

Improvements to be made by July

Proposal on 'Allah' issue to be tabled at Conference of Rulers' meeting

KUALA LUMPUR: The proposal to improve the policies and regulations relating to the use of the word "Allah" by non-Muslims will be tabled at the meeting of the Conference of Rulers in July, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said he had referred the matter to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and the King advised him that all decisions must be in line with the decision made by the

Conference of Rulers.

He said the government would also refer to the National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs (MKI) chaired by Sultan of Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah.

"We will refer first to the MKI chaired by the Selangor Sultan to seek their advice to improve the policies so that a final decision can be made, which is to prohibit the use in the peninsula but be allowed with certain conditions

in Sabah and Sarawak.

"God willing, the proposal will be tabled at the Conference of Rulers' meeting in July," he said during Prime Minister's Question Time in Parliament yesterday.

Anwar was responding to Datuk Idris Ahmad (PN-Bagan Serai) who wanted to know whether the government had obtained the approval of the Malay Rulers and consulted the state Islamic religious councils

first before withdrawing its appeal in the case relating to the use of the word "Allah".

On May 15, the Home Ministry and the Federal Government were reported to have withdrawn their appeal against the decision of the Kuala Lumpur High Court which ruled that non-Muslims can use the word "Allah" and three other Arabic words in the publication of their religious materials for learning purposes.

Anwar said the decision to withdraw the appeal was part of the efforts to improve all the related policies and regulations.

"It was done after taking into account the Attorney General's views. If not, there will be appeal after appeal due to loopholes.

"That's why we want to put an end to it by amending all policies to make it clearer so that no such cases can be taken to court. For me, it is better this way," he added.