Championing
connectivity for all

As Malaysia commemorates the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day, it has much to celebrate when it comes to driving digital transformation and narrowing the digital gap for the rakyat in the challenging year that was - and what's to come for a digital Malaysia.

Bridging the digital divide for the nation's future

Jendela, which will ensure that Malaysia is well-prepared to embrace 5G in the near future, is aimed at strengthening the country's existing connectivity.
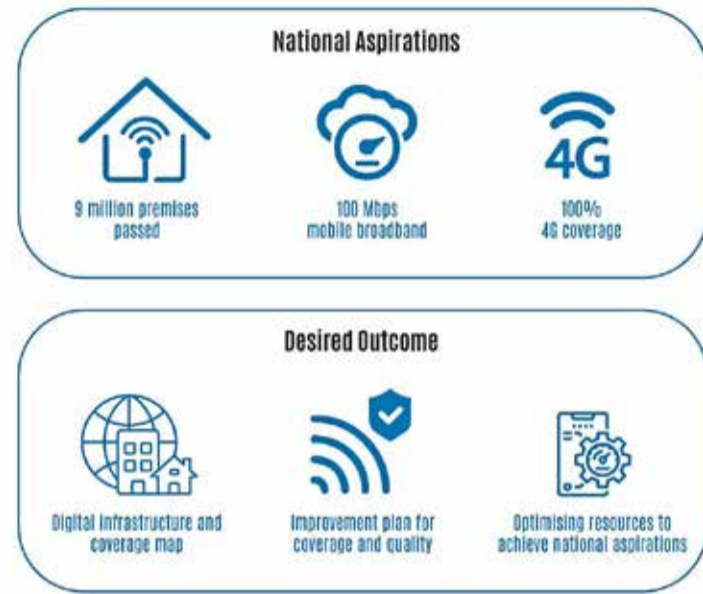
THE evolution of technology rapidly accelerated with the turn of the decade, creating a paradigm shift where constant change is the norm in an increasingly digital world.

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic has only served to demonstrate the intensifying need for Malaysia to embrace existing and emerging innovations in moving the lives of the people, who have also quickly adapted to new norms and new ways of doing things in carrying out their daily activities.

Thus, the theme of the 2021 World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) 2021 - "Driving Digital Transformation in Challenging Times" - is apt.

It's clear to see that technology is indispensable in daily life, powering more and more diverse applications with time, be it the purchase of goods and shopping, activities relating to payment transactions or the operation of an organisation.

Beyond that, its role has also drastically transformed. From being a backseat enabler for increased efficiency and productivity - old school customer relationship management systems, for example - technology has taken centre stage as a driving force to revive the national economy and empower society.

But equally undeniable is Covid-19's spillover effect, which has brought to light the glaring digital disparity between rural, suburban and urban populations.

And it is this inequitable state of affairs that the Government, through agencies such as the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), is determined to change.

Digital economy focus

In the short term, the Government has undertaken various initiatives to improve Malaysia's economic landscape, alongside introducing key relief measures to address both the tangible and intangible challenges arising from the pandemic, which have also negatively impacted the livelihood of the people.

The Government has also taken steps to ensure that both the people and the country continue moving forward to realise the 12th Malaysia Plan, along the way to achieving the Shared Prosperity Vision as a high-income nation by 2030.

Essential in reaching this aspiration is boosting the competitiveness and resilience of Malaysia's economic growth through the digital economy, driven by a sustainable digital ecosystem that is powered by a robust digital infrastructure - the core of the recently launched Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint (MyDigital) in February earlier this year.

The blueprint charts the path to strategically position the country as a competitive force in the new era, with comprehensive plans to accelerate progress towards a technologically-advanced economy. It identifies six strategic thrusts:
> Drive digital transformation in the public sector
> Boost economic competitiveness through digitalisation
> Build enabling digital infrastructure
> Develop agile and competent digital talent
> Foster an inclusive digital society
> Create a trusted, secure and ethical digital environment

Implementation is divided into three phases: Phase One to strengthen the foundation of digital adoption starting from 2021 to 2022, Phase Two to drive inclusive digital transformation from 2023 to 2025, as well as Phase Three to position Malaysia as a digital content and cybersecurity leader in the regional market from 2026 to 2030.

For strong foundations

Under the thrust of enabling digital infrastructure, a total of RM21bil has been earmarked for the implementation of the National Digital Infrastructure Plan (Jendela), which was announced by Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Mohd Yassin on Aug 29 last year.

This action plan, which will ensure that Malaysia is well-prepared to embrace 5G in the near future, is aimed at strengthening the country's existing connectivity by expanding the fixed-line fibre optic network to cover almost 100% of all populated areas in stages - from 7.5 million premises passed by end-2022 to 9 million premises passed by end-2025.

Under Jendela, there are two phases that will be implemented in stages.

Phase One, which starts from 2020 to 2022, will optimise existing resources for fixed and mobile access with several targets:
> Fiberise 7.5 million premises
> Expand 4G network coverage from 91.8% to 96.9% in populated areas
> Increase mobile broadband speed from 25Mbps to 35Mbps
> Sunset the 3G network in stages by service providers until end-2021 to improve 4G network quality and support future 5G network implementation

Following that will be Phase Two. The crucial starting point of the country's transition towards 5G, this phase will focus on bridging the digital gap from Phase One and introduce fixed wireless access and other relevant technologies.

Sabah, as the largest beneficiary of the Jendela initiative, will see aggressive telecommunication infrastructure development, especially in the 30 state legislative assembly constituencies that have been identified as lagging behind in terms of telecommunication facilities.

The crux is Gerbang Sabah (Sabah Gateway), a submarine fibre optic cable landing station in Tanjung Aru, Kota Kinabalu, that houses the Malaysian People's Cable System (SKRM) landing centre to develop broadband facilities throughout Sabah.

Managed by Telekom Malaysia Bhd (TM), the Sabah Gateway serves as the connection point for Sabah's broadband to the outside world. Other service providers will utilise the capacity available at the Sabah Gateway to connect the submarine cable exchange, telecommunication towers and various Internet devices.

By 2022, 419 new telecommunication towers will be built across Sabah, while 1,972 transmitters will be upgraded to 4G. An additional 251,166 premises will be provided with fibre optic fixed line connections. The total estimated cost is RM2.45bil for these additions and improvements.

Via an additional RM100mil allocation, the capacity of SKRM in Sabah Gateway will be increased more than three times from the original capacity of 4Tbps to 12.8 Tbps in the next three years.

This comes on top of the initial RM575.5mil investment, of which MCMC contributed RM383.7mil, while TM invested RM191.8mil.

Accelerating 5G rollout

The implementation of 5G is set to start earlier than expected, in the fourth quarter of 2021 as compared to the previous 2022 target, by focusing on covering selected localities and high density areas by 2023.

This will position Malaysia as one of the first Asean countries to enjoy 5G connectivity, while efforts to enhance 4G utilisation and network quality to benefit the rakyat will be ramped up at the same time.

The Digital Nasional Bhd special purpose vehicle is tasked with developing and managing the 5G network in Malaysia through a wholesale model, which will see RM15bil invested over 10 years for 5G rollout in the country and create almost 105,000 jobs.

The country's 5G journey was kick-started in 2018 by MCMC, which played a significant role in shaping the entire 5G landscape with the 5G Malaysia Demonstration Project (5GDP).

The 5GDP was introduced to facilitate, build and foster the development of high-potential use cases in a real but controlled environment, in order to expand the 5G ecosystem nationwide across various industry sectors and industries.

As at end-2020, Malaysia successfully demonstrated 71 use cases with a total investment of RM131mil in 50 5G base station sites comprising of nine industry verticals - smart cities; entertainment and media; oil and gas; tourism; manufacturing and processing; education; smart transportation; digital healthcare; agriculture - across seven states, namely Kedah, Pahang, Penang, Perak, Selangor, Terengganu and Kuala Lumpur.

