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Sultan: 'Allah' word can be used only by Muslims

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PETALING JAYA: Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah yesterday decreed that all non-Muslims in the state are banned from using the word "Allah" as it is a holy word exclusive to Muslims.

The sultan's decree was publicised through a statement from the Selangor Islamic Affairs Council (Mais).

Mais secretary Datuk Mohd Misri Idris said the sultan's decree was in line with an edict gazetted on Feb 18, 2010, as well as his initial decree which followed the edict, when the issue was first raised.

"His Highness deeply regrets that his decree has been taken lightly by certain quarters," said Mohd Misri, adding that the sultan has also instructed Mais and the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (Jais) to take "stern action" against any Muslim or non-Muslim who ignore the edict issued according to Selangor laws.

Section 9 of the Selangor Non-Islamic Religions (Control of Propagation amongst Muslims) Enactment 1988 prohibits the use of "Allah" by non-Muslims in any matter related to their religions.

The sultan's decree yesterday followed a special Mais meeting convened on Sunday to discuss DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng's Christmas message where he had urged the government to allow Christians to use "Allah" in the Bahasa Malaysia version of the Bible.

Lim's call had drawn an outcry from various quarters claiming to protect the sanctity of Islam.

Meanwhile, PAS said although Islam does not restrict the use of the term "Allah" by non-Muslims, it must not be "misused" by them to the extent that it confuses Muslims.

Party president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang, at a joint press conference with Pakatan Rakyat (PR) de-facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang yesterday, said that the term "Allah" in Arabic means "He is the only one lord" and cannot be accurately translated by any other language.