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Streamlining Syariah law on 'indecent behaviour'

SHAH ALAM, Mon. - Menteri Besar Datuk Abu Hassan Omar said the State Government will streamline the implementation of the Syariah law pertaining to indecent behaviour to bring it into line with such laws in other States.

The law also prohibits Muslim women from participating in beauty contests.

He said the State Religious Department had been directed to study all the Enactments and fatwa enforced by other States.

The outcome of the study, he said, would be tabled at the next National Committee on Religious Affairs chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said the study would be used as the basis for the uniform implementation of the laws throughout the country.

"Until then, the existing Enactment will continue to be enforced as it has already been passed by the State Assembly and gazetted for implementation.

"The State Government will step up publicity on the provision of the law in an effort to inform the public about its existence," he said, adding local authorities had also been directed to inform beauty contest organisers about the provision prohibiting Muslim women from taking part.

Abu Hassan said this after being briefed about the current programmes carried out by the department and the implementation of the State Islamic Crime Enactment 1995 today.

Last Tuesday, three part-time models who participated in the recent Miss Malaysia Petite 1997 pageant were charged under section 31 of the Enactment for dressing indecently.

Noni Mohamad, 19, of Georgetown, Penang; Fahyu Hanim Ahmad, 18 and Sharina Shaari, 22, both from Alor Star, Kedah, pleaded guilty to the charge and were each fined RM400 or two months' jail in default by the Petaling Jaya syariah court.

They were also charged in the Shah Alam Syariah High Court on Wednesday with going against a fatwa (Islamic ruling) of the Selangor Mufti, prohibiting Muslim women from taking part in beauty contests.

The case which came under section 12 (c) of the Enactment would be heard on Aug 6.

The case prompted acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to call for moderation in the implementation of Syariah laws in the country.

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