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Guan Eng sworn in as Penang CM

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PENANG: After 50 years of opposition politics, the Democratic Action Party (DAP) was rewarded yesterday when its secretary-general, Lim Guan Eng, was sworn in as the Penang chief minister.

Lim, who won in the Air Putih state and Bagan parliamentary seats, took his oath of office and oath of secrecy before Yang di-Pertua Negri Tun Abdul Rahman Abbas in Sri Mutiara at 10.05am.

Present were his wife Betty Chew, his opposition-icon father Kit Siang and wife Leong Yok Chee.

Displaying a high level of gentlemanly conduct was outgoing chief minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and his wife Puan Sri Chui Kah Peng, who witnessed the ceremony.

No Barisan Nasional assemblyman or MP was present. DAP, Parti Keadilan Rakyat (PKR) and PAS assemblymen turned up in full force.

On Saturday, DAP, PKR and

PAS ended the BN stranglehold of the state by sweeping 29 state seats. It was also a more than two-thirds majority win, sending the 11 BN-Umno assemblymen to the opposition bench in the state assembly for the next five years.

DAP won all 19 state seats it contested, leaving Gerakan, MCA and MIC seatless in the state assembly. PKR took nine and PAS one.

Guan Eng, 47, is no new face in politics. He was first elected as the Kota Melaka MP in 1986 and subsequently in 1990 and 1995.

He was also a former Internal Security Act (ISA) detainee for 18 months - one of the victims of Operation Lallang on Oct 27, 1987.

Guan Eng was also a victim of the Printing Presses and Publications Act when he was jailed 18 months under the Sedition Act and released in 1999. He had attempted to expose allegations of rape by a 14-year-old girl against a politician.

Lim was also jailed 18 months under the Sedition Act and the

Printing Presses and Publications Act and was released in 1999. For this, he was barred from standing for political office for five years and missed the action in 2004.

Kit Siang, who was also returned for a second term as Ipoh Timur MP, said: "I see this as the highest point of my 42 years of political work."

"It is also the fulfilment of my birthday wish," said Kit Siang who turned 67 on Feb 20.

Kit Siang said the electoral win was a success not only for DAP, but also for Penang and the country.

"Now is the time for us to work together with the BN here and at federal level to ensure good governance in the country," he said.

Asked to comment on the absence of all 11 newly-elected BN-Umno assemblymen at the swearing-in ceremony, PKR president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail said Guan Eng is a Malaysian and as a multi-racial country, he should be accepted as the chief minister.

"When Koh was sworn in as CM the previous terms, we accepted him and the Opposition did not boycott the swearing-in ceremony.

"The handing over of power proceeded smoothly and I commend Koh for setting a good example in ensuring such a smooth transition."

Asked whether she is contemplating stepping down as Permatang Pauh MP to make way for her husband Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, she said: "We will leave that decision to the voters. They voted for me and I have to let them decide for me."