

# National Service Act needed: Rais

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SEREMBAN: A new Act has to be enacted to implement national service, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said.

He said the Act would provide the authorities the power to enforce national service, especially in the recruitment and implementation aspects, and ensure the service was not contrary to the constitution.

"The element of forcing someone to do something must be synchronised with the federal constitution," he said.

"Article 8 clearly states that every citizen is the same in terms of status. We have to draw up clear provisions

giving exemptions to the programme."

He was commenting on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement that he would bring the matter to the cabinet's attention.

The National Service Ordinance was implemented in 1963 but was stopped in 1965.

In PEKAN, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak warned that implementing the proposal for national service could be a double-edged sword.

While it would help instil a greater sense of patriotism among Malaysians and see increased involvement of non-Malays in national defence, it would

also offer valuable training to those with "less desirable intentions".

He said there could be negative implications if those doing national service are not properly screened.

Thus, he said, the proposal for national service would not necessarily be military training.

"Military training might be given to those with other motives and this would jeopardise the country's security."

Najib said national service is good to instil patriotism among Malaysians but the government would have to consider the format and other features most suited in the country.