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Moggie-Sirim

SIRIM TO ABSORB SOME OF THE FUNCTIONS OF TELECOMS DEPARTMENT

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 28 (Bernama) -- Sirim Bhd is expected to absorb some of the functions of the Telecommunications Department when the department is replaced by the Communications and Multimedia Commission on April 1.

Energy, Communications and Multimedia Minister Datuk Leo Moggie said today discussions were underway for Sirim to take over functions like the approval of equipment.

"Sirim already has this function in other industries. The ministry and other relevant agencies are talking to see if this will be the better option," he told reporters after launching Malaysia's first e-mail paging for network personal computers called "Easy Reach".

Moggie said currently the approval and testing of telephone equipment and communications gadgets were carried out by the Telecommunications Department.

"I don't see the necessity for such things to be done by the commission. Sirim has the capacity to do that while the commission can be involved more with issues pertaining to competition, dealing with other countries, and commercial, rather than technical matters," he said.

Moggie confirmed that the commission would commence operations on April 1 when the Telecommunications Act 1950 and the Broadcasting Act 1981 were replaced by the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998.

He said the staffing structure of the commission was being attended to, and a briefing and workshop on this matter would be held on the third week of February.

"We will explain to the industry players and also expect to get some feedback from them. This will help us finalise the draft on some of the regulations that needed to be put in place," he said.

The establishment of the commission was announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad last October. The commission will be the sole supervisory body on communications and multimedia activities.

Moggie also said that five pilot projects had been identified in applying alternative technologies for wider access to Information Technology (IT) for people living in rural areas.

"We hope to start next month. We need to know how to bring access and what type of content the people need. This pilot project will give us some idea," said Moggie, who is also the chairman of the Electronic Community Task Force.

-- BERNAMA

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