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Islamic rulings: Three States respond favourably

KAMPUNG GAJAH, Sat. - The State Governments of Perak, Selangor and Kelantan have pledged to put on hold the implementation and enforcement of rulings governing Muslims pending the formulation of uniform Syariah laws.

They are responding favourably to the call made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday which included asking them not to gazette fatwa issued by State mufti.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib said the State Government had agreed in principle that the implementation and enforcement of Islamic laws should be co-ordinated throughout the country.

"We will comply with what has been agreed upon," he told reporters after the ground-breaking ceremony of the Mara Junior Science College in 5km Jalan Tanjung Tualang today.

Leaders of the three States were commenting on the Prime Minister's statement yesterday. He had said that pending a study conducted by a committee under the Prime Minister's Department, a temporary suspension was necessary to prevent people from "suffering" because some of what were classified as offences might not be so after the study.

In Klang, Selangor Islamic Religious Affairs deputy chairman Datuk Dr Zainal Abidin Ahmad said the State Government supported the call made by the Prime Minister.

He said the time had come for a review and study on the role and powers of religious officers pending the formulation of uniform Syariah laws for the whole country.

"In my opinion, the mufti's view may not be appropriate with the changing times," he told reporters after opening the Klang district-level reading week at Dewan Hamzah today.

Citing an example, Dr Zainal Abidin said the fatwa committee had ruled that smoking was prohibited (haram), but till today, the ruling had not been enforced in Selangor.

In Pasir Puteh, Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat welcomed the Federal Government's decision asking State Governments to put on hold the implementation and enforcement of Syariah laws.

However, he questioned if such a move would produce the desired results.

"It is good if we can standardise the Syariah laws for the whole country, but will the effect be as desired?" he asked.

He mentioned the controversy over the arrest of three part-time models who took part in a beauty contest in Selangor.

"Will the formulation of uniform Syariah laws be able to put a stop to Muslims taking part in such contests? If they can still do so, it will not give any meaning," he told reporters after opening a stretch of road between Tok Bali and Semerak at Tok Bali.

(END)