KEYNOTES ADDRESS BY
THE HONOURABLE ADLY BIN ZAHARI
DEPUTY DEFENCE MINISTER OF MALAYSIA
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SIBER SIAGA PROGRAMME 2023
KUALA LUMPUR CONVENTION CENTRE

16 AUGUST 2023, WEDNESDAY

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

May peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah SWT be upon you all, Salam Sejahtera and Salam Madani to all.

His Excellency General Tan Sri Dato' Sri Hj Affendi bin Buang, Chief of Defence Force;

His Excellency General Tan Sri Dato' Sri (Dr) Hj Zulkifeli bin Mohd Zin (Retired), Chairman of Perbadanan Hal Ehwal Bekas Angkatan Tentera (PERHEBAT)

His Excellency Tan Sri Asmat Kamaludin, Chairman of Aerosea Exhibitions Sdn Bhd, the organiser of CyberDSA 2023

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

1.   With a heart full of gratitude, let us express our thanks to Allah SWT for His most generous blessings and permission, as we gather today on this joyful occasion to celebrate the Siber Siaga 2023 programme. I also would like to extend my appreciation to the organizers for inviting me to deliver the Keynote Address for this special event.

2.   I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all participants, especially members of the ASEAN Cyber Defence Network Meeting. The Ministry of Defence Malaysia is proud to be able to host the ACDN meeting alongside the CyberDSA exhibition.

3.   Allow me to also extend my gratitude for the successful collaboration between the Defence Cyber and Electromagnetic Division and CyberDSA in organizing the Siber Siaga 2023. Hosting the programme demonstrates the commitment of the Malaysian Armed Forces to safeguarding our cyberspace domain. This achievement is truly remarkable, underscoring the importance of a unified approach to strengthening our nation's cybersecurity ecosystem.

Distinguished guests,

4.   Today, information holds supreme value, so, safeguarding our digital data is exceptionally important. As we push the boundaries of technology to become regional leaders in fields like Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things, and blockchain, we also expose ourselves to cyber challenges. Ultimately, national security will be at risk. Still, these challenges should not prevent us from innovation; rather, a call to strengthen our defences.

5.   Building robust cybersecurity measures and fostering a culture of security awareness is critical. Without them, incidents such as data breaches to disruptions of Critical Infrastructure will erode the integrity and credibility of our defence mechanism. This could, in turn, create uncertainty among investors and citizens. I cannot deny that today's battlefront extends beyond land, sea, and air to include the cyber world.

6. In this right, the Defence White Paper underscores the need to establish a dedicated organization to handle the cyber domain. Subsequently, the Ministry of Defence is to collaborate with central agencies to formulate a new structure for the Defence Cyber and Electromagnetic Division, enabling the Malaysian Armed Forces to align with other defence cyber organizations in the region, and globally.

Ladies, and gentlemen,

7. Living in an era where technology is advancing rapidly, our reliance on digital networks is vital, from communication to commerce, even in healthcare and national security. However, along with this dependence, come risks that we must identify and address, not alone but together.

8. The Siber Siaga 2023 Programme, themed "Defending Cyberspace and National Sovereignty," aims to enhance awareness of cybersecurity among the Malaysian Armed Forces, the defence and security community and all Malaysian. The programme seeks to expand cooperation and reinforce cross-sector collaboration among government agencies, industry players, academia and the cyber community.

9. I hope, the platform will support in enabling a foundation for a comprehensive and inclusive collaboration among sectors, and ideally contribute to the concept of Comprehensive Defence, one of the strategic pillars of Malaysia's Defence Strategy.

10. To better enhance our collaboration and understanding of the current warfare landscape, today we bring to you an interesting topic titled *"Modern Digital Battlefield: Connectivity, Lethality, Autonomy, and Sustainability,"*

11. The Modern Digital Battlefield is a dynamic and complex environment that requires constant adjustment and the use of emerging cyber technologies, to achieve military objectives while minimizing undesired effects. It is defined by **four pillars**; *Connectivity*, *Lethality*, *Autonomy*, and *Sustainability*. Allow me to explain further the four pillars.

   - **Connectivity** provides real-time coordination capabilities. While it is extremely important in modern warfare, the digital and cyber domain boundaries remain unknown, therefore displaying a more complex setting, making planning, monitoring and mitigation efforts far more challenging.

   - Enhanced **lethality** is all about accuracy and reduces collateral damage. In this context, it does not refer to only traditional military strength, but also to the potential of cyber-attacks, that could disrupt governments, economies, and societies on a large scale. The results are significant, and our responsibility to safeguard all forms of assets and minimize the risk is important.

- The concept of **Autonomy** brings challenges and opportunities. When we create systems capable of making independent decisions, such as unmanned systems, we must be able to deal with unforeseen ethical questions and risks. Striking a balance between digitalization and humane control is a challenge that warrants deep discussion;

- Finally, **Sustainability** focuses on employing innovation for continued operations while minimizing environmental impact. In the digital domain, continuous strategic efforts coupled with a skilled workforce to protect our digital future are extremely important.

Together, these elements shape a dynamic and complex battlefield, demanding strategic planning and responsible actions.

Esteemed guests and participants,

12. In this forum, we will hear insights from experts, visionary leaders, and prominent thinkers who will share their knowledge and experiences. It is my hope that the participants will engage in open and productive discussions, share best practices, and mutually shape the path forward to protect our digital world.

13. In closing, it is important to acknowledge that there is nothing impossible in managing cyber challenges today. By sharing our knowledge, experiences, and creativity, we can construct a digital landscape that focuses on safety, resilience, and the well-being of our digital world, even though it spans thousands of kilometres.

14.	In this respect, I encourage everyone to actively participate, challenge perspectives, and contribute unique viewpoints to upcoming discussions. Together, we can illuminate the future of the modern digital arena.

15.	I shall not hold the session any longer, hence let me conclude my speech with, Wabillahi Taufiq Wal Hidayah Wasalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh dan Salam Madani.