

**Don't join rally, Najib tells syariah lawyers**  
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With fever running high over the July 9 Bersih rally, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has warned syariah lawyers not to take part in it.

Najib, in his speech at the launching of the Malaysian Syariah Officers Convention, said lawyers and syariah lawyers are to preserve peace.

"Lawyers who are professional need not take part in street demonstrations, as we are a sovereign country, which has laws and a constitution.

"Hence we should act rationally not emotionally, and not hamper peace and harmony, which have been built by the freedom and independent fighters," he said.

A total of 1,200 syariah judges, lawyers and syariah officers are attending the three-day conference.

Najib and the police have been launching verbal assaults on next Saturday's (July 9) the proposed rally with the latter saying that any negotiation with Bersih has ended.

The prime minister was also seen to be indirectly taking a swipe at his adversary PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim, when commending syariah courts for adopting the modern approach of using DNA as evidence.

"I am made to understand that syariah courts have accepted bayyinah evidence through DNA as was practised in civil courts.

"Several syariah judges had been seen to use DNA as evidence to verify the status of the children in inheritance, child custody and adultery cases.

"In the case at Kota Kinabalu the judge Justice Ahmad Lakim had adopted the DNA process to verify the next of kin of a person who had passed away following a conflict between the plaintiff and the respondents."

Najib also cited another case in Sabah between the Sabah Islamic Affairs Department and Rosli Abdul Japar, when the court also allowed DNA evidence under the Sabah Syariah Evidence Enactment leading a conviction in an adultery case.

Najib said the syariah court decision to accept DNA evidence shows that it is willing to transform in various aspects.

"Hence, the syariah courts should not be afraid to use DNA to verify the facts.

"As the saying goes "Berani Kerana Benar, takut kerana salah" (Brave because you are in the right, afraid because are in the wrong)," he said.

Anwar, is facing an on-going sodomy trial where a DNA test is being disputed.

He is also implicated in a sex-tape scandal which the opposition leader has also denied.

**'Form Syariah Lawyers Council'**

Najib asked the syariah lawyers to form their own Syariah Lawyers Council, which will be at par with the Bar Council.

"This is to increase the professionalism of syariah lawyers and also to ensure they charge standard fees. I have received complaints that some syariah lawyers charge indiscriminately," he said.

The premier also announced that the government was in the process of formulating the Syariah Professional Lawyers Act, similar to the Legal Profession Act, to increase the professional level of the syariah lawyers and to streamline the practise, with graduates from overseas universities coming in.

He hinted that a female syariah judge may soon make her way to the Syariah Court of Appeal.

"At present there are three female syariah judges, one in Malacca and two in the Federal Territory," he said.

Najib also announced an allocation of RM15 million for the Family Support Assistance Scheme to assist divorced spouses awaiting compensation from their former partners.

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