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Rais-Witness

REPORT ON WITNESS PROTECTION SYSTEM TO BE TABLED BEFORE THE CABINET

ALOR GAJAH, June 27 (Bernama) -- The report on the proposed witness protection system will be tabled before the cabinet in two weeks, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said today.

He said that under the system, witnesses in major criminal cases whose lives and properties could be harmed may be protected.

The proposed system had been adapted from the Australian format found to be more suitable following studies of such a system conducted in several countries including the United States.

"We found that the format of the witness protection system in Australia is more practical compared to the US system," he told reporters here.

Earlier, he presented a working paper on "Laws on Human Rights" at a three-day seminar on "Enhancing the Royal Malaysia Police as a Knowledge-based Organisation".

Rais said that the initial report on the system had been prepared following a meeting between the police and the Legal Division of the Prime Minister's Department two weeks ago.

He said that the move to implement the system was mooted by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The minister said that he would propose to the cabinet that the police set up a special division for the protection scheme.

He said that the mechanism for such a system had been fine-tuned and several sessions would be conducted to determine the format and jurisdiction, powers and their relevance to the existing laws in the country.

"For instance, the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC), the Registration of Criminals and Undersirable Persons Act...all these will have to be studied first before specific proposals are made to the government.

"Anyway it should be sufficient enough to meet the requirement, and beyond that, we'll also have to look at the legal aspects of this scheme so that it falls squarely and justly under the various laws," he said.

He said that the system would also equip the police with a more practical mechanism to fight serious crimes in the country.

On human rights, Rais said that the police had proven to be positive towards the creation of a situation of rule of law and human rights in the country.

"Of course we are not saying everything is perfect but we are arriving at that level and the more they are aware of the scenario, their rights and obligations, the better it is," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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