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Mohamed-Broadcasting

BROADCASTING ADVISORY PANEL TO BE SET UP

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 26 (Bernama) -- A Broadcasting Advisory Panel will be set up soon to stipulate certain standards which local broadcasting stations will have to meet in efforts to create a well-informed society with noble values, Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat said today.

He said the panel would also advise the Information Minister on the programme content but would not however act as a controller of the broadcasting industry.

"Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has agreed to the ministry's proposal for the setting up of the panel to meet the ever increasing challenges arising from advances in broadcasting," he said.

The Panel would also study the current scenario in the broadcasting industry and advise on the necessary changes that would have to be made in the industry, he told reporters after hour-long talks with China's Vice-Minister of Radio, Film and Television Tong Xianrong at Angkasapuri here.

Xianrong arrived here yesterday at the head of a seven-member delegation on a five-day visit to Malaysia.

His talks with Datuk Mohamed centered on bilateral issues as well as exchange of TV and other broadcast materials.

Mohamed said the panel was necessary to study programme contents once the existing Broadcasting Act was replaced with the Multi Media Convergence Act.

Existing broadcasting regulations including those covering censorship would be replaced once the new Act came into force, he said.

He said a select committee was studying matters pertaining to the new Act but he however did not say when the Bill would be tabled in Parliament.

With the creation of the Multi-media Super Corridor (MSC) and in efforts to ensure that the people kept abreast of the latest advances in Information Technology, the question of suitability of broadcast content would indeed emerge as a major problem, he said.

"Hence the government has agreed to the creation of the panel with the aim of advising the minister and knowing the extent to which the broadcasting industry should expand in Malaysia so that the nation's aim of achieving developed status by the year 2020 will be achieved," he said.

The Prime Minister has appointed former Information Minister Datuk Rais Yatim as Chairman of the Panel in view of his vast experience in the broadcasting field, Mohamed said.

He said the other 10 members of the panel were drawn from various sectors such as the non-governmental organisations, various communities, police, women's organisations and institutions of higher learning with a view to ensuring that a wide spectrum of advice would be considered in determining the direction of the national broadcasting industry.

Mohamed, who is also Chairman of the National Disaster Relief Management Committee, said all necessary measures were being taken to help the victims of the tropical storm "Zita" in Kedah.

The storm killed five people and a total of 2,785 people, who were forced to leave their houses due to rising waters, were now housed in seven evacuation centres in the state.

He said all the relevant agencies were now providing emergency aid to the victims. -- BERNAMA

RHM AAM

