

EXISTING POLICIES REMAIN

PM: MALAY RULERS MADE THE CALL ON 'ALLAH' USAGE IN 1986

'Arguments on the withdrawal of appeal should be based on facts, don't make false allegations'

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday warned certain quarters against making false allegations about the federal government over its decision to withdraw the appeal against the High Court ruling that allowed non-Muslims to use the word "Allah".

While the unity federal administration under his leadership was open to views and criticism, Anwar said arguments on the matter should be made based on facts.

He reiterated that the Home Ministry's decision to withdraw the appeal would not change existing policies, where only non-Muslims in Sabah and Sarawak were allowed to use the word Allah.

"As much as we wanted to bring the case (proceed with the appeal) to the court, we realised that there was no basis for us to win the case. It is *tak cerdik* (not wise) for the government to proceed with the appeal just to prove that we are strict and that we will not compromise on such matters.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim (left) and Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan (second from right) inspecting the boys' dormitory of SMKA Dato Haji Hassan Sail Pedas in Rembau yesterday. The boys' dormitory was damaged in a fire in July last year. BERNAMA PIC

"Islam teaches us to formulate and implement policies based on facts," he said after inspecting the building of SMKA Dato Haji Hassan Sail Pedas here yesterday.

Present were defence minister and Rembau member of parliament Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan, Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Aminuddin Harun and Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek.

Anwar insisted that matters surrounding the use of the word Allah should not be made an issue again.

"The decision (by the Home

Ministry) to withdraw the appeal (against the High Court ruling) is related to Sarawak, which is based on the policy decided upon in 1986.

"Such a decision does not mean we are giving up, since it does not change the existing policy (on the use of the word Allah)," he said.

He added that the policy allowing non-Muslims in Sabah and Sarawak to use the word Allah had been decided by the Conference of Rulers and the government in 1986.

"It was not my decision but that of the Conference of Rulers and the

then federal government," he said.

On March 21, 2021, Court of Appeal Judge Datuk Nor Bee Ariffin, sitting as a High Court judge, made the ruling after a 13-year-long legal battle between the government and Jill Ireland, a Christian woman from Sarawak.

Nor Bee described the Home Ministry's directive to prohibit the use of four words by non-Muslims 35 years ago as "illegal" and "irrational". She said the government directive was issued beyond the aim of the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984.