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`Pas trying to avoid the real issue'

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today said Pas is avoiding providing details of the form of Islamic State it wants to establish.

He said Pas president Datuk Fadzil Noor's statements on the matter were political statements and "empty talk" meant to get the attention and support of Muslims.

Abdullah was responding to a statement by Fadzil yesterday challenging Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to officially declare in Parliament that Malaysia was an Islamic State.

Fadzil made the call in Kota Baru and said that alternatively the Prime Minister could insert the declaration in the Yang di-Pertuan Agong's speech during the opening of the next session of Parliament.

Abdullah said Fadzil was only trying to avoid providing details of the form of Islamic State Pas wanted to establish.

He said it was Pas and not Umno or the Barisan Nasional that was harping on the Islamic State issue.

"When they were challenged to reveal what form of Islamic State they wanted to set up, they didn't respond clearly. Now it seems they want to kick the ball back to us. Let Pas reply first," Abdullah said.

He said this after closing the 14th Asian Association of Management Organisations Conference, which was held in conjunction with the Third Multimedia Super Corridor International Advisory Panel Multimedia Business Summit.

Asked if Pas would now say that the Government did not dare to declare Malaysia an Islamic State, he said the Government had not made any statement on the matter nor had the BN included it in its manifestos.

"Pas is urging us to make a statement when it should be the one doing so. The Prime Minister has challenged them to do so, but they have not. So this is merely empty talk to get attention and support from Muslims."

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