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Pas `retreating on Islamic state'

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MACHANG, Sun. - Pas' call to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to declare in Parliament that Malaysia is an Islamic State was to divert the people's attention from Pas' failure to explain its concept of an Islamic State, Umno Information chief Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said.

He added that Pas felt trapped and was trying to avoid the issue after the Prime Minister called on the party to produce a White Paper on its concept of an Islamic state.

Mustapa was speaking to reporters after closing a briefing on meritocracy at the Kelantan branch Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) campus yesterday.

Pas president Datuk Fadzil Noor, at the opening address of the party's golden jubilee celebration at Pengkalan Chepa, Kota Baru, two days ago had called on Dr Mahathir to declare in Parliament that Malaysia is an Islamic State.

Alternatively, the Prime Minister was to insert the declaration in the Yang di-Pertuan Agong's speech during the opening of the next session of Parliament.

Mustapa, who is also National Economic Action Council (NEAC) executive director, said Malaysia is an Islamic state as enshrined in the Federal Constitution which provided for Islam as the country's official religion and also through the Government's administration.

"What we want to know from Pas is its a la Pas Islamic state," he added.

He said there was no difference in what Pas did in Kelantan or Terengganu. "In Terengganu, the State Government copied some of the Federal laws and then claimed them as theirs," he added.

Likewise, he said, the system of administration by the State Governments in Kelantan and Terengganu was no different from that adopted by Umno, which was based on Islam.

Referring to claims by Pas that certain quarters, which it believed were from Umno Youth, were trying to create chaos to disrupt the party's 50th anniversary celebration and a gathering of Buddhist monks in Tumpat today, Mustapa said it was Pas' own doing.

"Umno is not bad and the party never disturbs others," he added.

Circulars purportedly issued by Pusat Penyelidikan Pas (Pas Research Centre) were distributed during the golden jubilee celebration, claiming that these quarters were trying to create tension between Pas and the Buddhists.