

Next stop ... Putrajaya
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The DAP 15th congress is an event of many firsts. Most noticeably, it is the first time the event was held in a posh hotel and the proceedings fully opened to media scrutiny.
MCPX

DAP's most recognisable face Lim Kit Siang also bagged himself a first by topping the list of those elected into the central executive committee (CEC).

dap 14th congress 230808 outgoing cecMost importantly, this is the first time that party delegates are meeting, not as an opposition party, but as rulers of one-state and joint rulers of two others.

Other than the customary Barisan Nasional bashing and discussions about how to improve the party, delegates also focused on good governance and ironing out relations with Pakatan Rakyat coalition partners.

"We use to call ourselves the best opposition party, now the delegates want to find ways of being the best government," remarked Selangor exco member Ean Yong Hian Wah.

dap 14th congress 230808 talking to reportersParty secretary-general Lim Guan Eng, fresh from leading the small opposition party to a position of power, thundered on his vision for equality and social justice in his policy speech.

Moreover, Lim reminded delegates that federal power was within Pakatan's reach and the road to Putrajaya was called C.A.T. (competency, accountability and transparency), which was also the theme for the congress this year.

"Today, we are at the threshold of taking the party to the next level, the next 40 years. But the next few years is the most crucial in determining whether we can be a truly national party and partner in the federal government," he said.

Pakatan a hot topic

Lim stressed that DAP has to be a partner in a coalition in order to achieve its federal ambitions and the delegates honed in on their partners in Pakatan.

The delegates were tactful on their message to Pakatan partners but made clear that the party should not waver from its secular position and commitment towards pluralism.

dap 14th congress 230808 crowd"Non-Malays voted for PAS not because they love that party, but because they hated Barisan (Nasional)," declared delegate Michael Soon.

Ideological problems aside, several delegates also wanted Pakatan's mechanism to be formalised as soon as possible.

A delegate from Sarawak urged the CEC to work out ways to avoid three-corner electoral fights with Pakatan partners in view of the forthcoming Sarawak state elections.

The delegate added that in seats where DAP and PKR were involved in multi-cornered fights, DAP could have won if PKR did not split the opposition vote.

Kit Siang, who has loss count of the number of times he has attended such meetings and puts it at about 40, said that party grassroots want to see Pakatan's success and DAP playing an integral role in the fledgling coalition.

"They have had a glimpse of what is possible and that being part of the federal government is no longer impossible," he said.

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