

Freewheeling days over

The Star - 16/10/2006

Govt planning stiffer penalties to stop Mat Rempit menace

KUALA LUMPUR: Stiffer penalties await Mat Rempit.

Their motorcycles would be confiscated and their licences suspended. Action would also be taken against the organisers of the illegal races.

These are some amendments to the laws that the Government is looking at to overcome the problem.

"This is a clear signal that the Government is serious in overcoming the problem of illegal racing," Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak told reporters after launching a road safety campaign.

He said there was a proposal by some quarters to impose mandatory jail terms for illegal racing but the Cabinet felt that the punishment was too heavy.

"What should be done is to tighten the law by confiscating motorcycles, suspending licences, imposing heavier penalty and taking action against organisers of illegal races," he said.

Najib likened road users who flout the law as "thieves."

"If they think they can 'steal' and escape from enforcement, they will do it. They don't realise that they are actually affecting the whole system."

He expressed disappointment over the 6,000-odd road fatalities each year despite the Government's efforts to reduce road accidents.

"This is unacceptable. If we multiply 6,000 with 10 years, we get 60,000, which is comparable to a population of a small town. It would be great if

we can reduce the number."

Najib said he told enforcement officers from the police and Road Transport Department to issue summonses on

the spot to road users who flout the law during the festive seasons.

"Don't give them a chance! Just issue the summonses and

don't allow them to accumulate arrears.

"Don't practise discretionary power because that will create other problems," he said.