

Pas told not

Nst 29 OCT 2001

to set any

pre-conditions

'Party trying to cover up failures'

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news.nstp.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. Pas should cease setting preconditions to cover its failure to explain to the people the party's concept of an Islamic state, Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib said today.

Muhammad said it was typical of Pas to set preconditions as a way out to avoid providing details on the form of Islamic state the party wants to establish.

"They feel trapped because all their talk about wanting to set up an Islamic state is empty and is just to get the attention and support of Muslims," he said when commenting on the statement by Pas president Datuk Fadzil Mohd Nor during a *ceramah* recently.

Fadzil had said that Pas would submit a memorandum detailing the party's definition of an Islamic state only if they were given an opportunity to debate it in Parliament and the session was aired live on television.

He also said that Pas wanted a minimum of three hours (air time) and if the Ministry or Government could not do so, there was no need to send the memorandum to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Muhammad said before this, Pas had challenged the present Government to declare Malaysia as an Islamic State, but when Dr Mahathir did so, they were at a loss for words.

He said, Malaysia was already recognised as an Islamic country based on the *ulamah* who had defined what constituted an Islamic nation.

"Why are they so reluctant to spell out their concept of an Islamic state? Is it because they cannot spell out or come up with the concept in precise words to describe the party's version and vision of an Islamic state?"

This, Muhammad said, simply showed that whatever their plan on an Islamic state was, it was just a political gimmick.

"This is just a simple question that does not need any rhetorical language, unless they are unsure and wish to manipulate the issue for political purposes."

In Port Dickson, Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin today described Pas as "very insincere and evasive".

He said it was typical of Pas to set pre-conditions.

"This is what Pas has been doing all these while setting pre-conditions. Actually, the ultimatum issued by Fadzil (that Pas be allowed to present it on television) is imma-

terial.

"This is just an excuse and tactic by Pas to gain support and sympathy while evading the real issues," Muhyiddin said.

"If Pas was sincere, it should not have set any pre-conditions."

In Kuantan, Information Minister Tan Sri Mohd Khalil Yaakob said it was up to the Ministry to decide whether it was wise for them (Ministry) to air Pas' memorandum of an Islamic state live.

He said it was up to the Ministry to decide whether to agree to Pas' demands.

Citing an example, Khalil, who is also Umno secretary-general, said that when Dr Mahathir stated that Malaysia was an Islamic country, he did it at the Gerakan general assembly, which is one of BN component parties.

"That was a huge forum and also the right place to make the statement as it got good coverage from the media.

"However, in Pas' case, I do not see a concrete reason as to why we should have a live telecast."

Khalil, when asked on Fadzil's worry that the media would "manipulate" the content of the memorandum if it was not aired live, said he could not see this being done unless Fadzil makes an oral statement.