

## KERATAN AKHBAR

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### KL on track to become a startup and digital hub

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**PETALING JAYA:** Plans are afoot to turn Kuala Lumpur into a startup and digital hub to boost the national economy and offer higher wages to workers, says Economy Minister Rafizi Ramli.

He said the plan was among three strategic sectors that would be the government's focus – renewable energy, food security and digital economy.

"The next focus is developing the digital industry. My team is working to boost the digital economy in the coming months," he said in a statement yesterday.

Rafizi said there were offers from experts abroad to help develop the digital hub.

He said during a meeting with investment firm Thiel Capital managing director Jack Selby, a veteran in developing startup hubs, at the Qatar Economic Forum last week, the latter offered to make KL a digital hub.

"He expressed interest in helping shape the target I have outlined for Kuala Lumpur as a hub for startups. Selby's expertise is unique because of his efforts to develop Arizona in the United States as a new startup centre outside of Silicon Valley in California, which is now increasingly successful in attracting startups.

"His experience in Arizona can be used to formulate policies and programmes to boost Kuala Lumpur's status as a leading digital destination in the region," he added.

Rafizi said Selby was among the first employees of PayPal along with the company's found-

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Rafizi Ramli

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ing group – Elon Musk, Peter Thiel and Reid Hoffman.

"PayPal's founding group became the main force driving the digital industry from Silicon Valley through their involvement in well-known digital companies, including Tesla, SpaceX, YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn and OpenAI," he added.

Rafizi said his ministry was working with other ministries to achieve the digital economy target.

"The government is focusing on coordinating the public support system towards an integrated approach for a more effective digital ecosystem.

"We will begin the development of concepts and coordination of functions towards the implementation of a digital government that produces data-based and digital public service products in an integrated manner," he added.