

'Don't cherry-pick the law'

Anwar: Speaker made decision based on facts, unlike Opposition

By MARTIN CARVALHO
mart3@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: The Opposition should not selectively interpret the law to suit its agenda, says the Prime Minister.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim lambasted the Opposition for its handling of the issue of the six ex-Bersatu MPs who were allowed to keep their seats in the Dewan Rakyat despite attempts by the party to unseat them.

"The Speaker reviewed the law and Constitution in its entirety and based his interpretation on it. Don't cherry-pick some parts and leave the others out as what was done by the Bersatu leadership," he said after launching the Global Madani Forum 2024 themed "Catalysing the Next Civilisational Revival" here yesterday.

Anwar was responding to questions on Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Johari Abdul's decision to uphold the seats of the six MPs - a move sharply criticised by Perikatan Nasional chairman Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who alleged it was a violation of the Federal Constitution.

In his ruling, Johari cited Clause 10.5 of the Bersatu constitution, which he argued denies the rights of the six MPs enshrined under the Federal Constitution, Dewan Rakyat Standing Orders, and the Houses of Parliament (Privileges and Powers) Act 1952.

The ruling, conveyed in a letter dated July 9 to Bersatu whip Datuk Seri Dr Ronald Kiandee, was seen by *The Star*.

Under Bersatu's revised regulations, the six ceased to be party members and were required to vacate their seats after failing to respond to official letters requiring them to pledge their loyalty to the party by May 31.



In good company: Anwar (centre) posing with Ali at the launch of the forum. Flanking them are government ministers and other leaders. — RAJA FAISAL HISHAN/The Star

The six are Datuk Syed Abu Hussin Syed Abu Fasal (Bukit Gantang), Zahari Kechik (Jeli), Iskandar Dzulkarnain Abdul Khalid (Kuala Kangsar), Datuk Suhaili Abdul Rahman (Labuan), Datuk Dr Zulkafperi Hanafi (Tanjong Karang), and Mohd Azizi Abu Naim (Gua Musang).

Anwar expressed incredulity at Muhyiddin's omission of the discussions on the proposed anti-hopping laws during earlier consultations among political parties.

"I don't know why he chose to read out certain parts of the decision while ignoring others.

"When we were in the Opposition, we were very adamant about the part where those who are sacked will have to vacate their seats. But Bersatu opposed this at the time, which is why exceptions were included," he said.

Anwar said he was not involved

in the discussions when the anti-hopping law was being finalised.

He said the talks involved the then-ruling government's representatives Tun Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar and Datuk Seri Takiyuddin Hassan, as well as Pakatan Harapan's Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail and Anthony Loke.

On a separate matter, he said the details of the Mufti (Federal Territories) Bill would be presented to the Conference of Rulers next week.

"There are no disputes over the Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah and reference to Syafi'i, Hanafi, Maliki or Hanbali schools of thought and other opinions.

"The details are being discussed and I leave it to the experts," he added.

It was reported that the Bill, among others, outlines the mufti's responsibilities in assisting and

advising the King concerning all matters of syariah law, the procedure for issuing fatwas, views regarding syariah law in court, and determining the direction of the Qibla.

Earlier in his speech, Anwar stressed the importance of knowledge and proper understanding of religion in fully realising the Madani concept.

He said core values and principles such as justice, ethics and inclusiveness were necessary if a new society is to be built based on the Madani concept.

Also present was president of the International Union of Muslim Scholars Sheikh Dr Ali Al-Qaradaghi.