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Task force to study growing power, water needs, says Gobind

New Straits Times, Malaysia



Digital Minister Gobind Singh Deo speaking at the EmpowerHER Digital 2026 programme yesterday. NSTP PIC BY AZIAH AZMEE

DATA CENTRE INVESTMENTS

Task force to study growing power, water needs, says Gobind

PETALING JAYA: The government is tightening its oversight of data centre development, with a special task force examining the industry's growing demands for electricity and water as Malaysia prepares for further investments.

Digital Minister Gobind Singh Deo said the Data Centre Task Force, co-chaired by the Digital Ministry and Investment, Trade and Industry Ministry, was reviewing development applications and approval processes to ensure infrastructure could keep pace with the industry's expansion.

He said the task force brought together key stakeholders, including Tenaga Nasional Bhd, water authorities and state governments, to assess existing facilities, projects in the pipeline and proposed investments.

"We are working to ensure that the country makes the necessary preparations and exercises close oversight to ensure every approved data centre development is supported by sufficient electricity and water supplies," he said after attending the EmpowerHER Digital 2026 programme yesterday.

Gobind said Malaysia was not facing supply constraints at present, but planning ahead was essential to avoid disruptions as demand grew.

"We need to look ahead and ensure that electricity and water supplies remain secure, both in the short and long term, without any disruption."

He also acknowledged concerns raised by Her Majesty Raja Zarith Sofiah, the Queen of Malaysia, over the environmental and social impact of data centre expansion, saying he would bring the matter to the task force for further discussion.

On Saturday, the Queen called on the authorities, private sector and public to assess the impact of data centre development on the environment and community well-being, including its high consumption of electricity and water, land use and effects on residents.

Raja Zarith Sofiah made the call at the 70th Universiti Teknologi Malaysia convocation ceremony, where she also highlighted the need to balance technological progress with environmental sustainability.

Meanwhile, Gobind said the EmpowerHER Digital 2026 sought to help women use digital platforms to grow their businesses and simplify dealings with the government.

He said the initiative was part of efforts by Digital Nasional Bhd and the ministry to extend digital opportunities to the wider community.

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