

PM: Carve your own niche IT expertise

KULIM: Cybercities and cyber centres in the country should be carving out their own niches rather than competing among themselves, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said yesterday.

The Prime Minister said although the Government wanted the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) Malaysia to be extended to more areas and set up integrated economic growth corridors, the information and communication technology industry in these growth areas should complement each other.

"Focus should be given to tapping into new growth areas and carving out their own fields of expertise," he said.

"The Johor Cyberport, for example, specialises in outsourcing activities, logistics and content development, while the Malacca International Trade Centre which has been accorded cyber-centre status is becoming known for its e-commerce and bio-informatics abilities."

Abdullah said this when he launched the country's third cybercity—MSC Malaysia Cybercity @ Kulim Hi-Tech Park — in Kedah.

The cybercity on 1,612 hectares is home to six MSC-status companies.

Abdullah said given its strategic location in the northern region, the cybercity in Kulim could develop its own niche in high-technology and agro-based manufacturing.



Qistina Mohd Shahril surfing the Internet with her mother Mohalina Wan Muhammad at the Kulim Hi-Tech Park yesterday. — NST picture by Rosli Ahmad

"In further developing the ICT industry in the northern States, we must be mindful that it is not only the big Companies which must benefit, but even cottage industries, along with small- and medium-sized businesses and individuals," said Abdullah.

In acknowledging the efforts of several local entrepreneurs who had succeeded in developing ICT-based products and services, Abdullah announced that financial assistance would be given to these businesses to help them

move up the value-chain.

The assistance would be in the form of grants which they could use to eventually globalise their operations.

Present at yesterday's launch were Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid, Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Jamaludin Jarjis, Multimedia Development Corporation Sdn Bhd chairman Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali and Kulim Technology Park Cor-

poration Bhd group chief executive officer Datuk Ahmad Shukri Tajuddin.

Since 1996, the Kulim Hi-Tech Park, has been home to 36 companies with investments totalling RM21 billion.

Among the firms which are engaged mostly in hardware manufacturing-related products and information and communications technology products are Intel, Celestica, Infineon Technologies, Silterra Malaysia, Fuji Electric Malaysia, Toyo and Showa.