

31 JAN 2002

Khalil-Clip

VIDEO CAPSULE NOT DIRECTED AGAINST OPPOSITION- KHALIL

SEREMBAN, Jan 31 (Bernama) -- The airing of a video clip over TV1 on the shooting to death in cold blood of a veiled Afghan woman by the Taliban and the confessions of a man involved in the Memali incident is not directed against the opposition.

Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob said today it was instead aimed at serving the public interest.

"Our task is to give adequate background and message whenever there is a current issue. If it is not of public interest, we will not show."

"This subject is not only important for us to understand what is happening in the country but also overseas where such incidents become a hot subject with the government and the public focused on it," he told reporters here.

Earlier he delivered a keynote address at the Information Ministry's vision and mission review session. Also present were Deputy Information Minister Datuk Khalid Yunus, the ministry's Parliamentary Secretary Datuk Zainuddin Maidin, heads of department and state directors of information and broadcasting.

Khalil said the Information Ministry believed that such a video clip was most appropriate to enable the public to understand the actual situation.

"Our intention is to give as much information as possible so that the public will understand, for instance, there are many people indeed particularly among the young generation, who have forgotten past events."

"The young generation which has just reached the voting age, have not been exposed to the seriousness of past incidents...hence we are reminding them. In the course of conveying information, historic material becomes an important input," he said.

He said the Information Ministry through Radio and Television Malaysia (RTM) would continue to air video clips on various current issues as these were of public interest.

On the foreign media claim that Malaysia was supposedly the launching pad for terrorist operations, Khalil said such claims were merely to tarnish Malaysia's image.

"The claim is unfounded and irrational. They (foreign media) have a certain agenda....they cannot bear to see Malaysia progress....cannot bear to see our leaders becoming influential and so on."

"Explanations have been given umpteen times including by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad himself but the foreign media does not publish it or accept it, but continues to make inaccurate reports," he said.

The three-day review session which began yesterday was aimed at evaluating the overall functions of the ministry with a view to planning and making adjustments for action next year.

"In this respect, the Information Ministry evaluated its achievements last year in planning for the future," Khalil said.

This was important so that every department and agency in the ministry would act in coordination in conveying the government message, he added.

-- BERNAMA

RP MAI AAM