

STAR 18.1.2003

Fresh look for religious shows to boost ratings

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Information Ministry has taken charge of the religious programmes aired over Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) from the Islamic Development Department (Jakim) and intends to give them a fresh look to reflect Islam's universal values.

The move was prompted by surveys which showed that the ratings for programmes like Forum *Perdana* Ehwat Uğama, which was once rated among the top 10, had dropped.

Stating this, minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob said this programme and others would be restructured in line with suggestions made at the recent World Muslim Scholars Conference, where Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad delivered a keynote address.

Khalil said the quality of similar programmes in Egypt as well as some other Arab countries and Indonesia were more superior.

The Government felt there was a need to reorientate the people's per-

ception towards universal values to ensure they were better understood by society, he told reporters after presenting excellent service awards to his ministry staff at Angkasapuri here yesterday.

A total of 548 staff from various departments under the ministry received their awards.

"The true message of Islam, which is being manipulated for self-interests by certain parties, should be corrected for the people (through these

programmes)," said Khalil, adding that a committee to plan the new format of the programmes and to forward proposals to the Government has been set up.

On the changes to be made, he said they would cover presentation and content.

"It must be more professional. There must be certain techniques because talking on television is different from talking outside (the TV studios)," he said.