

DON: S'WAK DAP UNLIKELY TO USE GUAN ENG

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Countdown to the polls: A worker preparing election campaign paraphernalia in Kuching.

PUTRAJAYA: Lim Guan Eng may prove to be “toxic” for DAP in the coming Sarawak election, with a political analyst predicting that the secretary-general will not be in the party’s campaign trail in light of the controversies surrounding him.

Dr Lee Kuok Tiung of Universiti Malaysia Sabah said issues concerning the Penang Chief Minister’s purchase of a RM2.8mil bungalow as well as the Taman Manggis land controversy had somewhat affected his standing.

“As a result, I don’t think Sarawak DAP will use Lim to help them campaign in the election. Whether he is guilty or innocent is a different matter but for now – it’s not so good for him to go around campaigning,” said Dr Lee, who participated in a round-table discussion on Sarawak election organised by the National Professors Council.

Lim is said to have bought his residence in Jalan Pinhorn, Penang, at below market value while Taman Manggis became controversial after his state government sold the plot that was earmarked for affordable housing to a private company.

Political analyst Associate Prof Dr Jeniri Amir said that Chief Minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem’s test is not in winning the election or being able to gain two-thirds majority but whether he is able to bring back the Chinese votes to Barisan Nasional.

He said that in the 2013 general election, Barisan only gained 37% of the Chinese votes, a drop of 12% from the votes obtained during the last state election in 2011.

“The question here is, will the Chief Minister be able to win the hearts of the Chinese voters and will there be a big swing from DAP to Barisan?” said Dr Jeniri of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, who predicts that there would be some increase in votes.

On the Opposition, Dr Jeniri said that the 2011 election was the best that DAP and PKR could achieve in Sarawak and believed that they would not be able to repeat the success.

“I don’t think that DAP will get to increase the 12 seats they won in the previous election. At its best, the number will remain status quo. Worse, they may lose four seats,” he said.

The council’s head of political, security and international affairs cluster Prof Datuk Seri Dr Mohamed Mustafa Ishak said Barisan has an advantage because development is still an important issue in Sarawak and Barisan could deliver.

“But the coalition must be mindful as there are still many issues that can affect the people’s support for them,” he said, adding that the candidates must reflect the people’s aspirations.

The Sarawak assembly will be dissolved on April 11 to pave way for the state’s 11th election.