

Pakatan only needs 100 MPs to take power, says Guan Eng
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By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, March 22 — Lim Guan Eng believes that his Pakatan Rakyat (PR) pact needs to win just 100 federal seats in a general election that must be called by May next year to take over Putrajaya as “Umno will implode.”

The DAP secretary-general said PR “might not be able to make” up the 112 lawmakers for a majority in Parliament in its first federal polls as a formal coalition but the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) will collapse if the national opposition holds the majority in the peninsula.

“This election is harder. We might not be able to make it; we don’t need 112 seats to win power. Just 100.

“If we are the majority party in Peninsular Malaysia, do you think there will be any permanent loyalties from Barisan Nasional parties in Sabah and Sarawak?” the Penang chief minister asked in an interview with The Malaysian Insider this week.

He also predicted if “we get 90 seats in peninsula and 10 in Sabah and Sarawak,” then Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin will try to topple Umno president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

Lim (picture) pointed to how Najib himself took over both posts from Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi just a year after the latter led the ruling coalition to its worst electoral performance ever in March 2008.

“You think Muhyiddin won’t challenge Najib? It is a given. Then Umno will implode. It’s an entirely different ballgame,” the Bagan MP said.

Lim’s DAP had entered into an informal electoral pact with PKR and PAS in Election 2008 which saw them win a record 82 federal seats and deny BN its customary two-thirds majority in Parliament and five state governments.

The three opposition parties gained slightly more than half the popular vote in the peninsula, winning 80 out of 166 seats available.

The three parties soon formed Pakatan Rakyat with PKR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim insisting 30 MPs would defect to PR by September 16, 2008 and end the ruling parties’ 50-year rule since the country achieved independence.

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The opposition leader was believed to have targeted mainly Sabah and Sarawak lawmakers especially after the Sabah Progressive Party, which has two MPs, pulled out of BN.

However, the former deputy prime minister’s promise was never fulfilled and Najib’s

ascension also saw a revitalised BN reverse a string of by-election defeats.

But Najib replaced Abdullah ostensibly to improve on the 140 seats won four years ago and observers believe only a return to two-thirds majority can guarantee he remains in power.

In a boost to his confidence, a survey last month by independent pollsters Merdeka Center showed his approval rating has surged by 10 percentage points to 69 per cent on the back of an improving economy and the cash handout of RM500 to low-income earners under the Bantuan Rakyat 1 Malaysia.

Lim has also previously said the opposition must improve its tally in Sabah and Sarawak from two to at least one-third of the 56 federal seats on offer to give it any chance of taking power.

But he said in the interview "we have to be realistic — this will be tough but not impossible."

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