

## **Dr Ismail's son appears in Parliament to hand notice on Act 355**

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**By Adam Abu Bakar**

### **Tawfik Ismail reminds Speaker that a debate over the shariah amendment in the Dewan Rakyat can be sub judice when the case is brought to the courts.**

KUALA LUMPUR: The son of former deputy prime minister Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman showed up at the Dewan Rakyat today to deliver a notice of writ of summons to Speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia, but was stopped from entering by security officers.

Tawfik Ismail has named Pandikar as a defendant in his legal attempt to get the courts to make ten declarations and orders that would effectively stop the tabling of a bill to amend the Syariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act (1965).

In the notice Tawfik asked Pandikar to drop the private member's bill, put forward by PAS president and Marang MP Abdul Hadi Awang last year, from the Order Paper of Parliament.

"We hope Tan Sri (Pandikar) and the Dewan Rakyat secretary can remove Hadi's bill from the list of motions to be tabled and debated tomorrow," read the notice from law firm Mansoor Saat, Siti Kasim & Associates.

The notice was eventually received by Pandikar's special officer. Tawfik had filed the summons on Friday.

The motion is currently 13th in line in the Dewan Rakyat order.

Tawfik reminded Pandikar that a debate over the amendment in the Dewan Rakyat can be sub judice when the case is brought to the courts.

"We wish to draw your attention to the earlier decisions you have made on matters that are 'sub judice' and our action is also subject to the principal of 'sub judice'," the notice said.

Besides Pandikar, Dewan Rakyat Secretary Roosme Hamzah was also named in the summons which wants Hadi's bill to be declared unconstitutional and in breach of Parliamentary procedures.

Met by reporters on the grounds of the Parliament complex, Tawfik said Act 355 has not obtained approval from the Conference of Rulers.

A copy of the notice was also sent to the Keeper of the Rulers' Seal Syed Danial Syed Ahmad.

"The Standing Orders have established that any act that is intended to be tabled in the Dewan Rakyat that is related to religion must get the approval of the Conference of Rulers," it said.

"Till now there is no indication that the Conference of Rulers has agreed to Act 355 being amended," it added.

Hadi had put forward the private member's bill in the house in November last year.

It seeks to raise the maximum penalties for shariah offences to 30 years' jail, RM100,000 for fines and 100 strokes of the cane.

Shariah court punishment is currently capped at jail terms not exceeding three years, a maximum of RM5,000 for fines and whipping of not more than six strokes of the cane.

On March 29 Prime Minister and Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman Najib Razak announced after chairing a BN supreme council meeting that the government would not take over and table the bill, citing the consensus policy among the parties in the coalition.

The current Dewan Rakyat sitting for the 13th Parliament's fifth term will end tomorrow.

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