The initiative took a collaborative approach involving stakeholders such as strategic industry partners and various ministries, as part of efforts to advance the development of a comprehensive 5G ecosystem through a variety of new approaches, including network and infrastructure sharing between service providers, policy reviews, research collaborations and more.

New innovative services will emerge in many aspects of life, ranging from virtual reality technology, autonomous robots and drones to remote medical consulting and monitoring of industrial operations.

In addition, between RM12bil to RM15bil will be invested by cloud service providers (CSP) over the next five years.

To date, conditional permission has been given to four CSP companies - Microsoft, Google, Amazon and TM - to build and manage hyperscale data centres and cloud services, which will increase data storage space, reduce operating costs and improve analytics efficiency.

As a measure to strengthen public sector cloud computing services through the Cloud-first strategy, the Government has targeted the migration of 80% of public data to the hybrid cloud system by end-2022.

In addition to collecting and managing data more effectively and smoothly, the strategy can reduce government costs in information technology management in the long run. Cloud services will also enable big data application, artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things and other technologies to be used in strengthening Government services.

Sabah Gateway was launched in September last year, making Sabah the biggest beneficiary of the Jendela initiative.

ASSALAMUALAIKUM and Salam Sejahtera.

Annually on May 17, the World Telecommunications and Information Society Day (WTISD) is celebrated around the world, and this year, it is themed "Accelerating Digital Transformation in challenging times".

The theme is apt given that the world countries are still grappling with social and economic challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In conjunction with this celebration and the theme of the year, it is crucial for us to redirect Malaysia's development towards digitalisation and renew our determination to achieve this transformation at every level through the involvement of all citizens, improvement of Government delivery systems and technological transition in the industrial sectors.

Digitisation has been identified as an important foundation for the development of the country, as well as the society. Over the past two decades, many changes have taken place in the digital world and the phenomenon of digital life can no longer be curbed.

In addition to social and environmental impact, digitisation also has a huge impact on the economic development and competitiveness of a country. The Government projected that the digital sector will contribute RM500bil to the national economy or 20% of the gross domestic product by 2025.

These digital transformation efforts are embodied in MyDigital plan, which was launched on Feb 19, 2021. MyDigital provides direction and guidance to all stakeholders, including the Government, industry and the people to drive digital transformation in an integrated manner.

The digital transformation has opened up a wider space for virtual interaction and social inclusion.

At the same time, it also increases the risk of inequality for those who are not digitally connected.

The reality is, there are still people who are marginalised and left behind by the current digitalisation efforts in our country.

Among them are those living in rural areas, the elderly, or those with relatively low digital literacy.

The Government has introduced various strategic plans to enable the people and the economic sector to embrace the tide of digitalisation, as Malaysia cannot be left behind in bridging the digital divide.

Hence, the Government in collaboration with the public and private sectors have identified three key strategies - access, financial capability and skills - as the focus area in addressing the challenges of digital divide among Malaysians.

Under efforts to increase access, digital infrastructure was expanded and strengthened through the national digital infrastructure plan Jendela.

While, the commercial rollout of 5G technology is expected to begin in the fourth quarter of this year.

On improving the affordability, the Government has recently launched the Jaringan Prihatin Programme, which provides subsidies on Internet data subscriptions and the purchase of smart devices to 8.4 million B40 households.

The Government's concern for the B40s does not stop here.

The digital literacy aspect is also actively developed by various agencies, whereby under the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, about 873 Community Internet Centres are in operation across the country to provide Internet facilities to underserved areas, as well as to inculcate computer-based skills and know-how that have become indispensable attribute for everyone today.

In addition, the establishment of Warongku e-commerce platform under SME Corp offers training and there are many such initiatives available for the people.

In conjunction with WTISD 2021, I urge every Malaysian, whether villagers, city dwellers, corporate or Government people, to start thinking and be resilient to find opportunities, so that they can all get involved in the digital transformation agenda, so as not to be left behind.

Together, we work hand-in-hand to reduce the digital divide so that every society can enjoy a balanced stream of digitalisation.

TAN SRI MUHYIDDIN YASSIN

PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA

Pioneering Malaysia's shared network

The network gives multiple service providers access to wholesale services on one physical network infrastructure at shared costs, to unlock opportunities for the underserved community.

Allo is taking on the responsibility to eliminate the digital gap across both urban and rural areas, so that all Malaysians can enjoy the same broadband connection.

THE pandemic forced people around the globe to embrace digitalisation, especially when most countries started to impose lockdowns or movement control orders to curb the spread of the virus.

During this period, mobile devices and connectivity were what kept people connected to the outside world, enabling workers to do their jobs remotely and students to continue their education online.

On one hand, it has highlighted the inherent human need for connectivity; but on the other hand, there is also a digital divide among communities living in urban areas and those residing in rural areas.

It is this realisation that led Allo Technology Sdn Bhd (Allo) to take on the responsibility to eliminate the gap, so that urban and underserved areas can enjoy the same broadband connection, in line with the Government's National Digital Infrastructure Plan, Jendela.

Demonstrating its mettle in constantly challenging the status quo when it comes to technological advancement in the country, the

wholly-owned subsidiary of Tenaga Nasional Bhd has introduced the Open-Access network.

Despite being a first in Malaysia, the concept is already widely known in other countries such as the United States and Sweden.

A neutral and wholesome shared infrastructure for service providers, open access means that multiple service providers gain access to wholesale services on one physical network infrastructure at shared costs, enabling them to reach end-users without the need for them to deploy a new fibre access network.

Constructed and managed by Allo, the network enables quicker and more economical expansion of retail service providers' (RSPs) footprint, in turn helping future-proof their infrastructure to reach underserved areas – benefit their subscribers and the local economy.

The network is also a feasible way of deploying high-speed broadband, when other RSPs are unable to obtain sufficient return on investment to cover the high costs of laying their own fibre infrastructure.

On top of that, it stimulates healthy competition among service providers to offer more options for both residential or corporate customers as there are more options available.

Allo believes that the shared infrastructure brings progressive opportunities not just for RSPs, but also unlocks opportunities for the underserved community.

Running through Allo Carrier Network System (ACNS) backhaul, the Open-Access Network offers

uninterrupted service to partnering RSPs at Layer 2 network and bringing HSBB to end consumers.

The ACNS, designed as a fully meshed network targeted to deliver up to 99.999% uptime, is touted to be the most robust transborder terrestrial system ever built.

It allows Allo to offer better data transmission for speed and quantity due to its higher capacity, while its digital nature also ensures seamless route protection.

Allo's role in driving digital connectivity can be seen when Allo launched the first state to be completely fiberised, offering Internet speeds up to 1Gbps to 17,000 homes.

The successful implementation led to further expansion in other regions, including Perak, Kedah, Penang, Johor, Negeri Sembilan

and Selangor among others, with a projected 150,000 homepasses by the second quarter of this year.

In five years, Allo aims to fibre up half a million homepasses.

To date, Allo has collaborated with several RSPs to expand their digital footprints and serve the end-users residing in underserved areas with various broadband plans at affordable prices and more choices.

In April last year, Allo also entered a landmark partnership with a leading pay-TV provider to bring the best of TV and broadband services to selectively targeted areas.

Apart from that, several negotiations are underway to allow other RSPs to leverage their infrastructure, to bring Malaysians the connectivity they deserve.

Going back to basics

TELCO companies in Malaysia have played a huge and significant role in supporting businesses, especially for the community of micro, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that not only make up the bulk of local business establishments, but also represent the backbone of the country's economy.

