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Malaysian Space Board Act 2022 to regulate country's space, space-related activities

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PUTRAJAYA (Feb 9): The Malaysian Space Board Act 2022, gazetted on Jan 25, will be used to regulate space and establish the Malaysian Space Board to regulate space-related activities, according to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI).

MOSTI, in a statement on Wednesday (Feb 9), said the Malaysian Space Board Bill was passed by Dewan Negara on Dec 9 last year and assented by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah on Jan 19 before it was gazetted as the Malaysian Space Board Act 2022 on Jan 25.

The law stipulates four methods of regulating space activities, which include license to control the safety aspect of space-related activities and launching permit for service providers that carry out space-launching activities from facilities within Malaysia.

The other two methods are launch certificate for space object owners who launch space objects from launch facilities within and outside Malaysia, and registration of space objects that have been successfully launched and operating in orbit.

"The activities that will be licensed under this act are building or manufacturing any space object, to own or operate any facility for integration and testing of space objects, as well as to own or operate any launching facility within Malaysia," it said.

Space, as defined by the law, means a void extending from 100km above sea level to infinity.

It differs from airspace which is below 100km from sea level and used for aviation purposes by the aerospace sector regulated by the Civil Aviation Authority under the Civil Aviation Act 1969.

MOSTI said the establishment of the Malaysian Space Board to regulate space-related activities was for security purposes, to regulate the registration of space objects and to provide for space-related offences and related matters.

"This act will ensure that the space activities in the country are carried out responsibly, safely and securely and comply with all guidelines agreed at the international level, especially through the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)," it said.

Through the act, MOSTI said, the government could ratify space treaties and implement obligations under the international legal framework that would catalyse the country's role in research and development of the space industry towards a New Space Economy.

MOSTI said the act was needed to protect the government from liability for damage caused by any space object such as satellites, spacecraft, launching vehicles and others, including components launched by Malaysians.

"This protection is implemented through the transfer of liabilities and related responsibilities to the actual owners of space objects," it said.

MOSTI said the safety aspect, which included security or "spaceworthiness" of the capabilities of space objects in terms of design, launching activities and the ability to operate safely in space, was the main focus of the implementation of the act.

The Act will also ensure that space-related activities to be carried out comply with all rules and conditions under the law or other existing laws in the country such as the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 and the Strategic Trade Act 2010.

MOSTI said the act would be implemented in stages through the enforcement of provisions which include the establishment of the core team of the Space Superintendent and the Malaysian Space Board expected in the middle of this year.

"The enforcement of other provisions contained in this Act will be upon completion of the formulation of the regulations required for the full enforcement of all provisions contained in the act," it said.