

**A firm DAP 'No' to theocratic state**  
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**Syed Jaymal Zahiid**

DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng today reiterated his party would reject any proposal to turn the country into a theocratic state, whether Islamic or Christian, fuelling speculation it will just be a matter of time before the Chinese-dominated party hits the collision course with coalition partner and Islamic hardliner PAS.

MCPX

"Any proposal to turn Malaysia into a theocratic state whether an Islamic or a Christian state is contrary to our vision of a civil society that is multi-cultural and multi-religious. Further, it violates the Federal Constitution that is based on civil laws (and not on religious ones)," Lim said in his opening speech at the DAP 2008 congress.

dap 14th congress 230808 guan eng voteAt a press conference later, Lim denied his speech was intended to provoke PAS, which has constantly voiced its intention of transforming Malaysia into an Islamic state, should it come to power in the future.

"We have no other intentions," Lim told reporters. "We must abide by the four principles that have been the basis of our unity in Pakatan Rakyat. If we do not understand this, Pakatan will collapse."

DAP, PAS together with PKR form the Pakatan Rakyat, the country's most successful opposition alliance so far. The Pakatan won 82 out of the 222 parliamentary seats in the March national polls. De facto leader Anwar Ibrahim has promised to reverse the majority, currently held by the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition, to his alliance's favour and form a new government by Malaysia Day on Sept 16.

### **DAP committed to Pakatan**

Lim said DAP was committed to the four principles that bind Pakatan, namely, the endorsement of Anwar as the new prime minister should Pakatan succeed in taking power, the establishment of a secular state, equality and a two-coalition political system.

anwar hadi and guan eng 250105When asked about PAS members' intention to nominate their president Abdul Hadi Awang as prime minister instead of Anwar if the Pakatan took control, Lim said DAP would stand by Anwar.

"I have said it before several times and I said it on the tenth day after I became Penang chief minister," said Lim, denying his party was backing Anwar to provoke PAS.

Lim, who is also chief minister of Penang, declined to comment when asked who would be appointed deputy prime minister.

"Let's get through the first hurdle first. Take it step by step. It is a bit presumptuous to go that far. Let's get through the first hurdle first before talking about that," Lim said.

### **DAP wants more Malays to join**

Lim also said DAP would try harder to get more Malays on board its multi-racial platform. Though he said there had been an increase in DAP's Malay membership, he did not give details.

"We are making effort (to increase Malay membership) in the party," said Lim who added that one of the best ways to do so would be by leading a good government that represented the interests of all the races in the country.

DAP's paltry Malay membership has always been seen as the party's Achilles heel, limiting its growth as a potent political force and giving room to rivals like Umno to play up its Chinese-chauvinist party label.

dap 14th congress 230808 karpalDAP chairperson Karpal Singh urged party members to be united and not let power go to their heads.

"Every political party has its own differences but we must ride above them and rise to the occasion," he was reported as saying by local media.

In the March polls, DAP had won the second highest number of seats in the Pakatan coalition, just behind the PKR. The party secured a record 28 parliamentary and 73 state assembly seats.

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