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'Hudud an issue in polls'

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Hasan: It will be a factor among voters

KUALA LUMPUR: Despite attempts by the Pakatan Rakyat to put the lid on their dispute over the hudud and Islamic state issue, it will be a decisive factor in the general election, said ousted Selangor PAS leader Datuk Dr Hasan Ali.

The issue will continue to heat up as the elections draw near, although it is considered a taboo subject among the Opposition chiefs after PAS shifted its struggle for an Islamic state to just setting up a welfare state, he said.

"It will be a factor among voters who will have to choose hudud and the Islamic state or otherwise," Dr Hasan said at a press conference here yesterday.

"Hudud and the establishment of an Islamic state had been the main agenda of PAS for the past 60 years.

"The majority of its supporters cannot accept its shift towards a welfare state," he added, accusing "parasites" within the leadership for compromising the Islamic struggle for political expediency.

Dr Hasan, who now heads non-governmental organisation Jati, also asked PAS to state its stand over a recent call by Christian Federation of Malaysia chairman Bishop Datuk Ngo Moon Hing for voters to elect a government that allows freedom of religion, which included proselytising.

Dr Hasan said the Federal Constitution and state enactments prohibited the propagation of other religions to Muslims.

In **GEORGE TOWN**, DAP national chairman Karpal Singh said his objection to hudud was not a personal stand but a stand taken by DAP.

"As chairman of the party, I'm the spokesman," he said, referring to remarks by MCA central committee member Loh Seng Kok that aside from Karpal, all other DAP leaders are



It's the main agenda: Dr Hasan challenged the PAS leadership to clarify their stand over the hudud issue at a press conference.

mere "yes men" for PAS.

Karpal said both DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang and his son Guan Eng, who is party secretary-general and Penang Chief Minister, had publicly stated their stand in the past on hudud law and the Islamic state.

Karpal said he and lawyer P. Uthayakumar were the only ones to face a charge under the Sedition Act.

In **JOHOR BARU**, state PKR chief Datuk Chua Jui Meng called on DAP and PAS to stop fighting over the matter.

He said all parties in Pakatan understood that PAS was committed to its welfare state objective.

"All the parties under the Pakatan Rakyat leadership have agreed on that fact."

Chua announced that a *Merdeka Rakyat* dinner would be held in Johor Baru in September, with an expected turnout of 10,000 people.