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TIME TELECOM TO RECOUP RM60 MLN INVESTMENT IN NINE YEARS

LABUAN, Aug 29 (Bernama) -- Time Telecommunications Sdn Bhd is optimistic that it would be able to recoup its RM60-million investment in Labuan in six to nine years as was confident the island would emerge as a successful financial centre.

Group chairman Datuk Shamsir Omar said the Sheraton Labuan Hotel, located just across the road from the RM360-million Labuan Financial Park, had already signed up for telecommunication services.

"The first residential customer was connected on Tuesday," he told reporters in conjunction with the official opening of the park and Labuan Fest by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

Datuk Shamsir said Time Telecom launched its telecommunication services in Labuan to meet the needs of the high-calibre centre which required high quality, sophisticated and advanced telecommunication services.

Time Telecom's RM60-million thrust into Labuan in telecommunication infrastructure included the commissioning of its earth station in Kampung Sungei Beduan, the laying of a fibre optic cable stretching 21 km from the earth station to the Financial Park and the setting up of an office in Victoria Town.

The earth station, which transmits via the Pan-Am Satellite, would facilitate provision of leased line services as well as serve as back-up to the fibre optic cable for voice services.

Datuk Shamsir said the company's investment in Labuan also underscored Time Telecom's commitment as a telecommunications infrastructure developer and service provider to expand its services to cover the length and breadth of the country.

Time Telecom, which underwent a period of uncertainty when the government proposed rationalisation of the telecommunication service providers, has so far invested over RM2 billion to set up a comprehensive fibre optic transmission network, he added.

"Our arrival in Labuan marks the beginning of a new phase of growth in which we spread our wings to this part of Malaysia," he said.

The company's immediate focus would be on rapidly expanding its customer base for fixed-line services and extending the network coverage to all main population centres.

Datuk Shamsir said: "Time Telekom has emerged as a total telecommunications provider which is further enhanced with Sapura Digital Sdn Bhd and Uniphone Sdn Bhd joining our stable."

Meanwhile, Time Telecom managing director Robert Harvey said the company was serving 80 to 90 companies nationwide and "we have 6,000 orders for our services."

On the issue of interconnection with Telekom Malaysia, he said, it was being fully implemented and there was no longer any problem.

Harvey said more than 50 percent of the Financial Park market was being eyed by Celcom, with Telekom Malaysia Bhd being the alternate provider.

"We are also trying to position ourselves as a regional telecommunication provider with a fibre optic connection with Singapore and Thailand already in place," he added. -- BERNAMA

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