

**Kelantan issues may hurt Pakatan's chances, admits Mustafa Ali**  
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**By Md Izwan and Amin Iskandar**

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 14 — The "indecent behaviour" summonses on non-Muslim couples by Kelantan administrators are likely to hurt Pakatan Rakyat's (PR) chances in the next general election, says Datuk Mustafa Ali.

The PAS secretary-general admitted that the spillover effect from the incident will be felt by PR during the coming general election as it has worried other component parties and their supporters.

"I cannot say for certain that this will not impact non-Muslim voters.

"But it may affect us (the parties)," Mustafa (picture) told The Malaysian Insider in an interview this week.

PAS, the DAP and PKR scored historic wins in Election 2008, capturing four more states and winning 82 federal seats to deny the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition of its traditional two-thirds majority in the 222-seat Parliament.

The 2008 victory has fuelled confidence in PR to go all out to win in the next polls and form the federal government but a series of issues have kept them on the defensive.

Mustafa also blamed the MCA for exaggerating the issue and giving a bad perception of PR, criticising its English-language daily The Star as having bad intentions towards the party.

"It may have caused a less-than-favourable perception towards PR to emerge. MCA's move is one of bad tactics," he said.

The Star reported last week that Kelantan enforcement officers had fined two non-Muslim couples for khalwat, a crime under syariah law, but PAS had quickly pointed out the summonses were for indecent behaviour.

The MCA has condemned the actions taken by the state enforcers and accused the PAS government of imposing hudud law on non-Muslims.

PAS allies such as DAP national chairman Karpal Singh, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng and PAS Supporter Assembly chief Hu Pang Chaw have weighed in on the issue, and have called for the state government to explain the summonses.

Non-Muslim hairdressers in Kelantan were also recently reported to have also been slapped with fines for having customers of the opposite gender, breaching a local council by-law that bars women hairstylists from working on men and vice-versa — sparking a storm over the position of Islamic laws.

But the Kelantan government suspended the regulations relating to hairdressers two days ago after the uproar.

In the run-up to the 13th general election, BN has increasingly tried to discourage non-Muslim voters from voting for PR by saying that PAS would implement the Islamic penal code, hudud, and create an Islamic state.

While non-Muslims are exempt from syariah laws, Malaysia's dual-track court system has resulted in overlapping gray areas that have impinged on their constitutional rights.

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