

Islamic complex for Chinese in Seremban

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SEREMBAN: Several state governments, some a bit cautious, have promised to consider applications from Chinese Muslims to build mosques for their community.

However, it may not be that easy to get the final approval as some state authorities have indicated strict rules must be adhered to.

The most generous is Negri Sembilan, which is not only willing to consider such an application but has already planned to build an Islamic complex for the Chinese Muslim community.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan said the Negri Sembilan Islamic Religious Council (Mains), which is undertaking the project, has already identified a piece of land in Seremban for the complex.

"So far they (Chinese Muslims) have not asked us for one (mosque), but they don't have to, we have moved one step ahead by building this complex for them," he said.

He added that the decision was made recently and the committee overseeing the project was chaired by state mufti Datuk Mustadza Ahmad.

"Our plans are progressing very well," he said after chairing the state exco meeting here yesterday.

Mohamad, who is Mains chairman, said an Islamic complex would be more beneficial for Chinese Muslims than just a mosque.

"The complex would have lecture halls and a resource centre. This is more cost-effective and would also give them a chance to interact and exchange ideas."

While Mohamad has given the green light for the project, Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali is more cautious in his approach.

For him, it is a non-issue.

"If Chinese Muslims want to practise Islam in their mother tongue and they need their own mosque for that purpose, then there is nothing wrong with the idea," he said in an interview in Ipoh yesterday.

While saying that the state government had no problems considering any application, he also reminded the Chinese Muslim community to comply with the state's guidelines.

For a start, he said the Chinese Muslim community must first ensure a congregation of at least 40 in the area, according to classical Islamic law, before they could build a mosque.

After that, they must forward their application to the religious council.

"It's better for them to ask for the setting up of a surau instead of a mosque. They can start small and when their community has grown large enough, they can then apply to build a mosque," he said.

He said all mosques built by the Islamic

Religious and Malay Customs Council were located in areas where the vast majority of worshippers were Malays.

All states provide allocations to build mosques in all Malay areas without anyone in the community having to make an application.

In Shah Alam, Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo said he was open to the idea of having a Chinese mosque in the state.

When reminded that the Malaysian Chinese Muslim Association (MCMA) had submitted an application a few years ago, he said it was rejected due to technical problems.

"There was no proper design submitted, nor was there land available for the project," he said.

"I believe MCMA can submit a fresh application," he added.

Selangor mufti Datuk Mohd Tamvis Abdul Majid had expressed willingness to look into applications to set up a Chinese mosque in the state.