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Experts urge clear, quick rollout

The Star, Malaysia

Picking up the 5G pace

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Further delays said to have consequences for economy and user confidence

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PETALING JAYA: Experts are calling for a clear digital direction and quick implementation for the rollout of the dual 5G network and the MyDigital ID programme, saying that any delay is unacceptable if Malaysia were to position itself as the choice for leading industries and as Asean chairman.

Malaysia, said Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (Fomca) vice-president Datuk Indrani Thuraisingham, must have the proper infrastructure to support such targets.

"Since we are championing artificial intelligence (AI) development, setting up more data centres and other related fields, it is fair for the relevant authorities as well as stakeholders to prepare the right infrastructure to support these initiatives.

"It is unacceptable to delay it further as it could have an impact on our country's economy," she said in an interview yesterday.

Malaysia has secured billions of ringgit in investment in the past year from global tech firms seeking to build critical infrastructure to cater to growing demand for their cloud and AI services.

The Star also reported that while the number of digital nomads in the country has doubled, internet connectivity remains a major



Building the network:

A file photo of contractors installing a new 5G tower along Jalan Kuchai Lama in Kuala Lumpur. — YAP CHEE HONG/The Star

concern for them.

Other countries such as China, pointed out Indrani, have even achieved a breakthrough in satellite-to-ground laser communications that could pave the way for sixth-generation wireless technology – or 6G – and other applications, including remote sensing with ultra-high resolution and next generation satellite positioning technology.

"They have gone beyond 5G and we need to keep up with them," she said.

On Jan 2, China's Chang Guang Satellite Technology Co, which owns Jilin-1, the world's largest

sub-metre commercial remote sensing satellite constellation, announced that it had achieved a 100 gigabit per second ultra-high-speed image data transmission rate in testing last weekend.

In terms of consumer rights, Indrani said industry players must deliver what they had promised to customers.

"Some of the customers are already paying for 5G connectivity and they need to deliver it.

"In certain places, even in Selangor and Klang Valley, we cannot get proper connectivity, and some still get 4G networks," she said, adding that there are

also complaints of dropped calls.

Malaysia Cyber Consumer Association president Siraj Jalil said any delay in the rollout of a dual 5G network and MyDigital ID programme only reflected the preparedness of the relevant authorities.

"We need to look back at the objectives of the initiative and why it is still delayed," he added.

"Since (MyDigital ID) will be our future digital identity and represents our position in the digital landscape, the government needs to be clear on it, especially to the stakeholders which is the rakyat," he said.

Citing the postponement in the integration of the MyDigital ID with the MyJPJ app, he said such disruptions create a bad perception to the users.

"If we cannot integrate our ID into a multi digital system, like JPJ, it shows that is not being set up properly," he said, adding that this should be fixed.

In October last year, MyDigital ID Sdn Bhd CEO Mohd Mirza Mohd Noor had explained that the integration of MyDigital ID with the MyJPJ app was not cancelled but merely postponed.

The delay, he explained, should be looked at as part of an overall strategy to ensure the success of this feature and to improve the user experience.

Sharing her own personal experience, civil servant Siti Nor Mardiah, 33, said a few months ago, the 5G network completely stopped working on her phone.

"When I called my mobile service provider, they said 5G comes under DNB, and not them. As a solution, they told me to use 4G instead. It has been months and I am still using 4G.

"The same goes for my home Wi-Fi, the 5G doesn't work for some reason (and) 2.4G works better," she said.

"What baffles me is that this is the situation in Kuala Lumpur, now I can't imagine how the network is in rural areas."



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