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Malaysia faces shortage of cybersecurity experts

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is short of experts in the cybersecurity segment to equip the nation with the recommended amount of industry workers of 27,000 by 2025, says Communications and Digital Minister Fahmi Fadzil (*pic*).

He said currently there are only 15,248 workers identified as cybersecurity experts in the country.

ALSO READ: Cybersecurity Bill to be tabled by early next year, says Fahmi

"According to a recent study by the Department of Skills, The Centre for Instructor and Advanced Skill Training (CIAST) and Cybersecurity Malaysia, our country needs 27,000 cybersecurity knowledge workers by the end of 2025.

"Based on the study, we are facing a shortfall of 12,000 cybersecurity workers," he said when launching the Cyber Digital Services, Defence and Security Asia (CyberDSA) 2023 at Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre yesterday.

Also present at the event were Armed Forces chief Jen Tan Sri Affendi Buang, Aerosea Exhibition Sdn Bhd chairman Tan Sri Asmat Kamaludin and Cybersecurity Malaysia board chairman Jen (Rtd) Tan Sri Dr Zulkifeli Mohd Zin.

Fahmi said small-medium enterprises that lack resources and expertise will be vulnerable to cyber criminals.

"Remote and hybrid work arrangements increase the demand for skills, as unmanaged devices can pose major security threats," he said, adding that the government also supports the development of cybersecurity education and capacity building programmes.

Among the programmes are the Global Accreditation Cybersecurity Education Certification Scheme (Global ACE), CyberGuru and Cyber Range Consortium by CyberSecurity Malaysia.

"Global ACE is a holistic framework which recognises and certifies cybersecurity personnel, whereas CyberGuru is a platform offering training programmes across various competencies to foster innovation for robust cybersecurity defences.

"In collaboration with public institutions of higher learning, the Cyber Range Consortium will be established to address the scarcity of skilled talent and the national cybersecurity workforce gap," he said.

He added that the Cybersecurity Bill is expected to be tabled in Parliament by end of this year or maybe earlier. The Bill is currently being drafted by the National Cyber Security Agency (Nacsa) under the National Security Council.

"The process to table the Bill is ongoing. Nacsa is expected to deliver what is drafted. We will bring the draft to the Cabinet before it can made public," he said.

Fahmi said the ministry was also reviewing the need of appointing data protection officers to monitor organisations to protect individuals' data. He said this is among the suggestions to amend the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) 2010.

"There is a need to protect the users' data but they are all subject to the Cabinet and stakeholders' feedback.

"The ministry is actively collaborating with the cybersecurity community to explore quantum-safe cryptographic solutions in strengthening the nation's digital resilience," he said, adding that the amendment of the PDPA 2010 is expected to be tabled this October or March next year.