

Is The Opposition Pact In Kedah Breaking Up?

Bernama

May 15, 2012

By Alan Ting

KUALA LUMPUR, May 15 (Bernama) -- Arguably, the DAP and PKR may have a hard time during the next general election in PAS-led Kedah where much of their support comes from the non-Malays.

Remaining unresolved are several issues which the non-Malays are unhappy about, among them a demolished abattoir, the state housing policy and a mufti and fatwa (edict) enactment.

The unhappiness can be assumed to have set in way back in 2009 after the state government demolished the only abattoir in Alor Setar used by pig farmers.

The issue became so hot that Kedah's only DAP assemblyman, Lee Guan Aik, almost pulled out of the PAS-PKR-DAP pact.

Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Azizan Abdul Razak had promised to build a new abattoir but it has yet to take shape due to resistance from villagers in the vicinity of the proposed new site.

Unhappiness with the state housing policy has more to do with the housing quota for bumiputeras.

More than 90 per cent of the land in Alor Setar is gazetted as Malay reserve. Under the previous Barisan Nasional (BN) state government, developers who put up houses on Malay reserve were required to allocate 50 per cent of the houses to bumiputera buyers. The idea was to maintain Malay ownership of property in the state.

Under the PAS-led state government, the bumiputera housing quota was raised to 70 per cent, causing unhappiness among some of the developers. Not only that, the bumiputera quota for commercial property was raised from 30 per cent to 50 per cent.

Kedah Gerakan chairman Dr Cheah Soon Hai pointed out that many non-Malays have expressed concern over the approval on April 17 of the Mufti and Fatwa (Kedah) Bill 2012 to replace the Mufti and Fatwa (Kedah Darul Aman) Enactment 2008 (Enactment 10).

"This new law doesn't show the democracy in the opposition pact since it prevents the fatwa (edict) issued by a mufti or the fatwa committee, whether enacted or not, to be challenged, appealed, reviewed or questioned in any civil or Syariah court," he said.

The non-Muslims are worried and concerned that Kedah is going towards "a pure Islamic state" as the state has already attempted to impose several rulings, using Kelantan as the model, he added.

These developments, among others, have put the DAP and PKR in the state in a spot, so to speak.

The resignation of PKR assemblyman Tan Wei Shu in April 2010, claiming that certain leaders in the party had used him for their own self-interests, has not helped either.

Kedah MCA chairman Datuk Chong Itt Chew pointed out that almost 70 per cent of the population in the state is Malay and that, with PAS controlling the state, it would mean that they are in a position to push for more Islamic policies.

"Past experience also shows that nothing can be done by the DAP and the PKR politicians while the growing discontent continues. The DAP does not have the numbers, and cannot exert its opinion. When the state government wants to take the state down the Islamic road, there is nothing much that the DAP or PKR can do about it," he said when contacted by Bernama.

The latest comments by PAS leaders on hudud law and the Islamic state agenda have reignited the debate between them and DAP leaders, particularly its chairman Karpal Singh, and seem to have raised a serious political risk which the opposition pact may have to deal with.

To make matters worse, PAS leaders are reportedly saying that they would even forge pacts with other parties that support an Islamic state should PKR and DAP not do so.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2012 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v6/newsindex.php?id=666192>