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Ministry may open media campaign in West to correct distortions

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The Information Ministry may buy space in newspapers and air time on television to correct distortions about Malaysia in Western media, Deputy Minister Datuk Suleiman Mohamed said today.

"We will buy advertising space and television air time in the United States and Europe if the Cabinet gives its approval," he said.

The ministry was considering the move because it was almost impossible to get Western newspapers and television stations to allow Malaysia to give a true account of the situation for free, he told reporters after opening a medical camp here.

Suleiman said this when asked to comment on the views of certain people including New Straits Times group editor Datuk A. Kadir Jasin that the Information Ministry should also be involved in providing information about Malaysia abroad.

He said the ministry wanted to give the true picture of Malaysia's policies, especially Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's actions in dealing with the currency problem.

Many countries that were also affected by attacks on their currencies by speculators agreed with the statements made by Dr Mahathir which they were not bold enough to say so themselves, said Suleiman.

As a result, he added, it was Dr Mahathir and Malaysia who became the target of the foreign media.

Kadir told a TV3 interview that instead of keeping silent, the Government should respond to the erroneous and biased foreign media reports about the country, although not likely to be entertained.

He also said that the local newspapers were willing to highlight such replies that are not entertained by the foreign media.

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