

**1 Malaysia email begins beta testing**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 22 — The 1 Malaysia email service has begun beta testing four months after the controversial RM50 million project was first announced by the prime minister as a form of secure correspondence between Malaysians and the government.

But contrary to earlier reports, those signing up for myemail Beta do not have to verify their fingerprints at the National Registration Department (NRD) or via a USB biometric device and need only key in their full name, IC number and current email address.

Upon signing up, users will receive an email that reads: "Thank you for registering for a myemail account. Your registration needs to be verified by JPN. We will get back at you in 24 hours."

The terms and conditions further state: "For authentication purposes you agree to be authenticated using biometrics specifically your fingerprints at one of our authentication channels. Tricubes may use your full name and IC number, upon your consent, to verify your credentials with our authentication partners, who may hold the same information, and has already authenticated you."

However, it is not clear if this lack of biometric verification only applies to beta sign-ups or will be extended to the service proper.

Tricubes chief executive Khairun Mokhtar had earlier told reporters that Malaysians who wish to sign up for the service will have to buy a USB biometric device sold by his company or go to any NRD office to get their account activated in person.

He also admitted at the media briefing that the project was a financial lifeline for Tricubes, which is at risk from being delisted from Bursa Malaysia after being flagged in October last year by auditors concerned about its weak financial standing.

Tricubes, which describes itself as "the market leader in Malaysia in identity verification", made a net loss of RM481,502 for the quarter ended March 31, compared with the RM72,083 net loss it posted in the same period last year.

The 1 Malaysia email project is expected to save the federal government RM200 million over 10 years by halving the cost of sending official correspondence to 50 sen from RM1.

While basic email is free, users will have to pay for premium services such as end-to-end encryption, which Khairun has said will be provided as "a fraction of the cost".

Tricubes aims to sign up 5.4 million users by year-end but critics have questioned the need for the service, pointing out that companies such as Google, Microsoft and Yahoo! already provide free and secure web-based email accounts.

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