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MCA told to follow govt stand on 'Allah' issue

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PUTRAJAYA: MCA was yesterday given a warning for going against the government's stand in banning the use of the word "Allah" by non-Muslims.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who is also Barisan Nasional deputy chairman, said the government's stand on the issue was clear and it was only right that component parties observed the same stand.

He had earlier questioned MCA for being on the same page with DAP, which called on the government to rescind the ban on use of the word by non-Muslims.

Furthermore, Muhyiddin said, the issue was still under the purview of the courts and such statements could be rendered subjudice.

"While waiting for the court's decision, we should avoid any open polemics. By right, the component

parties should observe the government's stand so that this issue, which is already simmering down, does not turn into a new heated debate.

"These are matters that must be paid serious attention to. I'm not sure why DAP and MCA are taking a similar stand on this issue," he said after chairing the Cabinet Committee on Youth Development here yesterday.

He cautioned parties against fanning the issue further as it had already created tension and an unhealthy environment in the country.

"It is best that the unwelcome situation is not recreated. Let this issue be resolved amicably and any comments made must take into account the public's interest and not that of certain groups, including political parties."

On Monday, news reports quoted Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein as saying in a forum that his predecessor should not have banned the use of the word "Allah"

by the Catholic Church.

He was also quoted as saying that the decision would continue to haunt his ministry "for a very long time".

Following this, MCA had urged Hishammuddin to use his authority to rescind the ban.

The party also said that "BN must stop the 'Allah' ruling from further pohirisijg the public".

Meanwhile, DAP had called on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Ra^ak to end the court dispute, saying dropping the appeal would "demonstrate the government's seriousness and commitment to resolve the issue through inter-religious dialogue",

-Former home minister Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar had imposed the ban after the word was used in the Catholic Church's newsletter, *The Herald*, some two years ago as the use of "Allah" outside an Islamic context would confuse Muslims.

On former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's comment that

the 1Malaysia concept had not been understood well by some Malaysians, Muhyiddin said the government, from the start, had given the concept some time to be understood, adopted and practised.

"We thank Dr Mahathir, whom we deeply respect, and I agree with him although we never said that everyone would understand the 1Malaysia concept a year after its birth.

"There are many who have a good grasp of the concept. However, as this is a dynamic matter, there is a tendency for certain groups to interpret it based on their own understanding, agenda and desires.

"This has happened despite the prime minister having clearly stated that the 1Malaysia concept is based on the Federal Constitution."

Muhyiddin added that Malaysians must understand that the content and spirit of the 1Malaysia concept does not stray from stipulations in the Constitution.