

**Pakatan states U-turn over Merdeka theme**  
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Three Pakatan Rakyat-controlled states - Penang, Kedah and Kelantan - are expected to reverse an earlier decision to use different Merdeka Day themes.

The three will join Selangor to celebrate the 55th Merdeka and 49th National Day with the theme Sebangsa, Senegara, Sejiwa.

PAS secretary-general Mustafa Ali said he has been informed by Kedah menteri besar's aide that the state exco had decided to make change today, while Kelantan had decided on the matter yesterday.

Meanwhile, Penang Deputy Chief Minister I Mansor Othman confirmed to Malaysiakini that he will make a similar announcement tomorrow.

The dramatic reversal came just hours after Penang announced that it will stick to its own theme - Budaya Bersih, Merdekakan Rakyat - and not adopt the alternative theme proposed by Pakatan's top leadership, which had been accepted by Selangor.

The move has come under severe criticism from Pakatan supporters while BN leaders have mocked the coalition over its lack of cohesion.

On Aug 1, a tripartite committee headed by Mustafa had announced the coalition's alternative Merdeka Day theme - Sebangsa, Senegara, Sejiwa - which was chosen from 250 proposals by the public.

The proposals were vetted by a sub-committee headed by national laureate A Samad Said.

Democracy, Pakatan-style

Pakatan's basis for the move was to provide an alternative to Putrajaya's Janji Ditepati theme, because the same theme is being used by the BN for early campaigning ahead of the next general election.

However, the three states had already agreed on their own themes before the committee began work and until this morning, they were still adamant about sticking to their decision.

Kedah's theme is Terus Berbakti, while Kelantan adopted Menerajui Perubahan.

Late this evening, Selangor confirmed that it would use Pakatan's alternative theme.

According to the Harakah Daily website, Mustafa said the latest development showed that democracy was alive in Pakatan.

Mustafa is expected to announce the alternative Merdeka Day logo and theme song tomorrow.

Both the federal government logo and theme song have come under severe criticism.

Information, Communications and Culture Minister Rais Yatim has since withdrawn the logo and sought public feedback on the theme song.

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