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Bernama in Asian media discussions

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SEREMBAN, Mon. - Information Minister Tan Sri Mohd Khalil Yaakob today said preliminary discussions with national news agency Bernama on the possibility of setting up an Asian media has begun.

Khalil said Bernama has been told about the advantages of a tie-up with other Asian agencies. "I have told Bernama that they can consolidate their operations by pooling their resources with other news agencies in the region."

He said it was important that reporting on regional and global affairs, which was now dominated by the Western media, was not distorted.

Khalil said this after a three-hour dialogue with about 450 Information Department officers from the southern region at Wisma Negeri today.

During his visit to China last week, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said an important challenge and opportunity for Malaysia and China in the next century was the need to work together with other regional states to set up an Asian media.

He said this was due to the overwhelming dominance of the Western media reporting on regional and global affairs.

Dr Mahathir said the major concern among East Asian nations had been the slanted and distorted reporting of global events to Asian audiences and similar reporting of Asia to other parts of the world.

Khalil said the Cabinet had already directed the Ministry to increase media co-operation with South countries.

"We have already contacted the respective embassies and high commissions here to ensure news from these countries could be transmitted without being distorted," he said.

He said several leaders from South countries have visited Malaysia to see for themselves the developments taking place here and the country's achievements.

Khalil said his Ministry would work with the Foreign, and the Energy, Telecommunications and Multimedia Ministries on the proposal to set up the Asian media.

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