

Change, and the Malays will come, say DAP leaders

Malaysian Insider

Jan 11, 2016

By Zulkifli Sulong

DAP must stop relying on its allies in Pakatan Harapan to win over Malay Muslim support, its leaders say, as the party battles bad perception among the community.

They said DAP, along with partners PKR and Parti Amanah Negara (Amanah), needed the support of half of the Malay community, representing 60% of the electorate, in order to take over Putrajaya.

The party must also create a new narrative of inclusive politics for all communities and allay Malay Muslim suspicions, if it truly wanted to be a mainstream party.

DAP political education director Liew Chin Tong said the party needed to directly address Malay Muslim fears and suspicions towards it, instead of relying on others to do so.

"DAP needs to directly engage Malays to create a new narrative so that the party can be accepted," the Kluang MP told The Malaysian Insider.

That new narrative would be about how all communities – Sarawakians, Sabahans, Indians, Chinese and Malays in the country – can benefit fairly from its economy.

"We need a big narrative to allay their fears and unite everyone under a national mission to defeat Umno, which is the source of all our current problems," said Liew.

On January 7, think tank Institut Darul Ehsan said anger towards DAP among Malay Muslims, especially in rural areas, was on the rise, thanks to Umno's consistent campaign to demonise the Chinese-dominated party.

The animosity intensified after the break-up of the Pakatan Rakyat coalition in June, when DAP parted ways with former ally PAS, the country's second largest party of Malay Muslims.

Other DAP leaders such as parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang have echoed Liew's views, saying the party should step up efforts to communicate to rural Malays.

Party secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said Malay sentiment towards the party was better in constituencies which they governed as well as in Penang, as they have seen the benefits of the party's non-racial policies.

The leaders also said that rural Malay sentiment was negative because much of the information in these areas came from the pro-Umno media.

Liew admitted that propaganda from Umno and PAS against DAP, which was tied to race and religion, had been effective.

"But times have changed and I am confident that if Pakatan Harapan can be the new iPhone of politics or the new politics by building a new market, new demands and new narrative, we can together face this propaganda," said Liew.

DAP organising secretary Anthony Loke said there was a constant debate in the party on how to increase Malay Muslim support.

"DAP has long realised the importance of Malay support," Loke said, adding that the party also realised how the Malay electorate was growing faster than the Chinese community.

"We have always faced attacks from Umno but now that PAS is also doing it, it is becoming more serious," said the Seremban MP.

Constitutional law expert Dr Aziz Bari said he had prepared a proposal to the party's leaders on how to win over Malay support.

He said DAP should tackle Malay sensitivities in order to gain their trust and become a mainstream party. – January 11, 2016.

Copyright © 2015 Edge Insider Sdn Bhd

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/change-and-the-malays-will-come-say-dap-leaders>