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TRI, Iran's Efsahan in venture deal

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TEHERAN, Thurs: Technology Resources Industries Bhd (TRI) and Telecommunication Co of Efsahan (TCE) of Iran yesterday signed an agreement to incorporate a joint venture company that will provide GSM mobile telecommunications services in Esfahan.

TRI was represented by its executive director Wan Aishah Wan Hamid while TCE was represented by its chairman Ali Nadipour.

The signing ceremony was witnessed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Iranian first Vice President Dr Hassan Ibrahim Habibi.

Also present at the ceremony were Iran's Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones Minister Dr Mohamad Reza Aref and TRI/Celcom chairman Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli.

Yesterday's signing will lead to the formation of a joint venture company in which TRI will hold 49 per cent and TCE will hold the remaining 51 per cent.

The company is expected to launch its services by early next year utilising the GSM infrastructure that was already in place one and a half years ago.

"Although the incorporation of the company takes a longer time, we are pleased now that the joint-venture had been finalised. We are looking forward to getting the consent decree from the Government of Iran so that we can set up the company and commence operations," Tajudin said.

The incorporation of the joint venture company will also enable TRI to finalise the interconnection and roaming agreements with other cities in Iran, thus providing its customers with a wider network coverage.

To date, TRI has invested US\$23 million (US\$1 = RM3.72) to install the GSM system in Esfahan and is expected to increase its investment in the future. As of now TRI has six of its staff in Iran.

It is expected that TRI will be able to get some 15,000 customers in the first year of operations. TRI has set up one mobile switching centre, one base station controller and 20 Radio Base Stations with a capacity of 20,000 which is expandable.

Besides Iran, TRI has also ventured into countries such as Bangladesh, Tanzania and Cambodia.

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