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Govt may change definition of rape: Patil

 By: PTI
June 23, 2006

New Delhi: The government is considering changing the definition of rape to ensure that the accused do not go scot free, as well as bringing a bill in Parliament to amend the Indian Penal Code in this regard, Home Minister Shivraj Patil said today.

"A draft bill is being prepared to change the definition of rape and give it a new definition," he told a press conference while giving details of certain key amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code that have now become law.

Patil, however, declined to give details on the changes being considered with regard to the definition of rape, saying the draft bill was under preparation.

The government, he said, has also decided to make "plea bargaining", a new concept, part of the statute to allow the settlement of cases between the accused and the victim through various measures including compensation. This would only apply to offences carrying jail terms less than 10 years and would have to be done through a court.

The issue of plea bargaining was part of the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2005, which was passed by Parliament last year but had not not been notified.

"Though all other provisions of the CrPC amendment bill were notified and brought into effect on April 12, 2006, plea bargaining was left out deliberately as the Parliamentary Standing Committee, while examining the bill, had recommended setting up of an independent prosecuting agency for success of this provision," Patil said.

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