

KL to take closer look at Murdoch's Sky TV

PENANG, Sun. -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Government will send officials to study how Rupert Murdoch's television system works before making a decision on allowing him to broadcast here.

Two weeks ago, Murdoch met the Prime Minister at his office in Kuala Lumpur and told him he would like to broadcast to Malaysia. Murdoch owns Sky TV and the Hong Kong-based Star TV.

Dr Mahathir said: "Star TV is interested and we are looking into it. Mr Murdoch said he would like to broadcast to Malaysia programmes specially tailored for us.

"He assured me that we can switch the programmes on and off. If we don't like a particular programme, we can switch it off.

"So we are sending some people to see how his Sky TV works. However, we have not made any commitment."

The Prime Minister was speaking to newsmen after delivering the keynote address at the Pacific Dialogue attended by about 60 top political and economic leaders from Asia Pacific countries and the United States at the Mutiara Beach Resort.

Dr Mahathir was asked about recent reports that Star TV had begun talks to seek permission to broadcast in Malaysia.

When transmission begins through the Malaysian owned Measat satellite, 20 channels will be available. This means more programmes will be needed.

In May, Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat said his Ministry had identified news services from several foreign news agencies for RTM's world news programme and that Sky TV was one of them.
