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PM: Pas bill not about hudud

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PUTRAJAYA: Non-Muslims must understand that the amendment to the Syariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act 1965 (Act 355) is not about introducing hudud, but merely aims to increase the powers of syariah courts.

Najib noted that it is also not unusual for Barisan Nasional and Pas to be on the same page, saying that there were times both parties shared the same views and that included matters such as Act 355.

"It (Act 355) has nothing to do with non-Muslims at all," he said.

Najib's remark comes after various political parties and social movements called for lawmakers to reject Pas's private member's bill, which they claimed was aimed at paving

the way for the implementation of Islamic corporal punishment.

Pushed by Pas president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang, the bill seeks to amend the act to empower Islamic courts to enforce punishment, except for the death penalty, provided in syariah laws for Islamic offences listed under the state jurisdiction in the Federal Constitution. Syariah court punishments are currently limited to jail terms not exceeding three years, caning of not more than six strokes, or fines of not more than RM5,000.

Najib stressed that the matter is not about hudud.

"What we are doing is a *syiar* (prescription) in Islam; it is a Muslim affair. Non-Muslims must understand

that this is not about hudud, but about empowering the syariah courts."

As for opposition within BN, Najib said Umno planned to discuss with other component parties and explain the purpose of the amended bill.

"As a BN government, we will negotiate with other component parties so that they understand the actual purpose behind the amendment of the bill," he said.

Meanwhile, Najib said the Pas of today and the Pas of yesterday appeared to be different.

"The Pas of today appears to be more open and committed to fighting for matters involving the interest of the ummah (Muslim community)."

Najib said the relationship between both parties was more com-



The amendment to the Syariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act 1965 is about **empowering the syariah courts**, says Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak**. File pic

fortable now, despite both parties having their sub-groups within.

"The same applies to Umno when it comes to matters related to the ummah and the future of the country. There are certain things that we share similar opinions, but we have

yet to reach the level of 1974 in forming a coalition government.

"There are occasions when we have differing views, sometimes we have a different stance and there are also times when we share the same stance," he said.