

# DAP in dilemma over taking sides

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PENANG: The DAP has found itself in a dilemma. Should it rejoice if the Barisan Nasional beats PAS in the upcoming by-elections or celebrate an opposition victory if PAS retains the two seats in Pendang and Anak Bukit?

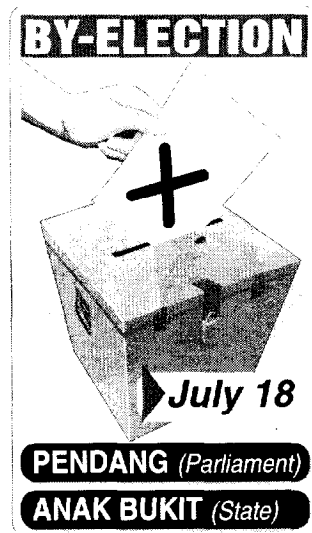
The DAP does not want to see a Barisan win as this would encourage the coalition to think that the Anwar Ibrahim issue was dead and that voters were in support of its view of Malaysia as an Islamic country.

On the other hand, a PAS victory would give the impression that the by-elections gave PAS-controlled Terengganu the mandate to enact the Hudud and Qisas Bill, said DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang.

However, he added that unless Terengganu Menteri Besar and PAS acting president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang gave an assurance that the state would suspend the Bill, the DAP could not help PAS in the by-elections.

On the recent Federal Court decision to uphold the conviction and six-year sentence of former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Lim alleged it was a "traversity of justice".

This issue and the pending retirement of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad have both been overshadowed by the hudud and qisas issue, Lim said when launching the second phase



of the DAP's anti-Islamic country campaign

In a separate statement, Lim accused the Malaysian Bar Council of trespassing outside its parameters by asking people to use the ballot box if they are not happy with the court decision on Anwar.

He said that council president Mah Weng Kwai should know that the judiciary was supposed to be independent of any political influence, unless Mah was implying that there had been an improper interference with the judgment.

In Kuala Lumpur, the International Islamic University Malaysia said it would take strict action against students involved in the upcoming Anak Bukit and Pendang by-elections.

Student Development and Affairs Division head Wan Mohd Hilmi Wan Kamal said that students could be suspended if they defied university regulations.

"All students have been informed that the university's regulations do not allow them to participate in the country's political scene, especially during campaign periods," he said in a statement.

He said the students were also barred from assisting any candidate during such periods.

In Seremban, Deputy Education Minister Datuk Hon Choon Kim said that voters in Anak Bukit and Pendang should not be confused by opposition allegations that the Government was replacing Bahasa Melayu with English.

He said the voters should not be worried as the Government would maintain the status of Bahasa Melayu at all cost.

"Bahasa Melayu as the national language is fully protected under the Federal Constitution," he said after launching a child development and kids education programme yesterday.