Altel's contribution towards the growth and development of micro SMEs has always been anchored on a strong grasp on the essential needs of the community and utilising the "back to basics" approach.

As many of these enterprises are still in the midst of learning to adopt and apply digital technology into their operations, some may find it challenging when trying to understand the use of the existing platforms in the market.

For this reason, Altel has been on a journey to reach out to the community by interacting and providing support on the various digital

technology options available, addressing a range of enterprises at various stages of digitalisation and with different literacy levels: from those with basic telecommunications needs to those learning how to maximise today's readily available digital applications.

By thoroughly understanding their specific challenges, Altel can provide an avenue for enterprises to reach out and address various issues, including managing the use of their Internet services, maximising the value of their telco spend, as well as integrating new digital applications to improve their day-to-day operations.

Before the pandemic, Altel's

team actively engaged the community in person, meeting folks from various walks of life.

Going "back to basics" over teh tarik sessions, its team would offer the community guidance to better understand the use of digital technology and ways to enhance their businesses – in short, to walk in their shoes is the best way to provide support.

The pandemic brought about the need to adapt to rapid changes and while Altel experienced fewer face-to-face opportunities to reach out to the micro SMEs, it remained committed to continuing to engage the community through alternatives.

Providing convenience through Altel's app is another method to enable its subscribers to better manage their telco needs anytime, anywhere; but more importantly, can spend within their means.

Additionally, through its recent

Reload Bonus campaign, Altel has proven its consistent focus on giving back to subscribers as much as it can by giving added value.

Aside from mobile plans, Altel also provides digital solutions to SMEs and micro SMEs through its corporate solutions business arm.

Among the solutions offered is GPS tracking for fleet management for companies to track their vehi-

cles in real-time, which helps enhance productivity, safety and efficiency.

Moving forward, Altel's continuous commitment to supporting enterprises via telecommunications and digital technology will expand through its offerings of enhanced mobile plans and the Internet of Things solutions to better cater to the needs of these businesses.

As the business community fights to survive through these challenging times, Altel lauds their perseverance and aims to help them by continuing to play its role as a service provider, shouldering the responsibilities of providing them with sustainable telecommunication and digital technology support, to heal and grow the country's economy.

Established in 2014 as a subsidiary of Altel Holdings Sdn Bhd, Altel is a mobile virtual network operator that provides telecommunication and digital technology solutions to Malaysia's SMEs and micro SMEs.

Other value-add campaigns that the telco has organised in the past are Extended Validity of up to 180 days, which ran from June 26 until Dec 31, 2020 as well as 20% Credit Rebate, which ran from March 22 until Apr 30 this year.

Altel engages with the business community to understand their needs via their Teh Tarik "back to basics" sessions.

Creating future-ready communities

THROUGHOUT its 33-year history, Celcom Axiata Bhd (Celcom) has acted as a catalyst to bridge the digital divide and help build an inclusive digital nation.

It has always placed great importance in providing connectivity to the people, which is why Celcom's network has the widest mobile coverage in Malaysia.

Driven by the belief that no one should be left behind in today's digital ecosystem, Celcom has been accelerating its network upgrading and optimisation works, including various initiatives to accelerate digital transformations across communities in the country.

The critical importance of digital connectivity was further accelerated by the pandemic, evidenced by the rapid increase in data utilisation in both urban and rural areas.

More Malaysians are now turning to digital services to carry out daily activities such as education, entertainment and business while staying safe at home.

Consistent accessibility

In 2020, despite the challenges from the pandemic and the movement control order (MCO), Celcom accelerated its network investments for crucial areas that needed connectivity.

These investments resulted with a reduction of network traffic con-

gestion, delivering consistent network services and experience.

In addition, Celcom also established a Rapid Response Team to address Covid-19 connectivity challenges, prioritising network coverage, optimisation and upgrading works within rural communities.

Celcom's accelerated network investment program included upgrading new 4G equipment and core network optimisation works at over 4,700 sites nationwide.

In addition, Celcom embarked on a nationwide cluster optimisation programme for 3,600 network sites to address video buffering issues and deliver better voice and video quality, by August 2021.

Since December last year, Celcom has deployed new network base stations, upgraded and optimised 4G coverage in rural locations nationwide, including Kampung Jemukan, Sarawak, Kampung Bukit Pampong, Raub, Pahang, Bukit Petai, Jeranggau, Kelantan, Kg Bunuk, Sarawak, Kg Mambong and Puncak Borneo, Sarawak.

Inclusivity for communities

Furthermore, Celcom accelerated its digital inclusivity initiative by reaching out to communities in selected People's Housing Projects (PPR) with the provision of free WiFi and extended operating hours of Community Internet Centres earlier this year.

Focusing on students from B40 families within these communities, the free connectivity facilitated home-based teaching and learning due to the MCO.

Celcom has also wholeheartedly

Celcom established a Rapid Response Team to address and prioritise network coverage, optimisation and upgrading works within rural communities.

supported the government's efforts in assisting communities to adapt to the new norm, especially in ensuring the continuity of education for Malaysian children.

Targeting primarily students who were preparing for SPM and STPM exams residing within 30 PPRs in nine states - Penang, Perak, Kuala Lumpur, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, Johor, Pahang, Terengganu and Sabah - access to free WiFi was provisioned via Celcom Home Wireless until Apr 30.

The service enabled unlimited data usage for learning applications and online classroom sessions via productivity applications.

Since March 2020, Celcom together with industry service providers have been continuously supporting Malaysians working and learning from home, with the provision of free 1GB data daily, valid for 24 hours, on top of the consum-

ers' data subscription.

In support of students preparing for their examinations, Celcom together with the industry initiated a special data package for SPM and STPM candidates, as well as students in higher learning institutions (IHLs).

Reducing digital gaps for all

Going just beyond providing connectivity, Celcom is also conscious about its inclusive digital nation-building aspiration and continuously drives digital entrepreneurship initiatives to empower rural communities with e-commerce skills and mindsets, reducing the digital gaps nationwide

These initiatives include DesaMall and Desa Harapan in collaboration with the Rural Development Ministry, which facilitated training and knowledge

sharing for over 1,500 rural entrepreneurs to embark on e-commerce businesses since 2018.

Another initiative, called Perkhidmatan e-Dagang Setempat, in collaboration with the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation, empowers and supports micro small and medium enterprise products in rural areas via e-commerce adoption and enablement programmes.

There is also Mahir Digital Felda, which targets youths within the communities of Celcom's Felda Internet Centres nationwide, to be equipped with digital entrepreneurship skills.

Similarly, the KPT-Celcom Siswapreneur initiative is a collaboration with the Higher Education Ministry for private and public IHLs to design and develop entrepreneurship skills and mindset among students.

Building an inclusive, resilient digital nation

WHEN the pandemic hit last year, Malaysia – like the rest of the world – had to quickly adjust to a new normal that centred around digitalisation and connectivity.

This inevitably put a spotlight on the need to expedite the country's digital infrastructure improvements, as well as the digital disparity across different communities.

To this end, the National Digital Infrastructure Plan Jendela was rolled out to shore up the nation's foundations of connectivity, paving the way for Malaysia to become a digital nation.

Various joint initiatives between the government and telecommunication industry were also introduced to assist the underserved community in gaining access to affordable connectivity and digital devices, to facilitate home-based e-learning and remote working at a time when movement was restricted.

These include free daily 1GB productivity Internet for all, special data packages for SPM/

Digi distributes micro:bits to students at a rural PIK.

STPM students, free 4G WiFi at People's Housing Projects, MYBaikHati campaign to crowdsource and repurpose pre-loved devices and the Penjana SME digitalisation grant to help businesses in the digital transformation journey, just to name a few.

As more aspects of daily life are transacted over the Internet – particularly for education, productivity and commerce – it is the responsibility of service providers such as Digi to combine the services it delivers to customers and the society with the guidance needed to wield such tools ably and responsibly.

