

**Umno pats MCA's back on Islamic state assault**  
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While Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin has backed MCA for playing up the Islamic state issue in Tenang, the Chinese party appears to be on the defensive, denying it is intimidating the voters.

At a press conference after nominations closed today, Muhyiddin commended MCA for raising the issue to "remind the Chinese community".

"Since years ago PAS has never said it will amend the party constitution... the establishment of an Islamic state is still there," he said.

"It is good of MCA to remind the Chinese community about it."

However, after days of aggressive assaults on Islamic state issue, the MCA today appeared to soften its tune.

Party officials said MCA was just "stating the fact that an Islamic state is the ultimate goal of PAS", and that the Chinese community's support for PAS would only open more room for the Islamic party to implement it.

**Clear explanation 'MCA's duty'**

MCA president Dr Chua Soi Lek (below, with blue cap) told reporters at the nomination centre today that MCA needed to explain the PAS agenda clearly to the Chinese.

Politics means giving clear explanations so that the people will know who to vote for.

"We did not say this is an issue. This is not an issue but a fact. This is not a political issue but the political agenda of PAS," said Chua.

He added that as PAS had the largest membership and network among the three Pakatan Rakyat parties, DAP would not be able to stop it from implementing the Islamic policy should the coalition take over Putrajaya.

"The Chinese community must think deeply, are we ready to accept a nation that is ruled by Islamic values and the holy Quran?"

"Don't regret after you have voted for it. It is our responsibility as a Chinese party to explain this to the Chinese community," said the MCA president.

**Forcing Umno to reciprocate**

Chua also warned that Chinese support for PAS would push Umno to implement more Islamic policies in a religious race to outdo PAS.

How will Umno see the Chinese community if you can accept an Islamic state which is more extreme and conservative?

"Would Umno become more Islamic to ensure the Malays support and win back the Chinese votes? This is definite," said Chua.

Later, the party president's son and Labis MP Chua Tee Yong echoed his father's argument, adding that MCA was not trying to intimidate the Chinese voters.

"It has been stated clearly in the (PAS) party constitution. During the campaign, their president also stressed that they want to establish an Islamic state.

"We are just conveying this message to the voters, not spreading lies," said the Labis MP.

MCA youth chief Wee Ka Siong concurred that the Islamic state issue was more relevant in this by-election than in others.

"Johor is different from other states. Other states may be not that sensitive to the Islamic state (issue) but in Johor, PAS has always called for the establishment of Islamic state," said Wee.

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