

Nik Aziz: Emulate Kelantan's principles
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Kelantan Menteri Besar Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat has reiterated the need for a common policy in the five states led by the Pakatan Rakyat as the opposition alliance marked its 100 days in power.
MCPX

He revealed that he will be hosting a meeting with the menteri besar and chief minister from Kedah, Perak, Selangor and Penang soon in an attempt for them to reach consensus on a set of common policies for the five states.

nik aziz interview in kota bharu 130608 03The 77-year-old PAS spiritual leader expressed hope that the four states can emulate Kelantan's way of governing which was based on the principle of justice as per Islamic teachings.

"If possible, this should be done in other Pakatan-led states as well although I can't interfere in the way how these other state governments are running their states.

"This is the principle (of how we run the government in Kelantan) and it will be good if they can emulate us. Of course it's up to them if they have better ways of doing it," he told Malaysiakini during a 90-minute interview held at his house in Kelantan last week.

Soon after the Pakatan component parties swept into power in Kedah, Perak, Selangor and Penang after the March 8 general election, Nik Aziz - who has led Kelantan since 1990 - has called for the formation of a common body to ensure welfare programmes are coordinated in all the five states.

Although being the 'Bapak MB' for all the heads of the Pakatan states, Nik Aziz refrained from elaborating on their performance in the first 100 days, saying that they were entitled to their way of administering the respective states.

Edited excerpts of Nik Aziz's interview, which is the concluding part of a week-long Malaysiakini special issue on the Pakatan's 100-days -in-power, follows:

What do you see as Pakatan's achievements 100 days in power?

We need a common policy in the five states ruled by the Pakatan. We need to be open and be fair to the people. This is what is advocated in Islamic teaching. As the menteri besar for 18 years, we have been fair to everyone.

nik aziz interview in kota bharu 130608 01Before we came in (to lead the state), the divide and rule policies were being practised but I introduced the concept of 'Islam for all'. I have the same policy for everyone, be they from PAS, Umno or Chinese. That is the message that we have to send through Islam.

If possible, this should be done in other Pakatan-led states as well although. I can't interfere in the way how other state governments are running their states. This is the principle (of how we run the government in Kelantan) and it will be good if they can emulate us. Of course it's up to them if they have better ways of doing it.

What is your response to arguments that Kedah and Perak, both led by a PAS menteri besar, are not as tough as Kelantan on imposing Islamic values? For example, Kedah has yet to implement any gender segregation rule.

I am talking about the underlying principle (on how a government should be run) but on how to implement them, it's up to the respective states.

Even in Kelantan, we could only carry out these policies bit by bit and in stages, we can't do it in one go. You can't change the people's mindset and mentality all in one go. In my view however, instead of coming up with new policies, these states are welcomed to just copy the Kelantan model.

How would you rate Pakatan's performance in running the four other states?

Each state has its own achievements. I can't rate because they would know their own situation (better). I have led Kelantan since 1990 and whenever people ask me to talk about my experience, I would say it's actually easy (as you just need to follow) Islamic teachings which taught us to be just to everyone.

When we rule the state based on justice, people can accept whatever that we are doing. Who doesn't want justice?

On the need to have a common policy, you have called for the setting up of a coordinating body previously, is there any progress on it?

I am inviting all four Pakatan states' menteris besar and chief minister to come to Kota Bharu to have a discussion. I have sent out the invitation letter before I left for umrah (minor haj) but the exact date has yet to be fixed. I hope we can find our consensus (on policies matters) through the meeting.

With the recent hike in fuel prices, are there any measures that you would introduce to help lift the financial burden of the people? Is there any need for Kelantan to get 'cross-subsidies'-of-sort from other states to tackle this hefty hike?

Justice is not build on the basis that you are rich. If there is justice, even if you are poor, there should not be any problem. The Chinese and the Indian communities know that we are poor but they too support us.

The DAP remained cautious towards PAS. Do you foresee any problem between the two parties within Pakatan in the long run?

nik aziz interview in kota bharu 120608 02I must first reiterate my gratitude to the support from the Chinese community because they know Islam is actually a religion which promotes justice and being considerate.

DAP was part of Barisan Alternatif (together with PKR) once upon a time ago but unfortunately they pulled out from BA later on. It now looks like the DAP tarik tidak masuk pun tidak (half-hearted over whether being part of Pakatan).

They can be cautious (but) I hope they understand what we are advocating is justice, which is needed by everyone. There is no reason why they need to be cautious.

The reforms that are initiated in the four other Pakatan states since the March 8 general election are rather obvious but this is not seen in Kelantan.

Of course you have to reform policies which are outdated and 'rotten'. It is just like you are having a spare tyre (reform measures), you would not use it as long as the original tyre (current policies) is still working.

There are plans to introduce local government election and the Freedom of Information Act in Selangor and Penang for instance. What about Kelantan?

These proposals have yet to reach me.

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