

14 NOV 1998

## BERNAMA GOES INTO AUDIOVISUAL NEWS PRODUCTION

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 14 (Bernama) -- The national news agency, Bernama, has gone into audio visual news production to complement its print news service which has been in the market for over 30 years.

The first Bernama visual news item is an exclusive interview with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in conjunction with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) leaders' summit which Kuala Lumpur is hosting for the first time this week.

The interview is being supplied to all five local television stations and several foreign tv networks for broadcast on their news bulletins or as a special programme today.

With the launching of the service, Bernama takes the route of established transnational news agencies such as Reuters and Associated Press (AP) which have gone into tv news production to give value added to their conventional news agency service.

"This is a major milestone for us," Bernama acting general manager and editor-in-chief Syed Jamil Jaafar said today.

He said it was a natural progression for Bernama to go into AV news production as the print media market in Malaysia was virtually saturated while the electronic media sector had expanded.

"With five, and soon six, free-to-air stations, one cable and one satellite network operating in the country, it has become worthwhile for Bernama to become a wholesaler of tv news items," Syed Jamil said.

The five local stations are RTM1, RTM2, TV3, Metrovision and NTV7 while the cable operator is Mega TV and the satellite network Astro. The IMT-GT (Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle) tv station to be based in Langkawi is in the implementation stage.

Syed Jamil said that initially, Bernama will produce up to five news footages daily, carrying the tag line "Bernama TV", for distribution to the local tv stations and interested foreign networks.

"The project was mooted two years ago as we examined various avenues for Bernama to expand its income base," he said.

Bernama currently supplies word news and still pictures to 50 newspaper subscribers, seven electronic media clients and seven news agencies.

In addition, it has 3,000 screen-based customers. These are people who subscribe to the Bernama real-time stock quotes and news service on personal computers.

Bernama has also introduced various news and information packages on the Internet ([www.bernama.com](http://www.bernama.com)) apart from maintaining a database which offers a wide range of sectoral reports for investors, entrepreneurs, analysts and researchers. -- Bernama

sj