

## KERATAN AKHBAR

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### Rafizi hits back at LFL's call to suspend Padu



Economy minister Rafizi Ramli speaking to the media during a press conference in Menara Prisma, Putrajaya.

PUTRAJAYA: Economy minister Rafizi Ramli has hit back at a rights group for suggesting that the Central Database Hub, or Padu initiative, be suspended until the Personal Data Protection Act 2010 (PDPA) is amended.

Earlier today, Lawyers for Liberty noted that the government is exempted from liability under the PDPA, warning that this puts the public at a “terrible disadvantage” and danger of loss or damage in case of a data security issue.

Responding to these claims, Rafizi said government agencies are covered by their own regulations on data – and not PDPA.

“As we speak, you (media) all have tonnes of data in government databases. If you project the same argument ... that without PDPA applying to this data, then the government cannot proceed with any process involving the public. So, all (government) agencies must close,” he said at a press conference here.

“I was hoping LFL would first understand (the difference) between (data under) PDPA and publicly available data. Each of these (government) agencies are covered by their own regulations on data. If it’s JPJ (road transport department) data, then data privacy falls under the Act that governs them.

“I would have thought that a ‘so-called’ lawyers group would have understood that.

“If we start talking about laws we don’t understand, we look silly.”

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim launched Padu on Tuesday to serve as a central database for the rollout of targeted subsidies, one of the government’s priorities for 2024.

Rafizi said the decision to let government agencies handle the Padu initiative was intended to limit third-party access to the people’s data.

“People don’t know that when a system is developed by a third party, so many hands have access (to the data).

“More often than not, those who have this access are vendors or third parties who are not accountable for data security,” he said, adding that public servants were bound to laws such as the Official Secrets Act.

This process will also build and centralise expertise in cybersecurity in the government, he said.

Rafizi said within 48 hours of Padu being launched, 516,168 people had registered. Of this number, more than 261,000 had passed the electronic Know-Your-Customer verification stage.

He added that the highest number of registrations were from those living in urban areas, with Selangor topping the list.