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Rais-Service

NEW ACT NEEDED TO ENFORCE NATIONAL SERVICE, SAYS DR RAIS

BATU KIKIR, Oct 27 (Bernama) -- A new Act has to be enacted to implement the proposal to introduce national service in Malaysia, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said today.

He said the Act would provide the authorities the power of administration in enforcing the national service, especially from the recruitment and implementation aspects to ensure the service was not contrary to the Federal Constitution.

"The element of forcing someone to do something must be synchronised with the Federal Constitution.

"Article 8 of the Federal Constitution 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 told reporters when commenting on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement yesterday that he would bring the matter to the Cabinet's attention for discussion.

Dr Rais was speaking to reporters after launching the 10th anniversary celebrations of Yayasan Jempol here today.

Present was foundation chairman Datuk Khalid Yunus, who is also Deputy Information Minister, and MP for Jempol.

Dr Mahathir had said the Government would study the possibility of introducing a "modified" national service for the country's youths in an effort to instil a greater sense of patriotism and self-discipline among them.

He said the plan was to introduce a kind of national service that did not necessarily require the need for compulsory military training.

Expressing happiness over the proposal which he had raised a few years ago, Dr Rais said, the matter was timely as the patriotism spirit among youths was waning.

He said countries like Singapore and Switzerland had implemented national service to create citizens with high patriotism and to foster camaraderie.

He said the National Service Ordinance was implemented in 1963 but was stopped in 1965.

"The Government will reconsider provisions in the previous ordinance if the Prime Minister gives a more accurate guide and all segments of society must accept the national service with an open heart.

"This can help overcome many social ills in our country besides nurturing values and practices that can strengthen nationalism and patriotism," he said.

National service can also help police and military work in the country, he said.

However, the administration and recruitment of people for the programme must be planned properly, he said.

The Government would get the views from organisations and human rights bodies like the Malaysian Human Rights Commission before further action was taken, he said.

Dr Rais said the scope of the national service should not only confine to police and military aspects but also emphasise on social, love for the nation and positive values to create a disciplined society.

On the case of an underage Malaysian girl who claimed she was raped while being detained at a illegal immigrants' depot in Sabah and had not been sent back to Malaysia by the Philippines till now, Dr Rais said if the

girl was a Malaysian, the government needs to produce the identification documents of the girl to the Philippines Foreign Ministry.

-- BERNAMA

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