

Leaders press media reps for **answers**

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LANGKAWI: The question and answer session between the 12 heads of states and top executives of the participating media organisations turned out to be an "enlightening" experience for those present when the tables were turned against the media representatives.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who started the session, had everyone in stitches when he said light-heartedly: "I am going to enjoy this."

The session was extraordinary because instead of the media asking the questions, it was the heads of states who bombarded the media with their intriguing queries.

Among the questions posed

were why there was a tendency for the media to highlight more negative than positive news, whether the media should be punished for defaming countries or leaders, the so-called secret agenda of media owners and the media's role in facing the challenges of globalisation.

Dr Mahathir asked why media organisations in developing countries did not trust each other and were dependent on wire media reports from developed nations.

Star Publications (M) Bhd's Group Chief Editor Datuk Ng Poh Tip who was among the top media executives present at the session, said that The Star's aim in highlighting the so-called "negative news" was a sincere wish to highlight what was negative so that the rightful authorities could

undertake the necessary action to right things that were deemed wrong.

"We don't just focus on negative news. We try very hard to highlight positive news each day.

"I tell my editors during our meetings that we should not focus solely on gloom and doom stories but also carry success stories in our newspaper," she said.

NSTP Group Editor Datuk Ahmad Talib, said it was not by design that newspapers intentionally ran negative news.

The session was punctured with laughter as the heads of states had a field day seeking answers to questions pertaining to "unfair and impartial reporting."

TRI Industries chairman Datuk Munir Majid moderated the unique interactive session.