

Shabery: Were TV debates in vogue during Dr M's time?

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By Geraldine Tong

Information and Communication Minister Ahmad Shabery Cheek today brushed off suggestions of holding a debate between Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"I have to check if the standards were the same during Mahathir's time," said Shabery in a curt reply, when met at the Huawei Malaysia ICT Roadshow 2015 in Kuala Lumpur today.

Shabery, who had once took on then opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim in a televised debate, was asked to weigh-in on the matter as the minister in charge of RTM.

On Saturday, Mahathir had publicly said he was willing to debate Najib on several controversies dogging his administration.

In a related development, former NSTP group editor A Kadir Jasin has challenged TV3 to organise the Najib-Mahathir debate.

According to former journalist Firdaus Abdullah, Kadir had issued the challenge to Media Prima's group managing editor Ashraf Abdullah, non-executive chairperson Johan Jaffar and prime minister's press secretary Tengku Sharifuddin Tengku Ahmad, through phone text messages.

"Kadir threw the challenge after an earlier request for a right of reply to TV3's lopsided news reports were ignored," wrote Firdaus on his blog apanama.my.

Firdaus alleged TV3 has been producing news items that put Mahathir, Kadir and former information minister Zainuddin Maidin - all of whom are major critics of Najib - in bad light.

"I'm quite optimistic that Tengku Sharifuddin has the wisdom to grab this opportunity for his boss," Kadir was quoted as saying by Firdaus.

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