

# Up to rulers to accept yoga ruling

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**IPOH:** It is up to the rulers of the respective states in the country to accept the National Fatwa Council's decision to ban Muslims from practising yoga.

Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (Jakim) director-general Datuk Wan Mohamad Sheikh Abd Aziz said the power to decide on such religious matters lies with these heads of state, with the department only playing the role of secretariat.

"At state level, the authority (on this matter) lies with the state Fatwa Committee, whose members were appointed by the Sultan.

"After it has been studied and agreed upon, it will then be discussed by the state Islamic Religious and Malay Customs Council before being presented to the Sultan for consent before the fatwa is implemented.

"Hence, the power lies with the state," he said after attending a conference attended by Islamic Religious and Malay Customs Council heads here yesterday.

On Saturday, the National Fatwa Council declared yoga *haram* for having the potential to undermine the faith of Muslims as it could be traced back to Hinduism.

Council chairman Datuk Dr Abdul Shukor Husin said yoga involved elements that went against the beliefs of Islam in its physical movements, chanting and worship.



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On Monday, Sultan of Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah issued a statement saying that the Rulers' Conference must be consulted before significant religious edicts were issued.

Perak Islamic Religious Department (Jaip) director Datuk Jamry Sury said a meeting would be held on Dec 9 before an announcement is made.

Wan Mohamad pointed out that Jakim, as the secretariat of the National Fatwa Council,

would only coordinate the fatwa (passed by these states) and carry out a study before tabling it before the council.

"The National Fatwa Council, whose members include the mufti of every state and five experts on religious matters and appointed by the Rulers' Conference, will then hold a *muzakarah* on the fatwa issued by these states.

"After being agreed upon, the fatwa will then be issued and made uniform."

In George Town, Penang Is-

lamic Religious Council president Shabudin Yahaya said the ruling had yet to be discussed by the state Fatwa Committee.

He said the council respected the fatwa issued by the National Fatwa Council but the enforcement could only be carried out once it is gazetted.

He added the council supported the ruling, that the systematic yoga practice which comprises of physical moves, chanting and uniting oneself with God, was against Islamic teachings.

"I hope that all parties will abide by the fatwa since it is for the good of Muslims," he said when contacted yesterday.

In Kota Baru, Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat voiced his support for the National Fatwa Council's decision to ban yoga.

He said the use of mantras and the concept of oneness with God as touted by the practitioners, was against Islamic teachings.

Nik Aziz said he agreed that

without these two things, yoga could be practised by Muslims as a form of exercise.

"The chanting of mantra is wrong in Islam. It is like the *main puteri* (the now-banned mystical healing ceremony) here where the practitioner chanted mantras that he may not even understand.

Meanwhile, a council spokesman said the fatwa would only be implemented in the state after it was endorsed by the ulama body and gazetted.