

Opposition mulls 'formalising' loose alliance
Malaysiakini.com
Mar 21, 2008

Leaders of the three-party opposition are considering formalising their loose alliance but ruled out a merger after stunning electoral gains. MCPX

The opposition parties, rallied by former deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim, claimed more than a third of parliamentary seats and five of the 13 states in March 8 elections that humbled the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition.

lim kit siang 111204Lim Kit Siang, leader of the predominantly Chinese DAP, said the opposition, which also includes Anwar's multiracial PKR and the Islamic party PAS, would not merge into a single entity.

"I think that issue is not on the table at the moment," he told AFP, but said they could move towards a more formal coalition.

"We are exploring that possibility," he said, but did not specify what form the new closer alliance could take.

Neither realistic nor feasible

The three parties have formed coalitions to govern the states of Selangor and Perak, while the administration in northern Penang is dominated by the DAP.

PAS governs Kelantan, which it has ruled since 1990, and now also administers Kedah in the northwest.

"We have (coalitions) in Perak and Selangor as a result of the elections. If we are to respect the voters' wishes for change... at national level we have to work together for some sort of cooperation," Lim said.

PKR coordinator Sim Tze Tsin said the parties' ideologies were too different to allow them to merge.

"One party right now, at this stage, is not realistic or feasible. DAP and PAS sitting together is already an achievement," he told AFP.

He said DAP leaders met on Tuesday for discussions, particularly on "thorny issues" such as the notion of an Islamic state.

PAS has publicly advocated an Islamic state but dropped the controversial issue in its election manifesto.