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R&D focus of MSC's second phase

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Research and development (R&D) will be the focus of the Multimedia Super Corridor's second phase to be launched next month.

For this the private sector must spearhead the role of R&D in information and communication technology (ICT), said Science, Technology and Innovations Minister Datuk Dr Jamaludin Jarjis.

"Research has to be done based on market demand. R&D shouldn't begin from the lab, but instead begin from the market. Private companies have to see the demand of the domestic and international market."

He added that the private sector should seek out areas and focus on products and not duplicate areas that were already being undertaken by others.

"Local companies must find their own niche and not touch on what the big boys are already doing," he said after touring the Multimedia Development Corporation in Cyberjaya.

Jamaludin urged ICT companies to work closely with agencies such as Mimos Bhd, Sirim Bhd and Technology Park Malaysia (TPM) as these bodies have done research that could be translated into products.

"R&D is always a risky investment for private companies but TPM, Sirim and Mimos have done research on potential products.

"We have asked these agencies to set up their own production arms to produce and sell their research findings. However the private sector is in the best position to commercialise the research findings".

This would be one of the strategies for MSC's second phase, from 2004-2010, to be launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Stressing that the MSC remained an important part of the agenda of the newly-elected government, Jamaluddin said: "We plan to take the MSC a step further and this would require new strategies. The PM is very much interested in taking the ICT agenda forward".

Jamaludin said that MSC had attracted investments of US\$4 billion (RM15.2 billion) creating over 22,000 jobs in the last seven years.

"We are very pleased with the developments and achievement of the MSC so far. It augurs well with what former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had started and what the present government wants."

On R&D done by universities, Jamaludin said the universities must not repeat or duplicate the work done by industries.

The government, he said, would want every ringgit spent on R&D to be put to good use instead of having overlapping research by various industries and universities.