

## **Mixed Reaction To DAP's "One Man One Seat" Announcement**

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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 12 (Bernama) -- DAP's announced intention to field one candidate for only one seat in the next general election in the peninsula draws one's attention immediately to those in the party now holding two seats.

At first glance, making the list are party secretary-general and Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng (who holds the Air Putih state seat and Bagan parliamentary seat); Penang Deputy Chief Minister II P. Ramasamy (Prai and Batu Kawan).

Penang DAP chief and state executive councillor Chow Kon Yeow (Padang Kota and Tanjung); Perak DAP chairman Datuk Ngeh Koo Ham (Sitiawan and Beruas); Perak DAP secretary Nga Kor Ming (Pantai Remis and Taiping).

Selangor state executive councillor Teresa Kok (Kinrara and Seputeh) and DAP Youth chief Anthony Loke (Lobak and Rasah).

In making the "one man-one seat" announcement, DAP chairman Karpal Singh said: "No double seats, unlike our time. We don't have enough candidates. Now, we are different. We have so many candidates and we must give the opportunity to others. I am serious in this matter. No double seats in DAP." He said Sabah and Sarawak will be exempted from the rule.

This statement caused many a wry smile among DAP grassroots members who said they would love to believe it if only there was a guarantee that no exception will be given to any leader or a selected few.

"Better ask Lim Guan Eng or Teresa Kok or Anthony Loke and others who are now both MP and state assemblymen," said a grassroots member who wished to remain anonymous.

Many among the DAP grassroots leaders believe that Karpal Singh's statement on "no double seats" except for the party's candidates in Sabah and Sarawak was meant to cool down issues as the DAP prepares to contest up to 35 parliamentary and dozens of state seats in the next general election.

The "one candidate one seat" issue and whether the DAP will field more Malay candidates in the next general election were not addressed at a recent party meeting in Shah Alam.

It has been reported that the DAP grassroots welcomed the exemption of the rule in Sabah and Sarawak because of a lack of credible candidates.

Some argue that Guan Eng should choose either a state or parliamentary seat. Since the general election in 1974, Penang chief ministers have only contested a state seat.

DAP vice-chairman Tan Kok Wai said fielding a candidate for both state and parliamentary

seats is not something new to the DAP or the ruling Barisan Nasional at the federal level.

He agreed that the DAP should seriously look into adopting the "one man one seat" rule, but only in certain constituencies. He said the rule should not apply to those holding the post of chief minister or menteri besar.

"Federal policy has an impact on a state. It is valid for leaders such as Guan Eng to contest both state and parliamentary seats because they can voice their views in parliament on policies being drafted at the national level," he told Bernama.

Tan explained that there were also other factors, such as the winnability of the candidates and, therefore, some of them may have to be fielded in both state and parliamentary seats.

"At the moment, no decision has been made. But certainly, the CEC (Central Executive Committee) has to decide on this before the party finalises its list of candidates. We will make the decision on this matter, certainly," he said.

However, some party insiders and political observers doubted that the party will ever adopt this "one man one seat" policy.

Most of the DAP leaders who hold both state and parliamentary seats declined, as interested parties, to comment on the matter when contacted by Bernama.

Political observers also believe that it is unlikely that the party will adopt the policy as it would be very risky politically.

"What they will do is perhaps try to put up more new faces for state and parliamentary seats but not ask those holding two seats to give up either one," one political observer said.

The only thing for sure at the moment is that the DAP is likely to put up more Malay candidates in the next general election, starting with Johor where the party is expected to field at least two Malay candidates.

Johor DAP chairman Dr Boo Cheng Hau confirmed that the state liaison committee has shortlisted two candidates, but declined to reveal their identity or the designated seats.

"One will contest in a parliamentary seat and the other, a state seat," he told Bernama.

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