

Make it clear

Pak Lah: There must be no confusion in religious matters

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KEPALA BATAS: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has made it clear that matters concerning religious conversion need to be spelt out plainly in the Federal Constitution and other laws to prevent confusion among Malaysians.

"Many feel it is necessary to clarify the question in the laws and Constitution to avoid further confusion," the Prime Minister told reporters after performing Zohor prayers in conjunction with Hari Raya Aidiladha at Masjid Kubang Menerung here yesterday.

However, Abdullah cautioned that the matter should be dealt with great care so that it would not go against the beliefs of the various races.

"We must handle whatever problems that arise with care. We must not allow our emotions to be whipped up over religion and race," he said.

The relevant authorities, he said, should be extra careful when initiating any action on such matters.

"We must all be united, tolerant and respectful of each other's religion without causing disharmony among ourselves."

"In whatever legal action that we initiate, we must also ensure that justice is

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Abdullah: We must respect rights of all religions

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served to all," he said.

He stressed on the right of Malaysians to follow the religion of their choice and said that this must be respected.

"The country has both Muslims and non-Muslims. We must respect each other's religion and practices. And we must acknowledge that each religion has its own rights," he said when asked to comment on the controversy that arose following the Dec 20 death of Mount Everest climber Sjn M. Moorthy.

His widow and the Federal Territory Islamic Religious Council got into a legal tussle when it was discovered that he had converted to Islam the previous year. Moorthy was eventually buried according to Muslim rites.

On Dec 28, the High Court ruled that it would not disturb the declaration that Moorthy was a Muslim because the matter was under the purview of the Syariah Court system.

A coalition of 35 Hindu non-governmental organisations sent a petition last week to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong seeking to restore public confidence in the judicial system following the controversial case.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri



RAYA KISS: Abdullah giving month-old Nur Dania Hanis Mohd Nasrul a peck as her proud mother Nafishah Mahadzir looks on during his visit to Kampung Kubang Menerong in Kepala Batas.

Nazri Aziz and several other ministers had said that the Cabinet was of the view that the civil court should not brush aside cases pertaining to the

status of converts by stating that it had no jurisdiction over them.

Abdullah said he was personally observing the case, giving it

due attention to have the matter resolved.

"If possible, we do not wish for such problems to reoccur," he said.