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Rais-Islamic

MALAYSIA HAS GONE LONG WAY TO BECOME AN ISLAMIC COUNTRY

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 7 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has gone a long way to become an Islamic country, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim today.

He said it had implemented various Islamic elements, such as the Syariah law, infrastructure and administration.

"Even though there is no specific definition on what an Islamic state is about, what the Prime Minister has said is sufficient to warrant nomenclature to be used in terms of its application to a specific country," he told reporters after the Ampang Jaya Residents Day here.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had during the Gerakan delegates conference on Sept 29 said Malaysia was already an Islamic country.

This was subsequently endorsed by the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties, leading the DAP Chairman Lim Kit Siang to question as to how and when did Malaysia transform itself from a secular to an Islamic state.

Lim recalled that first Prime Minister, the late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra AlHaj had declared in Parliament that the country was not an Islamic state as was generally understood although Islam is the official religion.

Commenting on this, Dr Rais said Article 3 of the Federal Constitution plus the implementation of Syariah court, power of the Sultan and the administration of Islamic state in the country were sufficient to conclude that Malaysia is a Islamic state.

"Let's not be confused by PAS, which wants that nomenclature to be insert constitutionally. But what we maintain is that the constitution is sufficient by itself because of provisions of Article 3 and 11. Therefore, there's no need to meddle that," he said.

He said the Tunku's statement was made decades ago and the country had undegone many changes since then.

-- BERNAMA

AT ABG