

**Shadow cabinet: Possible DAP ministers**  
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analysis  
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So far, we have discussed the necessity of Pakatan Rakyat setting up a shadow cabinet sooner rather than later, as well as the possible structure it could take. Next up, we will look at the individual Pakatan parties and identify prospective cabinet ministers should Pakatan come to power.

percentage of seats in parliament 300408With 30 or so cabinet positions to distribute, we estimate that PKR, with 31 MPs, can justifiably claim between 10 to 12 cabinet positions. DAP, with 28 MPs, may get between six to eight cabinet posts and PAS, with 23 MPs, may get between five to seven.

The Sabah and Sarawak parties, whose support is needed for Pakatan to form the next government, may have between seven to nine cabinet positions.

Although it's purely an educated guess that we are making here, there are a few things that we can confidently predict. For one thing, PKR, with only 31 MPs, cannot dominate the cabinet in the same way as Umno, with its 79 MPs, does. Currently, Umno holds 23 out of 32 ministerial positions. PKR, even if it is the linchpin of a Pakatan government, can probably only realistically lay claim to about half of that number.

We believe that one of the two finance ministers would likely to be given to a non-Malay MP. It's possible that another high-profile ministry such as the Ministry of Trade and Industry (Miti), could also go to a non-Malay MP. While other key ministries such as defence, foreign affairs, home affairs and education will likely stay in Malay hands, with most going to PKR, at least one of these portfolios would probably be allocated to PAS and perhaps to a bumiputera party from East Malaysia.

bersih rally outside parliament 111207 dap press conferenceNow, on to who will likely get which post – we start with DAP because it has the most number of senior MPs. This situation, ironically, makes the internal bargaining process within the DAP the most challenging among the three parties in Pakatan. Read on and you'll understand why.

Of the 28 DAP MPs currently in Parliament, 11 of them are incumbents – Chong Eng (Bukit Mertajam), Chow Kon Yeow (Tanjong), Karpal Singh (Bukit Gelugor), Lim Kit Siang (Ipoh Timur), M Kulasegaran (Ipoh Barat), Fong Po Kuan (Batu Gajah), Tan Seng Giaw (Kepong), Fong Kui Lun (Bukit Bintang), Teresa Kok (Seputeh), Tan Kok Wai (Cheras) and Chong Chieng Jen (Bandar Kuching).

It's worth mentioning that Lim Guan Eng (Bagan) is not an incumbent but was formerly an MP for Kota Melaka from 1986 to 1995. Three MPs are also incumbent state assemblymen: Ngeh Koo Ham (Beruas), Nga Kor Ming (Taiping) and Anthony Loke (Rasah).

Incumbency matters because these leaders, by virtue of their seniority, will have the highest claims on cabinet positions. Party seniority in the DAP is inextricably linked to the number of terms an MP has served. By this measure, Lim Kit Siang, Karpal Singh and Tan Seng Giaw should have the best claim to high-profile cabinet positions.

Kit Siang either in Finance or Miti

In yesterday's article, we speculated that Lim Kit Siang might be named as one of the two deputy prime ministers. It is also likely that he will take the most senior cabinet position allocated to the DAP, probably minister for the Finance Ministry or Miti.

temerloh hospital 110505 tan seng giawTan Seng Giaw (right) could possibly be made health minister because he's a doctor by profession. Karpal Singh's declining health and his still active legal practice might prevent him from taking up a cabinet position. He might just allow M Kulasegaran, two-term MP for Ipoh Timur, to be the senior Indian cabinet minister from the DAP.

One complication for DAP is that many of their key MPs also hold important positions in the state governments of Penang, Selangor and Perak. Lim Guan Eng is the chief minister of Penang. P Ramasamy (Batu Kawan) is one of the two deputy chief ministers there and Chow Kon Yeow is in the Penang state exco (executive council).

Meanwhile, Ngeh Koo Ham and Nga Kor Ming are members of the Perak state exco and Teresa Kok is the senior exco member in Selangor (a post that has been described as de facto deputy menteri besar).

While it is impossible, both for political and practical reasons, for politicians to hold positions in both a state and federal cabinet, it is understandable that they would want to upgrade themselves from a state exco position to a federal ministerial position. It would, however, be a big mistake for DAP allow this as there is bound to be backlash from the public.

The presence of incumbents makes it hard for DAP to nominate less-experienced but better-qualified MPs over more-experienced but perhaps less-qualified MPs for cabinet positions.

More than a handful of DAP MPs have shown a marked reluctance to deal with national issues, preferring instead to focus on servicing the grassroots in their constituencies. As such, it is somewhat difficult to imagine some of these MPs as cabinet ministers.

For example, Tan Kok Wai, a very senior DAP MP (since 1986) is well-liked in his constituency but is primarily known as a grassroots MP. Fong Kui Lun, a successful businessman and three-term MP, can also be placed in that category. Fong Po Kuan, an enormously popular three-term MP, has not been known to speak up on national issues beyond those concerning youths and women's rights.

The young and the capable

In contrast, the DAP has a few newer MPs who are well-known nationally and who are eminently qualified to take on cabinet positions. Jeff Ooi, Malaysia's uber-blogger, MP for Jelutong and chief of staff to Penang CM Lim Guan Eng, would be a good candidate for the Ministry of Energy, Water and Communications for obvious reasons.

forum free nat scah 200707 tony puaTony Pua (left), with his Oxford education, business background and deep interest in education issues, is flexible enough to take on one of many cabinet portfolios although we can safely say that he is too far too junior to lay any claim to the Education Ministry.

Anthony Loke (Rasah), another young and capable DAP leader, who was a one-man opposition in the Negri Sembilan state assembly in the period leading up to the 2008 general election, also has cabinet minister qualities. Karpal's son, Gobind Singh Deo (Puchong), an accomplished lawyer with the right education credentials, and political analyst Liew Chin Tong (Bukit Bendera), are also cabinet minister material.

In nominating cabinet ministers, DAP also would need to take into account regional and gender factors. It is likely that given the scarcity of women MPs in Pakatan, Chong Eng, the most senior female DAP leader, might be given cabinet consideration. Chong Chieng Jen, a two-term MP from Sarawak, might also be given due consideration to give East Malaysia some representation.

To recap, here's our take on prospective DAP cabinet ministers in a Pakatan government. Amongst the experienced ones: Lim Kit Siang, Tan Seng Giaw and Kulasegaran are shoo-ins. Next in line are Tan Kok Wai, Chong Eng and Chong Chieng Jen. Fong Po Kuan and Fong Kui Lun have the seniority but perhaps not the capacity.

As for the younger ones, Anthony Loke is probably the strongest candidate because of his seniority within the party. Jeff Ooi, though new to the party, has a lot of worldly experience, and is probably the best bet amongst the first-time DAP MPs. Tony Pua, Gobind Singh Deo and Liew Chin Tong are all dark horses.

Tomorrow, we look at PKR and the day after, PAS.

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