

No action if Negaraku not observed by cinema-goers

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By Ram Anand

The government will not take any action against those who do not observe the national anthem when it plays in cinemas across the country this weekend, Communications and Multimedia Minister Ahmad Shabery Cheek said today.

"We will see first, we will gather feedback. We have our people in all the cinemas (to observe)," Shabery said during a press conference at his ministry.

NONE "We want to know why some people don't observe.

"Is it because they are unaware? Is it because of the anthem itself?

"We will gather reasons," he added.

He said that the feedback would be used to outline the ministry's plans for the National Day celebrations next year, where he said a permanent secretariat would be set up to look into National Day and Malaysia Day celebrations.

"I know some people do not even want to stand up for the national anthem. I know there is such a movement to ask people not to stand up for the national anthem," he said.

Shabery, however, did not divulge whether his staff will start interviewing those who do not observe the national anthem in cinemas.

"We will see, how to go about it," he said curtly when asked.

No plans to introduce 'patriotism' law

Meanwhile, Shabery also denied ever having said that he would consider laws to push patriotism in the country.

Despite initial reports that he would make it a must for everyone to observe the national anthem in cinemas and also to fly the national flag during Merdeka, Shabery said that introducing such laws are only his "last resort".

"I never said that I want to introduce laws. Malaysiakini is the only one who said so," he said.

Bernama has, in a report carried by Malaysiakini last Saturday, said the Communications and Multimedia Ministry would be studying the need to introduce a law to make it compulsory for every premises to fly the Jalur Gemilang throughout the month of Merdeka.

Shabery said that the playing of national anthem in cinemas will begin tomorrow and that he would personally visit some of the cinemas to observe the situation.

"It will be from Aug 28 to Sept 3," he said.

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