

'Syariah to be empowered'

PM: Committee decisions will not offend, force non-Muslims

By TEH ATHIRA YUSOF
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: A special committee consented to by the Conference of Rulers will be set up to empower and elevate the Syariah Courts in the country, including defining its jurisdiction, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"The special committee is responsible for examining and fine-tuning issues related to the competence of the state legislative assembly regarding the enactment of Islamic law and the jurisdiction of the Syariah Court.

"The committee will be taking into consideration in their study so any decision would not offend or force the non-Muslims," he said during Prime Minister's Question Time yesterday.

The special committee is set up under the National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs (MKI).

Anwar was replying to a question from Mohd Azizi bin Abu Naim, Gua Musang MP, regarding the Federal Government's stance on the notice of petition filed by Nik Elin Zurina Nik Abdul Rashid and her daughter to challenge the Kelantan Syariah Criminal Code (I) Enactment 2019, and to state the efforts by the government to safeguard syariah-related laws.

The Tambun MP also said the public must be informed that the petition was not to challenge the Syariah Court, but instead, to challenge the involvement of state government in federal matters.

Following the legal matter, Anwar said the government will respect the decision of the Federal Court and Chief Justice Tun Tengku Maimun Tuan Mat as it is an ongoing case.

However, he is of the view that



Making it clear: Anwar speaking during Prime Minister's Question Time at the Dewan Rakyat. - Bernama

the case does not deter the special committee to review and discuss the matter with relevant figures or experts on the matter.

"The Federal Court can rule on the matter based on their decision, whether the matter falls under federal or state jurisdiction.

"Aside from the ruling, it does not hinder the government, with the consent of the Malay Rulers, to conduct a review and discuss with muftis, ulama and all relevant parties that can provide

their views so that the legislation that can be implemented will work to empower the Syariah Courts," he said.

Anwar explained that any suggestions to improve or amend the laws under the Syariah Courts must first obtain the consent of the Conference of Rules before it can be presented and tabled at Parliament.

When asked by Datuk Seri Takiyuddin Hassan, Kota Baru MP, about the details of the special committee, Anwar said the mem-

bers of the council had been approved by the Conference of Rulers two weeks ago.

"This is one of the efforts carried out in line with the order of His Majesty the Sultan of Selangor during the MKI meeting on Aug 28," he said.