

DAP's Rocket next on Home Ministry's list?
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After Suara Keadilan and Harakah, yet another Pakatan Rakyat party organ - The Rocket - may face uncertainty over the renewal of its publishing permit.

Malaysiakini understands that the permit for the English version of the DAP mouthpiece expired last month, whereas the Malay- and Chinese-language editions expired in September and November, respectively, last year.

When contacted, DAP publicity secretary Tony Pua said the party's application to renew its permit has been submitted to the Home Ministry.

The Home Ministry is often late in informing the party of its decision, forcing the DAP to use the old permit number on The Rocket's new edition.

The application to renew its permit that was to expire on June 30 last year, for example, was submitted as early as Sept 4, 2008, whereas the decision to approve its renewal was only received the following Sept 8, 2009.

Permits usually late

For the Malay-language edition, the annual permit expires on Sept 15, 2010, though it was only issued by the Home Ministry last month on June 11, whereas the application for renewal was made on Sept 4, 2008.

"Usually we get the permit, it's just that it arrives very late," he told Malaysiakini.

When the approval is granted, the permit would have already neared expiry and is need of another renewal application, he added.

"Every year it's like that. It will take a bit of time before we get the decision.

"But up to now, we have not faced any problems in renewing. Sometimes they just send us a letter," Pua said further.

One of the letters received by DAP about a year ago pertained to a Tamil-language edition of The Rocket.

"We forgot to send six copies to them because that publication was rarely published, perhaps just once every three or four months," said Pua.

Previously, The Rocket received a letter from the Home Ministry after the party placed the number of its expired permit on the front page of its new edition, although the party had by then received the renewed permit.

Pua clarified that their action in printing the old permit was due to the Home Ministry's late delivery of its decision to renew their permit.

'No pressure'

Asked whether The Rocket had received any pressure from the Home Ministry similar to that experienced by Harakah and Suara Keadilan, Pua said, "No, (and) we don't expect any problems."

Meanwhile, chief editor Wan Hamidi Hamid said the renewal of The Rocket's permit was a bureaucratic matter under the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984.

Asked about efforts by the management of the organ to renew its permit, Wan Hamidi said the matter should not be blown out of proportion.

"There's no need to focus on the issue, because we're afraid of being made a target by the Home Ministry.

"The Rocket has a permit, and it is always renewed on an annual basis," he said when contacted.

So far, The Rocket has not received any letter from the Home Ministry regarding future editions.

"So we're going to continue printing as usual," said Wan Hamidi.

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