

Buyers of pirated products may face the music

BY STEVEN PATRICK

PETALING JAYA: The Government has assured the Recording Industry Association of Malaysia (RIM) that it is considering the possibility of amending the copyright laws to allow end users to be brought to justice for buying pirated music products.

RIM chairman Darren Choy said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told them this when representatives of the *Gerakan Memelihara Khazanah Muzik Malaysia* (GMKMM or the Movement to Save Malaysia's Music Heritage) met him at his office yesterday.

Also present at the meeting was Nova Records managing director Rosmin Hashim, who said that amending the copyright law was an interesting point as it showed the Government's conviction in tackling the problem.

Under the Copyright Act 1987, Section 41 (1), a person would be guilty of an offence if, he possesses, otherwise than for his private and domestic use, any infringing copy of a copyrighted music, software or literary product.

RIM has declared 2003 a "doomsday year" for the music industry unless greater efforts were made to check rampant piracy, which it claimed had driven down CD and cassette sales by

37% over the last three years.

It estimates the music piracy rate in Malaysia to be about 75%.

Choy told *The Star* Dr Mahathir understood how grave the piracy situation was, and he was also aware that a lot of raids had been conducted without prosecution.

Legal action was also being hampered, he said, adding that 344 cases had been filed in the past three years under the Copyright Act 1987, but only 80 summonses were served.

At the meeting with Dr Mahathir, GMKMM representatives commended the Government for using forensics to identify the manufacturers of pirated discs.

Choy said that a forensic microscope was brought in two weeks ago and it would help greatly with anti-piracy enforcement as it goes straight to the source of the problem.