

DAP to hold fresh party polls tomorrow

MalaysiaKini.com

Sept 28, 2013

By Koh Jun Lin

DAP delegates will be voting at the party polls again tomorrow as they did eight months ago at the December 2012 National Congress, choosing from the same list of candidates vying for the powerful 20-seat Central Executive Committee (CEC).

This is to comply with a directive from the Registrar of Societies (ROS) and hopefully lay to rest the long-running dispute between the two bodies.

Even today, Utusan Malaysia carried the full statement from ROS director-general Abdul Rahman Othman stressing that DAP should give a 10-week notice for tomorrow's special congress in accordance to its party constitution.

NONEDAP national legal bureau chairperson Gobind Singh Deo (left) replied that the 10-week notice period only applies to the national congress, whereas a special congress only requires a seven-day notice.

"I call upon Abdul Rahman to stop confusing the public. He may be confused himself, but that is beyond our control.

"He cannot and must not make statements which are incorrect and squarely against our party constitution and say that we need to comply," he said in a statement today.

The ROS had ordered the re-election following, among others, allegations of ballot manipulation and failure to provide sufficient notice ahead of last year's congress - allegations that the party vehemently denied.

DAP also decried that the ROS has never provided legal justification for ordering the re-election, or reasons why the regulator is dissatisfied with its rebuttal to the allegations.

Nevertheless, the DAP publicity chief Tony Pua had said that the party would hold the election "under protest" to avoid "arbitrary deregistration" as a political party.

The re-election will be held at One World Hotel in Bandar Utama, where 2,576 eligible delegates will be choosing from 68 candidates contesting for 20 positions. This includes delegates who have been sacked or have resigned from the party since the last Congress.

Spotlight on Zairil

However, five of the candidates - Choong Siew Onn, Er Teck Hwa, Jaya Balan Valliappan, Teo Kok Seong and Violet Yong - have already dropped out of the race before last year's congress.

Meanwhile, the election's returning officer Ong Kian Ming announced today that another 12 candidates have withdrawn from tomorrow's polls.

These are V Ganabatirau, Jagdeep Singh Deo, Kamache Doray Rajoo, Khoo Poay Tiong, M Manogaran, Ng Chin Tsai, Ng Wei Aik, Sanisvara Nethaji Rayer Rajaji, Siow Kim Leong, Soh Boon Hong, Tan Lee Koon and Roseli Abdul Gani.

In addition, candidates John Fernandez and Hiew King Cheu have left the party altogether. The withdrawal of the 14 additional candidates since last year's Congress are not expected to have a significant impact tomorrow.

NONE Instead, the spotlight will be on Bukit Bendera MP Zairil Khir Johari (right) - the sole elected Malay member of the CEC who barely made the cut with 803 votes.

Landing in the Top 20 again would help DAP shake off its image as an anti-Malay party, but if Zairil fails, it would only vindicate its critics.

Another candidate to watch is Perak DAP chief Ngeh Koo Ham, who clinched the 19th position with just 21 more votes than Zairil.

Factional struggles and unhappiness over candidate selection in the 13th general election may play a role in the party polls. If so, this may see Ngeh nudged off the Top 20 list.

However, the answer will only be known after 7.30pm tomorrow when the results are announced.

The new CEC will then immediately hold its first meeting where its 20 members will elect the party's office bearers from among themselves.

