

**Contrasting religious messages in by-election**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**Aug 22, 2009**

The seemingly ideological polar opposites of PAS and DAP are being vigorously exploited in the Permatang Pasir by-election poster war.

In the Malay-dominated areas, Barisan Nasional are challenging incumbent PAS' religious credentials in view of its alliance with the secular DAP.

Banners declaring that a 'Vote for PAS = Vote for DAP' best summarises the modus operandi in the Barisan Nasional's campaign to persuade Malay voters to shun PAS.

Numerous banners are also mocking PAS' famous rallying cry 'takbir' and scandalously rephrasing it as 'take beer' in reference to the Selangor alcohol ban controversy.

Umno has recently accused PAS of giving in to its DAP counterparts and rescinded demands for alcohol to be banned in Malay-majority areas in the state.

Another common banner pits PAS against Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, because the party was not given a seat on the state cabinet.

Malays make up about 75 percent of the voters, which for the past three general elections have backed PAS.

**'One Malaysia supporter's club'**

But in contrast, BN's banners in the Chinese-dominated areas are accusing PAS of being overly religious.

Yet again, the Selangor alcohol ban controversy takes centre stage.

This time however, the message is that PAS was trying to curb non-Muslim rights to consume alcohol.

Banners are also reminding the Chinese voters of the PAS-controlled Kedah government's decision to demolish a pig abattoir (which was illegal, and given repeated warnings to relocate).

Huge billboards by dubious organisations aligned to the BN are also cropping up throughout the area.

The publisher's name on one billboard read "One Malaysia Supporter's Club" while another read "Malay-Race Lovers Association".

At a press conference today, Penang Chief Minister and DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng urged BN to stop portraying Pakatan Rakyat as being anti-Malay or anti-Islam.

He lamented that on one hand, MCA is accusing DAP of selling out the rights of the non-Malays by working with PAS, Umno is accusing the PAS of being subservient to the DAP.

"The racial and religious attacks have intensified," said Lim, adding that more neutral reporting in the Chinese press are also helping disseminate information to the Malay

community.

### **Mailbox surprise**

If huge eye-catching banners and billboards are not enough, campaign materials attacking Pakatan are also making their way into voters' mailboxes.

One voter was seen bringing the offending materials to PAS vice-president Mahfuz Omar this afternoon.

The envelope (*right*) contained five coloured leaflets, mostly condemning PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim, who is also the parliament rep for the area.

"Their intentions is to cause racial tensions. They are afraid to go door to door to distribute these materials so they opt to do it by post," said Mahfuz.

He said that the inflammatory leaflets can cause problems to national security and he will forward the matter to the relevant authorities.

The envelope was stamped in Butterworth, Penang.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.

Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/111184>