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Abdullah-Ulama

ABDULLAH: NATIONAL ULAMA CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL ON THE CARDS

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 24 (Bernama) -- The Government plans to establish a National Ulama Consultative Council to get views from religious scholars on Islam, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

He said the matter was discussed at the Umno supreme council meeting which he chaired on Friday.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would be informed about the proposed council upon his return from a five-day working visit to Britain.

Abdullah said ulama who are credible, knowledgeable and with expertise in certain fields would be invited to sit in the council.

"When there is something that we need to be advised, we can consult the ulama," he told reporters after attending a sacrificial ceremony in conjunction with Hari Raya Aidiladha organised by the Malaysian Islamic Missionary and Welfare Organisation at Sultan Suleiman Club here.

Abdullah said the council would not ignore or belittle the role or compete with the National Fatwa Council which is vested with powers to issue edicts.

"This is not a council that will issue fatwas but its members can give views on problems we are facing now. If there are problems that require fatwas, they will be referred to the fatwa council," he said.

Describing the idea to set up the council as an important approach, Abdullah said Umno, including its president Dr Mahathir, had always appreciated and valued contributions from ulama.

"Umno, its leaders and members are ulama-friendly and have always valued the contributions of ulama. We have always sought views from ulama on many important issues involving the ummah.

"As such, Umno feels it is better if the approach can be institutionalised and be continued as an official channel by setting up the National Ulama Consultative Council," he said.

Asked whether ulama from PAS would be invited to sit in the council, he said ulama who are credible and impartial in their views would be welcome to be members of the council.

Ulama with political inclinations would be biased in the views, he added.

-- BERNAMA

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