

'Govt open to improving laws'

Takiyuddin: Acts regularly reviewed to ensure all parties protected

PETALING JAYA: The government has no qualms to enact a Freedom of Information Act to give better protection and find a balance between private and public interests, the Parliament heard.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Takiyuddin Hassan said the government constantly reviewed existing laws, including the Official Secrets Act (OSA) 1972, to ensure all parties were protected.

"It is important because when we enact a certain law, surely there is an intention of legislation.

"The interest of the public is important and we have to find a

balance between the interest of public and private within the country and community.

"Based on that reason, the government has no problems especially when there is feedback given by civil society to improve the current laws including in the aspect of whistleblowing," he said in reply to a supplementary question from R. Sivarasa (PH-Sungai Buloh) at the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Sivarasa had asked whether the government would consider enacting a Freedom of Information Act to replace the OSA.

To the initial question, Takiyuddin said that currently protection was

given to whistleblowers under the Whistleblower Protection Act 2010, which has been enforced since December 2010.

"The objective of the Act is to fight corruption and misconduct in the public and private sectors. It is also to facilitate and promote the public to expose such acts.

"The Act also gives protection in the form of confidentiality of information, immunity from civil or criminal action as well as detrimental action being taken against them," he added.

Takiyuddin said the Act also empowered enforcement agencies to start a probe into improper con-

duct and detrimental action.

"The scope of the implementation involves the private and public sectors as outlined under Section 2 of the Act.

"The Act stated that the protection given to the whistleblower is through various enforcement agencies," he said.

Takiyuddin noted that whistleblowers who acted in good faith would be given various protections, including confidentiality of private information and immunity from civil and criminal actions.

"The whistleblower must give full cooperation to allow such protection be granted," he added.