

08/10/2001

DAP goes back to the drawing board

Audrey Dermawan

PENANG, Sun. - The DAP will go back to the drawing board to prepare for the general election, its national chairman Lim Kit Siang said today.

Lim said the party would formulate and implement an 18-month action plan in preparation for the general election.

He, however, did not elaborate.

"Now that the DAP is on its own, the party has to go back to the drawing board," Lim said at the State DAP Convention 2001.

He said it was certain that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would be leading the Barisan Nasional into the general election for the sixth time.

"But it is most unlikely that the general election will be held in 2004," he said.

Also present at the convention was State DAP chairman Chow Kon Yeow, who said the party's decision to withdraw from the Alternative Front was well-received in Penang.

"This opens up opportunities for the party to regain the people's support," Chow said.

He added the general election was only two to three years away and DAP must start preparing for it.

"It is not going to be an easy task. All party members must stay united and be committed to the party's struggle.

"By doing so, I am confident that the party is set to regain its rightful position in the Malaysian politics," he said.

Chow added the State DAP had been an effective watchdog, exposing the weaknesses of the government administration and earning the people's respect in the process.

He said there was no question of the DAP's relevance in Malaysia's democracy, as "we are still a voice of conscience against the powerful Government".

Earlier, Lim said the recent Sarawak election should be a lesson to opposition parties.

It should make them realise that the path to break the BN's political hegemony and restore justice, freedom, democracy and good governance was long, hard and rocky.

"It serves no purpose for the Opposition to point the finger at anyone over the BN's landslide victory in Sarawak," he said.

Lim said those who blamed the DAP's pullout for the Opposition's defeat should take a hard look at the election results.

Some had said that if the Alternative Front had been fully united and the DAP had not pulled out, the Opposition would have won more seats.

"It would be more helpful to find out the reasons for the huge majorities acquired by Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (a component party in the Sarawak BN) candidates than to point the finger at the DAP, when this is irrelevant to the election results," he added.