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Abdullah-PAS

NO NEED FOR UMNO-PAS TALKS ON ISLAMIC STATE ISSUE - ABDULLAH

KEPALA BATAS, Oct 6 (Bernama) -- Umno does not see the need to hold a dialouge with PAS on the Islamic state issue, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

The Umno deputy president said the party instead wanted PAS to explain its version of an Islamic state.

Umno, on its part, had already given adequate explanation on the matter, he told reporters after chairing a meeting of Penang Umno.

Abdullah said the statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad last Saturday that Malaysia was already an Islamic state was accepted by the Barisan Nasional Supreme Council.

The government would not make any amendments to the Federal Constitution in connection with the issue, he said.

Abdullah, who is the deputy prime minister, said the declaration of Malaysia as an Islamic state did not affect the religious freedom enjoyed by non-Muslims in the country.

"We must understand that that Malaysia accommodates people of all races and religions," he added.

In KUALA LUMPUR, People's Progressive Party (PPP) president Datuk M.Kayveas said his party accepted "with an open heart" that Malaysia was already an Islamic state.

Urging PAS to do likewise, he said the declaration by Dr Mahathir had caught the opposition party by surprise.

"If other Islamic countries and Muslim scholars can recognise Malaysia as an Islamic state, there is no reason why Dr Mahathir's open declaration should be disputed by PAS," he told reporters before the PPP's central working committee meeting.

-- BERNAMA

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