

**Guan Eng: Ensure economic survival to win Putrajaya**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
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**By Melissa Chi**

SHAH ALAM, Jan 8 — DAP said today it aims to empower “the bottom 60 per cent” of Malaysians to ensure the country’s economic survival and solidarity.

Secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said in his address at the party’s conference today that “the next general election will be won and lost on which party can help the ordinary Malaysian.”

The Bagan MP said society must introduce economic solidarity “between the rich and the poor, between the urban and the rural, between the strong and the weak.”

“Ultimately, our aim must be to build a society that empowers its people, especially the bottom 60 per cent that really need it,” he said.

The Penang chief minister said economic solidarity can be created through implementing minimum wage, indexing minimum wage to the rate of inflation, fostering female participation in the work force, and reducing reliance on unskilled foreign labour.

Malaysians have been hit by surging inflation, which breached a two-year high of three per cent in March last year and continued to increase to 3.3 per cent in November.

He also said moving up the value chain in automation and technology, addressing corruption and leakages, observing the rule of law and upholding the rights of workers will contribute to the nation’s economic growth.

Lim said that in Malaysia, human talent was not valued and maximised, freedom of opportunity was not encouraged and a system was fostered that rewards know-who rather than know-how, and that merit and excellence became secondary to political connections.

“To realise the Malaysian dream of a developed nation, we must reject a ‘police state’ in favour of a policy state that focuses on improving the quality of life and reducing the cost of living of ordinary rakyat.

“Policies must be made to benefit the people and not to turn Malaysia into a police state,” he said.

Lim stressed that there is a need to address the weaknesses in the current system that is characterised by “corruption, crony capitalism and monopolies”.

He pointed out that Malaysia is the only rice-producing country that has privatised rice production and consolidated it into a monopoly under a “single crony capitalist company”.

“As a result, while Thailand and Indonesia are self-sufficient, we are dependent on imported rice for one third of our consumption. And because of the monopoly, we are paying more for imported rice than even Singapore,” he said.

He also criticised gas subsidies worth RM20 billion given to independent power producers and “lop-sided” highway toll concession agreements, which allow operators to increase prices despite “most of them already recouping vast profits far surpassing their investment outlays.”

“Four years ago, we were entrusted with an opportunity to prove that we can institute change.

“We have shown that with a clear agenda of economic solidarity and democracy, we can make a difference,” Lim vowed.

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