

Historic doa recital at Penang DAP convention
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The DAP Penang convention yesterday raised a few eyebrows when for the first time in the history of the party, a prayer was recited before the event begun.

Often labelled a 'chauvinist and racist' party by its detractors, the convention invited Tanjong PAS commissioner Yaacob Omar (right) to recite the prayer.

Yaacob, who were invited to the event along with other Pakatan Rakyat representatives like Abdul Malik Abul Kassim (PKR - Batu Maung) and T. Raveendran (PKR - Batu Uban, were mildly surprised at the request.

When he went up to stage, Yaacob explained to the crowd to remain silent during the recital, which went on for about four minutes.

"Islam is for all irregardless of race, social standing or political allegiance," he said before the recital.

"It is not wrong for anyone to recite prayers at an event that is attended by many non-Muslims as Islamic teaching preaches what is good for all," he added.

The 496 delegates who participated in the whole day forum remained silent at their seats, while a few Muslim members put their palms together during the brief interlude.

Welcome development

Abdul Malik, who is also the state religious affairs state exco, welcomed the new development in its sister party in Pakatan.

"DAP is a multi-racial party and this is a good development as there are also Muslims members," he said, when asked later.

He denied that there were any request by PAS or PKR for DAP to include prayer recitals in its events.

Penang Pakatan government, led by the DAP, has been making efforts to include the Malay community in the state development, for example, doubling the allocation for social, education and religious programmes involving the Muslims.

About eight Malay candidates were among the 88 who vied for the 15 posts in the state committee yesterday.

All of them lost, however, veteran leader, Zulkifli Mohd Nor, was appointed into the 20-member committee by the new chairperson Chow Kon Yeow and his team last night.

Other than Zulkifli, who is currently a municipal councillor, Kamarulzaman Mohd. Sharif, Mohd. Razali Abdul Rahim, Nurul Baizura Ismat, Yusof Mohamad, Rozaini Abdul Kadir and

Suhaimi Chee Mugther contested for the posts.

When contacted, Zulkifli said the party has always been making efforts to recruit Malays into the party.

However, it is a challenging task as the Malays were able to join many other political parties including BN, PAS and other multi-racial parties, he added.

"The task is made more daunting when Malay members were 'black-out' by the mainstream media owned by BN," he lamented.

On the recital of prayer at the convention, Zulkifli said it was a good exposure for all the members.

He added that there were also imams (religious teachers) in DAP, so the party's members were also able to do the honours if invited."But since the PAS representative was there, we invited him," he said.

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