Dr Edwin J. Feulner, Madge Networks Ltd chairman and president Robert Madge, NEC Corporation chairman emeritus Datuk Dr Tadahiro Sekimoto, Sun Microsystems chief researcher and director of science office Dr John Gage, Ericsson Group executive vice-president Ragnar Back, Siemens vice-president Anton Hendrick Schaaf and Oracle Corporation executive vice-president Derek Williams.

Back, Schaaf and Williams, formerly representatives, are now members of the panel.

Meanwhile, when met during a break, Dougan said the panel delved, among others, on what had been done regarding the panel's recommendations last year.

"We also discussed the misconception of digital divide where so much focus is given on the rich and developed countries against poor and developing nations."

However, Dougan admitted a lot of disparities in the digital gap still existed.

Dougan added that this was not only among countries in the world but also within sectors, urban and rural areas and age, among others.