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PM to honour reform plans before March

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PUTRAJAYA: Three high-powered commissions, which are part of Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's reform plans, will be put in place before the prime minister relinquishes his post in March.

Bills on the formation of the judicial appointments commission, prevention of corruption commission and the special complaints commission will be tabled in Parliament for the purpose.

De facto law minister Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz said the current Parliament session would be extended for four days from Dec 11 to accommodate the bills on the first two commissions while the

complaints commission would be dealt with when Parliament begins its next session in February instead of in March as originally scheduled.

"The members of parliament have to work very hard if they want to see all these being legislated by next year," he said at the Hari Raya Open House of the Prime Minister's Department's Legal Affairs Division, here, yesterday.

The judicial appointments commission would, among others, oversee the appointment of new judges while the transformation of the Anti-Corruption Agency into the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission is to ensure transparency and public accountability as it will have a board of advisers comprising representatives of

non-governmental organisations, members of the public, professionals from the private sector and even retirees.

With amendments to the Anti-Corruption Act (the enabling legislation under which the present ACA was set up) already in its final stages, Nazri said the cabinet would have a last sitting to deliberate on the judicial appointments bill, before passing it on to Parliament.

The special complaints commission is seen as the alternative to the controversial proposed Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission and its scope would not be limited to merely the police force.

The commission members would be appointed by the Yang di-

Pertuan Agong based on the recommendations of the prime minister.

Nazri said the Witness Protection Act, where protection could be offered to witnesses or whistle blowers would be tabled in the current Parliament session.

The bill was drafted following Parti Keadilan Rakyat releasing a video clip allegedly showing a prominent lawyer on his mobile phone speaking with a senior judge on the appointment of several top judicial positions.

"These steps are being made to realise the prime minister's ambition of fulfilling his reform promises. These are the reforms that he was talking about and we hope to do this before he goes," Nazri said.