In this regard, through Digi's Yellow Heart initiatives, the telco has been championing education awareness in staying safe online

for the past decade.

Recently, it launched the Yellow Heart Safe Internet Portal, a one-stop repository of educational material, to equip Malaysians with the right tools and knowledge to safely use the Internet.

These include guidebooks for parents and children, video series, national syllabus modules, awareness on scams and more.

With most activities moving to online, all these resources can help Malaysians build stronger knowledge on cyber risks and develop their intuition to be more resilient digital citizens.

Another important aspect of Internet security is protecting data privacy online, especially for children, in the digital age.

Digi has made available simple

privacy tips for parents to help protect their children's privacy in the new normal, among several measures that it has put in place to advocate best practices in privacy and data protection.

Besides safeguarding privacy and data, Digi also recognises the importance of preparing children for a digital future by equipping them with digital knowledge and skills.

As such, the telco has been actively leading digital learning programmes for the community.

Under the Future Skills for All programme - in partnership with Unicef Malaysia, the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation and the Education Ministry (MOE) - Digi has distributed micro:bit quick-start learning kits to schools and Community Internet Centres (PIK), benefiting about 7,000 students.

The telco also contributed digital content to MOE's Digital Educational Learning Initiative Malaysia programme. Digi strongly believes that partnerships are the

most effective way to scale and maximise positive impact on the communities and economies we operate in. Thus, Digi has been championing digital resilience and safer Internet for all in the past decade through its flagship Safe Internet programme.

Digi has recently extended its long-running partnership with Unicef as part of our Yellow Heart promise to empower more Malaysians with skills for an accelerated digital future.

All in all, today, Internet connectivity impacts nearly every part of Malaysian lives.

Last year has demonstrated that Digi's purpose of empowering societies, by connecting people to what matters most, is more relevant than ever.

And it is this purpose that will continue to drive Digi to enable participation for all Malaysians, advance connectivity to accelerate the digital future, as well as safeguard both people and data in the digital world and beyond.

Digi has been championing digital resilience and safer internet for all in the past decade through its flagship Safe Internet programme.

Empowering the underserved with digital literacy

THE Community Internet Centres (PIK) plays a crucial role in bridging the digital literacy gap among the underserved community in rural areas.

It acts as an alternative for the people facing difficulty in getting fair coverage to stay connected, by taking advantage of the facilities available at 873 PIK nationwide.

Each PIK has information and communication technology (ICT) equipment, high-speed Internet access and full-time staff to help visitors use the services available to its best.

PIK is an initiative under Universal Service Provision. Besides providing opportunities for people to enjoy quality broadband services, PIKs also help in improving their socioeconomic status via capacity building and upskilling transformation efforts.

The PIK transformation involves service improvement and addition of content or courses, optimisation of PIK usage as well as assistance in packaging and product marketing to entrepreneurs.

In addition to digital accesibility, this is expected to boost the rapid growth of the digital economy, as PIKs nurture new and young entrepreneurs, emerging as the focal point for the economic activities of the people within the stipulated vicinity.

Introducing inclusive initiatives

Along with the Government, service providers mutually agreed to extend the operating hours of 54 Community Internet Centres (PIK) located at People's Housing Projects (PPRs) nationwide to enable students to do revision and prepare for exams.

This meant that from Jan 9 to the end of April this year, the PIKs were open from 9am to 9pm daily, except for public holidays.

In addition, a total of 130 PPRs across the country were identified to receive free WiFi access, installed by telecommunication companies that volunteered.

To date, all WiFi services are still operating to benefit the oft-marginalised with the convenience of connectivity, thus allowing residents to use online platforms to make a living by generating additional income through online business activities, stay updated with current developments or learn new skills.

These facilities are part of the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission's efforts to close the digital divide among the underprivileged, so as to ensure that no one is left behind in the current digital age.

Strengthening digital connectivity

Since its establishment in 2007, about 14 years ago, PIKs have undergone a series of transformations to better serve the needs of the people.

During that time, its role has also enhanced from providing Internet access to people in underserved and rural areas to a learning centre that offers various training and awareness programmes to spur community involvement.

PIKs also act as an information centre where various Government and private initiatives are implemented, including the recent Covid-19 vaccine registration assistance for the needy in the said areas.

The role of PIKs is significant especially in the time of the pandemic, which has demanded the application of new norms in daily life.

Facilitating education and entrepreneurship

Physical learning sessions in schools and institutions of higher learning, for instance, have been severely affected.

Hence, PIKs are now the main focus for students, especially for those who live in underserved and rural areas with less coverage, to attend virtual classes or exams.

Over time, entrepreneurship development has also become a key agenda at PIKs, in line with efforts to empower local communities towards innovative, sustainable digital entrepreneurship.
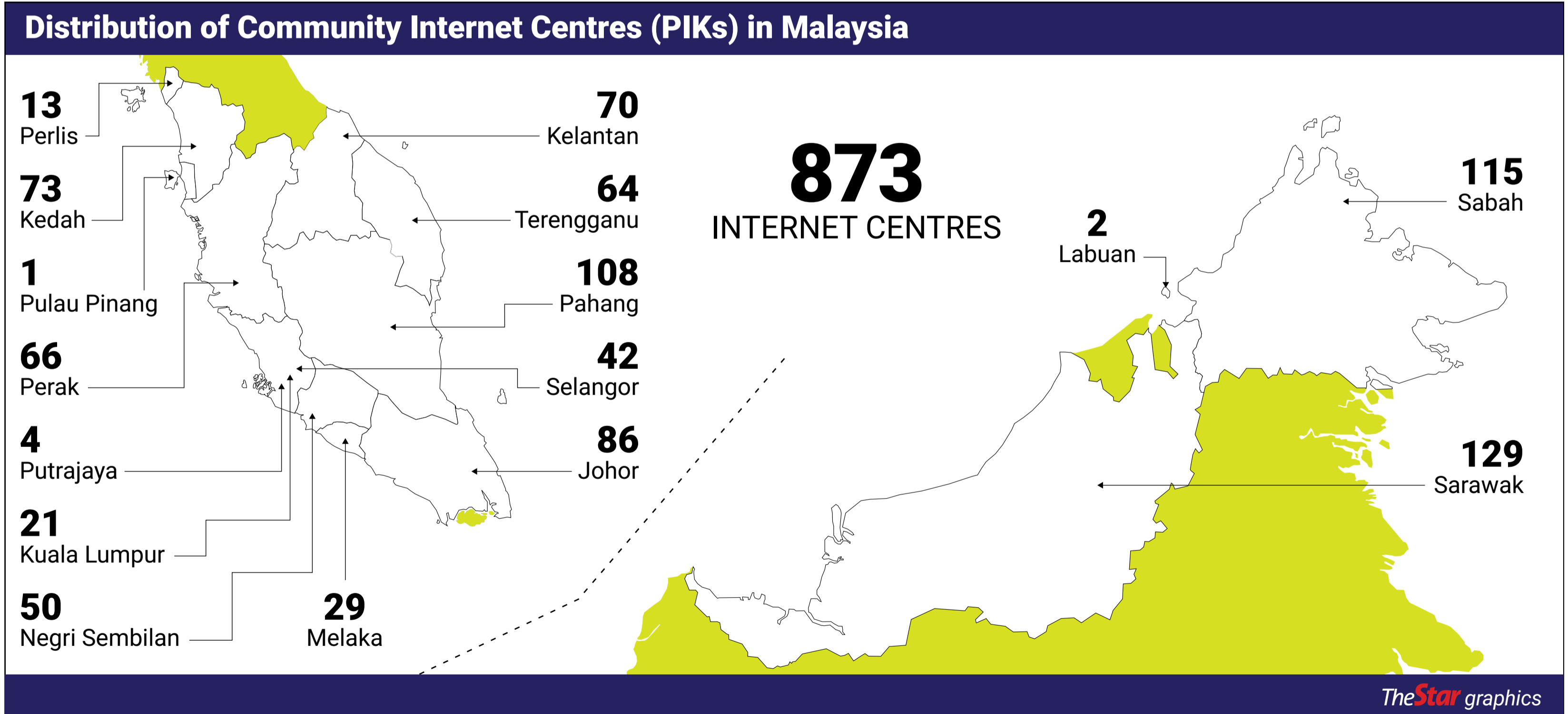
Various digital entrepreneurship programmes have been implemented at PIKs to guide entrepreneurs to expand their business to a wider market through e-commerce platforms.

