

**Umno can 'overcome' PKR and PAS but not DAP, says minister**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
**December 02, 2011**  
**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 2 — An Umno minister admitted today his party viewed DAP as its biggest threat in the next general election, but he confidently predicted that PKR and PAS could be beaten.

Pasir Gudang MP Datuk Seri Khaled Nordin reasoned that this was why delegates had focused their attacks on DAP when speaking about Pakatan Rakyat (PR) throughout the Umno annual general assembly so far.

"Because they believe, and it has been some sort of perception, whether real or imaginary, that the dominant force (in the opposition) is not PKR — it is DAP.

"Therefore, Umno members have been focusing (on) and criticising DAP ... because Umno feels they can overcome the other Malay-based parties," he told The Malaysian Insider when approached on the sidelines of the party's AGM today.

The higher education minister was commenting on the direction of debates during the assembly so far and how delegates have been targeting DAP in their criticisms.

Attacks against the opposition party have served as a focal point for this year's Umno assembly, with delegates accusing DAP leaders of marginalising Malays in PR states, and challenging the sanctity of Islam as the country's "official religion".

While some have dismissed renewed attacks against DAP as mere "Pakatan bashing," some Umno leaders have insisted that DAP poses a "real threat" to Malays, and that a future with DAP in power would spell disaster for the community.

"The party (Umno) is a platform. Our main concern is the future of Malays and Islam.

"This goes beyond political differences between PAS and PKR. Malays have a right to be worried. The position of Malays and our religion has been challenged subliminally and one day before we realise it, it will be too late to do anything," said Umno delegate Abdul Rahim Kamarudin.

Khaled agreed today, pointing to how DAP has made significant inroads in the Chinese community.

During the Sarawak state polls in April, DAP chalked up the biggest win among its PR partners, snapping up 12 out of the 15 seats it contested.

"They (delegates) see that DAP has gained significant support from the Chinese," he said.

But Khaled added it was important for delegates to heed their president Datuk Seri Najib Razak's message of unity, saying it was crucial that the party stand together to face the coming polls.

In his opening message to delegates, Najib had urged them to stand united and be willing to face sacrifices to guarantee victory for the ruling pact in an "extraordinary" general election expected soon.

"I think the president's request must be given serious consideration because this is the basis of our strength ... it will help us overcome the challenges that lie before us," said Khaled.

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