

# Shared towers

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## PM: Form a pact to build and manage telecommunication structures

BY NICK LEONG

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has told telecommunication companies to form a "pact" to rid the nation's skyline of unsightly telecommunication towers.

The Prime Minister said they should create a single company to build and manage the towers.

"The move will reduce costs to telcos and ensure that the towers are well maintained, neat and tidy," he said when opening the 77-storey Menara Telekom here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said the proliferation of telecommunication towers in recent years had tarnished the aesthetic beauty of towns and cities.

"The Government hopes the companies would share towers instead of building a tower each in the same place," he said.

The mushrooming of telecommunication towers has been a source of complaints among city dwellers and architects.

While some have claimed that the towers, many perched atop the roof of buildings, are ugly, others have voiced concern on the safety of the structures.

There are five telcos in the country. They are Telekom Bhd, Maxis Communications Bhd, Celcom Bhd, Digi.com Bhd, and Time dotCom Bhd.

Dr Mahathir also said the telcos should strive to provide cellphone coverage to every part of the country.

Although this might be difficult, he said, they were responsible for ensuring that people could be contacted everywhere in the country.

Dr Mahathir also said the Government's privatisation policy had served the country well.

Citing Telekom Bhd as an example, he said the Government used to allocate a large amount of money each year to maintain the former Telekom Department.

He said money that could be used for other development was used to pay the wages of its workers.

But since the privatisation of the department, he said, the Government was not only relieved of the burden but was able to collect tax.

He said Telekom was now making about RM1bil yearly.

Dr Mahathir added that Telekom was able to

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## 800 towers and 1,000 telecommunication buildings

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provide not only better wages to its workers but also better services to the people.

Commenting on the Prime Minister's suggestion to set up a company to erect and maintain telecommunication towers, Telekom subsidiary TM Facilities Sdn Bhd said it had approached other telcos on the matter.

However, although some were receptive to the idea, others were reluctant for "strategic reasons," TM Facilities chief executive officer Hamzah Yacob said.

He said Telekom, the leading telecommunication company in the country, had about 800 telecommunication towers and 1,000 buildings, including exchanges.

Telekom's new headquarters in Jalan Pantai, based on renowned Malaysian sculptor and artist Latiff Mohidin's depiction of a bamboo shoot, has an intelligent building management system.

Telekom chairman Tan Sri Ir Md Radzi Mansor said the system was conceptualised on the platform of providing a productive and cost-effective environment.