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Boycott call: `We can take legal action under WTO'

PETALING JAYA, Fri. - Malaysia could take legal action under the World Trade Organisation if a Jewish group's call for boycott of investment and tourism in Malaysia materialises, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Rais Yatim said today.

He said such an action was provided for under the WTO third chapter.

"The WTO law permits legal action to be taken to protect member countries against any malpractice," he said when asked to comment on the call by the Simon Wiesenthal Centre for a boycott of tourism and investment in Malaysia.

The centre made the call following Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's speech at the Organisation of the Islamic Conference Summit recently that Jews ruled the world by proxy.

Rais was speaking after attending a Deepavali open house hosted by MIC deputy president Datuk S. Subramaniam at the National Union Plantation Workers building.

However, he said the Government would have to investigate the boycott call first before any action under the WTO could be taken.

"Without knowing who are the culprits behind it, we cannot make any assumption," he said, adding that Dr Mahathir's contention that Jews ruled the world by proxy had been proven true.

Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting said the boycott call was ridiculous. He said the Prime Minister's speech was fair and based on historical facts.