

DBP given power to fine

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Cabinet has given the Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka (DBP) the power to advise and fine anyone not using the national language correctly on signboards.

Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Rais Yatim said this was one of the measures being taken to strengthen the national language.

"This step was outlined in a special memorandum between the Education Ministry and my ministry which was approved by the Cabinet to make sure the national language is hot sidelined in any way," he said.

"DBP can now enforce the correct usage of the national language on the public and private sectors," he told reporters at a press conference at his office yesterday.

Rais said for a start, DBP

would advise anyone found using the language wrongly.

Anyone refusing to follow an order by the DBP director-general can be fined up to RM1,000.

Rais also gave some examples of commonly used terms such as Touch 'N' Go and Boulevard that he would like to see changed to Bahasa Malaysia terms.

"The word for 'Boulevard' should rightfully be 'Lebuh

Perdana'," he said.

Asked whether the term MyKad would be changed, Rais said his ministry, together with the Education and Information ministries would soon identify public terms that do not have to follow DBP guidelines.

He said the ministry would also compel the correct use of the national language at official meetings and functions.

To a question that the use of the national language at func-

tions attended by foreigners would mean that they would not understand what was going on, Rais said as long as Bahasa Malaysia was used in the preamble or introduction of the function, English could be used subsequently if necessary.

"It has to be admitted that a mixture of Bahasa Malaysia and English sometimes cannot be helped, but we hope these measures can arrest the decline," Rais said.

He added that a national language unit would be set up to monitor the move.

Another move resulting from the memorandum would be an RM20mil allocation for a cultural training programme in local arts and culture.

"Part of this allocation will go to an annual RM300,000 grant to the Malaysian University Cultural Council so that local university students can conduct cultural activities," he said.