

Karpal: Mahathir is being mischievous
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DAP national chairperson Karpal Singh today accused former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad of trying to tear open old wounds by saying Karpal is the winner in PAS' decision to drop its Islamic state agenda.

Calling Mahathir's statement "mischievous", Karpal said the former premier and others in Umno are merely trying to distract PAS from its new objective of establishing a welfare state in Malaysia.

"It should not be forgotten that in 2001, when Mahathir was prime minister, he had, in utter contempt for the constitution, publicly announced that Malaysia was an Islamic state and went further, a few days later, to say that Malaysia was not only an Islamic state, but an extremist Islamic state..." he said in a statement.

Mahathir had said in his blog recently that Karpal should be happy that PAS' new leadership line-up has changed its course towards adopting a similar cause as DAP's "welfare state" proposal instead of pushing for an Islamic state.

Karpal acknowledged that he had from the start opposed PAS' goal of installing an Islamic state in Malaysia, on grounds that the federal constitution provided for a secular state and the Reid Commission, which included Islamic jurists, had "carefully provided for this position when presenting the constitution to the country on Merdeka Day".

Umno panicked and has gone on vicious trip

He also admitted that his controversial "Islamic state over my dead body" statement during the 1990 general election had backfired, though he withdrew and apologised for the statement nine years later, during the 1999 general election when DAP joined forces with PAS and Semangat 46 to form Barisan Alternatif.

However, Karpal consigned the issue to the past, stressing that the decision by PAS delegates to "rebrand" their struggle to pursue a welfare state was a historic development that had the stamp of approval from its Pakatan partners, DAP and PKR.

"Obviously, Umno has panicked and gone on a vicious campaign to attack PAS for having diverted from its original struggle for an Islamic state. PAS should show its mettle in fending off such unwarranted criticism.

"Credit must go to PAS for having taken a bold and pragmatic stand which will, no doubt, be a boon to the national interest.

"The political topography in the country has taken on an unexpected turn which will undoubtedly contribute to the avowed aim of Pakatan Rakyat to replace the BN in Putrajaya," Karpal added.