

**Success aside, DAP needs to fortify itself**  
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**Stanley Koh**

DAP like its arch rival MCA, is characterised by controversial internal dissensions and power struggles.  
MCPX

Will its recent success in the general election be marred by future internal conflicts? What is the tolerance level of the leadership towards dissenting views and differences of opinion?

Will its central leadership hold a fair and just "meritocracy" system in political promotion of its leaders and not just favour those who had been jailed or prosecuted? Will the injection of a new generation of leaders be smooth and accepted by the "old guards?"

dap penang grand rally 070308 whistleDespite repeated failures of the Tanjung 1, 2 and 3 missions in 1986, 1990 and 1995 respectively, in March 2008, Penang voters responded overwhelmingly that DAP was ready to govern the state.

Is it time for DAP to prove MCA wrong for accusing the former of being a "Nato" party - "No Action, Talk Only"

Today, critics may even agree that the social democratic party is finally entering a "golden age" of stability and maturity. Nothing succeeds more than success, as the saying goes. But success has its problems too.

Any electoral success is no justification for everlasting jubilation. Some argue in support of the "pendulum theory" as proven in our electoral history, the swing "for" and "against" between the opposition and the might of the Barisan Nasional (BN) ruling coalition.

Having swept 28 parliamentary and 79 state seats from the BN in the March 8 polls was indeed an unprecedented success for DAP in comparison to its previous electoral performance from 1969 to 2004.

In its first electoral performance in 1969, DAP won only 13 parliamentary and 31 state seats. One reason for its rapid electoral advance is because Malaysians want a two-party system in the country.

DAP leaders should know by now that the voting support its party obtained could be attributed to many "other" reasons and not because of its popularity among voters.

### **Overcome the weaknesses**

It is therefore timely for the DAP 15th congress to dwell on how to strengthen the party in view of the "success story" - on building the party's institutional strength and overcoming any weaknesses. MCA has more than 4,000 branches compared to DAP's 300 to 400 active branches.

dap penang mega rally 060308 crowd5One of the many weaknesses which needs to be addressed is how to attract more credible Malay leaders.

DAP can no longer depend solely on the "non-party affiliated" voting support-base during general elections. It would make the party vulnerable to the roller coaster effect.

Instead, it would be wiser to build a "strong membership base" by increasing membership and expanding the network number of branches.

In the past, opposition parties had faced significant obstacles in competing with the long-entrenched ruling coalition. The Pakatan Rakyat coalition must prove its resilience to give Malaysians a choice of a two-party system in the country.

DAP's contributory role as one of the three major opposition parties in Peninsular Malaysia, the others being PKR and PAS, is crucial towards that aim.

For this matter, Malaysians may not be that forgiving towards DAP if the party fails to live up to their expectations toward building a two-party system with its coalition partners.

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