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Internet broadband service for schools

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JELI, Sat. - All 10,000 government primary and secondary schools nationwide will be connected with the Internet broadband service in a project to be undertaken by the Energy, Communications and Multimedia Ministry soon.

Minister Datuk Amar Leo Moggie said the "schoolnet project" would start this year and should be completed by the middle of next year.

"We are doing the costing now but the budget is not expected to be very high as about 2,000 to 3,000 schools, especially in the urban areas, are already connected," he said after chairing a dialogue with residents at the ministry's open day with clients held at the Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Air Lanas here today.

Present were National Economic Action Council executive director Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, Telekom Malaysia deputy chief executive Datuk Dr Abdul Rahim Daud and TNB Distribution Berhad managing director Datuk Engku Hashim Al-Edrus.

Also present were representatives of agencies under the ministry, telecommunication service providers and television stations (TV3 and Astro).

Moggie said the project would be undertaken under a special budget provided by the Treasury. "The ministry will only provide the lines while the other equipment including computer sets will be taken care by the Education Ministry."

On the Government's plan to merge Internet service providers, TMnet and Jaring, as announced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the recent Budget, Moggie said both Telekom and Mimos Bhd which are in charge of the services would be asked to meet soon to implement the decision.

He said the Government which had investments in both Telekoms and Mimos felt it was better for them to be consolidated to provide wider services.

"The decision has been made. It is just a matter of implementing the decision, but it will be better if it can be done earlier," he said.

Moggie said the decision did not mean that other companies could not provide Internet services.