This has resulted in higher sales revenue, while generating lucrative income for them.

Currently, there are a total 20,353 active PIK entrepreneurs in the country.

As at Dec 31 last year, a total of 2.7 million participants from the local community have been recorded attending programmes and training offered at PIKs - based on ICT, science and technology, multimedia, the Internet of Things, e-learning and community engagement.

The number of registered PIK members has also reached 678,000, while more than 520,000 non-members also benefit from various facilities and services provided at all its 873 centres across Malaysia.

Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah (right) during a site visit to PIK Rantau Panjang in Sibu, Sarawak.

More than just internet or capability development centres, PIKs also act as a focal point for community activities and outreach programmes.

Distribution of Community Internet Centres (PIKs) in Malaysia

13 Perlis

70 Kelantan

73 Kedah

64 Terengganu

1 Pulau Pinang

108 Pahang

66 Perak

42 Selangor

4 Putrajaya

86 Johor

21 Kuala Lumpur

50 Negri Sembilan

29 Melaka

873 INTERNET CENTRES

115 Sabah

2 Labuan

129 Sarawak

TheStar graphics

Enabling M'sians to always be ahead

AS the world continues to move forward in the new normal, there is no doubt that these unprecedented times have shed a bright light on the need for greater digital adoption.

While digitalisation has been high up on the agenda for nations across the globe, the pandemic has shown that it is a lifeline for individuals, communities and businesses.

In such a rapidly-evolving digital landscape, Maxis plays a critical role in accelerating digitalisation through advanced connectivity, innovation in products and services, as well as providing access to digital tools and learning – especially for those in the rural communities.

Since 2017, Maxis has been fostering digital inclusion through its flagship community programme eKelas, an after-school digital learning initiative for students in rural communities from Year 6 to Form 5.

The eKelas portal provides quality education content and enrichment through experiential learning with a current focus on Science, Mathematics and English – via live tutorials by experienced teachers, group learning, competitions and access to digital content – in line with the Malaysian school syllabus.

The programme is available at all 118 PIK Community Internet Centres under Maxis' care that serve as digital hubs for these communities across 10 states.

In addition, SPM Exam Clinics are also conducted via Maxis eKelas YouTube channel to share tips and tricks on how to score in Mathematics, Science and English.

Maxis hosts events such as the eKelas Highly Immersive Programme StoryFest Essay Writing 2021 in PIK Kg Taee, Sarawak.

A major milestone achieved in 2019 was when Maxis eKelas was recognised by the Education Ministry as an initiative under its Highly Immersive Programme, where students are eligible to collect co-curricular marks from their participation in eKelas. Over 550 schools have the programme to date.

Content has always been a key driver for eKelas as it keeps students engaged with exciting and compelling material.

The eKelas portal has over 2,000 bite-sized videos notes and worksheets, seminar videos, as well as 10,000+ eBooks and 500 audio books through partnership with Malaysia's National Library.

Maxis has also collaborated with partners such as Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation to co-create exciting videos, as well as STEM content.

During the various phases of the movement control order, eKelas pivoted to enable eKelas students to continue learning with zero data charges, when accessing the eKelas portal from home or mobile.

Digital engagement was also ramped up in the portal, where students were able to interact with the portal's community manager, Abang Portal, for guided learning.

Meanwhile, building upon learnings from a challenging pandemic year in 2020, Maxis increased its support for communities in driving digital adoption among entrepreneurs and micro, small and medium enterprises.

In March this year, it launched eKelas Usahawan, a structured digital marketing programme that comprises a series of digital marketing workshops with a practical and

eKelas Usahawan is a structured digital marketing programme that comprises a series of digital marketing workshops.

hands-on approach to equipping entrepreneurs with digital tools and skills to help them grow their respective business and expand their income opportunities.

Targeted towards empowering women entrepreneurs in rural communities to develop a stronger online presence, the programme collaborates with local NGOs in different states to identify specialised content and training partners, as well as entrepreneurs.

It has already benefited 186 women entrepreneurs in Sabah and Selangor since its launch.

Maxis remains committed in supporting the rakyat and the nation through sustainable and empowering programmes that aim to create digital literacy, improved social well-being and an inclusive digital society.

As the country's leading converged solutions provider, it is staying true to its brand purpose of bringing together the best of technologies to enable people, businesses and the nation can always be ahead in a changing world.

Connecting the unconnected

REDTONE has come a long way from being a discounted call provider – albeit a very successful one – to what it is now, a leading integrated telecommunications and digital services provider for organisations in Malaysia.

Two and a half decades after its establishment, the company remains just as passionate about creating lasting value for its stakeholders, while doing its part to serve the people and make a positive impact by delivering reliable digital infrastructure and services.

Over the years, Redtone has reiterated its commitment to supporting the government in providing mobile and Internet access to underserved communities and areas by leveraging on its telco engineering expertise and know-how.

The company first expanded into the telco engineering business in 2012 when it was awarded the Kampung Tanpa Wayar (KTW) project. Since then, it has been instrumental in the successful roll-out of numerous large Universal Service Provision (USP) projects, namely KTW, Time-3, T3-extension and Community Internet Centres (PIK) all within the short span of eight years.

While Redtone's expertise lies in telecommunication engineering, operation, construction and maintenance services, it also boasts extensive experience in radio-frequency engineering, planning, designing, implementing, optimising and operating fixed and mobile networks.

Its telco engineering work encompasses the installation of towers and infrastructure, as well as the installation of equipment and electronics related to public cellular service, under the concept of Radio Access Network sharing technology in underserved areas across the country.

Expanding mobile coverage

Redtone provides mobile coverage to rural areas via the Multi-Operator Radio Access Network (Moran). The company builds and operates mobile networks in these areas by interconnecting all mobile service providers.

Thus, the population in these areas gets to stay connected no matter which network they subscribed to.

The sheer remoteness of locations, isolated

Establishing infrastructure in the most difficult of environments is a key step in bringing connectivity to all.

Redtone's commitment to providing mobile and internet access to underserved communities and areas, by leveraging on its telco engineering expertise and know-how, is shown in this old photo taken before the pandemic.

nature of the areas and unpredictable weather conditions have always been the main challenges faced by its deployment team.

However, the team's steadfast commitment and determination to get the job done have bolstered their reputation among both the local communities and authorities.

Establishing infrastructure in the most difficult of environments is a key step in bringing connectivity to everyone – and this

access to new information, knowledge and business opportunities.

This will ultimately pave the way for them to achieve better and more sustainable household income.

Through the PIK project, Redtone provides a one-stop learning centre for villagers.

Besides Internet access, the company also facilitates training programmes that focus on micro-entrepreneur development, including leveraging digital technology to expand small businesses.

On top of that, Redtone offers training to assist the younger generation in acquiring a basic computer and IT knowledge.

Internet connectivity has become a social necessity and an essential service.

Redtone network engineers throughout the nation have been working hard to deploy, maintain and upkeep USP sites to ensure reliable Internet access is available to all during these trying times, while navigating movement challenges following the movement control orders since March 2020.

