

DAP dissects by-election results

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PENANG: It would have been disastrous for the country if PAS had won in both the Pendang parliamentary and Anak Bukit state seats so soon after the passage of the Terengganu Syariah Criminal (Hudud and Qisas) Bill, said DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang.

He said PAS leaders would have used their victories to lend credence to the party's claim of gaining increasing support for the enactment.

On the other hand, he said, the scenario of a "2-0" win by Barisan Nasional would not be good for the country either, as it would be exploited as an endorsement for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement on Sept 29,

last year, that Malaysia was an Islamic country.

Lim said the by-election results showed that PAS suffered a greater setback in losing one of the two seats it won in the 1999 general election.

He said PAS should return to the 1999 alternative front's common manifesto in its struggle and that its loss in Pendang illustrated the unacceptability of the hudud law.

DAP secretary-general Kerk Kim Hock said if the Barisan's capture of the Pendang seat and the reduced majority in Anak Bukit were seen as a triumph, then it was not a victory that brought much joy because it was evident that Umno needed the non-Malay votes to win.

On the other hand, PAS' pursuit of

the hudud law had alienated the liberal Malays and the non-Muslims, he said, adding that this would result in a loss of support in the long term.

"Thus, the by-elections provided no real winner," he said.

PAS spiritual adviser Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said Barisan should have won by a thumping majority in Pendang given its mighty election machinery.

He said Barisan had mobilised all its strength, including using the print and electronic media, to wage an all-out onslaught against PAS but failed to garner a comfortable majority as expected.

"PAS considers Barisan's failure (to secure a big majority) as a victory to the party," he said.