

Freedom of Information Act to replace OSA

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PUTRAJAYA: The Freedom of Information Act will be drawn up to replace the Official Secrets Act (OSA) 1972, said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said a Cabinet special committee on anti-corruption which met yesterday had agreed in principle that sufficient time must be given to the process of drawing up the law.

"This is to allow for sufficient engagement and outreach sessions with the public."

Mahathir said the meeting also discussed the scope of the Government Procurement Act which would be drawn up by the Finance Ministry.

"The bill is expected to be tabled in Parliament in the middle of 2020."

On another matter, he said plans to re-evaluate the role of political secretaries were also discussed.

"Under the previous government, they had abused their



Mahathir and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail at the launch of the Public Complaints Bureau's smart response application yesterday. — **ASHRAF SHAMSUL/THE SUN**

position," the prime minister said.

"They were found to have given out contracts although this was not their role.

"The task of a political secretary is to be a go-between for ministers

when dealing with his constituents."

He said the government also planned to amend the Audit Act 1957 to ensure the independence of the National Audit Department and the auditor-general.

He said although the Prime Minister's Office had oversight of the department, it must be free to act.

On the Public Complaints Bureau, Mahathir said its smart response application would enable complainants to upload a 150-second video, a 1,200-second audio recording, a 15MB document and 25 pictures taken on smartphones.

"The system will inform the complainant about the case's progress and the messenger system will permit the complainant to communicate with the investigating officer."

Mahathir said the meeting also discussed five proposals made by the Securities Commission (SC) to boost corporate governance practices in the capital market to curb corruption and fraud.

"The meeting agreed in principle with several proposals submitted by the SC which will be discussed by the National Debt Management Committee."