

04 FEB 2002  
ABDULLAH-MERGER  
NO PLAN TO HAVE 11 ANCHOR BANKS

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 4 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said here today that there was no plan to have 11 anchor banks in the country.

"We are not at that level. Let us look at the current situation first, how the merger of banks can be strengthened," he told reporters after chairing the Barisan Nasional (BN) Convention Technical Committee meeting here today.

Abdullah was asked whether there would be 11 anchor banks after the merger process of banking institutions in Malaysia is completed.

Prior to this, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has stressed that there would only be 10 anchor banks in Malaysia and not more than that.

To-date, 10 banks have achieved anchor bank status, except for Bank Utama which has yet to merge with any of the anchor banks.

Bank Utama has been given six months until June to do so. It is currently in discussions with RHB Bank.

Meanwhile, Abdullah was also asked on the consolidation of the telecommunications sector which might eventually see only three anchor companies.

He said that such a merger was important to strengthen the telecommunications sector.

However, he said that it was up to the companies concerned to discuss how to achieve this.

Asked whether this process would take time, he said that compared with the banking merger, the idea concerning the consolidation of the telecommunications sector was introduced only lately.

Abdullah also said that compared to the banks, the number of telecommunication companies in the country was not large. -- BERNAMA

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