

# DAP amends constitution

NEW PROVISION ALLOWS  
PARTY POLLS TO BE PUT OFF  
FOR UP TO 12 MONTHS

by **Pauline Puah**  
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

The Sun - 7/5/2007

**KUALA LUMPUR:** It looks like the DAP will have to eat its words. The opposition party yesterday amended its constitution to put off party polls should there be a general election in the offing, a move taken by Umno in 1999 which the DAP had criticised as undemocratic back then.

Other Barisan Nasional parties like the MCA and Gerakan have followed suit and introduced similar provisions.

At the DAP special congress here yesterday, there was overwhelming support from the delegates for its constitution to be amended to allow the party polls to be postponed for up to 12 months if they were to fall on a date within two years of the date Parliament is dissolved.

The amendment allows its central executive committee (CEC) to postpone the party congress and conference, and state ordinary and annual conventions.

Of the 228 delegates present – out of the 602 eligible to attend the special congress – 222 supported the amendment and six opposed it.

The party leadership explained that the amendment was meant to prepare the DAP for the general election, speculated to be held by the end of this year or early next year.

The last party elections were in September 2004 and the DAP is due to hold the next triennial party elections between September and year-end.

The amendment was made amid internal criticism that it was a move by DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng to consolidate his power.

Another criticism levelled against the party is that it should not follow in the steps of its political rivals, Umno, MCA and Gerakan, which had made provisions in their party constitutions to defer party elections – especially given that the DAP had once criticised such a move as undemocratic because it allows the leadership to remain in power beyond the elected period.

Asked about this at a press conference held before a closed-door debate on the amendment, Lim said: "It's a matter to be discussed later. After all, it's for the members to decide (whether to accept the amendment)."

Pressed further, he said members who were unhappy with the amendment should voice their dissatisfaction through internal channels and not "tarnish the party's image from outside".

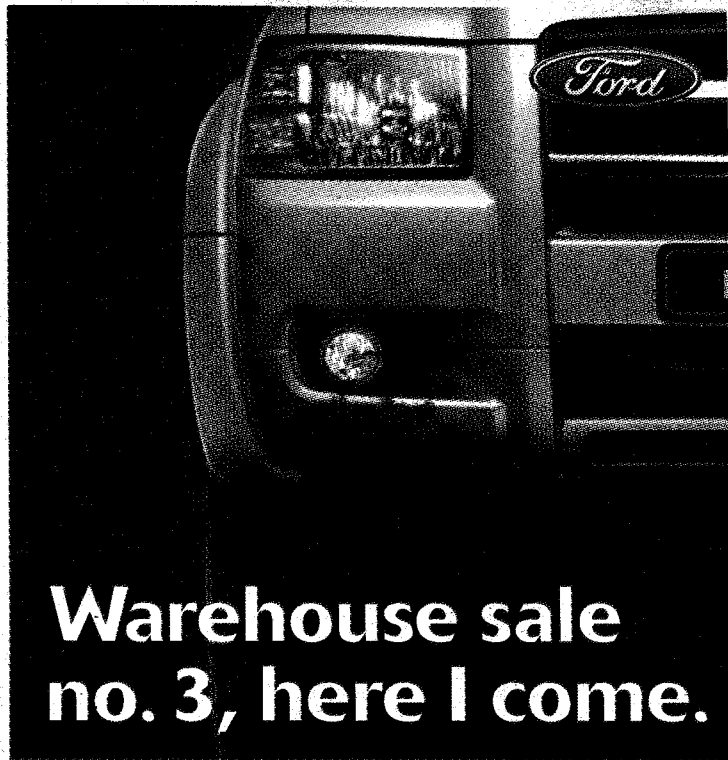
"The chances of our party elections hitting on the next general election is very high. Logistics- and resources-wise, we should concentrate on the general election," he said.

In his opening speech earlier, Lim told the delegates the CEC was concerned that party elections at both national and state levels may be severely disrupted if they coincided with the general election.

"Let me be frank by saying all state committees are still not in full election mode. Maybe partly, but not fully," he said.

He also announced the party will be contesting 54 parliamentary seats and 115 state seats nationwide (state seats not including Sarawak) in the next general election.

In the 2004 general election, DAP contested 44



Warehouse sale  
no. 3, here I come.

parliamentary and 104 state seats, winning 12 parliamentary and 15 state seats.

"In the coming general election, the DAP does not walk alone. Apart from Keadilan's Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, we are willing to cooperate with all organisations or political parties that share the common platform of respecting basic human rights," he said.