

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY YAB PRIME MINISTER: SMART CITY EXPO KUALA LUMPUR (SCEKL 2025)

By : DATO' SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM

Venue : KUALA LUMPUR CONVENTION CENTER

Date : 18/09/2025

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YAB DATO' SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM

PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA

AT THE

SMART CITY EXPO KUALA LUMPUR

SCEKL 2025

18th SEPTEMBER 2025 (THURSDAY) | 9:30AM

KUALA LUMPUR CONVENTION CENTER

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh dan salam Sejahtera.

Yang Berhormat Tuan Gobind Singh Deo,

Minister of Digital;

Yang Berhormat Datuk Seri Dr. Zaliha binti Mustafa,

Minister of Prime Minister Department (Federal Territories);

Yang Berhormat Datuk Wilson Ugak AnakKumbong,

Deputy Minister of Digital;

KSU dan rakan-rakan yang saya muliakan dan juga terutama duta-duta.

1. Kita pada hari ini menyaksikan satu kemaraan dalam usaha kita menjadikan transformasi digital dan negara AI satu kenyataan. Dan saya ingin juga mengambil kesempatan ingin mengucapkan terima

kasih kepada rakan-rakan ASEAN dan di antara tonggak utama ASEAN tahun ini adalah juga apa yang dikatakan connectivity, dan perhubungan ini merentas hubungan yang konvensional tapi termasuk hubungan digital dan saya percaya dalam kerangka pembinaan kota pintar, atau 'Smart City' itu menjadi permulaan yang penting.

2. Dalam sejarah manusia zaman berzaman, permulaannya harus di kota, Athens, Rome malah dalam sejarah Islam sendiri dianggap kota Madinah, pusat perkembangan tamadun. Dalam teori Ibnu Khaldun, mukaddimah dalam Abd al-Rahman ibn Khaldun dalam mukaddimah itu dijelaskan tentang kota sebagai pusat permulaan suatu budaya, teknologi dan pembinaan tamadun. Beliau mengungkapkan teori Umran Hadari berbeza dengan Umran Badawi, berbeza dengan nomadic culture kepada city-based civilization, Umran Badawi.
3. Jadi idea yang dilontarkan oleh saudara Gobind Singh Deo tadi sebenarnya sesuai dengan tuntutan masa kita telah menggagaskan dalam negara kita apa yang kita sebut sebagai transformasi digital dan ia memerlukan keseluruhan jabatan, tenaga, kerajaan dan swasta dan akademia tentunya dan sekarang dengan Kementerian Digital yang menjadi tonggak dan penyelaras utama dalam usaha kita membawa perubahan ini ditetapkan di antara keutamaannya ialah kota pintar. Benar di bandaraya dan Putrajaya kita mulakan dengan Kota MADANI, yang sebenarnya mahu memenuhi, sebab itu saya telah minta saudara Gobind Singh Deo dan KSU dan Kementerian memastikan penyelarasan yang lebih teliti dalam usaha menjayakan

Kota MADANI dan apa yang disebut, kota pintar Smart City Kuala Lumpur sebagai mercu tanda permulaan.

.Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

4. The region is rapidly urbanizing and it is expected that more than half of ASEAN's population will reside in cities by 2030. I alluded to earlier about the cities centre not to suggest that rural and rural heartlands not important but all civilizations begin with city of city state and that's precisely why this has become very patently critical because transforming cities is ASEAN's constant effort to address poverty and elevate lives.
5. Now, it is our firm commitment to the ideals of people centered and people first, and what has been explained. I mean clearly this council of mine, Gobind has been my counsel for decades now has grasped the issue of digital that he has forgotten law I think now (joking), but I think this is a welcome sign. Now no one deserves a life fully surrounded by concrete I popularized Mark Twain's observation when he first visited Washington DC, concrete jungle but culturally barren.
6. Now our challenge is of course culturally vibrant and technologically savvy, which means in the AI city is a smart city. The city must be living spaces that uplift living standards of the people. World bank states that cities account for 80% of global GDP and 88% of global private sector job creation.

