

**DAP stems anti-Malay bogey, eyes Putrajaya**  
**MalaysiaKini.com**  
**January 8, 2012**  
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Taking advantage of the party's national conference today, likely the last before the general election, DAP sought to project an inclusive image and shed its anti-Malay perception.

The move appears targeted at addressing its sliding Malay support, a pivotal voting bloc seen as responsible for Pakatan Rakyat's recent string of by-election defeats.

malay bloggers join dap 080112 02"The challenge for the party is to obtain at least 30 percent of Malay support," said DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng to a room of over 700 delegates.

Earlier this morning, Lim oversaw a major coup against Umno - that has relentlessly labelled DAP anti-Malay - when two former Umno members handed in their membership form to join DAP.

The duo, one of which is a former assemblyperson, dismissed Umno's attacks as a non-issue and instead slammed their former party for corruption.

Also attracting attention at the DAP national conference was its long-time Malay delegate, Bukit Bintang Baru branch representative Azhari Ismail.

"Everyday in the newspapers they bash us that we are anti-Malay, but as a DAP member since the 1990s I have been working hard to serve the people," said Azhari.

He added that to avoid DAP's political enemies from exploiting the party's weaknesses, it must tread carefully on sensitivities about Malay culture and religion.

On the election front, Johor DAP chief Boo Cheng Hau said the party plans to field a Malay candidate at a Felda seat that comprises over 80 percent Malay voters.

"It may be a small step, but it's a start," he said.

Sabah, Sarawak key battlegrounds

But Malay voters aren't the only voting bloc the party is eyeing, as for the first time the party is setting its sights, along with that of Pakatan partners, on Putrajaya.

dap convention shah alam 080112 crowd"I hope our friends in Sabah and Sarawak can begin a new wave, a wave not only to save the states but all of Malaysia," said Lim.

Significantly, of the close to twenty delegates who spoke at today's conference, almost a quarter was from the East Malaysian states.

Sabah delegate Edwin Bosin said the state was ripe for change and called for Pakatan to see its successes in the states it currently administers as evidence of its credentials.

Meanwhile, Sibü MP Wong Ho Leng responded to the party's challenge for him to lead the front in securing electoral support in East Malaysia.

"I cannot speak for Sabah but I promise you that for the six Chinese-majority seats in Sarawak, we will deliver."

This was also reflected in several other states that are expected to be key battlefields in the next general election.

"In Negeri Sembilan, we are already in full gear; we formed a committee in every constituency six months ago and some operations rooms have begun operations even though we do not know the election date," said Bukit Kepayang state assemblyperson Cha Kee Chin.

Call to close ranks

Delegates today were determined to close ranks and focus on their election strategy.

In the morning, DAP national chairperson Karpal Singh called on party members to join forces against the common foe BN, candidly brushing aside his spat with DAP deputy secretary-general P Ramasamy (below, right with Karpal on the foreground left).

dap convention shah alam 080112 karpal ramasamy Later, Sekinchan assemblyperson Ng Suee Lim stirred the crowd when he raised blogger Raja Petra Kamarudin's allegations suggesting elements of corruption in the Petaling Jaya City Council's (MBPJ) legal department.

"The Special Select Committee for Accountability, Competency and Transparency (Selcat) must investigate this," he said.

Teng Chang Khim, who heads Selcat, responded immediate vowing to look into the matter.

"I will call Selcat and we will discuss and decide. If we feel there is a case to investigate, we will investigate, there will not be compromise," he said.

The issue was the only conflict of interest matter brought up during the conference, with no mention of Perak DAP secretary Nga Kor Ming's tailoring contract controversy.

'Start strategising'

Meanwhile Lim in his closing speech urged party members to function as a team as what they do in the next six months will determine the country's political future.

"After Chinese New Year, we need all members in every state to plan and strategise. We must not only retain our seats, but also increase them.

"I hope, during our next congress, we will be able to hold it in Putrajaya," he said.

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