

# 'PEDI to bridge urban-rural divide, trigger digital innovation'

**BERA:** The Keluarga Malaysia Digital Economy Centres (PEDI), rebranded from the existing community Internet centres, will play a prominent role in empowering digital commerce activities, especially in rural areas.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said the move will not only help bridge the digital gap between urban and rural areas, but will also trigger digital innovations which can steer Malaysia's digital economy agenda.

"The digital transformation plays a vital role in enhancing competitiveness, accelerating economic growth and ensuring that the country's prosperity can be widely distributed.

"Since the use of the Internet will be able to create economic opportunities and improve living standards, PEDI will be introduced nationwide to provide facilities to 15.4 million people, especially the B40 and rural communities.

"The government will focus on efforts to build the country's digital economic infrastructure through various initiatives such as PEDI to drive the national

agenda."

He said this in his speech at the launch of the Keluarga Malaysia PEDI centre at the Kampung Durian Tawar public hall here yesterday.

Meanwhile, Ismail Sabri, who is Bera member of parliament, said PEDI aimed to improve the socio-economic status of small entrepreneurs by providing exposure to digital skills to ensure everyone, regardless of their geographical location, could be involved in the digital economy.

"A total of 873 existing PEDI will be upgraded and utilised as one-stop centres for rural digital economic activities.

"Each PEDI will be equipped with broadband access and digital infrastructure facilities, as well as trained staff to provide support. Thirty-seven new PEDI will be opened in the first quarter of next year, and another 173 centres will be operational by the end of next year bringing the (total) number of PEDI to 1,083 nationwide."

He said the micro, small, and medium enterprise sector had been the pillar of the economy,



*Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob visiting an exhibition stall at the launch of the Keluarga Malaysia PEDI centre at the Kampung Durian Tawar public hall in Bera, Pahang, yesterday. With him are Communications and Multimedia Minister Tan Sri Annuar Musa (left) and Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail. PIC BY FARIZUL HAFIZ AWANG*

making up almost 1.2 million or 97.2 per cent of the total businesses at the end of last year.

"However, the Covid-19 pandemic last year caused most of them to become less competitive. The focus of PEDI is to deliver and empower small entrepreneurs towards innovative and competitive digitisation.

"PEDI will comprise various programmes to help small entrepreneurs start businesses or

increase demand for their existing products.

"The government will provide incentives for entrepreneurs to modernise their businesses by utilising advanced technology and digitisation that will create opportunities for them to explore the global market."

He said apart from providing infrastructure facilities, the government had also established a PEDI advisory panel, PEDI's Dig-

ital Partner and Entrepreneur Icon at each PEDI, which will encourage the community to be actively involved in the activities, as well as utilise the services offered by PEDI.

"In ensuring, no one is left behind in the digitisation wave, the government together with the industry players has provided infrastructure, encouraging innovation and creating a complete ecosystem for everyone."