It also established and activated a comprehensive pandemic response plan earlier this year with requisite risk mitigation protocols.

The plan is still being implemented today, ensuring the continuity of mission-critical processes to keep the company's networks up and running.

Redtone is forging ahead with its mission to work closely with the government and other service providers to accelerate coverage and improve the quality of broadband services in the country.

In addition to participating in more USP projects, the company is also poised to play a significant role in the roll-out of 5G, mainly in the digital applications and solutions space.

is where Redtone has proven itself time and time again.

The company has been recognised by the industry as one of the largest USP service providers and the largest third-party neutral Moran operator in Malaysia.

The use of ICT in building a knowledge-based economy for underserved communities will help improve their economic potential and empower them with

Accelerating Digital Malaysia

TELEKOM Malaysia Bhd (TM), in its role of enabling Digital Malaysia, is ever ready to support the Government's digitalisation agenda, particularly the National Digital Infrastructure Plan (Jendela) and the Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint (MyDigital) towards accelerating the nation into a technologically-advanced economy by 2030.

TM has established itself as a leading end-to-end cloud and data centre service provider of data residency, locality and sovereignty in Malaysia, serving both public sector and enterprise customers. It is the only home-based cloud operator to be awarded as the cloud service provider serving the public sector, together with the appointed managed service providers.

Out of TM's nine data centres, two are rated as Tier III that provide world-class cloud services, artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced cybersecurity.

Driving digital connectivity expansion, TM continues to contribute to the nationwide fiberisation effort – not only for homes and business premises, but also mobile towers – to improve the current 4G service quality and next, to expedite 5G rollout.

Its existing 600,000km fibre network nationwide is expected to grow rapidly over the following years, in tandem with Jendela's implementation.

Beyond Malaysian shores, TM's vast and diverse global network of

Two of TM's nine data centres are rated as Tier III that provide world-class cloud services, AI and advanced cybersecurity.

more than 30 submarine cable systems spanning 300,000km is ready to support the global connectivity demand of MyDigital.

Through strong relationships with global telco and content partners, including hyperscalers, TM enables end-users to access and enjoy a seamless connectivity experience to support today's digital lifestyle.

Global connectivity drive

TM's extensive fibre network nationwide is also primed to support Digital Nasional Bhd, the Government's newly formed 5G special purpose vehicle, in bringing next-generation services to the multi-segment customers served by its business units. Along with TM's ongoing nationwide fibre network expansion via Jendela, this will enable fast and cost-effective rollout of 5G infrastructure.

As TM continues to support

national digital connectivity (fixed and mobile), as well as the digital infrastructure (cloud, data centre), these strategic assets need to be secured and protected.

TM's enterprise and public sector arm TM ONE offers CYDEC as a solution to help Malaysian enterprises and public sector institutions build digital trust and cybersecurity resilience, by managing five key areas of risk: cybersecurity, compliance, privacy, ethics and social responsibility.

These managed security services ensure access to real-time, continuous, predictive cybersecurity – quickly and without complexity – for added assurance.

TM ONE helped strengthen the health and security of the nation's frontliners through the deployment of voice and Internet services, as well as several innovative and smart health screening and monitoring solutions, at various critical and strategic sites to

As the nation's telecommunications and digital infrastructure provider, TM has established itself as a leading end-to-end cloud and data centre service provider of data residency, locality and sovereignty in Malaysia.

ensure efficient crisis response.

Future-proof talent

In building the digital skillsets and talents of the local workforce, TM's education arm Multimedia University is currently offering degree courses and executive education in AI, data analytics, robotics and cybersecurity.

At the same time, the TM Digital Academy will equip its employees with future skills needed to realise its digitalisation aspirations.

As the nation's telecommunications and digital infrastructure provider, TM has fully supported and will continue to support the telecommunications industry, various

industry verticals and the nation's requirements to ensure seamless and uninterrupted connectivity for Malaysia overall during the movement control order and beyond.

TM is also participating in Yayasan Hasanah's Tabung Cerdik, which aims to provide devices with connectivity to enable digital learning for 150,000 B40 students.

For Phase One, TM is contributing connectivity services and devices totalling RM5.5mil.

In short, TM will be at the forefront of this new economy to improve the quality of life of its customers, while supporting nation-building programmes to drive the Government's holistic digital initiatives for the future.

Laying groundwork for a digital tomorrow

THE foundation of a successful digital economy hinges on a comprehensive and developed digital communications infrastructure.

Towards achieving this end, the National Digital Infrastructure Plan (Jendela) was launched last year in August 2020.

Further to supporting the delivery of Jendela's objectives of making Internet more accessible, by continuing to expand its fibre network reach and supporting mobile players in the industry with additional fibre capacity, TIME dotCom Bhd (TIME) continues to focus on ensuring a consistently good quality of experience for its subscribers to support their digital lifestyles.

Seamless WiFi connectivity

TIME's network is designed for high bandwidth usage and as such, can cater to the rapid increase in household Internet consumption in recent times.

As families conduct online activities from anywhere in the home, TIME introduced OmniMesh, an affordable solution that delivers seamless WiFi connectivity to all corners of the home.

New technology is an area that TIME continues to invest in, as illustrated by the deployment of its network cloud engine management and analysis software in its network, which improves its ability to diagnose and troubleshoot WiFi connectivity issues more quickly and accurately.

In addition to product innova-

tion, TIME continuously strengthens and improves its fibre network infrastructure to ensure stable connectivity at all times.

It also focuses on traffic management and re-prioritisation activities to further optimise user experience.

Facilitating business growth

While working Malaysians have had to adjust to working from home, businesses also had to pivot quickly. Some needed to overhaul their traditional brick and mortar business model to an online one, while others had to fast-track digital transformation plans.

TIME is well-positioned to help businesses on their digital transformation journey.

While connectivity serves as the foundation for any business transforming digitally, TIME has built an end-to-end hyperscale ecosystem, which comprises key components such as cloud and data centres to help businesses move to the next level.

The future of business success lies in the ability to be agile and move quickly to adapt to market needs.

Having anticipated this, TIME constructed a secure network

Further to supporting the delivery of Jendela's objectives TIME continues to focus on ensuring a consistently good quality of experience for its subscribers to support their digital lifestyles.

with network functions virtualisation-capable infrastructure.

As such, it offers the ability to virtualise network and edge services over the cloud in its entirety, allowing businesses to address concerns such as cost, flexibility, scalability and security as they accelerate digital transformation.

With an end-to-end hyperscale ecosystem that extends beyond Malaysia for regional and international reach, TIME looks forward to playing its part in helping the nation achieve its objective, becoming a digitally-driven, high income nation and a regional leader in digital economy, as envisioned in the Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint, MyDigital.

TIME's end-to-end hyperscale ecosystem is primed and ready to support businesses as they take digital transformation to the next level.

Unleashing the nation's unlimited potential

DIGITAL connectivity has become a basic need for most people at all levels of society, much like water and electricity.

In fact, it has been recognised as a third utility in the states of Terengganu, Penang, Melaka, Perak, Sarawak, Pahang and soon, Kuala Lumpur.

Without such connectivity, many will be unable to make a living, learn, play and connect with their loved ones – even more so during the Covid-19 pandemic.

To ensure all Malaysians, especially the B40 community, have access to the right tools and the connectivity necessary to thrive in today's digital economy, the Government and the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) have launched many initiatives, such as the Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint (MyDigital) and the National Digital Infrastructure Plan (Jendela) to narrow the digital divide.

Unlimiting with purpose

U Mobile has always striven to make its services accessible and affordable to Malaysians, long before the pandemic hit.

