

'Herald' editor out to hurt Muslims, says Mahathir
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Catholic weekly Herald's editor Father Lawrence Andrew was out to "hurt Muslims" by insisting that churches in Selangor will continue using Allah to refer to God, according to former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Utusan Malaysia quoted him as saying that the priest should respect the Court of Appeal decision that 'Allah' is exclusive to Muslims and also preserve the religious harmony that exists in the country.

"The usage of 'Allah' in Sabah and Sarawak has been in place for a long time, but why suddenly they want to use it in the peninsula?" Mahathir reportedly asked after attending a Tabung Haji event yesterday.

"We asked them to learn the national language, they don't want, they don't speak the national language, but suddenly in this issue they want to use the national language - why, what is the motive?" he asked.

"We shouldn't hurt others. But he is doing it on purpose, the court has said no, but he doesn't pay heed. This is disrespecting the court," Mahathir was quoted as saying.

Lawrence (left) is currently the subject of a sedition investigation following his statement that churches in Selangor will continue using 'Allah' during their Bahasa Malaysia sermons.

This followed the Appeals Court overturning an earlier High Court decision that the Herald can use the word 'Allah' in its publication as the earlier Home Ministry ban was unconstitutional.

Lawrence's statement subsequently caused an uproar among Malay rights groups, which threatened to hold a protest in front of a church in Klang during mass last Sunday.

The protest only took place at a bus stop near the church, while the BM mass in the church continued using the word 'Allah'.

Christian groups have said that a majority of Christians in the country, especially

those from East Malaysia, have been using 'Allah' in their BM masses even before the formation of Malaysia.

The High Court in 2009 ruled that the Home Ministry's ban on 'Allah' being used in the Catholic weekly the Herald was unconstitutional, but the Court of Appeal overturned the decision in 2013, ruling that the usage of 'Allah' was "not integral" to the Christian faith.

Earlier last week, the Selangor Islamic Affairs Department (Jais) raided the Bible Society of Malaysia (BSM) and seized over 300 copies of the Malay Bible, even though BSM has claimed that the usage of 'Allah' in the Bible was according to the 10-point Solution provided to Christians by the government.

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