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Ministry to form broadcasting advisory panel

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The Government has given the green light to the Information Ministry to form a broadcasting advisory panel to set standards for the broadcasting industry.

Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat said today that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had agreed to the members named to the 10-member panel.

The panel, which will be chaired by former Information Minister Datuk Rais Yatim, will meet twice a year. Its members are experts in religion, women's rights, consumerism and the media.

"We hope members of the panel will contribute constructively to our aim of introducing a set of common standards for the broadcasting industry," he told a Press conference at his office after meeting a six-member Chinese delegation led by its Radio, Film and Television Vice-Minister Tong Xiangrong.

"The panel will act solely as an adviser to the Minister and is not a regulatory body to the broadcasting industry. It will set the standards for the broadcasting stations with the ultimate aim of creating an informed society, while preserving good moral values."

He said the setting up of the panel augured well for the broadcasting industry "which is rapidly taking a new shape" following developments in information technology.

"The broadcasting industry is witnessing a convergence between telecommunications technology, broadcasting and computers, resulting in TV stations, both locally and globally, moving towards 24-hour broadcasting."

On the appointment of Rais as the panel's chairman, Mohamed said Rais was appointed based on his vast experience in the broadcasting industry.

"As a former Information Minister, he has the knowledge and understanding on issues pertaining to broadcasting."

On his meeting with Tong, Mohamed said Malaysia hoped that the Chinese Government would consider buying Malaysian TV programmes to be aired in China.

As Malaysia was considered a big purchaser of Hong Kong programmes, he felt the Chinese authorities should consider buying some Malaysian-made Chinese or even Malay programmes.

"We hope there will be a balance, otherwise our deal will be one-sided."

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