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NECESSITY

'INTERNET LINK AS VITAL AS WATER, POWER'

Connectivity may become a requirement in residential, office buildings, says minister

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THE Communications and Multimedia Ministry has proposed that Internet connectivity be listed under utilities, similar to water and electricity, as part of efforts to expand broadband penetration nationwide.

Its minister Gobind Singh Deo, who is spearheading the initiative, said Internet connectivity could be considered a daily necessity in an age where it plays a pertinent role in development, specifically the economy.

He said the recent 5G broadband pilot project showcased the significance of data connectivity in everyday use in the fields of agriculture, medicine and transport, among others.

"I will be proposing to the government to tailor a policy in which Internet connectivity will be listed as a utility, which means that it (the service) will be given the same emphasis as water and electricity.

"We need to understand that it is (becoming) as important as daily necessities such as water and electricity. It will become something that we will require daily as the years go by.

"We need to accept the fact that everybody will progress with the help of such connectivity. That is why the government is taking proactive measures to ensure that it will be provided to all Malaysians.

"No matter where (in the country), there needs to be connectivity," Gobind said during a special interview at his office in Angkasapuri yesterday.

Gobind said the success of the proposal could also see, among others, Internet connectivity or facilities become a requirement in physical developments involving residential or office buildings.

"I have already discussed with the housing and local government minister (Zuraida Kamaruddin), during which we proposed the need to ensure all



Communications and Multimedia Minister Gobind Singh Deo speaking at his office in Angkasapuri, Kuala Lumpur, yesterday. PIC BY ZULFADHLI ZULKIFLI

buildings in new development projects, be it residence or office, are equipped with Internet facilities.

"Eventually, we will not be seeing any building without Internet connectivity... (previously people had to) meet contractors to set fibre optic cables, which is costly and time consuming."

On a separate matter, Gobind expressed discontent over an apparent delay by relevant authorities in taking action against cases of alleged offences involving gross insults against race, religion and the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong on social media.

Gobind said the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) had ex-

tended its cooperation to the police which, unfortunately, he claimed, were not seen to expedite such cases.

"We have laws and we need to be ready to implement them. So when a police report has been lodged, we need to take action fast.

"The MCMC can only take action within its jurisdiction. But to make an arrest or charge is beyond my ministry's authority.

"I had a meeting last week (during which) I had requested the police and attorney-general to update me if there are constraints. Tell everyone what is actually taking place. If an offence has been committed, please take action."