

'DAP needs to rethink position on meritocracy'

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DAP needs to review its position on meritocracy in order to make inroads into semi-urban constituencies, said the party's parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang.

"Representing semi-urban constituencies also requires us to rethink our position on meritocracy.

"We are confronted with very serious and widespread poverty which requires us to complement meritocracy with solidarity, which is a social democratic value anyway.

"We must be able to articulate the aspirations of semi-urban constituencies so that we provide Malaysians a future that is beyond Umno-Barisan Nasional," he said.

Lim was speaking at the DAP semi-urban caucus meeting in Kluang today, which was organised by the DAP Policy Forum.

Previously, the party had long advocated for meritocracy - especially in business and in education - in order to boost competitiveness, and replace policies that are allegedly discriminatory or fosters nepotism and cronyism.

In his speech today, Lim also urged his party to reimagine a future for agriculture, fisheries and plantation industries with urgency, noting that these industries are dominant in semi-urban seats and is needed to help grow the party.

"It is also important to note that Umno survives on fanning anxieties and fears among Malays and bumiputra in the semi-urban constituencies.

"It is here that the DAP must represent hopes against fears, to offer new political and economic dreams for all and to reassure Malays and bumiputra voters that a new Malaysia is one that is only against the cronies and not the Malays and bumiputra," he said.

The Gelang Patah MP said the party's previous attempts to win over semi-urban constituencies were unsuccessful until the 2008 general election, and it was a new experience for the party compared to its urban strongholds.

Nevertheless, Pakatan Rakyat had many 'near-misses' in the 2013 general election in several semi-urban seats that would have otherwise made BN an opposition party, he said.

In order to wrest control of Putrajaya and assuming that the number of parliamentary constituencies remain the same, he said Pakatan Rakyat needs to win two more urban constituencies, 16 more semi-urban constituencies, and 10 more rural seats.

This constitutes 90 percent of urban seats, 70 percent of semi-urban seats, and 20 percent of rural seats.

“For the DAP, this means winning semi-urban seats such as Bentong, Cameron Highlands, Alor Gajah, Labis and Tanjong Piai in peninsular Malaysia, Bintulu in Sarawak and Sepanggar and Putatan in Sabah.

“The semi-urban constituencies hold the keys to unlocking the way to Putrajaya,” he told participants at the meeting.

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