

**Valentine's Day raid nabs 19 couples in Penang, S'gor**  
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Five couples were picked up by the Selangor Islamic Affairs Department (Jais) and the Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) in an early morning anti-vice raid that was apparently timed to coincide with Valentine's Day today.

According to Star, the five couples between the ages of 20 and 30 were arrested for alleged khalwat (close proximity) at budget hotels around Kota Damansara and Bandar Sri Damansara, in operations mounted at 12.30am today.

The operation dubbed 'Petaling district level 6th anti-vice campaign', saw the participation of 85 enforcement officers from Jais, MBPJ, the Immigration Department, district land office and police.

Suspected offenders are liable to a maximum two-year jail term or fine of up to RM3,000 or both under the Syariah Criminal Enactment 1995.

Meanwhile, China Press reported that 14 couples were nabbed in Penang for similar offences by the religious authorities.

The 71st Muzakarah Conference of the Fatwa committee in November 2005 had declared that Valentine's Day is not part of Islam.

"The spirit of the celebration contains elements of Christianity and its practice that is mixed with sinful acts is prohibited and contradicts with Islam," the edict stated.

Last year, 80 Muslims were reportedly hauled up for allegedly being involved in khalwat on Valentine's Day.

**Flak for PAS**

Kedah Gerakan chairperson Dr Cheah Soon Hai, meanwhile, hit out at PAS Youth for disapproving of Valentine Day celebrations by Malaysians.

He said PAS is oblivious to basic human rights, as it pushes its agenda to dominate those of other creeds.

Cheah (right), the Derga assemblyperson, claimed that the BN is becoming open and liberal while Pakatan Rakyat is moving toward the opposite extreme.

He said he admired DAP chairperson Karpal Singh for upholding his political principles and ethics.

Karpal has called on PAS to rescind its stance in the interests of freedom of expression.