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Note on restricted residence law review to ministry soon

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim will be submitting a preliminary note to the Home Ministry next week on the review of the Restricted Residence Enactment 1933.

"To review this law is not an easy matter because it pertains to the rights of the individual and the restriction of the law must consider the reality of the day," he said after launching Asiagate, an Asian credit information network, at Hotel Istana today.

Rais said that the Government had considered the effectiveness of the enactment, in particular the control of persons subjected to restrictive stay.

"In 1933, there were no phones, what more handphones, but a restricted person now can organise his kin or group to do anything with the telephone."

Rais said his department would be assisting the Home Ministry and all other relevant authorities to update the law and make it effective.

"We also want to compare it with some of the provisions of other instruments, including the Internal Security Act, Emergency Regulations for Public Order, the Public Order Act 1959 and the enhanced Anti-Drug Law 1988."

On recommendations for the new law, Rais said there were no specific ones since the Cabinet had ordered the Home Ministry to give its preliminary reaction.

"The final decision will lie with the Home Ministry but I will be submitting a preliminary note on this matter. We have 124 cases now in the country subject to that law," he said.

On whether the problems of tontos (thugs who trail enforcement officers) would continue, Rais said: "In my view, tontos cannot exist if inside information is not leaked out.

"The question is who informs from the inside."

He said that enforcement authorities must be strong in dealing with this problem.

Rais said that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had agreed at last week's Cabinet meeting to address the weaknesses of enforcement agencies.

He said Dr Mahathir and Abdullah were expected to provide instructions to enforcement agency heads, including the police and the Immigration Department.