

DAP seeks crisis meet over hudud row
The Malaysian Insider
September 24, 2011
By Clara Chooi

GEORGE TOWN, Sept 24 — DAP today urged for an emergency Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leadership meeting to resolve the ongoing dispute over PAS's plans to implement hudud laws.

DAP national chairman Karpal Singh, who has been openly critical of the plan, insisted that the party would always reject the establishment of an Islamic state.

According to national news agency Bernama, the Bukit Gelugor MP said any delay in addressing the matter would negatively affect public confidence in PR, especially among the non-Muslim electorate.

"An emergency meeting must be held immediately to publicly clarify Pakatan's stand on the issue and the controversy must end, once and for all," he was quoted as saying on Bernama Online.

DAP and PAS have been at loggerheads over the Islamist's party's support for the controversial law that prescribes stoning, whipping and amputation as punishment for criminal offences.

PAS has refused to back down from its plan, with its spiritual advisor Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat reportedly saying recently that DAP could leave the coalition if it refused to offer support.

Hudud is a prickly subject in multicultural Malaysia where race and religion are closely-linked. The country's 28-million population is also still haunted by the bloody racial riots of May 13, 1969.

The issue is raised cyclically as political fodder as its divisive nature often causes conflicts to occur within otherwise-friendly circles, making it ideal to pit parties with opposing ideologies against one another.

Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has backed the introduction of hudud in Kelantan, saying it would not infringe upon non-Muslims' rights, further escalating the dispute.

The PR de facto leader also moved today to rebuke Nasional (BN) for purportedly exploiting hudud, or Islamic penal laws, to gain political support as national polls nears.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak earlier today pledged that his administration would block any attempt to implement the Islamic penal law, in a bid to curtail further debate on the fractious subject.

Najib's deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, however, expressed support for hudud earlier this week, upsetting Umno's Chinese partner, MCA.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek has threatened pull his party out of the ruling coalition if senior ally, Umno, goes ahead with enforcing hudud. Gerakan has expressed the same threat.

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