

Cabinet nod for cybersecurity law

PM: Govt aiming to table Bill in Dewan Rakyat before end of the year

By ARFA YUNUS
arfayunus@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: A Cybersecurity Bill aimed at granting regulatory powers and enforcing laws related to the field is being drafted, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said the government planned on tabling the Bill in the Dewan Rakyat before the end of the year.

"The Cabinet agreed in principle to the drafting of the Cybersecurity Bill," he said in a speech at the launch of the Capacity Development Programme and Public Dialogue Session on the Cyber Security Bill 2023 here yesterday.

His speech was read by Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan, who later said the Bill would be tabled during the current Parliament session if there is time.

"We still have about 10 (other) Bills to pass and only a few days left (before this year's Dewan Rakyat session ends).

"Nov 27 is the last day we have to pass Budget 2024 and hopefully we can push this (cybersecurity) Bill in this session," he said.

Meanwhile, Anwar said that as of October, 2,674 cyber-related incidents had been reported to the National Cyber Coordination and Command Centre (NC4).

These include ransomware and advanced persistent threat (APT) attacks, which he said are serious threats, especially by those who may have a geopolitical agenda.

Ransomware is an attack in which a hacker locks the victim's personal data, releasing it only if said victim pays a ransom, usually through cryptocurrency exchange. APTs are sustained long-term attacks on a network that remain undetected for some time.



Tackling cyberthreats: Mohamad (centre) arriving at the public dialogue in Kuala Lumpur. - Bernama

Anwar said the widespread use of digital devices and technology had increased the risk of increasingly dynamic and complex cyberattacks, such as phishing and distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks, where the victim's computing resources were over-

whelmed by a flood of data or requests.

He said Malaysia needed at least 25,000 workers in the cybersecurity field by 2025.

"However, at this point, it is estimated that there are only 13,000 workers in the market.

"Therefore, in order to deal with the shortage, collaboration between the government, educational institutions and industry players is critical."

The lack of skilled cybersecurity workers showed that the initiatives taken by the government would not be able to fully address the issue of cyberthreats effectively, if there was no ability, awareness, discipline and cooperation from all parties, said Anwar.

"Therefore, I welcome the initiative launched today, through a strategic collaboration between the National Cyber Security Agency (Nacsa), higher education institutions, and industry players, in an effort to improve and accelerate cybersecurity readiness, capability and efficiency in Malaysia," he said.

This initiative is supported through a scholarship fund worth RM5mil that would benefit some 2,000 Malaysians, he added.