



**Dr M: Set strict conditions on 'Allah' use
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The High Court's decision allowing a Catholic weekly publication to use the term 'Allah' must be governed by strict conditions, said former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said whatever justifications offered for the approval, it would not diffuse the anger of Muslims in the country.

"This is because 'God' in other religions is translated as 'Tuhan' in Bahasa Melayu or Arabic, not 'Allah'. 'Allah' specifically referred to God in Islam. If they understand that, they would use the word 'Tuhan', not 'Allah'.

"I accept the term 'Allah' had been used in Sabah and Sarawak before the two states joined Malaysia, but it is difficult to stop them from doing so now... but in the peninsular, we have not heard of such practice," he told reporters after presenting a keynote address at the Malay Undergraduates Convention at Universiti Malaysia Terengganu here today.

On Friday, the High Court ruled that the Catholic weekly, The Herald, can use the term 'Allah' in its articles to propagate Christianity among its followers.

Judge Lau Bee Lian had ruled that usage of the term was constitutional as long as the periodical was confined to educate the followers of the Christian faith.

Mahathir said, "What I am afraid of is that the term 'Allah' might be used in such a way that could inflame the anger of Muslims, if they were to use it on banners or write something that might not reflect Islam."

Condolences to Tok Mat

Meanwhile, Mahathir extended his condolence to the family of former information minister Mohamed Rahmat, who passed away yesterday.

"During his tenure as a minister, Allahyarham had carried out his work diligently and I appreciated his work.

"I am indebted to him as a minister in my cabinet before he was appointed Malaysian ambassador to Indonesia with ministerial status."

- *Bernama*

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