DAP rejects ROS' order to hold fresh polls
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By Andrew Ong

The DAP central executive committee (CEC) has resolved not to accept the Registrar of Societies' (ROS) instruction to hold fresh elections of the CEC because the ROS did not provide any grounds for its decision.

In a press conference after an emergency CEC meeting tonight, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said the ROS must first explain why it is was not satisfied with the party's explanation on its conduct during the election held last year.

He said that the CEC also wants the ROS to explain which provision of law was applied to direct the party to hold fresh CEC elections.

These matters will be communicated to the ROS in writing tomorrow.

"We find it extraordinary that the ROS can just order fresh election on the mere reason that they are not satisfied without providing any grounds.

"We have provided all our answers and explanations in full. We were fully cooperative with the ROS. And yet, with just one simple line, they say they are not satisfied and order us to hold fresh elections.

"We feel that the party is being held to ransom," said Lim, who appeared visibly upset at the situation.

Lim added that the ROS must answer DAP's queries in the interests of natural justice and due process of the law.

De-registration threat

Yesterday, the ROS had wrote to DAP stating that it was unsatisfied with the party's explanations over the error that occurred during the CEC election that took place in December.

The ROS also said that fresh elections must be conducted by the CEC elected for the 2008-2010 term.

Although the ROS did not state which provision of the Societies Act 1966 was being

applied to issue the directive, the notice itself was issued under Section 16(1) of same act.

This provision states that if the ROS is not satisfied with the identity of the persons constituted as office-bearers of a society, the ROS may serve a notice to produce evidence of a settlement of any such dispute and proper appointment of office-bearers.

If this provision is not complied with to the satisfaction of the ROS, the ROS may take steps to invalidate the DAP, under Section 13 of the same law.

In January, the DAP admitted that there was an error in the tabulation of the results, although the net effect on the make up of the CEC, which includes elected and co-opted members, was nil.

At the time, the party said that it was ready to be ridiculed for making such a simple error and it conceded its mistake in the interest of transparency.

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