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Mahathir-Information

EXERCISE SELF-CENSORSHIP TO INFORMATION, USERS TOLD

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 22 (Bernama) -- System telecommunications users should exercise self-censorship to information, opting only the good and rejecting the bad, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the society must realise and act for themselves as the government could not keep up with the rapid advance in communications technology through the formulation of laws or policies or control mechanisms.

"The government's control is not important if only useful information is channelled through the telecommunications equipment," he said when opening Sistem Televisyen Malaysia Berhad (TV3) Operations Centre, Sri Pentas, Bandar Utama, near here.

Dr Mahathir said all sorts of propaganda, deviationist teachings, foreign ideologies and pornographic materials were being disseminated through the modern equipment of communications technology.

"Human desire is exploited to reap more profits. The situation is not much different from trafficking in dadah, regardless of its effect," he said.

The government, he said, would continue to use the laws and certain technology to censor such materials which were channelled through telecommunications equipment.

But just like dadah which was rejected because the majority of the people were aware of its harmful effect, undesirable information too could also be rejected through similar awareness, he said.

Dr Mahathir said radio and television stations in Malaysia, which would have hundreds of channels in the near future, must play a major role in efforts to combat these negative elements by not only censoring the materials and programmes for broadcast but also selecting programmes that were both entertaining and contributing to development of good character.

He said those assigned the task must be selected people because they had to make important value judgement in the selection and censorship of the programmes.

"We don't need fanatics who reject everything but we also don't need people who are too liberal or irresponsible as censors in our broadcasting stations," he said.

He hoped that TV3, as the country's first private television station, would become an example of a responsible corporate and information body.

Dr Mahathir said he was sure that nobody would lose out if private television stations were not obsessed with drawing the viewers to the extent of willing to destroy society and country.

"If all our stations are responsible and moderate, no one will lose out, the stations, the government or the society and country," he said.

He also congratulated TV3 for having achieved many notable progress since it was launched on June 1, 1984, in particular it was set up without the services of foreign experts although the country at the time did not have many experts in tv broadcast engineering.

It showed that Malaysia was capable of standing on its own feet in certain fields and did not need foreign expertise. -- BERNAMA

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