

PM: Govt to set up special committee to empower Syariah Court

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The government has agreed to set up a special committee sanctioned by the Conference of Rulers in a bid to empower and elevate the status of the Syariah Court, said Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

He said the committee would conduct research, including discussions with muftis and all relevant parties, to gather views to formulate regulations that can be implemented to enhance the jurisdiction of the Syariah Court.

He said the Conference of Rulers is also keen and has given consent for the committee to study ways to enhance the powers of the Syariah Court over Muslims, while ensuring that it does not affect non-Muslims at the same time.

“So far, the names of members of this special committee have been consented to by the Conference of Rulers, and they will need to engage with the state Islamic religious councils and state governments before anything is finalised.

“There are methods that need to be discussed because some states are quite

strict and may not agree if we violate the principles mentioned, but whatever proposals this committee may have, the Conference of Rulers must be notified,” he said during Minister's Question Time at the Dewan Rakyat sitting today.

Anwar was replying to Mohd Azizi Abu Naim (Perikatan Nasional-Gua Musang) who wanted to know the federal government's stance on the petition filed by two women to challenge the Kelantan Syariah Criminal Code (I) Enactment 2019, and the government's efforts to safeguard the syariah-related laws.

Elaborating, Anwar said any decisions by the Federal Court regarding the constitutional challenge proceedings by the two Muslim women would not hinder the government's efforts to strengthen the Syariah Court through the committee.

“That is why we have this special committee, to coordinate the implementation of the law.

“Imagine if the states are given unlimited space to enact laws, each state does its own thing, and then there will be conflicts among the states,” he said.

Through the committee, Anwar said any proposals for amendments and improvements to the Syariah Court would have to obtain the consent of the Conference of Rulers before being tabled in Parliament.

'Court case not about challenging syariah law'

Meanwhile, the prime minister said that the public should have a correct understanding of the case because it is not about challenging syariah law but rather challenging considerations involving state powers in the Constitution.

“There is a perception that these Muslims (women in the case) are challenging syariah law because politicians have been exploiting the religious aspect of it but, in reality, the issue is about jurisdiction, where each state can make its own laws.

“So, don't use this to raise the political temperature and spread hatred, claiming that the prime minister is indifferent to syariah matters,” he added.

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