

# PM orders halal cert report to be tabled next week

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**PUTRAJAYA:** As the debate on the proposed mandatory halal certification for eateries rages on, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has instructed a full report on the proposal to be prepared and tabled to the Cabinet next week.

Communications Minister Fahmi Fadzil said Datuk Dr Mohd Na'im Mokhtar would be responsible for preparing the report to be presented to the Cabinet meeting next week.

The Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs), said Fahmi, must also conduct a review of the proposal to be tabled at the meeting.

Fahmi, who is also the government's spokesman, said matters related to halal certification were discussed at the Cabinet meeting, particularly on the implementation aspect.

"But on the policy side, we'll need to wait for the Religious Minister to table the findings," he told the weekly post-Cabinet meeting press conference here yesterday.

On Sept 3, Mohd Na'im said that several laws would need to be amended to enforce mandatory halal certification for food outlets, and various agencies would need to be involved to ensure compliance.

The proposed move requiring all eateries that do not serve pork or alcohol to obtain halal certification has caused an uproar among politicians and communities.

Food and beverage industry players, in particular, have voiced their concern about the process, which they say involves high fees and stringent requirements.

Currently, such certification is optional for those food operators.

The furore also led to Seputeh MP Teresa Kok being called in by the police on Tuesday to have her statement recorded after she remarked that the move could burden small businesses and restrict consumer freedom.