

28/10/1997

THB will be stronger after crisis: Mokhzani

Foo Eu Jin

TONGKAH Holdings Bhd (THB) will emerge from the current stock market and currency crisis stronger than ever, says THB's executive chairman, Mokhzani Mahathir.

Speaking to reporters after THB's joint venture signing ceremony yesterday, Mokhzani said that the companies owned by him and his elder brother, Mirzan, are sound, contrary to rumours in the market, adding that he has even been offered to buy a public listed company at a low price.

Mokhzani said that Hospital Pantai Bhd has ample cash reserves from the sale of Parkway Holdings Ltd in Singapore for RM686 million recently.

Touching on his elder brother's companies, he said that Mirzan is a very prudent businessman and in situations as the present, he (Mokhzani) is sure that Mirzan's group of companies will have the right set-up and come out stronger in the end.

Mokhzani said that any company which is highly geared, be it Bumiputera, Chinese or Indian-owned, is likely to get into trouble, under the present economic conditions.

In order to make Malaysia the regional hub for telemedicine services across Asia, THB has entered into a joint venture with three companies to provide an integrated, comprehensive and cost-effective range of telemedicine services in the country.

The project will be undertaken by a joint-venture company called WorldCare Health (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd in which THB and Worldcare Ltd (USA) each will hold 30 per cent, whilst Concorde Investments Ltd (Saudi Arabia) holds 25 per cent and Mitsubishi Corp (Japan), 15 per cent.

Mokhzani said that the joint venture will invest RM15 million on digital and PC-based equipment and hopes to be granted Multimedia Super Corridor status in a few months' time.

As to whether this venture will complement THB's medical support services business for the Government, Mokhzani said that this venture goes into the high-end of the medical services business, thus both are entirely two different areas.

He said that users of telemedicine services could either buy digitising equipment themselves or bring their X-ray, for example to WorldCare Health's specialists to have it read.

The transmission of medical records is managed by a specialised information software system called Telemanager, which was developed by WorldCare in co-operation with Massachusetts General Hospital of Harvard University.

(END)