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Malaysia needs 27,000 cybersecurity knowledge workers by end-2025



The scarcity of skilled talent is a concern for SMEs that lack resources and expertise, making them vulnerable to cybercriminals. (Freepik pic)

The demand for workers with expertise in cybersecurity will almost double in the next two years, according to communications and digital minister Fahmi Fadzil.

Citing a new joint study by the department of skills development (JPK), The Centre for Instructor and Advanced Skill Training (CIAST) and CyberSecurity Malaysia, Fahmi said the country will need 27,000 such workers by the end of 2025, up from the 15,248 on the payroll now.

“This means there is a shortfall of almost 12,000 workers,” he said at the launch of Cyber Digital Services, Defence and Security Asia 2023 (CyberDSA 2023) conference today.

“The scarcity of skilled talent is a concern for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that lack resources and expertise, making them vulnerable to cybercriminals,” Fahmi said.

He added that remote and hybrid work arrangements also has increased the demand for skills as unmanaged devices could pose major security threats.

Citing the ISC Squared (ISC2) Cybersecurity Workforce Study 2022, Fahmi said there is now a shortfall of 3.4 million cybersecurity knowledge workers worldwide.

“There is an acute shortage of cybersecurity professionals who are not only sufficiently equipped with the right technical skills but also possess creativity and deep understanding of both technology and human behaviour,” he added.

Cybersecurity training

To meet the demand, the Malaysian government is supporting the development of cybersecurity education and capacity building programmes at home.

Among them are the Global Accreditation Cybersecurity Education Certification Scheme (Global ACE), CyberGuru and Cyber Range Consortium by CyberSecurity Malaysia.

Global ACE is a holistic framework that recognises and certifies cybersecurity personnel, while CyberGuru is a platform offering training programmes across various competencies to foster innovation for robust cybersecurity defences.

“In collaboration with higher learning public institutions, Cyber Range Consortium will be established to address the scarcity of talent and the national cybersecurity workforce gap,” Fahmi said.

He added that it will be offering a comprehensive cybersecurity curriculum and realistic simulation environments.

In addition, he said, this will bring together diverse organisations to establish agile cyber ranges for education and training to empower professionals and defend against cyber threats effectively.

The three-day expo, themed advancing digitalisation and security through collaboration, seeks to create a platform for networking, exchange of ideas and forging alliances that will drive the nation towards a more secure digital future, a statement from the organiser said.

CyberDSA 2023 spotlights cutting-edge cybersecurity technologies and innovations, with over 100 exhibitors demonstrating their expertise.