

Pekan is Malaysia's first 'digital district'
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The government aims to achieve 50 percent broadband penetration in the country by year end, said Prime Minister Najib Razak.

He said the government now was implementing various strategies to increase broadband and ICT services in efforts to instill an ICT culture and narrow the digital gap among Malaysians.

"We are on track to achieve the 50 percent target by the end of 2010 and we will monitor the progress through the Information Communication and Culture Ministry, Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) and the Economic Council," he told reporters after launching 'Digital Pekan 1Malaysia' in Pekan, Pahang, today.

Also present were Pahang Menteri Besar Adnan Yaakob and Information Communication and Culture Minister Dr Rais Yatim.

The launching of 'Digital Pekan 1Malaysia' is an initiative by MCMC to consolidate ICT and broadband projects under a digital strategy.

Earlier, when speaking at the function, Najib said the launching of 'Digital Pekan 1Malaysia' was an indication of the government's commitment to take the digital path as it was the best way to create a quality of life that was much better for the people and provide a brighter future for succeeding generations.

"I express my deepest thanks for choosing Pekan to be the first 'digital district' in the country, and in doing so giving this town the title of 'Digital Pekan'," said Najib, who is also the member of parliament for Pekan.

Najib said among the core activities that would be undertaken under the 'Pekan Digital' initiative were providing a better ICT environment with the setting up of one-stop ICT/Broadband centres called ICT Broadband Experience centres, provision of laptop computers that have high-speed broadband features to selected people and introducing 'wireless Pekan' whereby residents would be allowed to access the Internet for free for a short duration so that they could familiarise themselves with ICT, all of which would be supervised by the MCMC.

He said the government and private sector had come up with RM11.3 billion for ICT development, particularly provision of High Speed Broad Band services.

"A total of RM11.3 billion will be spent for the national HSBB project through a public-private sector collaboration between the government and Telekom Malaysia (TM). It involves an investment of RM2.4 billion from the government with the rest coming from TM," said Najib.

Don't break the law, bloggers warned

He said the government had also provided additional incentives in the 2010 Budget to expedite broadband development in the country.

"In line with efforts to further improve the education system, Budget 2010 provided for PC

Netbook packages with broadband capability to ensure easy accessibility to such tools for students in higher learning institutions.

"Some 100,000 students will benefit from this initiative. More than that, tax exemption of RM500 is also provided in Budget 2010 for the purchase of such tools, which is an additional motivator," he said.

On a related issue, Najib when asked about misuse of the Internet by bloggers and others who resorted to posting seditious materials, said: "We have laws that cover the media and cyberspace which come under the purview of the MCMC, but where the Internet is concerned we do not exercise very rigid controls.

"We have to accept that differences of opinions is something very normal, but they (Internet users) should not reach a point where the country's laws are broken."

- *Bernama*

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