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Telekom to only buy items quoted in ringgit

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TELEKOM Malaysia Bhd has adopted the practice of buying equipment only if quoted in ringgit so as to help strengthen the local unit and reduce the company's dependence on foreign currencies like the US dollar and the yen.

Chairman Datuk Ali Hassan yesterday said the company had adopted this practice even before Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad called early this year for more business transactions to be conducted in ringgit.

"Telekom Malaysia had use the ringgit, especially in the purchase of telecommunication equipment, where we require that tenders be done by quoting prices in ringgit rather than using foreign currencies.

"This move was taken immediately after prospects of economic problems became likely since July last year. Since then we have conducted all our business dealings by using the ringgit and not foreign currencies."

He however could not disclose any statistics offhand on the use of the ringgit in Telekom Malaysia's business dealings.

Ali spoke to reporters after the Bangladeshi Telecommunications, Post, Housing and Works Minister, Mohamad Nasim, visited Universiti Telekom in Bukit Beruang, Malacca.

He was asked to comment on calls by Dr Mahathir discouraging the wide use of the US dollar in domestic business transactions as this would further weaken the ringgit.

"If one is going abroad and needs US dollars, he can change the ringgit. But if it's in the country, there is no reason to use the US dollar," Dr Mahathir had said in January.

On the visit by the Bangladeshi Minister, Ali said Telekom Malaysia hoped to expand its investment there in the near future.

"Besides this, we are offering their technical personnel places in Universiti Telekom and our Universiti Multimedia campus in Cyberjaya which will be completed by the end of this year or early next year."

Presently, there are six Bangladeshi students studying at Universiti Telekom.

Telekom Malaysia has awarded places in areas like telecommunications, information technology and business management to the Bangladeshi government.

Ali also said the target was to have overseas students making up 30 per cent of the student population at both universities.

"We hope to have a student population of 20,000 and 30 per cent of this would be from foreign countries," he said,

Telekom's training institutes in Kuala Terengganu and Taiping will be used to accommodate extra students and courses if found necessary.

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