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'Australian model more suitable'

A. Hafiz Yatim

ALOR GAJAH, Thurs. - The proposed witness protection system that will be presented to the Cabinet within two weeks is expected to follow the Australian model, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said.

He said a committee evaluating the implementation of the system was in the final process of completing its studies and findings.

"The committee has evaluated the systems in the United States and Australia, and finds the latter to be more suitable for a small country like Malaysia. This is because the American system uses another agency in protecting the witnesses as the police there are different (units) from one State to another. The Australian system, which sees the Federal police implementing the system, is more suitable and less costly."

Rais said this after tabling a paper titled Laws and Human Rights at a three-day seminar here today on enhancing the police force as an organisation.

Rais said the committee evaluating the implementation of the system would also seek input from the police. He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had asked that the witness protection scheme be implemented following concerns witnesses may not be willing to testify in high profile cases for fear of their lives and assets.

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