

Bank Islam SMS banking

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Bank Islam Malaysia Bhd hopes to entice 5% of its 500,000 ATM-card holders to subscribe to its new bankislam.sms, a short messaging service (SMS)-based product, in the first year of its launch.

Its consumer banking general manager Wan Ismail Wan Yusoh said Bank Islam, which has a customer base of 1.2 million, was one of the pioneer Islamic banks to offer an SMS banking service in Malaysia.

Bankislam.sms, an electronic banking channel, allows Bank Islam customers that are Maxis, Celcom or DiGi subscribers to access their accounts simply by composing and transmitting a short message from their mobile phones. The service starts today.

"Bankislam.sms could be used with any brand of mobile phone that supports SMS and no upgrading of SIM cards is required," Ismail said after the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with AKN Messaging Technologies Bhd and Axis Systems Sdn Bhd in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

From left: Axis MD Wing Chew Meng, Wan Ismail Wan Yusoh and S.B. Lim.

The MoU is for the provision of SMS solutions that would enable the bank to cost effectively and efficiently disseminate information as well as a transaction platform for its customers.

Ismail said the bank had to date invested RM1.5mil in its SMS banking product. AKN Messaging will provide the messaging solutions and Axis the online banking transaction delivery software system.

He said the SMS banking would be implemented in two phases.

" The first phase, customers can perform at least seven banking transactions and also receive alerts for the numerous banking and Bank Islam credit-card transactions,"he said, adding that payments for utility bills and financing with Bank Islam could also be made.

Ismail said that in the second phase, targeted for completion next month, transactions such as settling Bank Islam credit card bills, placement in and withdrawal from investment accounts and topping up handphone credit, among others, would be included.

"SMS banking is a powerful vehicle for service differentiation. It also provides the convenience to customers to perform banking transactions anywhere and at anytime," he said.

AKN Messaging managing director S. B. Lim said the company's advanced portal solution would support Bank Islam's role in realising Malaysia's dream of developing a competitive and modern financial system.

He said that as the bank's strategic business partner, AKN Messaging hoped to jointly explore the potential of mobile commerce.

On another note, Ismail said Bank Islam was targeting to sign up 50,000 new credit-card holders annually by next year. The bank now has 60,000 credit-card holders.