

## **Intense DAP polls expected, biggest focus on Zairil**

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**By Lee Way Loon**

ANALYSIS Following the DAP's announcement that it will hold a re-election for its central executive committee (CEC), the focus of attention now is on whether Bukit Bendera MP Zairil Khir Johari would be elected into the powerful committee again.

Although the re-election was due to pressure from the Registrar of Societies (ROS), it is expected to see intense competition among ambitious party members.

In the last party elections in December, the original results showed that Zairil was not elected.

However, a month later it was discovered that the number of votes for some candidates were erroneously replicated.

NONEThe corrected results saw Zairil (right) coming in at 20th place, narrowly securing a spot on the CEC, making him the sole Malay representative in the committee.

If Zairil gets elected this time, it will not only help DAP reduce the negative perception of being anti-Malay, but more importantly, it could also prove that the last result was not fabricated as claimed by some parties, in particular the BN and its associated media.

On the contrary, if Zairil loses, the implications would be the opposite.

Zairil, who is also political secretary to Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, was elected as an MP in the recent general election. He is now known to more DAP members "thanks" to the infamous party election results blunder.

It is believed that he stands a better chance in the re-election compared with the last party polls.

When contacted, Zairil said he will definitely contest again but this does not mean DAP needs to prove anything.

"I don't think there is anything to prove because the last results showed that I was in. I don't think DAP needs to prove it is not anti-Malay or anything.

“Just like in last round, the delegates should vote according to ability. This is what DAP is about,” he said.

More Malays to join the fray?

Apart from Zairil, more Malay leaders are expected to throw in their hats in this round such as Raub MP Mohd Ariff Sabri, or better known as Sakmongkol AK47.

The blogger-cum-politician did not contest last time around, but he may join in this time after being elected as a people’s representative.

NONEAmran Ahmad (centre in photo), son of party veteran the late Ahmad Nor, had also announced his plans to enter the fray.

In the last elections, quite a number of Malays contested but most were little-known grassroots members.

After the party polls, critics opined that the lack of Malays in the elected CEC means DAP missed a chance to shed its anti-Malay label, although the party had appointed Senator Ariffin Omar as vice-chairperson later.

The aftermath of the general election also saw DAP facing more racial attacks from Umno, further highlighting DAP’s need to reduce its ‘Chinese party’ image.

However, it is still too early to assert whether this will affect the delegates in voting for the new CEC members.

NONEAccording to DAP Socialist Youth (Dapsy) organising secretary Lee Chin Chen (right), opinions among the grassroots were polarised about the party picking Malay candidates for the general election.

“In one of the constituencies that was contested by a Malay, the grassroots believe that they would not have lost if a Chinese had been picked.

“But in Pahang, Ariff won against an MCA candidate in Raub. The grassroots there opined that we should field more Malay candidates and it is good for the party,” said the newly elected Ketari state assemblyperson.

Possible factional tussling

However, the bigger impact that GE13 could bring to the party elections is the possible factional tussles sparked by unhappiness over candidate selections, in

particular in Perak.

If this problem blows up, state DAP chief Ngeh Koo Ham may suffer a loss as he only garnered 824 votes, the second lowest among the elected CEC members.

It is expected that there will be no problem for the top leaders like Lim Guan Eng, Karpal Singh and Lim Kit Siang to continue helming the party, but this might not apply to others.

tan hong pinDapsy secretary-general Tan Hong Pin (left) said the ROS problem has forced DAP to hold fresh elections in a short period of time and this is not easy for the party to handle.

He said while the elections was caused by the ROS problem, it will not weaken the will of new talents to contest.

"I just hope these party elections will not ignite a new battle. We were supposed to get back to work after the general election. But with fresh party elections coming, will the grudges be paid back now?"

However, the Mengkibol state assemblyperson added that if DAP can survive this round, it will progress in a more steady manner.

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