

14/08/1997

TV3 gets nod to broadcast 24 hours, says Mohamed

SISTEM Televisyen Malaysia Bhd (TV3) has been given the greenlight to broadcast 24 hours a day, Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat announced yesterday.

At present, the private television station is broadcasting 20 hours daily.

Mohamed said he had consulted with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad before arriving at the decision.

The minister, speaking at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, said the Government has allowed TV3 to broadcast 24 hours as it wants the station to provide information and education to the people.

TV3, he added, indicated in its application that it wants the extra four hours for the purposes of "infotainment and edutainment."

He hoped that the station's management will consult the Information Ministry on the programmes it will air during the time.

"In the past, I have been quite sceptical about this (24-hour broadcast) because at that time, we were trying to encourage people to work hard and be productive.

"With the introduction of satellite and cable television which are operating 24 hours a day, we find that there had been no negative influence on the population.

"In fact from our studies, we found that Malaysians are more intelligent by watching television," he said.

He described the approval (for 24-hour broadcast) as "a gift to the nation" in conjunction with the 40th year of independence of the country.

Mohamed said Radio and Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) has no plans to extend its transmission and does not consider TV3 as a competitor. He added that both stations supplement and complement each other.

To date, the ministry has not received any other applications from other local television networks to extend their transmission hours.

On the rights for Measat Broadcast Network Systems Sdn Bhd, the operator of Astro, to telecast the international football matches, Mohamed said the ministry hoped to finalise negotiations with the company by September 1 this year.

He said the both parties need to discuss the cost of the rights and whether the matches telecast are live or delayed.

Astro has agreed that the matches be aired on RTM's second channel, TV2.

He said the ministry also wanted TV3 to have its own football programmes and suggested that it telecasts Malaysian and Asian Football since these two leagues are getting bigger and more popular.

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