

**Irony At The Pakatan Rakyat Convention**  
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The statement by Pakatan Rakyat leaders such as DAP Advisor Lim Kit Siang at the recent third Pakatan Rakyat general convention held in Alor Star claiming that they will bring about political reforms in Malaysia was marred by the fact that the audience were forced to sit in separate groups for men and women.

It is ironic as this forced segregation shows conservative measures, thus making Pakatan Rakyat's so-called reforms a sham and at the same time refuting Lim Kit Siang's statement on moderation.

As reported in Sin Chew Daily (14 Jan '12) whereby signs were erected for men and women to sit separately while The Star (15 Jan '12) observed that "an elderly PAS official was vigilantly trying to keep the men and women segregated in the press section.

As a result of the limited seating near the press area, some of the male reporters and bloggers spilled over into the area reserved for the women", these scenarios bring back memories about similar measures implemented in PAS-held Kelantan.

Although the separate seating for men and women may seem a trivial matter to Pakatan, the fact that there are people who concern themselves with gender segregation displays their conservatism and the backward slide of theocratic religious thinking.

Coupled with the fact that the Pakatan Rakyat leadership had talked about promoting moderation, liberalism, progress and political reforms, this makes it extremely ironic.

If Pakatan Rakyat is really sincere in upholding political reforms and were not merely spouting words at the convention, then they should immediately address several issues and answer some unanswered questions on issue such as the demolition of the sole pork abattoir in Kedah and the 50% housing quota for Bumiputras in Kedah, as well as assure Malaysians that the implementation of hudud law will neither affect the lifestyles of non-Muslims nor the country's political, economic, cultural, social, and education fields.

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