

Pakatan to unveil alternative Merdeka theme

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Pakatan Rakyat will reveal an alternative theme for this year's Merdeka Day celebration tomorrow after the government had ignored its one week ultimatum to review the "55 Tahun Janji Ditepati (55 Years of Fulfilled Promises)" theme.

PAS secretary-general Mustafa Ali said that Pakatan has formed a committee to choose an alternative theme from some 250 proposals, to be led by national poet laureate A Samad Said.

"Within a few days, we received 250 proposals to be given to the government. So, we have created a (special) committee to further analyse the proposals submitted to find the most suitable National Day theme," he explained.

He said this during a press conference following Pakatan's secretariat council meeting at PAS' headquarters in Kuala Lumpur today.

Pakatan had given the government one week's notice to retract the controversial theme, especially since it garnered a lot of criticism from various parties.

PAS vice-president Mahfuz Omar even mentioned the possibility of states under Pakatan's rule celebrating National Day with a different theme.

Other than the national laureate, Mustafa also announced that former information minister Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir and two others have agreed to join the committee.

"They are in the process of deliberating, we will announce the winning theme tomorrow. We feel that our recommendation does have an impact. While it is not comprehensive, at least Rais Yatim has retracted the logo, but not the theme," he said.

Earlier this month, the BN-led government released the latest Merdeka Day theme and logo which sparked a public outcry because of perceived similarities with BN's latest 'Janji Ditepati' campaign and what designers call a sloppily designed logo and a theme that smacks of propaganda.

On Sunday, the government retracted the proposed Merdeka logo as being a placeholder for the real logo which is still being developed and finalised, in what may be seen as authorities buckling under intense public pressure.

However the government, BN leaders and pro-establishment NGOs adamantly continue to defend the '55 Tahun Janji Ditepati' theme, which adds fuel to Pakatan's efforts and public opinion against it.