

Anwar slams Najib over 'Allah' acrimony
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Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim said the lack of leadership from the prime minister and the courts has allowed "irresponsible elements" to hijack the discourse on the 'Allah' issue.

Anwar was lamenting the missed opportunity at a reasoned debate over the Herald's ban on using the word 'Allah' arising from the Federal Court's decision on Monday.

"It is unfortunate that a great opportunity has been lost for reasoned and enlightened thinking to prevail over rabble-rousing and extremist sentiments.

"The Federal Court's non-decision and Prime Minister Najib Razak's complete lack of leadership only place this country in further anxiety and uncertainty," said Anwar in a statement today.

The PKR de facto leader said the Herald's appeal was an "important legal and constitutional issue with major implications for Malaysians" and the Federal Court had the duty to offer its guidance.

He pointed to Perkasa's controversial remark this week on the chopping of heads of those who ridicule Islam and the sultan as the result of the highest court's failure to hear the case.

"Disturbingly, Perkasa has even suggested decapitation of those who disagree with it.

"The judiciary must not abdicate its duty. By not deciding, it allows irresponsible elements such as Perkasa, Isma and Umno to hijack the national discourse with divisive, confrontational and wrong-headed views," Anwar said.

On Monday, four judges of a seven-member Federal Court bench ruled against granting leave to hear the appeal by the archbishop of the Catholic Church over the ban on its weekly publication from using the word 'Allah'.