

PAS to enter the Machap race?
Malaysiakini.com
March 28, 2007
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PAS Malacca has decided not to help its opposition counterpart DAP in the April 12 Machap by-election in the state.

Its state commissioner Abdul Ghani Abdul Rahman said a directive has been issued to all PAS members and supporters not to assist DAP in its bid to capture the state seat from MCA.

"PAS members who help DAP's election machinery will face action," he told malaysiakini today.

However, Abdul Ghani said party members can attend talks organised by any parties, including Umno.

This stand has led to the speculation that the Islamic-based opposition party may sponsor an independent candidate for the by-election.

According to a source, the PAS Malacca leadership is disappointed with the DAP top guns who they claim are disrespectful towards PAS.

He said the intention to field an independent candidate will be brought to the attention of the party's national leadership as soon as possible.

'Arrogant' party

The source added that DAP is perceived as being 'arrogant' and 'cannot be coaxed to come to the negotiation table'.

"We have identified a Chinese professional to be the independent candidate in Machap," he revealed.

Elaborating on the grievances towards DAP, the source said PAS Malacca is upset with DAP's move to run down the Islamic party in the Chinese press.

"PAS is also very disappointed that DAP does not want to hold talks with the party since the last general election in 2004.

"PAS Malacca is also unhappy that no DAP representatives attended a programme organised by PAS and Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) despite promising to do so earlier," he added.

The Chinese-dominated DAP was once a member of Barisan Alternatif, the opposition coalition comprising PAS and PKR.

However, DAP withdrew in 2001 after crossing swords with PAS over its intention to establish an Islamic state.

Machap is a predominantly Chinese constituency, accounting for 45.7 percent of the population, with a 39.5 percent Malay electorate.

The seat - a traditional stronghold of the ruling MCA - fell vacant following the death of incumbent Poh Ah Tiam, 55, on March 15.

So far both DAP and MCA have said they will field candidates for the by-election.

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/65178>