

DATE: 26/04/2008

THE STAR

# Hisham regrets wielding keris

## He apologises to all Malaysians

The Star - 26/4/2008

By **TEH ENG HOCK**  
enghock@thestar.com.my

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Umno Youth chief Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein has admitted that his raising of the *keris* was among the causes of the Barisan Nasional's poor performance in the general election.

Apologising to all Malaysians for his action, he said: "If it affected anyone, I cannot run away from the reality of it. I apologise to the non-Malays and the Malays.

"To the non-Malays because of the fear to a symbol which was not my intention. And to the Malays for not being able to uphold their symbol of heritage."

Describing it as a "sad lesson", he said as a leader, he must be gracious and accept the consequences because the party came first.

The wielding of the *keris* was introduced at the Umno Youth assembly in 2005 to symbolise Malay tradition. At the start of the assembly, a procession carrying the *keris* would proceed to the hall to hand it to the Youth chief, who would then unsheathe and kiss it.

In the 2006 assembly, there was uneasiness among non-Malays when some speakers made racially slanted remarks about using the *keris*. Things were made worse as the proceedings of the assembly were telecast live.

MCA and several other Barisan component party leaders criticised the use of the *keris* in such a manner.

However, Hishammuddin had then defended his action, saying the *keris* was a symbol of Malay culture.

»If it affected anyone, I cannot run away from the reality of it«

DATUK SERI HISHAMMUDDIN  
TUN HUSSEIN

Hishammuddin, who is the Education Minister, however did not want to say if the tradition of kissing the *keris* would be stopped at future Umno Youth assemblies.

"This is not the forum to discuss it," he told reporters after chairing a BN Youth central committee meeting at Menara Dato Onn.

Among those present were MCA Youth chief Datuk Liow Tiong Lai, MIC Youth chief Datuk S.A. Vigneswaran, and Umno Youth deputy chief Khairy Jamaluddin.

Hishammuddin also said the BN Youth proposed that the coalition's representatives from Sabah and Sarawak be given more recognition.

"We recognise the role and contribution of Sabah and Sarawak BN (in the general election), and they are now the anchor and backbone of BN," he added.

He said Barisan leaders in the peninsula could share and learn from the experience of their Sabah and Sarawak counterparts on issues such as religion and racial relations.