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MOGGIE-TARIFF

REVIEW ON FIXED LINE TELEPHONE TARIFFS LIKELY, SAYS MOGGIE

CYBERJAYA, May 9 (Bernama) -- The fixed line telephone tariffs will be reviewed if the call rate pattern does not show reduction in cost for long distance and international, Energy, Communications and Multimedia minister, Datuk Amar Leo Moggie said today.

The ministry he said was awaiting records from Telekom Malaysia Bhd on the actual samples of call rate pattern since the implementation of the new tariffs in March and the company was to submit the figures by next month.

"If it's not like what we thought before, we can find a way to request them to review but based on what we thought previously, the the bill should go down other than the few who make just purely local calls," he told reporters after launching the City Broadband Internet access services here.

The wireless broadband service is believed to be the world's first commercial wireless service using prepaid card system.

The minister, who was asked to comment on calls to lower the telephone rates, said when the government allowed the fixed line rates to be re-adjusted in March, the objective was to ensure that there would be increasing downward trend on the cost of long distance and international and to achieve that the subsidy component on the local sector was reduced.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad himself had on May 3 urged Telekom Malaysia to lower the rates so that more people could use telecommunication facilities.

Under the new rates, international call charges have been cut by 7.0 to 67 percent while national call charges made beyond 25km distance were slashed between 23 and 54 percent. However the tariff for local calls was increased by 1.0 sen from 3.0 sen per minute.

Telekom Malaysia enjoys more than 90 percent of Malaysia's fixed line market.

Moggie said pending the figures from Telekom Malaysia, the government was urging telecommunication companies especially the operators of leased line to offer more competitive rates for the benefit of customers.

"Now that you have optic cable being installed, quite extensive network of optic cable throughout the country, the chances are that size cable carry so many channel signals and the cost of technology is going to go down.

"So this is what we are also looking at for companies to keep on reviewing and transmitting the advantage of improved technology to the consumers," he said.

On the launch of the broadband facility in Cyberjaya, Moggie commended Setia Haruman Technology City Broadband for taking the initiative and he attributed it to the decision made by the government last year to open up the operation of the infrastructure service network facilities to all operators.

Previously, Telekom Malaysia monopolised the operation of the infrastructure network within the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) including Cyberjaya.

The minister also called on Malaysians to improve the local content on the internet with attractive format including online television as provided by other countries, especially now that the network infrastructure was already in place.

City Broadband is a dedicated broadband internet access service from Setia Haruman Technology Sdn Bhd, the IT arm of Setia Haruman Sdn Bhd,

master developer of Cyberjaya Flagship Zone Township.

It is now available to all businesses and houses in Cyberjaya, providing internet connection at speed up to 50 times faster than traditional dial-up services provided by the other internet service providers (ISPs).

The wireless broadband service is based on the highly popular 802.11b standard, known as WiFi, which has the transmission capacity of up to 11Mbps. -- BERNAMA

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