

Tougher data, AI oversight planned

Govt reviewing two laws to pave way for new panel to regulate emerging technologies

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KUALA LUMPUR: The government is reviewing two Acts as it moves to establish a national data commission with powers to enforce rules governing personal data, artificial intelligence (AI) and other sensitive information.

Digital Minister Gobind Singh Deo said work was already under way to establish a new body with the authority to advise the government on data-related measures.

"We are looking at legislation. So, we are looking at two different Acts.

"We are already looking at incorporating a new body that has the powers and the authority to advise the government on data and measures around it moving

ahead," he told *The Star* at the CloudTech & DataCentre Conference 2026 here yesterday.

Gobind did not reveal the two Acts or specify when the commission would be established, saying the proposal was still under development.

He said the commission should not merely formulate rules but also have the power to enforce them.

"It's not just thinking about how things are done, but it's also about building structures to ensure that, if rules and regulations are created so that the space that we live in is safe, then there is an organisation that has the power to enforce those rules and regulations," he said.

Gobind said different forms of data required varying levels of

protection, contrasting information on a hospital's monthly medication purchases with patients' medical records.

He said the commission should comprise specialists in data protection, governance, enforcement and laboratory work who could analyse products, investigate complaints and provide expert evidence in court.

Personal data used in connection with AI must also be properly managed, he added.

In a separate development, Gobind said Malaysia was preparing for the wider use of autonomous vehicles, with network upgrades targeted for completion by year-end and legal changes being considered to allow vehicles to operate without human drivers.

He added that the country's network was "almost ready" to support autonomous vehicle activity but still required further upgrades.

"We are looking at that, and that's one of the areas that we are trying to complete within the next quarter, before the end of the year," he said.

Gobind said that existing laws expressly required vehicles on public roads to be operated by qualified drivers.

"Having a vehicle that operates without a driver is something that requires legal changes as well," he said.

"That's where we have to start looking at streamlining laws for that purpose. So, we're also in the process of doing that."

He said an autonomous vehicle

test run had been done in Cyberjaya for more than a year, while Pos Malaysia had introduced autonomous buses within its compound in Shah Alam.

Such systems could eventually be replicated in ports and other industries, he added.

Gobind said the deployment of autonomous vehicles would require coordination among the Digital and Transport ministries, local authorities and other agencies, particularly in dealing with accidents, traffic-camera footage, vehicle data and emergency systems.

"There are so many things that are actually happening at once in this ecosystem.

"That's where the Digital Ministry comes in, and that's what AI Nation is about," he said.