

# Rais: Ministry will submit proposals once data are obtained

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PUTRAJAYA, Tues: Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Rais Yatim said his ministry will be submitting proposals to the government to protect witnesses to crimes once the necessary data are obtained.

He has asked several parties to come up with proposals to amend the Evidence Act and/or Criminal Administration and Corruption Act.

Once the necessary data have been gathered, a meeting will be held and proposals will be drawn up and submitted to the government to amend the acts.

He was commenting on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement yesterday that the government is prepared to consider introducing a law to protect witnesses so that they will not be afraid to help in police investigations.

Mahathir had also said there is a need to review deterrent laws such as the Printing Presses and Publications Act to make them more relevant and effective.

The widespread use of the Internet and the threat of spreading rumours or classified information through it may require amendments to

the acts or to pass new laws.

Rais said the amendments are being studied by the coordinating committee under his ministry, of which he is the chairman. They will be submitted to the government soon.

However, the major problem faced is the concept of publication which needs to be scrutinised and amended, he said.

"The Internet is not classified as a publication in the Publications Act as its usage is in electronic form. That is the problem," he said.

Therefore, certain terms and definitions need to be studied.

Rais also said there are certain aspects of the act pertaining to printing that need to be looked into as they are deemed to be on longer applicable in the modern environment.

Earlier, Singapore's Attorney-General Chan Sek Keong and his delegation paid a courtesy call on Rais at his office here.

Rais said they discussed several common topics of law involving both countries.

On the setting up of the Academy of Law, Rais said Singapore's experience will be taken into account.

Also present were Attorney-General Datuk Ainon Saaid and Singapore High Commissioner K. Kesarpay.