

Skip National Service, do community service

PUTRAJAYA: National Service shirkers will in future do community service instead of being fined or sent to jail.

Drafting of the law to provide for this change was in the final stages, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Maximus Ongkili said yesterday.

He said this was among the

amendments to be made to the National Service Act.

"We hope to be able to table this proposal at the next sitting of Parliament in December," he added.

Maximus, however, declined to give details of the proposed punishment for NS dodgers, saying that he could not disclose them until "we

have finalised everything".

He said after chairing the Parliamentary Select Committee on Unity and National Service that the committee was of the opinion that NS dodgers should not be sent to jail.

"We will make the recommendation for jail term to be replaced by community service."

The first NS shirker who was jailed is Ahmad Harizal Ahmad Fauzi, 18, of Kampung Titi Serong, Kangar.

He was fined RM600 or 14 days' jail by the magistrate's court on May 10 last year for not turning up for training at Kuala Nerang in Kedah.

He was sent to jail when he could not pay the fine.

Perlis Menferi Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim paid the fine and Ahmad Harizal was released after a day in jail.

Following the case, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the government would study a proposal that the penalty for NS dodgers be replaced by community service.