

DAP: Let Malaysians make the decision

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AYER TAWAR, Sat. — The DAP is prepared to take on both the MCA and the Gerakan together, to let Malaysians decide whether to preserve and defend the Federal Constitution or opt for an Islamic State.

Chairman Lim Kit Siang said the party was prompted to accept Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik's challenge following his proposal that a joint MCA and Gerakan council be set up to counter the DAP.

The joint council was to deal with the DAP stand in opposing Pas' Islamic State as well as Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's declaration that Ma-

laysia was already an Islamic State.

Lim said this in his speech at a forum here last night.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik rejected Dr Lim's proposal as he (Dr Ling) saw no need for such a joint council.

"Dr Lim is in the most uncomfortable political position in his entire political career as his new found argument that Malaysia had always been an Islamic State since *Merdeka* lacks conviction," he said.

Lim said Dr Lim's stand also ran contrary to the constitutional and political history as well as his own political record from the 1969 general election.

He said although Dr Ling had backed out of the joint MCA-Gerakan council idea, the DAP still challenged Dr Lim and Gerakan to a nationwide series of 42 public debates on the issue.

"I hope Dr Lim will be prepared to face his own voters in Bruas to initiate the public debates to justify his support for an Islamic State after calling on them to vote against an Islamic State in the 1999 general election."

Lim said the DAP welcomed the reaffirmation of the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism that Malaysia is a secular state.