

Gov't mulls return of jury trials: Nazri
Malaysiakini.com
Disember 8, 2010

The government is considering reviving the jury system which was abolished more than a decade ago, the minister in charge of legal affairs said today.

Jury trials were axed in 1995, with the government arguing at the time that it would hasten court proceedings, and citing difficulties in finding qualified jurors as ordinary Malaysians were ill-equipped to weigh up evidence.

NONENazri Aziz, the minister in the prime minister's department overseeing legal affairs, said the government is now looking at reviving the system which is practised by countries including Britain and the United States.

"So the jury system is something we are looking into," the minister told a press conference, adding that there had not yet been any decision on whether to reintroduce it.

"One head is not as good as seven heads to decide on the future of a person," he said, pointing in particular to cases involving the death penalty.

"You can't allow one person to decide. Sometimes there are judges who are reluctant to pass a death sentence as well which may result in a miscarriage of justice."

The death penalty - carried out by hanging - is mandatory for murder, drug trafficking and possession of firearms among other crimes in Malaysia.

The last case tried by a jury in Malaysia was the gruesome murder of a state lawmaker from the ruling coalition, who was killed and chopped into 18 pieces by a married couple who practised black magic.

They were found guilty in February 1995, along with their assistant, and sentenced to death.

- AFP