

18-POINT AGREEMENT MUST NOT BE COMPROMISED, SAYS GUAN ENG

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Lim (front row, third left) with state DAP leaders, founders and members holding up cards asking 'Where is the RM2.6 billion?' at the convention.

KUCHING: Sarawak is an indispensable partner of Malaysia and the 18-point agreement must not be compromised, said Penang Chief Minister cum national DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng.

“Sarawak is not one of the 14 states, but one of the three partners, together with Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah. The 18-point must not be touched but be respected.

“But has Sarawak been treated as one of the three partners? No. It is just one of the 14 states. Sarawak’s rights, especially those enshrined in the Federal Constitution, must not be compromised,” he said at the opening of the 17th DAP Sarawak State Ordinary Convention here yesterday.

Lim said Sarawak’s immigration right must be retained, but he queried why DAP Petaling Jaya Utara MP Tony Pua and Seputeh MP Teresa Kok had been banned from entering Sarawak.

“We respect the decision, yet we do not accept abuse of power,” he said, asking what offences Pua and Kok had committed to deserve the ban.

Lim then mocked Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Adenan Satem’s policy of shutting the door on peninsula-based political parties by saying: “Sarawak has contributed so much to the federal government, but what does it get in return?”

Noting that Adenan had steered clear of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak when the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) scandal was raised, he challenged state BN component

parties to contest in the coming state election under their respective party logo, instead of the BN ticket.

“If they want to show to the people that they do not support BN policies, they should use their own party logo and not the BN flag to stand in the coming state election.”

Lim pointed out that elections were never about electing one leader. It is about the policies drawn up by political parties to put the country in a better position.

Citing Sarawak’s recognition of Unified Examination Certificate (UEC) as an example, he wondered how the government could announce accepting UEC holders into Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) only to be refuted by the university’s vice chancellor later.

“How can a vice chancellor be bigger than a chief minister?”

He believed DAP Sarawak could deliver if the people put trust in them come the next state election.

“If you told me I would be a chief minister before 2008, I would not believe it. But I have been the chief minister of Penang for seven years now. The impossible happens.”

Met by reporters later, Lim felt Sarawak could not claim not to be affected by the 1MDB scandal. He even attributed the country’s current economic crisis and ringgit slump to the scandal.

“The Ringgit has dropped to 4.3 (against USD). Because of this scandal, they came up with GST (Goods and Services Tax). So, is GST not harmful to us? It is because of the failure of Putrajaya that the people of Sarawak are suffering because of GST, and how can you say the scandal does not impact Sarawak?”

“Where did the RM2.6 billion donation come from, and where did it go to? These are the questions Malaysians are asking. So are Sarawakians. Do not say what happens in Malaysia does not affect Sarawak because we are part of Malaysia, whether we like it or not.”

Asked whether the state DAP aimed to deny BN the two-thirds majority in the coming state election, Lim said: “We hope for the best.

“BN is not the solution, but part of the problem. If you continue to support BN, there will be no improvement.”

To a question, he said the DAP had no objection to having a Dayak chief minister in Sarawak, given that the Dayaks made up the largest community.

“We feel that there should not be a question of race. Dayaks are the largest community here and they should be able to exercise their rights. Of course, we have no objection.”

At the convention, DAP Sarawak also launched the Chinese version of their election campaign song titled 'Light'. A video was played after Lim delivered his opening remarks.

Speaker of the convention, Edwin Bosi, announced that the song would have its Bahasa Malaysia, English and Iban versions.

Ninety-four delegates from throughout the state attended the one-day convention, where an election of the state party's new line-up was also held.