Through the years, the telco has introduced many innovations that are industry firsts, such as 1GB free data for prepaid plans, micro-financing for smartphones, as well as affordable unlimited data plans for both prepaid and postpaid customers.

The mindset of going above and beyond to bring accessibility and affordability to Malaysians has also been applied to U Mobile's Jaringan Prihatin efforts.

Jaringan Prihatin is a joint effort between the Government and 12

telecommunications service providers focusing specifically on the B40 community's digital connectivity needs to empower them to enter the digital economy through affordable devices and data plans.

Under the programme, over and above the device and data subsidies, telcos are providing an additional 2GB high-speed data for one hour daily for those who have successfully signed up for a device or data plan offered.

Value that empowers

U Mobile has extended the Jaringan Prihatin programme's device subsidy to prepaid customers, beyond the industry norm of device bundles only available to postpaid customers, alongside other efforts:
> U Mobile has one of the biggest ranges of free phone models available for eligible customers that qualify for the programme.
> The B40 community may enjoy U Mobile's unlimited data plans for as little as RM15 monthly under the programme.

U Mobile supported Covid-19 medical frontliners with connectivity and mobile devices.

Temporary tower built in Kampung Kongsi, Kedah to provide connectivity to the community.

The telco has also sponsored connectivity and devices to B40 students in Sabah and Penang, as well as to medical frontliners in hospitals battling against Covid-19.

It has also contributed RM2mil to the GLC Disaster Response Network to provide Covid-19 relief. Moreover, U Mobile is committed to help Malaysians unleash their unlimited potential by making quality connectivity affordable and accessible, which is in line with the Government's MyDigital aspirations for the nation.

The telco has also pledged its commitment to continue working with the Government and MCMC to support the rakyat – especially the B40 community – with digital connectivity, all in the interest of helping Malaysia fast track to becoming a robust digital economy.

Facilitating uninterrupted learning for B40

ONE of the biggest challenges facing Malaysian parents during the Covid-19 pandemic is finding an effective way to ensure that their children's education can continue, even from home.

That was the starting point that led to YES launching the YES Prihatin Learn-from-Home plans, coinciding with the Government's Jaringan Prihatin programme rollout on May 5.

In March 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic first hit the country, YTL Foundation – together with YES and learning platform FrogAsia – launched the Learn-from-Home initiative, designed to keep all Malaysian school children learning through the pandemic.

Working with teachers and community leaders nationwide to identify those most in danger of being left behind, YTL Foundation and YES delivered phones and free SIM cards with 40GB of free data to these children and their families.

The phones allowed them to stay connected with their teachers and schools, as well as access YTL Foundation's Learn-from-Home content and FrogAsia's quizzes and revision exercises.

This programme was then extended to students at over 30 universities and institutions of higher learning, as well as the 230,000 members of the National Union of the Teaching Profession.

To date, YTL Foundation and YES have distributed over 18 million GB of free 4G data, 450,000 SIM cards and 100,000 free 4G smartphones to students, families and teachers who most need it – all with the aim of helping Malaysia

achieve a vibrant and effective, digitally connected teaching and learning ecosystem.

Focus on B40 youths

There are two YES Prihatin device plans for rakyat B40: YES Prihatin Learn-from-Home Families and YES Prihatin Learn-from-Home Individuals.

With just the Jaringan Prihatin subsidy, both plans give subscribers a free smartphone, free data and free access to YTL Foundation's Learn-from-Home content, all for one year with no deposit, contract or payments needed. Subscribers will also receive a RM50 Shopee voucher to shop for essentials.

By choosing YES Prihatin, B40 families will have full access to YTL Foundation's Learn-from-Home content, which includes free lessons in Bahasa Malaysia, English, Mathematics and Science from Primary 1 to Form 5 mapped to the Malaysian syllabus, as well as access to revision quizzes in all core subjects through FrogAsia's FrogPlay mobile app.

All 1,272 Learn-from-Home lessons are available on the YTL Foundation website and the FrogPlay App, which along with more than 13,000 quizzes, make learning and revising easily acces-

sible to all students with a smartphone.

For Hamdan, father of a Primary Three student, home-based learning was not easy for working parents.

Both he and his wife struggled to guide their child with his studies until they discovered the lesson materials available through the Learn-from-Home initiative.

Sharing his excitement to use the Learn-from-Home lesson materials, Hamdan said the interactive videos made learning much more interesting and engaging for his son.

Watching and listening to videos as part of lessons also helped improve his son's understanding on the topics, he added.

Hamdan also downloaded the FrogPlay application on his smartphone, so that his son can answer quizzes during his free time.

Summing it up, he recommended Learn-from-Home to other parents experiencing similar issues or are looking for academic support.

YES believes that education is a powerful tool that can unlock many possibilities.

By removing the barriers to education and making online learning accessible to all, YES is giving every child a chance to succeed and achieve more.

The YES Prihatin initiative will impact the lives of the B40 families and their children, contributing to nation-building efforts.

YES Prihatin plans are available at *www.yes.my/kasiupB40* or via the MyYes App. Anyone can also nominate a B40 family for a YES Prihatin plan at *www.ytlfoundation. org/learnfromhome*.

Working with teachers and community leaders nationwide to identify those most in danger of being left behind, YTL Foundation and YES delivered phones and free SIM cards with 40GB of free data to these children and their families.

To Malaysia, With Love

Online essential goods, groceries and other daily necessities have become vital for a large number of Malaysians.

IN solidarity that furthered the mobilising of efforts to contribute to the needy, especially frontliners and those severely impacted by Covid-19, the country's telecommunications industry players have continued supporting Malaysians.

For the 'To Malaysia, With Love' campaign, Celcom, Digi, Maxis, Telekom Malaysia (TM), TIME and U Mobile donated RM66mil to the GLC Disaster Response Network (GDRN) led by Yayasan Hasanah, a foundation under Khazanah Nasional Bhd and TM.

This is the second time that these telecommunications service providers have contributed to GDRN.

Together with the Malaysian Coordination and Action Hub, the GDRN will act to coordinate the support of telecommunications industry players in assisting the Government and non-governmental organisations to channel assistance to those affected by the pandemic.

Providing free data access

In addition to monetary contributions through the GDRN, many telecommunications service providers have also extended 1GB free internet offerings for mobile data to promote uninterrupted e-learning and productivity through the National Economic Regeneration Plan Penjana until July 31, on top of offering their own special packages.

The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, in collaboration with five major telecommunications service providers including Celcom, Digi, Maxis, TM and U Mobile, mutually agreed to extend the provision of 1GB free daily data to every customer until July 31.

The provision of 1GB free data on a daily basis, made available since April 2020, aims to help the people cope with the new norms of digitalisation arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Increasing digital accessibility

Meanwhile, the YTL Foundation and YES Learn-from-Home initiative, collaborating with learning platform FrogAsia, was also extended until Sept 30 - this time including students from institutions of higher learning (IHLs).

The special package provides a free SIM card with 40GB data, free content and mobile phone for students from B40 households.

To assist PdPR home-based teaching and learning, a special data subscription deal was also announced for students preparing to sit for major examinations such as SPM and STPM, as well as for students of IHLs.

With the aim of increasing digital accessibility, the affordable prepaid package - offered by Celcom, Digi, Maxis, TM and U Mobile - provides students with a 15GB data pass for as low as RM20 per month.

In providing better access and connectivity to students and B40 households located at the People's Housing Programme (PPR), the Government and telcos extended the operating hours of 54 Internet Community Centres nationwide from 9am to 9pm daily, except for public holidays, in order to enable students to do revision and prepare for their exams.

Furthermore, a total of 130 PPRs across the country were identified to receive free WiFi access, installed by selected telcos.

This proved invaluable in enabling Malaysians, especially the underprivileged B40 community, to perform daily activities such as online learning, work remotely from home or start online business ventures to eke out a decent living.

