17.5mil 5G users in Malaysia - Gobind

By Bernama - December 3, 2024 @ 6:01pm

Digital Minister Gobind Singh Deo delivering his keynote speech at the Connected Industries Day: Transforming Manufacturing with 5G and Artificial Intelligence (AI) programme today - BERNAMA PIC

JOHOR BARU: : Malaysia has 17.5 million 5G users to date, covering 82 per cent of the populated areas nationwide, says Digital Minister Gobind Singh Deo.

"The ministry, through Digital Nasional Bhd (DNB), has provided and will continue to provide 5G infrastructure.

"The high number of users indicates a strong interest in this technology.

"…we would like to ensure that all infrastructure is secure, particularly in terms of cybersecurity and data usage," he told reporters after officiating the Connected Industries Day: Transforming Manufacturing with 5G and Artificial Intelligence (AI) programme here today.

On data centres, Gobind said the government had not set any limits on data centre construction in the state but would assess the suitability of each investment before proceeding.

"We will carefully review each application because in the future we not only want data centres but also AI-powered data centres. We also need to consider several factors including approvals for land and the required energy and water supply," he said.

On Nov 12, Gobind was reported as saying that by October 2024, 10 data centres had begun operations in Johor, and seven were still in the development process, adding that the state government is studying 36 applications to build the infrastructure.

He also said the planning for areas dedicated to data centres such as the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ), aims to maximise economic spillover by attracting high technology investments and potentially generating high income for the people.

In another development, Gobind said the ministry supports the move by local universities to establish AI faculties as part of the efforts to ensure adequate future supply of human capital in the field.

"...the country will require a large talent pool and a workforce skilled in AI technology. The infrastructure is being built, and the country needs qualified individuals to operate it.

"For this purpose, we must ensure that the talent in Malaysia is developed to the highest level.

"AI faculties must be expanded to universities with the capacity to offer them," he said, adding that currently only Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) offers this study field.

The establishment of UTM's AI Faculty was inspired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim during the tabling of Budget 2024, and the university, in collaboration with the Higher Education Ministry, managed to set up the faculty four months after the tabling.

On Nov 15, UTM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Ahmad Fauzi Ismail said that the faculty had its first intake of 126 full-time students on Sept 29 this year.

– Bernama