

**Utusan backing Dr M's race theory, says DAP after 'haram' report
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 8 — Umno-owned newspaper Utusan Malaysia appears to be deliberately fomenting conflict by suggesting a conspiracy to prove right Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's controversial remarks that multicultural Malaysians are increasingly racial in the run-up to key national polls, the DAP's Lim Kit Siang said today.

The opposition federal lawmaker wants Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to act and rein in the widely-read Malay broadsheet for allegedly stoking religious tensions in the country, after the paper ran a controversial report on its front page today titled "Haram sokong DAP (Forbidden to support DAP)".

"There seems to be a conspiracy to prove Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad right with regard to the former prime minister's prediction in June that the next general election will centre on race as 'Malaysia has become more racial than ever!'" Lim said in a statement.

Dr Mahathir, who was the country's fourth and longest-serving prime minister, had controversially declared at a public forum here on June 28 that the 13th general elections will be about race as Malaysians were growing more polarised.

"They want to be identified by their race, even if they have lost the connection with their country of origin," said the still-influential Dr Mahathir at a forum on politics and business, adding, "That is why there are now more racial politics than before."

Lim lashed out at Utusan for acting irresponsibly in publishing as news, a report citing one Islamic religious scholar who declared it "haram (forbidden)" for Muslims to support the DAP but saying that MCA and MIC were acceptable because the two Barisan Nasional (BN) parties recognised Islam's pre-eminence.

"A newspaper which could publish a front-page headline like "Haram sokong DAP" is an anti-national and anti-Malaysia newspaper," the Ipoh-Timor MP said.

He said if the newspaper had highlighted a report with the incendiary title against BN's main party, Umno, or any other component party within the ruling coalition, the Home Ministry immediately would have banned the paper from publishing.

"But here we have the prime minister, the home minister and the ruling coalition condoning if not endorsing such a irresponsible, despicable and seditious publication!" Lim said.

"Will Najib, who prattles about 'moderates of the world unite' in international forums, take action against Utusan Malaysia for another example of extremist, irresponsible, incendiary, seditious, anti-national gutter journalism calculated to foment racial ill-will, religious distrust and undermine national unity?" he challenged.

The paper had today reported an Islamic religious teacher, Abdullah Sa'amah, as saying that Muslims must not vote for DAP and its two allies PAS and PKR in the federal opposition pact of Pakatan Rakyat (PR) in the 13th general election that must be called by April next year.

"DAP's fight does not accept the country's (Federal) Constitution, they want equality (for) Islam and (other religions), temples and mosques (they) also want equality," Abdullah was quoted as saying by Utusan.

"(It is) compulsory for the Muslims in PAS, Umno, and Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) to reject DAP that is looking for ways to take power by voting in elections."

"It is also sinful (berdosa) to support parties that co-operate with DAP because supporting them means we also support DAP because they are one pact (pakatan)," said the founder of the Pondok Geting religious school in Tumpat.

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