

27 JUN 2003

Rais-Rape

30 YEARS JAIL FOR RAPE CASES TO BE TABLED IN PARLIAMENT IN SEPTEMBER

KUALA LUMPUR, June 27 (Bernama) -- The amendment to the Penal Code to increase the maximum penalty from 20 years to 30 years for incestual rape, rape-cum-murder and other rape cases will be tabled in the Dewan Rakyat at its next sitting this September.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said today that the Cabinet, at its meeting last week, also approved caning for those aged 50 and above found guilty of committing the offence.

"If a guy of 50 is capable of doing rape, he is capable to withstand the whipping," he said when explaining the rationale to reporters after chairing a plenary session at the three-day Civil Service Conference here.

The current law exempts offenders aged 50 and above from whipping.

Dr Rais said the decision to again increase the penalty for rape in less than two years was due to the increasing number of incest, rape-cum-murder and rape-cum-robbery cases.

The Penal Code was last amended in 2001, among others, to include mandatory whipping for rape and incest, besides defining incest and providing a maximum 20-year jail term and mandatory whipping for the offence.

He Rais said amendments would also be made to the Penal Code to include provisions for anti-terrorism and for a timeframe for the police to give feedback on reports made by the public on each case.

"The people have a right to receive feedback on whether there is any follow-up on the case," he said.

He said that the ministry would amend the Criminal Procedure Code and the Criminal Justice Act following the amendments to the Penal Code.

He said that although the legal framework was apt and complete, to counter the increasing crimes, especially rape-cum-murder cases, "we have now to translate to enforcement to work."

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, directed the ministers at the cabinet meeting last week to be more vigilant to the current crime issues.

-- BERNAMA

HK HK JK