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Proposal to set up media research centre

BANGI, Tues. - Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob today proposed the setting up of a media research centre to keep pace with the rapid progress in information technology.

He said media representatives no longer carried heavy equipment for assignments, but relied on portable items to send back news.

"Besides looking into the technological aspects, such a centre can also help in the training of those in the print and broadcast media," he told reporters after opening the 8th Research Communications Symposium at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia here.

Khalil said the meeting was an appropriate forum for academicians to further look into the suggestion.

"We are still behind in providing coverage to our audience, especially the television viewers. There must be better linkages via satellite and digitalisation."

He said media courses should be upgraded to meet current demands and extended beyond serving the needs of newspapers and television stations.

Khalil said Malaysia was in a better position to provide media facilities to foreign journalists covering the Organisation of the Islamic Conference summit at Putrajaya in October as it learnt a lot after hosting the Non-Aligned Movement summit here earlier this year.

He also said RTM would make arrangements to provide live coverage when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad addresses the United Nations before his retirement in October. "We will be sending a team (to New York)."

Earlier in his speech, Khalil said media freedom, just like democracy, was seen from the Western perspective.

But he said an American academician who visited several countries, including Malaysia, noted that the Press freedom as practised in his country was not suitable here because of the diverse races, languages, religions and cultures.

"We are a young nation having attained Merdeka 46 years ago while the United States got its Independence more than 200 years ago," he said, adding that the notion "one size fits all" was a fallacy.

Media practitioners and academicians from local institutions of higher learning are attending the two-day meeting.