Leveraging the Internet enables entrepreneurs, as well as small and medium enterprises, to expand their reach to more customers across geographical borders, in order to boost sales revenue and profit.

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic has made it necessary for students and school-going children to continue their studies at home, but many parents have found it hard to manage their children's lesson virtually through mobile devices.

Helping in times of need

SINCE the beginning of the pandemic, the telecommunications industry has worked closely with the Government to ensure that all Malaysians have access to essential digital connectivity.

For instance, a key joint initiative - resulting from the collaboration of the Finance Ministry and 12 telecommunications service providers in the country - is the Jaringan Prihatin programme.

The service providers include Celcom, Digi, Maxis, Mcalls, redONE, speakOUT, Tune Talk, U Mobile, unifi Mobile, XOX Mobile, YES and Yoodo.

This programme focuses specifically on addressing the B40 community's digital connectivity needs.

First announced with an initial RM1.5bil allocation as part of Budget 2021, Jaringan Prihatin was further enhanced with an additional RM500mil allocation as part of the People and Economic Strategic Empowerment Programme (Pemerkasa), after taking into consideration the number of B40 families with school-going children.

The Government has thus pledged RM2bil in subsidies to 8.4 million eligible Bantuan Prihatin Rakyat (BPR) recipients to have access to Internet data or for the purchase of mobile devices.

Beyond the device and data subsidies, all 12 telecommunications service providers are also offering additional benefits worth RM1.5bil - bringing the total benefits to RM3.5bil for BPR recipients - with an additional of 2GB high-speed data for one hour daily for those who have successfully signed up for a device or data plan offering under Jaringan Prihatin.

The programme, which complements the MyDigital initiative, strengthens efforts to empower the B40 community with affordable devices and data plans to join the digital economy and tap into its opportunities.

In tandem with inclusivity efforts centred on the objectives of the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030, Jaringan Prihatin aims to equip talent with digital skills as part of the Government's five main focus areas to rebuild and propel the nation's economy in the post-Covid-19 era.

To do so, it seeks to strengthen the country's competitiveness by bridging the digital gap in order to transform the economy based on knowledge and innovation, as well as control the spread of Covid-19 to spur economic recovery for the welfare of rakyat and affected sectors.

Solving pressing challenges

Under the Jaringan Prihatin programme, households with children under the age of 18 are eligible for a RM300 device subsidy, whilst those with no children are eligible for a RM180 subsidy to go towards redeeming a device or purchasing a data plan.

At the same time, there is also an alternative option of a data rebate plan for families and individuals at an affordable price of RM15 per month, for a period of 12 months.

Registration for the Jaringan Prihatin Programme is open from May 5 until July 31, 2021. Eligible recipients can register with the service providers of their choice and choose any plan offered under this programme to claim the subsidy.

Aside from Jaringan Prihatin, another key initiative under the Communications and Multimedia Ministry is the MyBaikHati programme.

MyBaikHati aims to help B40 households own devices as a way to survive in the new norm by easing daily activities such as studying, working and running an online business.

Utilising crowdsourcing to collect used devices from businesses and individuals, the campaign is being carried out by six telecommunication companies, including Celcom Axiata, Digi, Maxis, U Mobile, Telekom Malaysia and TIME.

Donations of used devices from Malaysians and concerned organisations will be collected and refurbished at a cost of up to RM500 per device. Successfully refurbished devices will be distributed to eligible B40 candidates throughout the country based on a list provided by the Inland Revenue Board, while deteriorated units will be recycled safely to protect the environment.

The collection, refurbishment and distribution of these devices will run for 12 months, starting in the Klang Valley as the pilot location before expanding nationwide.

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Mohd Yassin (left) takes a commemorative photo with 11 local telecommunications industry players at the launch of the Jaringan Prihatin programme, accompanied by Finance Minister Datuk Seri Zafrul Abdul Aziz. The programme strengthens efforts to empower the B40 community with affordable devices and data plans to join the digital economy and tap into its opportunities.
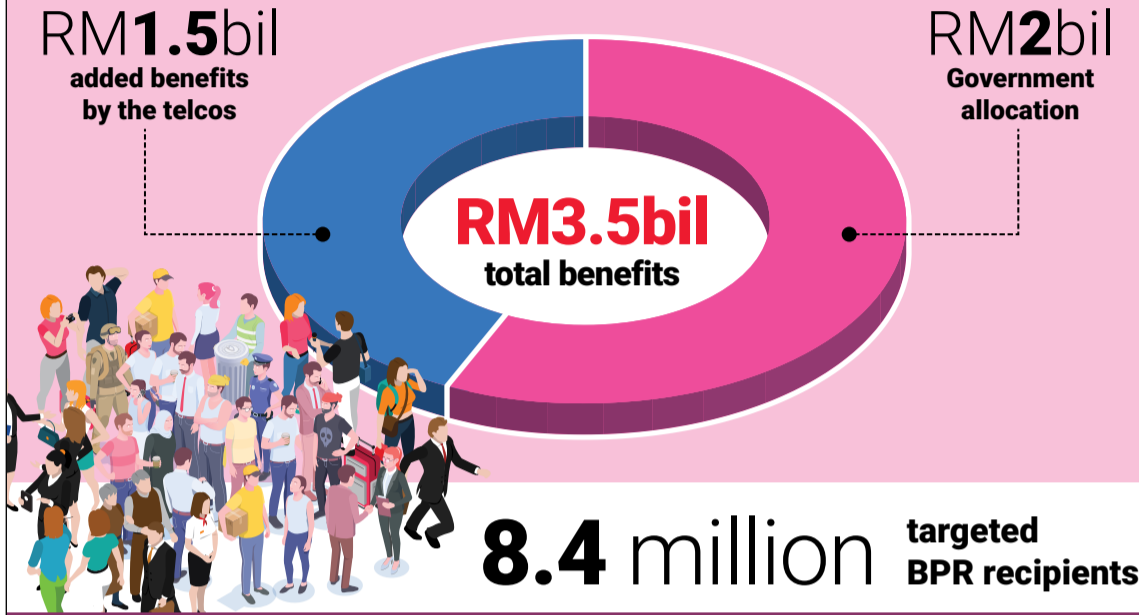

KEMENTERIAN KEWANGAN MALAYSIA

BUDGET 2021

Jaringan Prihatin

Assistance to access internet data services or purchase mobile devices for Bantuan Prihatin Rakyat (BPR) recipients

RM**1.5**bil
added benefits by the telcos

RM**2**bil
Government allocation

RM3.5bil
total benefits

8.4 million **targeted BPR recipients**

12 TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE PROVIDERS

Celcom	redONE	unifi Mobile
Digi	speakOUT	XOX Mobile
Maxis	Tune Talk	YES
Mcalls	U Mobile	Yoodo

JARINGAN PRIHATIN MINIMUM PACKAGE

B40 household category	Mobile device aid	12-month data plan aid
WITH children below 18 years old	RM**300**	RM**180**
WITHOUT children below 18 years old	RM**180**	RM**180**

REGISTRATION PERIOD: MAY 5 - JULY 31, 2021
*Register with your preferred telecommunications service provider

SUBSCRIPTION PROCESS

1 **Check your eligibility**
Check your eligibility through the BPR website or telecommunications service providers

2 **Register as a customer**
If you are eligible, proceed with registering with your preferred telecommunications service provider of choice

3 **Make your choice**
Choose from the two assistance options available: **Purchase a new mobile device or purchase a monthly internet data plan**

FREE DATA

4 **Enjoy free data***
Benefit from increased internet access with the additional free data on offer
*Terms and conditions apply

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
https://belanjawan2021.treasury.gov.my/manfaat/index.php/en/jaringanprihatin-en

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