

# DAP ready to face Gerakan-MCA onslaught

STAR 29 JAN 2002

PETALING JAYA: DAP is ready to face the joint Gerakan-MCA onslaught, particularly on the issue of Islamic state.

Its secretary-general Kerk Kim Hock said the opposition party would not compromise on its basic principle of rejecting the establishment of such a state in Malaysia.

"I wish to declare that DAP is ready.

"In order to defend the secular basis of the nation's Constitution, we are prepared to face the joint Gerakan-MCA onslaught," he said in a statement here yesterday, pointing out that the party was holding on to its founding principle after it had failed to resolve this issue with PAS and which later led to the DAP leaving the opposition coalition.

Kerk was responding to a statement by Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik that the party should re-establish a joint council with MCA to "counter the

DAP."

Dr Lim had also claimed that DAP had been using the Islamic state issue to confuse and to frighten the Chinese community.

Kerk said DAP's position was that the announcement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that Malaysia was an Islamic country had "far-reaching political, legal and constitutional implications."

Dr Lim's proposal, alleged Kerk, showed that Gerakan and MCA "were not genuine friends" and that Malaysians were beginning to understand the implications of Dr Mahathir's announcement.

"Malaysians, we must stress, do not have to choose between an Islamic state ala Umno or ala PAS," he said.

He added that both Gerakan and MCA should therefore look at the implications of such a declaration instead of blindly supporting it from political need.