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'Digital economy must take priority'

Budget 2024 must focus on 5G infrastructure, cyber security, say experts

KUALA LUMPUR: Budget 2024 needs to reflect the country's priorities in driving the digital sector and 5G network technology through accurate investments and smart strategies to overcome issues related to poor coverage, network problems and service charges, says Malaysia Cyber Consumer Association (MCCA) president Siraj Jalil.

He said this was because the digital world is now filled with emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR) and the Internet of Things (IoT), thus enhancing the country's cyber world.

He said 5G-related infrastructure and cyber security must be given priority in Budget 2024 to ensure Malaysia is at the forefront of the digital revolution.

"However, infrastructure alone is not enough. We need to ensure Malaysians are equipped with the



necessary skills to utilise the full potential of these new technologies. This means investing in digital training and education programmes, especially those related to 5G. The involvement of the private sector is the key to accelerating the development of 5G technology.

"Through government-private partnerships, we can combine resources and expertise to ensure Malaysia is at the forefront of the 5G revolution," he told Bernama.

Siraj said focus should also be given to cyber security, as the increase in internet network connectivity also causes security

"We need to ensure M'sians are equipped with the necessary skills to utilise the full potential of these new technologies."

Siraj Jalil

threats that the government needs to take seriously.

"The government needs to invest in cyber security initiatives, accelerate the establishment of the Cyber Security Act, the Cyber Security Commission,

and upgrade the PDRM Multimedia Cyber Crime Unit to the Cyber Crime Department to protect people's data and privacy from cyber criminals," he added.

Yayasan Digital Malaysia chief executive officer Nasru Syazwan Nawai said with the rapid development towards digitisation which saw many sectors and industries moving towards digitalisation, cyber security issues need to be given attention, especially from the legal aspect.

This is to ensure security in the digital world and users are protected from issues such as data leaks, ransomware attacks, cyber espionage attempts, and cyber fraud, he said.

The unity government, through Budget 2023, allocated RM10mil to the National Scam Response Centre (NSRC) to upgrade equipment, start an awareness campaign, and promote

the 997 hotline.

Meanwhile, Prof Datuk Dr Ismail Sualman of the Centre for Communication and Media Studies, College of Computing, Informatics and Media, Universiti Teknologi Mara, said it was important to focus on expediting the 5G network because it could spur the development of the digital economy.

He said this was also important to drive the development of various sectors, including education, entertainment, health and e-commerce.

Though the implementation of 5G presents major challenges, including infrastructure investment and concerns about security and privacy, he said they need to be overcome by developing an appropriate regulatory framework to ensure that the use of 5G successfully drives productivity.

Budget 2024 is expected to be tabled in Parliament on Oct 13.

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