

Improving justice system

Nst 25 JAN 2001

Comprehensive feedback sought from enforcement agencies

By Hamidah Atan

KUALA KLAWANG, Wed. — An in-depth report which will propose ways to improve the overall administration of justice in the country will be presented to the Cabinet, likely in March.

The report will include recommendations on how to overcome the problems, shortcomings and weaknesses of the justice system and restore public confidence in its administration.

Datuk Dr Rais Yatim, the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, said the report covered the administration of the judiciary, Attorney-General's Chambers, the police and other enforcement agencies.

The report, which is being prepared by the PM's Department, will study the problems which cause a backlog of cases and delay the cases of women seeking maintenance claims at Syariah courts; the role of the police; and other obstructions to the administration of justice.

"The report will be the basis of our efforts to improve the administration of justice within the next three years and to restore public confidence," said Rais after launching the Chinese New Year celebrations at Pertang, near here, last night.

"It is for the better implementation of the administration of justice in the country. We want to improve the sectors beginning this year and we would like to work on it with an analysis of the report.

"Hopefully by March, we will be presenting it to the Cabinet. If the Cabinet has specific views, we will be taking them into stock."

Rais, who is also Jelebu Member of Parliament, said the Government must act fast to regain the trust of the people.

"We are coming under close scrutiny now and the administration of justice has come under heavy criticism. The Government cannot simply leave it at that. We must do something fast (about it). After all, there is always room for improvement ... volumes of it," Rais said.

There is a dire need to bring about further improvement to, and positive change in government departments and agencies, he added.

This was also to ensure that the process of administering justice by the sectors could be carried out effectively and professionally with less criticisms from the public.

"Our emphasis this year is to get the report ready and work on it (administering justice efficiently involving all the sectors) immediately," he said.

"The Government is concerned about the people's perception of the administration of justice.

"I am doing my level best to make sure that this can be done in all the sectors ... not so much to counter the allegations hurled by foreigners."

So far the Kuala Lumpur Bar committee has res-

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 2, COL 5

Ex-CJ's proposal being considered

FROM PAGE ONE

ponded with feedback and Rais said he is awaiting the views and observations of the Judiciary, the Attorney-General's Chambers, the police, the Immigration Department and other authorities before preparing the report.

On the proposal by former Chief Justice Tun Mohd Eusoff Chin that litigants in civil cases be charged fees from the second day of hearing to speed up cases and avoid calling unnecessary witnesses, Rais said he had asked the new Chief Justice Tan Sri Mohamed Dzaiddin Abdullah to look into it.

Last June, Eusoff had also suggested that evidence-in-chief be replaced by affidavits.

Nst 25 JAN 2001
Saying that the fees could be waived in cases involving the poor, Eusoff had also said the fee in principle would be similar to that levied by the Bar Council mediation centres which charge RM375 for half-day and about RM700 for a day.

The imposition of fees would encourage parties considering hearing to go to the mediation centres instead. At present, many opt for the centres as they are free.

"If the proposal is of benefit and meets the target of its objectives, we will present it to the Cabinet.

"However until now, the Government has yet to receive any memorandum or note from the judiciary with regard to it.

"I am prepared to brief the Cabinet once it is ready."