

**No exclusive 700MHz spectrum for YTL**  
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The government continued to deny claims of awarding the highly coveted 700MHz spectrum to YTL Communications Sdn Bhd.

Information, Communications and Culture Minister Rais Yatim (left) asserted that Internet regulator, the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) had never given approval to anyone to run in the 700MHz band.

This was brought up by opposition MP Jeff Ooi (DAP-Jelutong) in Dewan Rakyat today when debating a motion tabled by Mahfuz Omar (PAS-Pokok Sena) to dock RM10 from the minister's salary.

The broadband spectrums are sought after by telecommunications and multimedia companies as it is considered the next wave of new technology.

Ooi, asked why the government had silently awarded the spectrum to YTL, owned by property and real estate tycoon Francis Yeoh.

A shouting debacle took place as Ooi argued that contract awarded was clearly an act of cronyism and lacked transparency.

"It also means that if YTL is awarded the spectrum without consideration to other MCMC licensees in the industry, including Telekom Malaysia, Axiata, Maxis, Digi, Packet One, among others.

"This has become a monopoly. It is similar to a 100m race where YTL was given a 50m head start while the rest are left behind. Why was YTL given this privilege?" he asked adding that without equal opportunities other operators would either have to shut down or fork out to purchase bandwidth from YTL.

Little knowledge is dangerous

However, Rais continued to deny awarding YTL Comms the 700MHz and instead accused Ooi of making "unfounded statements".

"The two spectrum commodities - the 700MHz and 2.6GHz spectrums - are apparatus assignments (AA) - that are important to help us in the future to compete in the communications sector... the 700MHz spectrum is controlled by MCMC and is important for our future programmes," said Rais rubbishing allegations that of the award merely as "hearsay".

"It is easy to use eloquence to blame MCMC but it is not proper. This is akin to punishing a person before asking the question, instead of asking the question first, and then meeting out the punishment," he said.

"I would like to state here that little knowledge is dangerous," he said.

But he admitted to Ooi's claim that Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak needed to intervene to resolve the unhappiness among the other operators.

NONEOoi (right) defended that MCMC took two days before refuting the award of the bandwidth and in that time the premier had met with officials from Axiata to sort out the mess.

"If there is no wind, the leaves on the tree will not sway," said Ooi. But Rais stood his ground and pointed out that Najib "had every right to meet with the telecommunication chiefs".

It was reported by news portal The Malaysian Insider that YTL bagged a five-year concession to operate in the 700MHz bandwidth for paid television to break satellite television, Astro's monopoly.

According to the report, MCMC had bypassed the rules in the recent AA exercise for the 700MHz and the 2.5/2.6GHz spectrum.

Mahfuz in moving the motion, had also laid the blame of Rais for state owned media, Radio Television Malaysia (RTM), "unfair" coverage of the recent floods that beleaguered the northern states, mainly Kedah.

The motion was however, rejected as the BN backbenchers stood firm behind Rais and argued that the state government had failed to tackle the flood problem and RM10 should be deducted from the Menteri Besar's salary instead.

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