

KUALA LUMPUR: The launch of the Measat-3d satellite will help bridge the digital divide and lure more young people to venture into the aerospace industry, says the Prime Minister.

Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said the launch of the satellite would also improve Internet penetration rates in suburban and rural areas across Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak.

"On this historic day, Measat Global Berhad (Measat) has launched the Measat-3d satellite in Kourou, French Guiana," he posted on Facebook yesterday.

The Prime Minister joined 600 guests to watch the live streaming of the launching of Measat-3d into orbit at Dewan Merdeka, World Trade Centre here yesterday.

The satellite was launched on an Ariane-5 rocket from the Guiana Space Centre, which is also called the European Spaceport, in Kourou, French Guiana in South America, at 5.50am Malaysian time (6.50pm local time on June 22).

Also present were Communications and Multimedia Minister Tan Sri Annuar Musa, his deputy Datuk Zahidi Zainal Abidin and several other Cabinet ministers.

Measat-3d, which is Measat's eighth and most advanced satellite, costs RM1.2bil and has a lifespan of 18 years. It is expected to improve the communication services to Malaysia and regional countries.

It is also expected to bridge the digital connectivity gap and shape a better connectivity future for Malaysians in line with the government's initiatives through the National Digital Network (Jendela) plan.

With the launch of Measat-3d, Malaysia can also strengthen its presence in the digital era based on fixed-line, mobile and satellite technologies without marginalising any group of people.

Other telecommunication service providers could also utilise the satellite to offer data, voice and video services to three to five per cent of the population that is not yet covered by fibre or wireless broadband connections, as offered by Measat through the CONNECTme NOW satellite broadband service.

Bernama reported that Measat-3d satellite is a Geostationary Equatorial Orbit or GEO-type satellite that has a wide coverage site and is capable of providing fast broadband services and supporting high data flow known as High Throughput Satellite.

Annuar said the newly-launched satellite was important for Malaysia to achieve its 100% Internet coverage target before 2025 and improve the quality of its broadband services.

He said the services offered by the satellite could be fully utilised in a couple of months' time.