

Lim looking at bittersweet Sunday as DAP gears up for new party polls
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DAP's constitution states that the secretary-general can only hold office for up to three terms, or nine years.

Still, it will be a moment to savour, given what has happened.

Lim and his colleagues had to face one of their most trying challenges in recent times when his 48-year-old party was threatened with deregistration if it refused to hold this fresh election.

This came after complaints from several disgruntled members who claimed that the party polls last December was not properly conducted when it was announced that a tabulation glitch resulted in the wrong candidate being elected to the CEC.

Although the DAP itself reported the glitch and clarified that the correct winner had been identified, the RoS stepped in and directed the secular Chinese-dominated opposition party to hold new CEC elections.

Add that to the uncertainty of an injunction filed by a branch leader to stop the new polls from taking place, and party leaders, including Lim, could certainly be forgiven for having had sleepless nights.

The Kuala Lumpur High Court's decision to throw out the suit yesterday knocked down that particular hurdle.

Now, the fiery Lim is hoping the election will go on without a hitch but the load is still not off his shoulders yet.

He is worried that members will not come out to vote because they think the worst is over.

"Initially, when we were butting heads with the RoS, members were worried. The consequences were too heavy to bear," he said, referring to the threat of deregistration.

"When we decided to hold the fresh election, they were very happy and that was it. The sense of crisis was not as strong as before. They might think, ok la, safe already, no need to worry," he told The Malaysian Insider.

It is the fear that delegates are too comfortable that have the party leaders criss-crossing the country urging them to attend tomorrow's election at a hotel in Petaling Jaya.

A total of 2,576 delegates from 985 branches will elect 20 members into the CEC.

If everything goes as planned, it is expected most of the current crop of CEC leaders will be returned. They in turn will elect the party's office bearers.

If elected secretary-general again - and he most likely will be - Lim already has plans to take the party to the next level.

First among them is to look into succession planning to reflect the party's and the country's multi-racial composition.

Currently, only nine CEC members are non-Chinese, a fact that has often come under fire from its critics.

Lim is also looking to improve the party's performance in the 14th general election even as DAP has set its sights on making inroads in the Sarawak polls in 2015.

At the 13th general election, DAP won 38 parliamentary and 95 state seats, its best performance to date.

At the Sarawak state election in 2011, Pakatan Rakyat won 15 seats, with DAP taking the lion's share of 13 seats, all located in urban areas.

There are other things Lim has to look into as well. The Penang Chief Minister, who is into his second term of governance, also wants to usher in the politics of inclusiveness. That explains why he decided to allocate RM40,000 to opposition BN representatives for small development projects, despite initial unhappiness from his own party and Pakatan Rakyat partners PAS and PKR.

"I understand their concerns, I also struggled with it myself, but we need to lift politics to another level. We should not follow BN's rules of the game, we should be defining it," he said in explaining the rationale of his decision.

He has also set his sights on developing the state's "soft infrastructure" as he tries to steer it through the global economic uncertainties.

Among his targets is the setting up of more educational institutions and "digital intelligence" in the form of expanding its free wifi services, as well as capitalising on the state's vibrant arts and cultural scene that is a major tourism draw.

Lim is unperturbed over the softening of the economy, saying that Penang is well-governed and has put in place measures to cut down red tape and corruption through having open tender processes and public declaration of assets of its executive councillors.

He pointed out many huge international corporations have set up shared services operations in the state, so much so that it is running out of office space. – September 28, 2013.

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