

25 JUN 1996

M. Nasir-Minister

MINISTER ASKS UTUSAN FOR EXPLANATION ON M. NASIR ISSUE

PETALING JAYA, June 25 (Bernama) -- The Information Ministry today asked media group Kumpulan Utusan to give an explanation on the issue of singer-composer M. Nasir who was reported to have belittled Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad with an alleged remark "Siapa Mahathir?" (Who is Mahathir?).

Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat said the account by Kumpulan Utusan was important for him to make a final decision on M. Nasir whose creative works have been banned in the electronic and print media.

"To ensure fairness, we have to call Kumpulan Utusan for an explanation since the issue originated from a report in the Utusan newspaper. We want them to supply us the proof in a day or two," he told reporters after witnessing the signing of a memorandum of understanding for the establishment of "Channel Ten", an in-house video production company.

Yesterday, M. Nasir met the ministry's Secretary-General, Datuk Zawawi Mahmuddin, in connection with the issue.

The ban on M. Nasir's works was announced by Deputy Information Minister Datuk Suleiman Mohamad on June 16 after Utusan reported that the singer remarked "Siapa Mahathir" when he was asked to turn up at a rehearsal for the recent Malam Puisi Utusan poetry recital which was attended by Dr Mahathir.

Mohamed said Zawawi had not informed him of the outcome of his meeting with M. Nasir.

He said the action against M. Nasir was taken while he was on vacation abroad and it was only proper that any further decision should be made after hearing from all sides.

Earlier, Mohamed said Channel Ten would be another source of in-house video programmes for hotel operators in the country besides Vision Four.

Channel Ten, a joint-venture between Malaysian-owned Cape Elegance Sdn Bhd (Cape) and IPC Interactive Pte Ltd of Singapore, will be an information and entertainment, or Infotainment, channel to hotels, airports, Light Rail Transit stations, bus stations and service apartments.

Cape chief executive Azlina Aziz said the company is discussing with the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board and state governments on producing documentaries for screening on Channel Ten besides other popular programmes. -- BERNAMA

AZH CTL