

## HALAL CERTIFICATE FUROR

# ANWAR: KOK'S VIEW IS HER OWN, NOT PH'S

**PM says there is a need to be mindful of both Muslim and non-Muslim sentiments**

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**S**EPUTEH member of parliament Teresa Kok's comments on the halal certification issue do not represent the stance of Pakatan Harapan, said its chairman Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"There is no need for this, as it will create unnecessary controversy in our society.

"Regulations (related to halal certification) are necessary to prevent doubts among Muslims.

"If she (Kok) feels that regulations are not needed in certain

areas, she should discuss it appropriately," the prime minister said after the launch of the Seremban rest and service area (southbound) — Malaysia's first sustainable highway rest area — yesterday.

Previously, Kok — who is DAP vice-chairman — opposed a proposal by the Malaysia Islamic Development Department (Jakim) requiring all food establishments that do not serve pork or alcohol to obtain halal certification.

She said doing so could burden small businesses, restrict consumer freedom and clash with Malaysia's cultural diversity.

Her statement was criticised by various parties, including Umno leaders, opposition members, non-governmental organisations and the Malay Chamber of Commerce Malaysia.

Anwar said: "If she wants to represent certain quarters, that's fine... but she should not make such statements publicly because it does not help to clarify the situation.

"We need to be mindful of both

Muslim and non-Muslim sentiments.

"The approach should be to negotiate properly first.

"Our country is in a good state now, the politics are stable, international appreciation is positive, and the economy is improving. So, why should we do anything that could disrupt this?"

DAP secretary-general Anthony Loke, however, said that as a MP, Kok had a responsibility to voice her views on issues concerning the people.

"What she raised is a community concern, particularly from non-Muslim restaurants, that they might also be affected or required to obtain halal certification," he said after opening the Perak DAP Convention at the Ipoh Convention Centre here, yesterday.

Loke added that at this point, it was only a proposal made by Jakim and had yet to be submitted for consideration.

"It will involve amendments to the law. So, it has not yet reached the decision-making stage."