

17 MAR 1999

Cyber-Curbs

NO MORE CYBER CURBS, JUST NORMAL BUSINESS PROCEDURES

KUALA LUMPUR, March 17 (Bernama) -- Cyber cafes are free from any form of censorship but must observe the normal business registration requirements, Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh said today.

The Cabinet discussed this matter at its meeting last week and decided to remove any form of curbs that was previously imposed on cyber cafes, he told reporters at the ministry.

He said this meant that the proposal to register patrons of cyber cafes had been shot down.

However, he said cyber cafe operators must fulfil the normal business regulations imposed on restaurant owners, including licensing requirements of the local authorities.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has directed the authorities to lift all curbs amounting to censorship of the Internet so as to fulfil the pledges made in the Bill of Guarantees.

Cyber cafes are not entertainment outlets but information technology centres and any attempt at censorship would attract negative reactions from investors, particularly those in the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), he said.

"The government is aware that although information technology and Internet usage come with a high risk it cannot be controlled, and should be accepted according to international practice," he said.

The Malaysian Youth Council (MYC) said Internet censorship was not the way to check social problems at cyber cafes.

In a statement, it welcomed the government's move to remove any curbs on Internet usage that would amount to censorship.

Gerakan also welcomed Dr Mahathir's directive, saying it will go a long way in silencing critics who have been eternally complaining about government censorship and similar restrictions.

-- BERNAMA

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