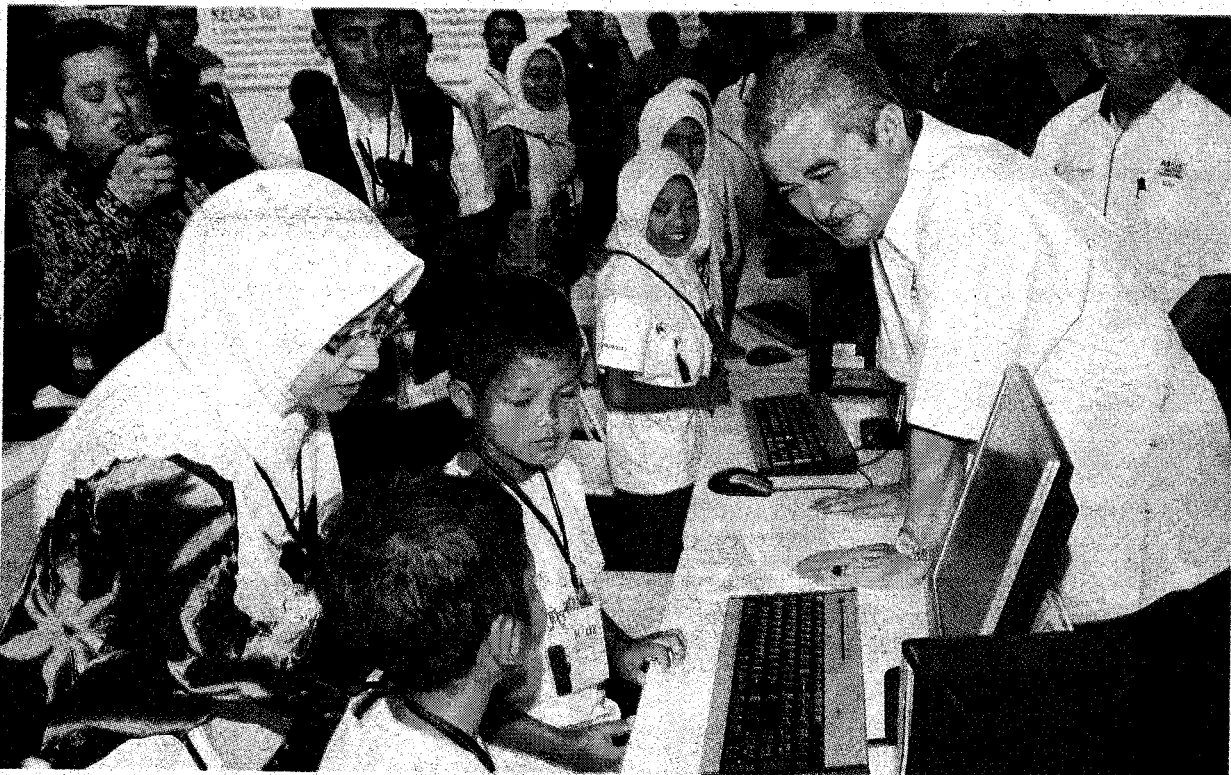


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# Multimedia initiative to be extended nationwide

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Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi speaking to participants of the KPerak Kidz, programme during a visit to an expo in conjunction with the launch of MSC Malaysia Cybercentre@Meru Raya in Ipoh yesterday.

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**IPOH:** The Multimedia Super Corridor Malaysia initiative, a forerunner in the country's progress towards developed status, would be extended nationwide.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said this would be done in stages, with more areas to be accorded MSC cybercity and cybercentre status upon meeting the necessary conditions.

This had been decided, Abdullah said, on the basis of the success of the MSC programme, now into its 11th year of rapid progress in achieving its targets.

Under the MSC Malaysia initiative, there are now five cybercities and cybercentres: Cyberjaya, KL Sentral, Port of Tanjung Pelepas in

Johor, and the cities of Penang and Malacca.

"It is evident that MSC Malaysia has changed the country's economic landscape," Abdullah said.

"The number of companies with MSC status have multiplied. We have some 1,900 companies while the export value of products and services related to ICT have risen to some RM2.7 billion.

"MSC Malaysia has also created some 50,000 job opportunities in the ICT field, where almost 90 per cent of the jobs are in the high-end market."

Speaking at the launch of MSC Malaysia Cybercentre@Meru Raya here yesterday, Abdullah noted that within a short period the MSC had started a wave of ICT-related programmes such as e-services, e-Learning and e-health.

"These are all the benefits MSC

has brought to the country, which we are proud of. But in order for MSC Malaysia to be more successful, it must involve the whole country, with all Malaysians able to benefit from it," he said.

Abdullah said the launch of MSC Meru Raya as the next MSC cybercentre had established Perak as part of Malaysia's MSC fraternity.

He said the K-Perak 2010 Strategic Blueprint had proven a success, with the implementation of numerous programmes in the past two years.

He also pledged the government's support in promoting the Meru Raya cybercentre internationally.

Among those present at the launch were Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali, Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Aziz Shamsuddin and Deputy Science, Technology and

Innovation Minister Datuk Kong Cho Ha.

At a press conference later, Abdullah said the government would consider the offer from the Russian Space Agency Roskosmos for a second Malaysian angkasawan to be sent to space.

"We have to consider carefully before we make a final decision," Abdullah said.

"It is important that we study the offer and understand the conditions, including the cost."

It was reported that Roskosmos had offered a place for another Malaysian angkasawan to be sent to the International Space Station in late 2010 or early 2011.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had said the government had until the end of 2009 to accept the offer, and that this time it would not be an offset arrangement but directly financed.