

## **DAP transforms travail into triumph**

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COMMENT DAP delivered a resounding rebuff to the nitpicking Registrar of Societies (ROS) by keeping intact the central executive committee (CEC) the party's delegates elected last December.

The ROS had behaved in an unwarrantedly bossy manner towards DAP, disdaining to justify his reasons for ordering a re-election of the CEC.

NONEBelated discovery of a vote tabulation error saw DAP make a slight change in January to the CEC line-up elected a month earlier.

The error could have been ignored but DAP chose candid disclosure to expedient concealment and thereby risked the fighting of last May's general election under a banner not its own.

In the event, that debility was barely averted but a curmudgeonly ROS continued to be a nuisance such that DAP then had to prefer discretion to defiance by holding a reelection of the CEC.

This second time round, the party's delegates, delivering an eloquent rebuke to the ROS, returned the same slate they elected last December.

Not only that, the electors decided to do one better: they showed their appreciation for the more inclusive among their leaders, such as Kluang MP Liew Chin Tong, by moving him up the popularity chain while relegating the exclusivist-minded down the ladder.

Subtle rectification

In sum, the party's delegates turned an unwarranted imposition by the ROS into a demonstration of its capability for grandly subtle rectification.

NONEThe party ought to be congratulated on its maturity in converting what was an irksome encore into an exercise in the best of democratic traditions, combining chastisement of the oppressive with promotion of the deserving better over their inferiors.

It's a pity that Dr Boo Cheng Hau, the party's leader in Johor, suffered alongside its

Perak chieftains, Ngeh Koo Ham and Nga Kor Ming, in the general relegation by the delegates of those state leaders whose department before the last general election was considered detrimental to the party.

The hardworking Boo, who had devoted many years to building the party at the grassroots level in Johor, was understandably wary of the effort by DAP central at inserting "outsiders" as candidates in winnable seats in the state.

He must have viewed that effort as an encroachment on local party rights by DAP central when it was more nearly a case of compelling national imperatives outweighing local ones.

He does not run Johor DAP as a closed shop as the Foochow cousins, Ngeh and Nga, do DAP Perak.

The debit for the latter was broadly felt by Pakatan Rakyat in Perak where even the popular Nizar Jamaluddin of PAS barely won the state ward of Changkat Jering, to which he moved, while his party suffered the loss of Pasir Panjang where the former Pakatan Menteri Besar had been elected in 2008.

Malay voter perception of the influence of the overbearing cousins on Nizar redounded to Pakatan's overall disadvantage at the polls and is said to have accounted for the coalition's failure to recover the state it lost by fraud to BN in February 2009, 11 months after a refreshingly dynamic tenure by the hitherto unknown Nizar.

In yesterday's CEC vote, DAP delegates appeared to have imbibed this lesson in Perak and displayed their dismay by relegating the sectarian Foochow cousins down the CEC pecking order.

Though not of the same strain, Boo suffered in consequence of DAP electors' dim view of exclusivist state barons.

By the same token, the electors gave a boost to Liew Chin Tong and Gobind Singh Deo, the more prominent among the party's younger set of leaders by dint of their greater engagement with national issues and spectrum of ideologies ranged on the side of the opposition in Malaysia.

Liew, in particular, possesses a higher sensitivity to this spectrum and willingness to engage with it creatively.

By putting him at the top of the CEC vote tally, the party's electors are perhaps

signaling that now as the second largest party in terms of seats in Parliament, DAP must be broadly inclusive in its agenda, not only in rhetoric but also in reality.

As for the ROS, he should emulate DAP delegates' width of vision and forsake his nitpicking ways.

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