

Pakatan moots alternative Merdeka theme
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By Koh Jun Lin

Pakatan Rakyat is to propose a 'more inclusive' theme for this year's Merdeka Day celebration, if the government does not change its chosen theme within a week.

"The theme must be inclusive for the whole country. 'Janji Ditepati' (Promises delivered) is a BN slogan," PAS secretary-general Mustafa Ali (right) told a press conference after chairing a council meeting of Pakatan Rakyat secretaries-general today.

"How can a BN slogan be used as a theme for the Merdeka Day celebrations? That is unreasonable."

He assured that the new slogan would be acceptable to all parties and not merely "suit our (Pakatan) tastes".

Asked what would happen if the government refuses to adopt the suggestion, PKR vice-president Tian Chua said: "Then it is up to the rakyat (to decide) whether they like our slogan or the BN's slogan better."

At the launch of a 'fly the flag' campaign last week in the run-up to the celebrations, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said the nation has progressed over the 55 years since Independence because its leaders have delivered their promises to the people.

The theme has been criticised as an attempt to hijack the national celebration, with former information minister Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir among the detractors.

However, the incumbent Information, Communication and Culture Minister Rais Yatim has brushed the criticism aside, saying this is normal practice in other countries.