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Share with smaller players, big telcos told

By **LOONG TSE MIN**

KUALA LUMPUR: The big boys in the telecommunications industry have been urged to share with smaller players to open the industry further.

“The industry must not be controlled by a monopoly.

“The incumbents must learn how to share the access to spur the industry,” Energy, Water and Communications Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik told reporters at the National Telecommunications Conference 2006 yesterday.

By incumbents, he was referring to the fixed line, mobile and wireless broadband operators in the country who have been allocated with service licences or any of the telecommunications spectrums.

The minister also said the government was looking at ways and means to reduce the dominant position of incumbent telcos, with unbundling being a key issue that needed to be tackled.



Dr Lim Keng Yaik replying to questions at Monday's conference

“If the infrastructure is produced by one and only one company, it is therefore a monopoly, and it will want to take advantage of its monopoly to charge monopoly prices.

“Then the regulator will have to get the monopoly to share its infrastructure with others, either by mandate or by encouraging more competition.



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“It must be mandatory for the infrastructure owner to open it for access, regulated by the various parties,” he said.

Dr Lim also said that the country still had a long way to go in achieving the target of 75% broadband penetration rate for households from the current 3%.

As part of the push to increase broadband penetration, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) launched the MyICMS 886 last December.

The five-year ICT development blueprint focuses on eight services, eight infrastructure and six growth areas.

The eight services are High-Speed Broadband, 3G and Beyond, Mobile TV, Digital Multimedia Broadcasting, Digital Home, Short Range Communications using RFID (Radio Frequency Identification), VoIP/ Internet Telephony and Universal Service Provisioning.

The eight infrastructure areas to be developed to support the roll-out of these services include the provisioning for hard infrastructure, such as multi-convergence networks; 3G cellular networks; satellite communications networks; the development of soft infrastructure such as Next Generation Internet protocol or IPV6; information and network security; Internet adoption; skill development; and enhanced product and design capabilities.

The six areas of growth are content development, ICT education hub, digital multimedia receivers, communication devices, embedded components and devices, and foreign ventures.

In the shorter term, MCMC is targeting household broadband penetration to reach 25%, which will mean 1.3 million subscriber lines, by year-end from the 700,000 lines currently in service.

The agency is also targeting a 50% broadband penetration rate for households by 2008.

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