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Still much talk over country's Islamic status

THE issue on whether Malaysia is an Islamic state or not seems to be the most popular subject being debated by Members of Parliament.

The Opposition and Barisan Nasional MPs are constantly at loggerheads over the question of whether the country is already an Islamic state.

Datuk Mohd Zin Mohamad (BN-Shah Alam) said misinterpretations by some parties on the definition of Islamic nation have led to confusion among the people.

"Logically, Malaysia is on the right track as it is already being recognised by many quarters as a progressive Muslim nation."

"Moreover, about 60 per cent of the population are Muslims while the country is now being administered by a Muslim, the Yang Di Pertuan Agong is a Muslim and even the Opposition leader is a Muslim.

"On top of this, the country has already in many areas been practising Islamic values and principles. So why is there a need to debate openly on whether Malaysia is an Islamic nation or not?" he said, when debating the Supply Bill 2002.

He said some Muslims in the so-called Islamic country were living in poverty without getting any justice although the country is an Islamic country.

Fong Po Kuan (DAP-Batu Gajah) reiterated the party's stand on the matter, saying that DAP disagreed with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's declaration that Malaysia is an Islamic state.

"We are saying this not because we are anti-Islam but we are of the opinion that there is a need to promote religious understanding among the multi-racial population.

"We must take a hard look at the Federal Constitution and what was said once by Bapa Malaysia that Malaysia is a secular country."

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