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Khalil-Egypt

MALAYSIA AND EGYPT TO BOLSTER SOUTH COOPERATION ON INFORMATION

By: Mokhtar Hussain

CAIRO, April 11 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Egypt have joined hands to enhance the exchange of news, radio and television programmes in an effort to bolster South-South cooperation in the information field.

To that effect both countries marked their collaboration by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which the Malaysian Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob signed on behalf of Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) with his Egyptian counterpart Muhammad Safwat El Sherif, on behalf of the Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU).

Bernama, the national news agency and its Egyptian counterpart, the Middle-east News Agency (MENA) also entered into a similar agreement which was signed respectively by its Editor-in-Chief Jaafar Hussin and MENA chairman Mahfouz El-Ansari.

The RTM-ERTU agreement will see the exchange of radio and television programmes and documentaries while BERNAMA and MENA will exchange and distribute news and other related materials.

Safwat later described the MoU as "a very good agreement" towards further improving the flow of information between West Asia and South Asia while Khalil said that it would allow both countries to know each other better.

According to Khalil, such an agreement would allow the South nations to be less dependent on news carried by the Western media which were sometimes biased.

The move would help realise the idea of the South-South Information Gateway (SSIG), he said. The idea was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad during the 1999 Langkawi International Dialogue (LID).

MENA is a leading news agency for the Arab and African region and rated 11th on the list of international news agency. With more than 400 journalists, the agency currently transmits news in Arabic, English and French via satellites, covering Africa, Asia, Europe and South and North America.

Earlier, Khalil held informal talks with Safwat before visiting the studios and production facilities at the ERTU building which was located on the bank of the Nile, here.

Malaysian Ambassador to Egypt Datuk Abu Bakar Daud was also present.

During the visit, Khalil was interviewed by Nile TV anchorwoman Dina Othman on issues pertaining to the Palestinian struggle.

Asked what could be done to stop Israeli military assault against the Palestinians, Khalil said that Malaysia always believes in collective effort in finding solutions to conflicts as "any unilateral action may not give any impact".

Meanwhile, Jaafar said that the agency hoped to conclude more of such agreements with South countries especially the Muslim world.

After Egypt, Khalil and his eight-member delegation will head for Beirut to initiate the same arrangement with the Lebanese.

During the visit here, the Malaysian delegation also visited the Egyptian Media City or "the Hollywood of the Middle East" which has state-of-the-art facilities for the production of movies, television programmes and commercial and documentaries.

It offers movie and video professionals the latest production and post-production technology on a two million sq m area located at the outskirts of Cairo near the pyramids of Giza.

-- BERNAMA
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