

Abdullah: PAS is passing the buck

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat: PAS is shifting its responsibility over the Islamic state issue to the government as it has failed to explain what it really entails, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

The deputy prime minister said the intention to set up an Islamic state has been intensely pursued by PAS but it has vet to commit on its form and content or cleared the doubts and queries from the citizens.

"They (PAS) have been challenged to explain to the people but they could not respond clearly.

"It appears they want to pass the ball to us," he said.

"This proves that all this while,

they have engaged in empty talk to get the support of the Muslims."

He said PAS was trying to deflect the issue when it failed to take up Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on his challenge to explain what they meant by an Islamic state.

He was asked to comment on the statement by PAS president Datuk Fadzil Noor who challenged the government to announce in Parliament or through a royal address that Malaysia is indeed an Islamic state.

"That is a political statement as they want to avoid having to commit on the Islamic state issue. But they are the ones who have been talking about setting up an Islamic state, not Umno, or Barisan Nasional," he said.

Abdullah was speaking to

reporters after closing the 14th AMMO Conference held in collaboration with the third MSC-IAP Multimedia Business Summit here.

Fadzil had said yesterday when launching the party's golden anniversary celebrations in Pengkalan Chena that PAS was not obliged to spell out the details of the concept as its constitution was clear and precise on the matter.

Abdullah said that unlike PAS, the BN had never expressed such intentions or included it in the party's manifesto but they are being forced to commit to a stand "so that they (PAS) can lash out at us or find fault with us".

On a related matter, Abdullah, who is home minister, said he will set a date for a meeting with PAS leaders over the recent ban on political ceramah.