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Bill is to boost multimedia

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has the prerogative to set up a new ministry, rename an existing ministry or assign a minister to communications and multimedia functions.

Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Minister Datuk Leo Moggie said the setting up of a ministry is provided for under the Ministerial Functions Act 1969.

He was asked to comment whether a ministry will be set up in charge of communications and multimedia.

The Communications and Multimedia Bill, which has been tabled for second reading at the Parliament, does not have any provisions for the setting up of a ministry. Instead, a Communications and Multimedia Commission will be established.

"The Bill was drawn up to create a framework for the information technology and communication industry, and not the setting up of a new ministry. "The rationale for the Bill is to facilitate rather than regulate or control the industry and provide confidence for the set-up mechanism in the industry to grow," he said adding that the industry will play a bigger role to regulate itself using the industry forum.

The industry forum which is open to all relevant parties may prepare a voluntary industry code to deal with any matter pertaining to the Act on its own initiative or under the directive of the Commission.

Leo Moggie said the Bill which is more transparent also provides for the establishment of an Appeals Tribunal which will convene on an ad-hoc basis to facilitate procedures for appeal if players are unhappy with the Commission decision.

The Appeal Tribunal will be chaired by a High Court judge with at least two other members who are industry experts.

He said however that it is better for the industry to be regulated under a ministry and a regulator.

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