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CYBERJAYA: The Government wants the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission to find out why the cost of Internet services in the country is high.

Information, Communications, Culture and Arts Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said that apart from the high cost of getting Internet connection, the public was also generally unhappy with the quality of the service, particularly its speed.

Consumers' main grouse is that they are charged more compared to users in other countries but the quality of service is not up to mark.

We want to know how it (cost) can be brought down and at the same time improve on the quality, he told reporters after a briefing at the commission's office here yesterday.

Dr Rais also wanted the commission to ensure service providers delivered what they had promised so that consumers were not short-changed.

If they promised Internet speed at 10 megabits per second, the public should not be experiencing a slow-as-tortoise service at one or two megabits, he said.

He said action must be taken against service providers who failed to meet expectations.

Dr Rais said efforts must also be taken to close the digital gap between rural and urban areas, adding that fixed telephone line providers must expedite the laying of optical fibre cables so that people in villages could also enjoy Internet service.

On another matter, the minister said 11 cases related to violations of cyberspace which include sending lewd and vulgar SMS and e-mail and insulting comments on the Sultan of Perak had been taken to court.

He said several other similar cases have also been referred to the Attorney-General's Chambers for further action.

Dr Rais reminded the commission of its responsibility to ensure all cyberspace users adhered to laws and regulations, adding that it should not hesitate to take action against violators.

I must, however, stress that we are not practising censorship but there are laws that need to be respected and adhered to.

The public's interest and safety, as well as the country's security need to be looked after and that is why the commission must do its job to see to it that users follow guidelines, he said.

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