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Telekom has not received merger offer

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CONTRARY to market belief, Telekom Malaysia has not been approached by other parties regarding either mergers or acquisitions.

Chief executive officer Datuk Mohamed Said Mohamed Ali said at present, no company has made a merger offer to Telekom despite talk that the utility company was buying over the US West stake in Binariang.

On the possibility of Telekom acquiring new telecommunications networks after Emartel, he said: "It is premature to say. But we have not been approached by anybody at this time."

He was speaking to reporters in Kuala Lumpur yesterday after an agreement-signing ceremony between Telekom and Meps Joint Venture for the planning, designing and construction of Telekom's Multimedia University.

Mohamed Said noted that at the moment, no local telecommunications firm is seriously considering merger plans.

"However, I believe that all telecommunications companies are contemplating their position, with some of them feeling it could be beneficial for them to merge," he added.

Earlier, Mohamed Said represented Telekom at the signing ceremony, while Meps Joint Venture chairman Datuk Mustapha Kamal Abu Bakar signed on behalf of the company.

The event was witnessed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. Also at the ceremony were Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak and Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Minister Datuk Leo Moggie.

Meps Joint Venture is a consortium of four companies: MKN Holdings, Projass Engineering, Eastbourne Corp and Shorefield Holdings.

The consortium has been appointed to build the university on 80ha of land within Cyberjaya in Sepang. The project will cost Telekom RM350 million.

Mohamed Said said Telekom will still need to invest an additional RM250 million for the proposed university's equipment, furniture and other facilities.

The university complex will comprise student hostels, executive apartments, non-executive apartments, an Islamic centre, multimedia engineering faculty, creative multimedia faculty, administrative building and student centre, library, cyber cafe and lecture complex.

Meps Joint Venture will also be responsible for the provision of certain infrastructure including sports facilities, sewerage treatment plants, a chiller plant, Tenaga Nasional sub-station and water supply.

Stage one of phase one, including the students' accommodation, the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology, staff apartments and lecture facilities will be completed by October this year.

This will be followed by stage two of phase one, covering the Faculty of Creative Multimedia/Management, sports facilities, library and a student centre/administration which will be completed by February-end next year.

Both the Multimedia University and University Telekom are under the management of University Telekom Sdn Bhd.

University Telekom is situated in Bukit Bruang, Malacca. It has a maximum capacity of 7,000 students while the Multimedia University can accommodate 5,000 students.

In his speech earlier, Dr Mahathir said the university plays a critical role in developing the country's human resources, particularly in the area

of Information Technology (IT).

"We need to have controls in this new area. IT is in fact new to mankind and it can be used in daily activities as well as in business and trade ... with proper information, we can handle tasks more efficiently," he said.

He told a press conference later, that for the country's Multimedia Super Corridor project, Malaysia needs to produce 25,000 people a year with expertise and skills in IT.

"We need to produce them very quickly. The Multimedia University will help us in this," he added.

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