

Provide alternative fare to foreign broadcasts, media told

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — The local media should provide an alternative fare to the corrupting influence of ideas and values propagated by foreign television programmes and publications, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the media, including those who managed television stations, publishers, writers and advertisers should not be confused or influenced by the foreign media.

He said the local media should master the technique of conveying information and news in a way which was interesting and yet keeping within the bounds of decency as against the style adopted by the foreign media.

In this way, they would be able to provide an alternative fare to Malaysians, he added.

Dr Mahathir said it was the responsibility of the local media community to discharge their duties and responsibilities with consideration to society, religion and nation.

"Although the Government wants the people to progress and the country to experience economic and in-

dustrial development, we should not compromise on our culture, social values and way of life."

Of course, he said, there were elements in our culture which were not healthy and had to be replaced with wholesome foreign values.

"However, there are many values that are noble in our culture which have to be revived and perpetuated."

Dr Mahathir said currently the Government was still able to control foreign broadcasts and publications.

"However, with greater sophistication in technology, television broadcasts from the West will become increasingly difficult to control. Everyday, values and lifestyles which are against our culture will be brought into our homes.

"We will accept what is strange to us as normal when the influence is on a continual basis. Before long, consciously or unconsciously we will imbue the lifestyles and values.

"When we start practising a way of life or thinking, it will then become part of our culture.

"In the past we were shy

to utter words such as sex but today we say it and broadcast programmes on sex as an ordinary matter. This does not reflect our culture but it has become part of it as a result of long-term exposure to the foreign media."

He said this to reporters after witnessing the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Keris Motion Sdn Bhd and Measat Broadcast Network Systems Sdn Bhd and launching Keris Motion's logo at Hotel Istana here today.

Keris Motion is a consortium of Bumiputera film producers. Measat Broadcast Network Systems, which is expected to offer between 15 and 20 satellite TV channels, is scheduled to operate next year following the launching of the Malaysia East Asia Satellite (Measat).

At the signing ceremony, Keris Motion was represented by its executive chairman, Mohamed Jusoh while Measat Broadcast Network Systems director, Syed Hussein Syed Abu Bakar, signed on behalf of his company.

Dr Mahathir said with this development, it was all the more important for the

local media to provide an alternative fare to foreign broadcasts.

"This is because soon, news broadcasts, features and other information from Malaysia will not only be watched by local people but also people of other countries once Measat Broadcast, the country's first satellite TV station, begins operations.

"With our satellite station beginning transmission, through Measat Broadcast, our films and TV programmes will be seen by people in Malaysia, Asean countries, India and Australia," he said.

Dr Mahathir said TV stations, no doubt, would attract a bigger audience if they screened materials featuring violence, sex, and matters which were controversial and that which condemned others.

"However this is the method of people devoid of ideas, those not efficient in producing stories or in the utilisation of tools to meet the wishes of viewers."

The Prime Minister said those who were efficient need not be dependent on ways which were based on human longings or urges.