

**DAP eyes 54 Parliamentary seats**  
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The DAP state committees have identified 54 Parliamentary and 115 state seats which it can contest in the forthcoming general election.

"If possible, we want to adopt the suggestions by the state committees. But we also wish to consult Parti Keadilan Rakyat to ensure a straight fight with Barisan Nasional," said DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng today.

He was speaking to reporters at the sidelines of the party's special congress in Kuala Lumpur. Lim announced the number of eyed seats in his opening speech.

In the 2004 general elections, DAP bagged 12 out of 44 Parliamentary seats and 15 out of 104 state seats contested. The party won another six state seats during the Sarawak state elections last year.

The party presently however only holds 20 state seats after its Bahau assemblyperson Lim Fui Ming defected to MCA in December. Malaysia has 222 Parliamentary seats and 576 state seats.

The general election, legally not due until April 2009, is expected to be held between now and next April.

When asked if the party has identified 'front-line' states like PAS and PKR, Lim said the party would focus on Sabah, Sarawak, Penang, Perak, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan.

"It looks 'OK' in Johor also, especially after the floods. But Johor is [a BN stronghold] and we won't dare to consider it as a 'front-line' state," quipped Lim.

He later skirted a question on where he would contest in the upcoming general election.

"But definitely I will contest," said Lim, 47, a former Kota Melaka Parliamentarian until his conviction in 1997 for sedition. He is speculated to contest in either Penang or Selangor.

### **Constitutional amendments passed**

DAP had made various bids to wrest Penang from the Gerakan-led BN state government with varying success. But in 2004, the party intensified efforts in Perak, where it had fared the best.

At the special congress today, party delegates voted 222 to six in favour of amendments to the party constitution that would allow the party's decision making body – the central executive committee – to defer party polls for up to 12 months.

Lim explained that the party predicted that the general election would be called before April next year and that conducting party polls, which were initially due in September this year, would hamper the party's preparation for the general polls.

He said it was not possible to hold the party polls sooner due to technicalities. He also expressed confidence that the Registrar of Societies would approve the amendments as other

BN component parties had either done so or were in the process of doing so.

Party critics have claimed that Lim, who was considered to have fared below expectations in the last triennial party polls, sought the amendments as a 'face-saving' tactic in case he did not perform better in the party polls due this year.

Lim declined to respond to the allegations adding that the matter would be debated during the special congress.

### **Anwar: Things look good**

With a specific reference to opposition figure and former deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim, Lim's speech today also touched on 'six key principles for co-operation' among opposition parties and other groups. They were:

- Acceptance of Bangsa Malaysia
- Respecting Bahasa Malaysia as the official language and fair treatment of mother tongue education
- Acceptance of the secular Federal Constitution
- Acceptance of a needs-based wealth distribution policy
- Acceptance of meritocracy in education; and
- Ensuring sustainable development

Anwar, who is now PKR advisor, was a guest speaker during the closed-door congress.

Speaking to reporters later, he said PKR would focus on forging closer ties with DAP while also trying to help the latter resolve issues with hardline Islamist party PAS.

"We are forging closer collaboration with PAS in making sure that issues agreed upon in the past should not encroach on rights of others or cause anxiety to the rest. This includes issues on the Islamic state.

"Things are looking positive," added Anwar, who like DAP, had also named Sabah, Selangor, Perak and Penang as PKR's 'front-line' states

DAP had previously severed links with PAS over the latter's insistence in forming a theocratic state.

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