

# Keng Yaik: Work together

## Share facilities, WiMax firms told

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The four WiMax licence winners will have to sit down together, under the watchful eye of the Energy, Water and Communications Minister, to work out the sharing infrastructure for rolling out the wireless broadband network.

Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said he wanted them to set up a joint company in which all four would have equal share, and own the equipment and facilities needed on a shared basis.

"The vendors are all waiting. But I say 'wait'. Don't go and buy four sets of transmitters. Why not group together and buy just one set?" he said.

He added that instead of the four companies forking out RM300mil to RM400mil each to put their own infrastructure in place to roll out their service, it made better sense to share the facilities and split the cost.

This way, he said, they could concentrate on service and content.

Malaysia, he said, had learnt from its experience of 20 years ago when it first started the telcos without realising the need for shared facilities and domestic roaming, resulting in each going its own way.

So for WiMax (Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access), Dr Lim said he would have the four sit down before him and agree to buy the equipment together.

"I have sounded out the WiMax licence winners and they have said 'Minister, it is a good idea.' But if I leave it to the four to go to the coffeehouse and negotiate, it will be until the cows come home. But if it's in front of the minister, do you think they will say it's difficult to sign an agreement?" he said, adding that shared facilities would mean that Malaysian consumers would have to pay less for the service.

Last month, the Government announced that it had awarded the WiMax licence to Asiaspace Dotcom Sdn Bhd, Redtone-CNX Broadband Sdn Bhd, Bizsurf (M) Sdn Bhd (a unit of YTL Corp) and Packet One Networks Sdn Bhd (formerly known as MIB Comm).



**Dr Lim** Wants the four WiMax licence winners to buy the equipment together

WiMax is a technology that enables wireless broadband access in a similar fashion to Wi-Fi but on a larger scale, covering a greater distance with higher speed.

Dr Lim was speaking at a press conference after the signing ceremony between MiTV Corporation Sdn Bhd and Celcom (Malaysia) Bhd for a domestic roaming agreement.

Dr Lim said Malaysia must learn to live, share and do business based on competition rather than monopoly.

He lamented how his colleagues in the Cabinet were "walloping" him every week over the lack of mobile phone coverage in the rural areas.

He pointed out that in China, one could get connected everywhere including in tunnels and towers, yet here, there were blind spots even in Putrajaya, the Government's administrative centre.

In humour typical of the minister, he said, mobile companies here should quickly provide network wherever politicians died and there were by-elections, because he did not want to be criticised again over poor mobile coverage.

"I tak boleh tahan lagi (I can't take it any more). For no reason, I get walloped. Now you know why I cry. I cry for the rakyat," he said, in reference to him shedding tears on Sunday at the Gerakan extraordinary national delegates conference when he resigned as the party president.