

Shariah bill: Strategic move by Umno, says Syed Saddiq
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The PPBM Youth chief says giving leeway to PAS to table Hadi's bill serves to ease the tension between the party and PAS.

PETALING JAYA: The decision to once again postpone the PAS president Abdul Hadi Awang's motion to amend the Syariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act 1965 (Act 355) may be a strategic move on Umno's part to ease the tension between the party and PAS.

Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia Youth chief Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman said BN had allowed the Islamist party the opportunity to table the motion in the Dewan Rakyat, albeit without debate.

"The next Dewan Rakyat sitting may be held only after the general election.

"But Umno has already succeeded in splitting the opposition.

"In a three-way fight, there is a great likelihood that PAS or Pakatan Harapan will lose a lot of seats.

"As for PAS, it might have lost the political capital to raise Act 355 post-election.

"We have seen this happen many times, from the days Umno betrayed PAS to wrest Kelantan ... all of Umno's failed election promises."

Syed Saddiq said putting off the debate on Hadi's motion was a demonstration of the political games played by PAS and Umno.

The people were a witness to the political power play.

"In general, many of them are sick of the country's politics," he said in a statement today.

Yesterday, the Dewan Rakyat had rushed through five federal bills and deferred four more in a 20-hour marathon sitting.

It is believed this long sitting was to pave the way today for PAS to read out Hadi's motion to amend the Syariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act 1965.

However, immediately after the motion was read this afternoon, Dewan Rakyat Speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia announced that the debate was being deferred to the next sitting.

“This is not the first time, not the second time, but the third time this motion has been deferred,” Syed Saddiq pointed out.

Lawyer Syahredzan Johan said it was not PAS which was played out by Umno today.

Instead, the ones played out were Pakatan Harapan and those who believed that today would be the day the proposed amendments to Act 355 would be debated and put to a vote.

“The ones who won were Umno and PAS,” he wrote on Facebook.

He believed this was so because the two parties could use the existing support for amending Act 355 as political capital to mobilise the voters in the general election if it was held before the next Dewan Rakyat sitting.

Syahredzan said PAS and Umno would use their advocacy of Act 355 to position themselves as the “defenders of Islam” to win votes.

“Look at (DAP supremo) Lim Kit Siang and DAP, trying to interrupt the tabling (of the motion). Look at (Shah Alam MP) Khalid Samad shouting like someone who has lost his sanity.

“Don’t tell us Muslims will want to support individuals like that.”

Hadi’s motion was first tabled in the Dewan Rakyat in May last year but was deferred to the next sitting.

In November, Hadi amended his original bill by proposing to have shariah punishments capped at 30 years’ jail, 100 strokes, and RM100,000 fine.

Currently, shariah punishments are limited to three years’ jail, six strokes, and RM5,000 fine.

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