

IT Bill will lead to brain drain, says DAP
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By Shannon Teoh

PUTRAJAYA, Dec 13 — The DAP said today the proposed law to regulate the computing industry will penalise local IT professionals, leading to an exodus of talent to more conducive markets.

The Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry (MOSTI) has said that certification as computing professionals under a board proposed under the Computing Professionals Bill would only be required for Critical National Information Infrastructure (CNII) projects.

At the ministry's open day here, DAP publicity chief Tony Pua (picture) raised the question of whether foreign companies such as software giant Microsoft needed to be registered.

The panel of experts, who drafted the Bill over the past two years, replied that programmers from such companies would likely gain immediate certification.

"If Microsoft or Hewlett Packard from overseas could be exempted from being registered, why should Malaysians be penalised for being unregistered?" the Petaling Jaya Utara MP told reporters later.

Pua said such a move would only cause local talent to flee as "they will find the environment more conducive in other countries to pursue their computing dreams."

"This is the best example of an impossible attempt to regulate the impossible," he added.

He also said the likes of Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg, founders of Microsoft and social media giant Facebook respectively, "did not succeed because they registered with a Board of Computing Professionals."

"Their success is based precisely on an environment which encouraged unrestrained creativity, breeding innovation without the leash," he said.

IT professionals had raised concerns over the Bill when a draft surfaced online last week, saying registration under the Board of Computing Professionals will hurt the billion-ringgit industry by shrinking the pool of eligible professionals.

Pua also criticised the ministry today for being unable to define what falls under CNII despite drafting the proposed law for 2½ years.

"CNII will be impossible to define as it would and could encompass any industry from the government sector, financial services, telecommunications or even transportation as a failure in any of these would have a 'devastating impact on national economic strength.'

The panel of MOSTI advisers had said today they were still working on a clear definition of the CNII with the definition used by the government's cyber security agency being one of the templates.

Cyber Security Malaysia defines CNII as systems and functions that are vital to the nation that their incapacity or destruction would have a devastating impact on national economic strength, image, defence, public health and safety and the government's ability to function.

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