

Initiatives to promote use of IT among MSMEs

GEORGE TOWN: The Digital Ministry is formulating various strategic initiatives to drive the use of digital technology among micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), in line with the country's digital transformation plan.

Minister Gobind Singh Deo said that the initiatives were aimed, among other things, at addressing the digital usage gap among small and medium businesses, ensuring their role remained relevant in the technology-driven modern economy.

He said that this was due to the sector's significant role, contributing 97 per cent of the total number of businesses in the country and supporting the growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

"I'm sure that everyone understands the importance of technology and its ability to empower, and strengthen our businesses. The real question is, do we actually use technology? Many people possess knowledge of technology but still fail to apply it.

"This is an aspect that we have to look at. Therefore, the government is exploring initiatives to promote, ensuring that every business considers how to adapt digital technology into their operations," he told reporters after attending the Exclusive Dialogue Session on Digital Adoption for Small and Medium Enterprise in Penang at Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) North Zone Headquarters here, Monday.

MDEC chief executive officer Anuar Fariz Fadzil and Penang Deputy Chief Minister II Jagdeep Singh Deo were also present.

Gobind said the dialogue session, organised in collaboration with MDEC, aimed to identify the main challenges and gather direct feedback from industry players.

He said that, as part of a strategic move, MDEC had opened an office in Penang, which would serve as the main hub to support small and medium businesses, offering specific assistance to those in need of guidance and technical support.

According to him, MDEC also acted as a mediator to resolve issues such as talent shortages and other challenges faced by businesses, while also providing insights into how technology could empower and strengthen their operations.

"I have asked for a report to be submitted in the first quarter of this year so we can bring recommendations to the government on how we can further strengthen the digital transformation, especially for MSMEs.

"But let's see how our process is now that there are new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), Gen AI, and so on. We need to look back at the existing policies to see how we can ensure that the latest policies we implement can also accommodate new technology and how this technology can benefit these traders. That is why we started this dialogue process," he said.

14/1/2025