

Abdullah Sees No Need For Non-Muslim Portfolio, Tsu Koon Labels It A Publicity Stunt (Updated)

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KEPALA BATAS -- There is no need for the Penang government to have a portfolio for non-Muslim affairs as the federal government has always looked after the welfare of non-Muslims, said former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Abdullah, who is also the MP for Kepala Batas in Penang, said the Federal government had also always been responsive to the needs of non-Muslim communities.

"The Federal government has never marginalised anyone and as such, I do not think there is need for a specific institution to look into non-Muslim affairs," he told reporters after opening the annual general meeting of Sekolah Kebangsaan Kepala Batas' Parent-teacher Association, here today.

On Wednesday, Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, who is also DAP secretary-general, announced that the state government would be adopting a portfolio to look into the affairs of Buddhists, Taoists, Christians, Sikhs and Hindus.

The portfolio will be chaired by Lim himself while Deputy Chief Minister II P. Ramasamy was appointed the deputy.

In KUALA LUMPUR, speaking on the same matter, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Koh Tsu Koon said the move by DAP-led Penang government was just a publicity stunt.

Koh, who is also Gerakan chairman and former Penang chief minister, said when he was leading the Barisan Nasional (BN) government in the state, the coalition had been dealing with non-Muslim issues without the need for a specific portfolio on it.

"He (Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng) is just trying to pull off a publicity stunt," Koh told a press conference at Gerakan's headquarters in the federal capital.

He added that the state government under him had been successful in handling issues involving non-Muslims but did not "blow the trumpet" about it.

(Bernama)

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