

End of Islam under Pakatan rule, warns Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 24 — Voting PKR and PAS will divide the Muslim community and destroy their aqidah (faith), Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has said, in a warning to Malay voters against supporting the opposition in Election 2013.

Najib (picture) also added that supporting DAP would see “Islam oppressed” if the Chinese-dominated component of Pakatan Rakyat (PR) were to be voted into power, according to Sunday Star.

“A vote for PKR will destroy the aqidah (faith) while a vote for PAS will only result in disunity among Muslims,” the Umno president was quoted as saying at the launch of his administration’s “Jelajah Janji Ditepati (Promises Fulfilled Tour)” in Terengganu yesterday.

“As for DAP, a vote for them will see Islam being oppressed”.

The BN chairman’s statement comes amid rising tension between the country’s majority Muslims and minority Christians over the tussle on “Allah”, an Arabic word for god that Muslims insist was exclusive to them.

Malaysian Christians, however, said it was their right to use the term to describe their god, especially for those in Sabah and Sarawak where “Allah” has been used in religious texts and sermons purportedly for centuries.

The term is also used by the Sikhs in their religious scriptures.

The “Allah” storm was reignited recently when DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng urged Putrajaya in a Christmas message to lift its ban on the word published in Malay-language bibles shipped to East Malaysia, where the bulk of Malaysia’s 9.2 per cent Christian population reside.

This led to the Sultan of Selangor issuing a blanket ban against non-Muslims using “Allah” in the state, a move that sparked legal confusion in light of the December 2009 High Court ruling that the term was not restricted to Muslims and the Catholic Church had the constitutional right to publish the word in the Malay section of its weekly newspaper, The Herald.

PR also differed with the Selangor Sultan’s decree, insisting that Islam does not prohibit others from using the word.

Explaining the federal opposition’s position, PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang told a joint press conference with PR leaders that Christians and other non-Muslim communities should not abuse the word to spread confusion among Muslims but this did not mean they were not allowed to use the word.

The Islamist party, however, was seen backtracking on its position when some members from the party's highest decision-making body, the Syura Council, said "Allah" can be used orally but not translated in religious texts.

The move drew criticism from DAP chairman Karpal Singh who felt PAS was politicking on the issue to placate its conservative powerbase.

Najib saw this as PAS's failure to defend Islam, according to a report in New Sunday Times today.

"When DAP belittled Islam, made statements that offended Muslims, what did PAS do? They did nothing and bowed down to DAP leaders," the English language newspaper quoted the prime minister as saying.

The BN chairman added that voters were beginning to reject the Islamist party as "mengarut (nonsense)", saying that Muslim voters now look to Barisan Nasional as the only safeguard to the sanctity of Islam.

However, observers noted the Najib administration was unresponsive to calls for intervention by minority groups who felt a concrete policy on the issue could have easily contained the tension and end the controversy.

Najib's statement also came after he made a rare Vatican visit in mid-2012, in what appeared to be an attempt to repair frayed Muslim-Christian ties.

Political analysts pointed out that communal politicking had escalated in recent months in the run up to Election 2013, which must be held by June.

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