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Express wins cybersecurity award for helping govt

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Putra Jaya: Sabah and Labuan's leading newspaper, Daily Express, was again honoured by Cybersecurity Malaysia as the State's "Most Supportive Media Organisation" for the second time in the award's four-year history.

Chief Editor James Sarda received the award from the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Cybersecurity Malaysia, General (r) Tan Sri Mohd Azumi Mohd at a ceremony at the Marriott Putrajaya.

Cybersecurity Malaysia is a unit under the Energy, Technology, Science, Climate Change and Environment Ministry entrusted with protecting the nation from cyber-related threats.

The award is for the newspaper's role in keeping the public abreast with information relating to Internet use and abuse and giving advice on issues related to cybersecurity and positive Internet use.

The awards also coincided with the launch of its Global Ace scheme, which for the first time provides professional certification in cybersecurity that would also enable the Government to increase the number of people knowledgeable in the industry.

Azumi, in his speech, said there are now only 8,281 knowledge workers in cybersecurity in Malaysia, which is still low compared to the nation's 25 million Internet users. He hoped the global Ace scheme would help increase the number so that the nation is better prepared to counter various threats that cybercriminals pose to the nation's security and economy.

He said cybersecurity has become a serious issue that warrants the attention not only of the IT sections of the respective government departments and private firms. "In the corporate sector it must not just be the responsibility of the Information Security personnel but the Chairman downwards," he said.

He cited data from 2016 until January 2018 in which 21,795 reports were lodged over various cybersecurity incidents, of which 2,500 comprised fraud cases, intrusions (576), malicious codes (366) and cyber harassment (203).

He said this represents a high rate of internet usage and provides criminals an unprecedented opportunity to use the internet to carry out their activities like cheating via the internet on a global scale.

"This rise in internet-related crimes means the people have to be smart and be armed with knowledge to counter criminals," he said, and referred to a Microsoft survey that concluded Malaysia lost USD12.2 billion due to cyberattacks on private and public computers via hacking, among others.

Hence, although ICT today acts as enablers of the economy and social development, it also is accompanied with dangers.

On the regional level, Azumi said there has been an Asean call for action in view of the grouping poised to take its position among the world's top digital economies.

"The doors are wide open for cyberattacks," he said.

"The digital economy of Asean has to be protected as it is expected to add USD1 trillion to its GDP over the next 10 years and Asean members states have been used as a launchpad for attacks on vulnerable unsecured infrastructure and connected hubs."

He singled out the tension in the South China Sea involving China and the Asean neighbours and the grouping's geostrategic position which makes it a prime target for cyberattacks since cyberresilience is generally low plus lack of strategic mindset, policy preparedness and institutional oversight on cybersecurity.

He reckoned where Asean is concerned, the cybersecurity landscape is likely to generate greater complexity, further escalating Asean's cybersecurity challenges. He welcomed the recent Asean ministerial communique which highlighted the need for cybersecurity cooperation, policy diplomacy, technical and capacity building efforts in cyberspace.

"We are today talking about the rate of change in computing power and its expansion into every sphere of existence," he said, citing ex-



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