

## Budget 2023 will boost rural digital economy - Mohd Shahar

KOTA BHARU - The government would be boosting the rural digital economy through Budget 2023 to be tabled this October, said Deputy Finance Minister I, Datuk Mohd Shahar Abdullah.

He said that based on the findings through e-Dagang (e-commerce), the increase was 7.7 per cent in the first quarter of 2022 and valued at RM288.2 billion compared with RM267.2 million recorded during the same period last year.

"The Finance Ministry is, therefore, also expecting the digital economy prospects in 2023 to further improve, thus fulfilling the government's desire to ensure that digitalisation also occurs in the rural areas.

"We see that the e-Dagang market is expanding rapidly since a few years ago, Therefore, we will see the need, through Budget 2023, to further boost rural digital technology.

"In fact, with the current expansion of e-Dagang, we can say that the country is on the right track to having an e-Dagang market size of RM1.65 trillion by 2025."

Mohd Shahar said this to reporters after officiating at the Kadok state constituency-level Merdeka@Komuniti Keluarga Malaysia Programme at Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK) Kadok, Ketereh, here, today.

He said the **Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM)** recorded a total sum of RM1.09 trillion in e-Dagang transactions in 2021, up by 21.8 per cent from RM896.4 billion in 2020, the first time where the transactions exceeded RM1 trillion.

"From that sum, we can see a bigger opportunity through the digital economy, thus the implementation of various initiatives should be focused on and not just in the big cities.

"In fact, it should be widened to reach all levels of society including the minority communities in the rural areas in tandem with the technology implemented by the Communications and Multimedia Ministry," he said.

Mohd Shahar also said that the country was expected to be facing some economic challenges next year.

"Hence, Budget 2024 will also be looking at subsidies for the consumers and some drastic measures to revive the economy so that next year, we will have enough funds to look after the welfare and health of the people.

"We can't avoid the external factors but we can make preparations with the prospective initiatives so that Budget 2023 will be able to cushion the adverse effects if any," he added. – BERNAMA

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