

Wanita chief challenges Pas

‘Kelantan women oppressed, discriminated’

WANITA chairman Datuk Kee Phaik Cheen challenged Pas to give more freedom to women in Kelantan and Terengganu which it rules.

She said the discrimination and oppression against women there were similar in principle to that of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

She also criticised the fact that women in the Pas-governed States were not allowed to join Quran reading recitals and were discouraged from working.

“We have made great progress as far as women’s rights are concerned. We even have an amendment to the Federal Constitution to eliminate gender discrimination but some people still cannot get

into that frame of mind,” she said when replying to points raised in the debate.

Gerakan vice-president Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, who is also Penang Chief Minister, touching on Islamic regimes, said there was a need to understand the different definitions of an Islamic state.

He told delegates that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said that Malaysia was recognised as an Islamic state through its membership in the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

On the slowing economy, Koh said 9,000 to 10,000 workers in some industries had been retrenched.

“There might also be 2,000 to 3,000 who will be laid off in stages up to December,” he said.

One positive point, he said, was that more people would use telecommunications equipment for teleconferencing instead of air travel.

Party vice-president Datuk Dr S. Vijayaratnam said the party backed the Government’s support for the United States in its efforts to bring those responsible for the terrorist attacks to justice.

“We condemn extremism, not only in religion, but also in the forms of race and language. But we hope that the American Government will not harm the innocent.”