



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim (centre) mingling with guests during a Hari Raya Aidilfitri open house hosted by the Prime Minister's Department in Putrajaya yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

'ALLAH' ISSUE

CABINET TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS TO RULERS

PM says measures aim to forge greater unity and harmony among the people

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THE king has given the cabinet consent to submit proposals to the Conference of Rulers to strengthen the enforcement of the use of the word "Allah".

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the proposals were aimed at forging greater unity and harmony among the people of different races and religions.

"The cabinet today (yesterday) discussed the decision by the attorney-general to withdraw the appeal against the (Sarawakian) Jill Ireland case related to a publication containing the word 'Allah'.

"The cabinet took note that such a decision revolved only around administrative matters and would not change the ruling of the Federal Court in 2014."

He said this in a statement that was issued shortly after attending the Hari Raya Aidilfitri open

house hosted by the Prime Minister's Department.

The unity government under his leadership, said Anwar, respected, acknowledged and adopted state enactments and the decree issued by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong on Feb 27 to maintain the existing policies on the use of the word "Allah".

"The government would continue to defend the Federal Constitution, especially Article 3, in relation to Islam being the religion of the Federation and that other religions can be practised in peace and harmony," he said.

Umno information chief Datuk Seri Azalina Othman on Tuesday said ministers from the party would raise the issue of the use of the word "Allah" by Christians, at the weekly cabinet meeting.

Azalina, who is also minister in the Prime Minister's Department (law and institutional reforms), said the issue must be handled carefully as the government continued to be criticised for withdrawing its appeal against the High Court ruling.

It was reported that the government withdrew its appeal over the High Court's ruling that allows non-Muslims to use the word "Allah" and three other words for teaching purposes.

The other words are "kaabah", "solat" and "baitullah".

Home Minister Datuk Seri Sai-

ruddin Nasution Ismail has said the move to withdraw the appeal is due to a contradiction between a 1986 cabinet decision and the Home Ministry's administrative order the same year.

On Tuesday, Anwar said the use of the word "Allah" by Christians for the publication of religious materials for educational purposes was limited to Sarawak.

Ireland, a Melanau of Christian faith, filed for a judicial review application on Aug 20, 2008 after compact discs meant for Christians' educational purposes but containing the word "Allah" in their titles were seized by an enforcement agency on May 11 the same year.

The seized CDs were bought in Indonesia and had various titles, including "Ibadah Yang Benar Dalam Kerajaan Allah" (True Worship under Allah's Kingdom).

On March 21, 2021, Court of Appeal judge Datuk Nor Bee Ariffin, sitting as a High Court judge, ruled in her favour after a 13-year legal battle. Nor Bee, in her judgment, described the Home Ministry's directive to prohibit the use of the four words by non-Muslims 35 years ago as "illegal" and "irrational".

She said the government's directive was not in line with the aim of the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984.