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New commission to be independent

Kamarul Yunus

THE proposed Communications and Multimedia Commission will be an independent regulatory agency with similar functions to the Securities Commission (SC), Minister of Energy, Communications and Multimedia Datuk Leo Moggie said.

"This is in line with the Government's move to promote a more independent regulatory agency within the various industries," he told reporters after the opening of the four-day Asean Telecom '98 conference and exhibition in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Leo Moggie said the Commission, which will supervise competition and encourage growth in the communications and multimedia industry, will also draw up its own rules and staffing structure.

"The commission will be independent, similar to the SC. So it will not function as a government department; it will be a separate entity.

"We think this will provide the Commission greater flexibility in formulating their rules and drawing out the necessary staffing," he said.

Leo Moggie hoped that members of the Commission will be appointed as soon as possible.

He was asked to elaborate on the structure of the Commission, following the appointment of Dr Syed Hussein Mohamed as its chairman.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had announced the proposed setting up of the Commission last Friday.

The Commission was proposed following the renaming of the former Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Ministry to Energy, Communications and Multimedia Ministry.

The Commission for Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 provides for a single and more independent regulatory body to ensure healthy and competitive operations within the industry.

Leo Moggie also said the setting up of the Commission, which will take over the powers of certain departments such as the Department of Telecommunications and Department of Broadcasting, will also involve some staff restructuring.

"For that reason, the Public Services Department will make recommendations on how to carry out staff restructuring in the affected departments," he said.

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