7. Now, urbanization raises the cost of living already pressured by supply chain disruptions, geopolitical events and energy and raw material costs. The phenomenon of urban poor is a symptom of underlying income inequality. Exacerbated and unchecked urban poverty could setback Malaysia's poverty eradication.
8. Now, how does this relate to the issue of a smart city? It would ultimately be able to reduce cost and engage every single citizen, including the poorest, make it easier, make it cheaper and accessible and that I think precisely the target and aim of a smart city. So, despite the pressures of an ever-changing landscape we must hold steadfast to the ethos of inclusivity and sustainability.
9. We must decisively shape cities around people and address their concerns I think this needs to be stressed because otherwise we are talking just about technology or level of technological sophistication or AI but actually it relates to the common men and women.
10. So, while prosperity is the purpose, innovation must be the cause. Ideas transfer in environments of close proximity, thus the rise of innovation hubs and districts that generates wealth. Yet as innovation in the digital age also comes hand- in-hand with demand for energy, our commitment to sustainable goals and 2030 agenda for sustainable development must be rigorous at the heart of it is the need to build spaces and enhances care and compassion while embedding trust. Now, our cities of the future must be constructed with the MADANI principles that envisions a future with sustainable communities, equal opportunity and the compassion.

11. In an increasingly complex world, our cities face challenges arising from rapid population growth, diverse demographics, environmental issues and increasingly sophisticated infrastructure needs. This is where digital technologies such as AI offers us the tools to respond to these proactively.
12. From leveraging AI capabilities in energy, water, waste management to strengthening our national resilience with technology empowered disaster response, the Smart City bolsters cost efficiencies, decreases our environmental footprint and fortifies our cities to be better prepared for future perils.
13. It is with these synergies that we could collectively enhance the citizen experience. AI empowered government services could increase accessibility, ensure consistency in responses, thus strengthening our commitment ultimately to justice, stability and safety.
14. While the envisioned Smart City can be a utopia of solutions, it presents challenges to cybersecurity, data management and privacy.
15. Developing this vision could pit the “green corridors” for ambulance and emergency services against potential critical infrastructure attacks, hyper-surveillance, extremely customized services and the vulnerabilities from interconnected systems. It may also mean physically transforming existing cities.

16. That's why I mentioned to Gobind that possibly the first place, other than dealing with more established cities is to attempt to embark on a smaller scale of sub cities. New sub cities like Kota MADANI in Putrajaya or probably second proposal around Cheras that could be done more effectively because we are not boxed by the old archive infrastructure.
17. Now, despite the chase of fast-paced development, AI Safety, ethics and principles must not be compromised. Development will ring hollow if we lose sight of identity and values. The world would seem foreign if we awaken to a city that does not reflect our cultures.
18. Again, to remind us what Mark Twain said, it should not be culturally barren and of course technologically backward. Thus, AI must be deployed with society in mind. In order to keep pace, urban governance must be modernised and upheld by regulation and innovative tools.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

19. Malaysia has built the foundation for this vision with world- class digital infrastructure. The nation's 5D coverage have reached 82.4% of populated areas and with the 13th Malaysia Plan committing up to 98% of populated areas. And this is quite a remarkable thing when we talk about Peninsular, Sabah and Sarawak. Very challenging, but congratulate the Ministry and all those who have been buckling on this.

20. Now, beyond high-speed conductivity, we are developing a deep pool of cloud resources via data centers across this country. This would be empowered by affordable compute power for Malaysia.
21. A development center is only as effective as the people who will be agents of change. And this comes with the challenge. So, Digital Nasional Berhad, together with Ericsson are launching a 21st Century Technologies Education Programme that will play a pivotal role in equipping personnel with competencies in AI, data science and digital governance. This initiative is targeted to upskill over 40,000 public sector personnel across levels and municipalities.
22. And this reminds me what I said last month about productivity products because unless you are able to train our personnel, then we'll have this sophisticated expensive equipment but not fully utilized or does not meet commensurate with this huge disbursement of funds.
23. This is massive study, and I must thank the General Chief Secretary taking that up and challenging the public servants to ensure that whatever new facilities we acquire at high expense should be fully utilized and would result in enhanced productivity.
24. So, a city must be built for the people and serve its purpose and championed by our enterprises. AI Cities must be empowered by local expertise, platforms and solutions. We must be proud to have solutions that reflect our unique needs and values. By fostering

innovation and supporting homegrown talent, we can reduce reliance on external technologies and ensure data sovereignty. MDEC is cultivating the marketplace and ecosystem for next-generation technology companies, inclusive of Malaysia Digital incentives and innovation centers that enable companies to develop, test and scale urban frontier technologies.

25. The 13th Malaysia Plan alluded to earlier of course has ambitious goals: to be top 30 in the world for the largest economy; to be ranked top 25 in Human Development index. If the cities are our hubs of productivity, then its efficiency and ability to congregate talent is a mark of its competitiveness. It was a major challenge for us all, government, the experts, professional technologists and academia and the public servants and of course finally the private sector.

26. So, I am of course share the excitement as you heard my Minister of Digital with such passion talking about Smart Cities and his determination to ensure that we succeed. And I thank you for your presence and for your support.

Terima kasih.

Wassalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

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