

Post-polls, an air of vindication in DAP

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ANALYSIS As DAP retained the exact 20-member central executive committee (CEC) line-up from the last election, it was apparent that delegates were determined to send a signal to the Registrar of Societies (ROS) that had created a host of problems for the party.

There was a sense of vindication among DAP delegates after the election results were announced this evening - that there was absolutely no manipulation of its CEC election held last December.

"Basically, it is a slap in the face of the ROS," a delegate from Selangor told Malaysiakini.

The drama over the CEC election began in January after DAP admitted that there was a tabulation error resulting in Zairil Khir Johari being wrongfully excluded from the CEC.

After the results were rectified, there were claims that the results were intentionally manipulated in order to include a token Malay into the Chinese-dominated CEC.

The fallout from the botch up resulted in ROS initiating an investigation against the party that dragged on until the general election, raising fears that DAP may be de-registered on the eve of the national polls.

The poor timing also saw slighted DAP members who were dropped as general election candidates - most notably, former Teratai state assemblyperson Jenice Lee - challenging the authority of the party leadership due to the disputed CEC election results.

But now that the CEC election result has affirmed the rectified results of last year's party polls, there are DAP members who feel that ROS had purposely put the party in a bind for political reasons.

"What are they going to do now? Are they going to say that both elections were null and void?" asked a delegate from Johor.

'Rewards' for some

Although the line-up still remains essentially the same, delegates appear to have "rewarded" some leaders for their recent achievements, most notably being Liew Chin Tong and Zairil.

Zairil climbed eight spots from the last party polls to place 12th after winning the Bukit Bendera parliamentary constituency with a convincing majority.

"ROS helped make Zairil more famous among the delegates," summed up one delegate from Johor.

While Zairil's convincing win is an endorsement of his role in the party, it also appeared to be an attempt to ensure that the party's most prominent Malay face would safely make into the CEC this time.

But if there was one shocker during this election was Liew's meteoric rise in popularity among the delegates.

Liew climbed 13 spots since the last polls with his votes topping that of DAP veterans Karpal Singh, Lim Kit Siang and Lim Guan Eng who usually leads the pack.

Among party delegates, there has been talk about Liew being an efficient strategist and a "giant killer" for unseating MCA strongman Hou Kok Chung, a deputy minister in the previous federal government, in Kluang.

Although not as famous as Karpal, Kit Siang and Guan Eng outside the party, Liew's popularity within bodes well for the party which has long been criticised for allowing "dinosaurs" to rule the party for too long.

Liew is only 36 years old, making him among the youngest CEC member.

Crack the whip, and votes dip

However, it was not all joy for everyone as DAP disciplinary board chairperson Tan Kok Wai who surprisingly fell 10 spots, placing 15th.

Tan's decline was likely due to his handling of disciplinary issues involving disgruntled DAP members which have not been smooth sailing as they relentlessly attacked the party.

When met, Tan conceded that this could have been a factor, but added another.

"By chance, I was also a member of the committee that selected candidates for the 13th general election. Some twenty incumbents were dropped," he said.

The fact that at least two such disgruntled members, namely Jenice Lee and David Dass who turned up at the re-election and created a scene, did not help the party stalwart.

In his post-election press conference, newly re-appointed DAP secretary-general Guan Eng brushed off his slight drop in votes and instead urged the ROS to stop hounding the party.

"I hope they will stop oppressing us," he said.

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