

DPP urges KMT to play fair in Saturday's polls

Written by Taipei Times

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The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) said yesterday it is fully prepared for Saturday's legislative by-elections, urging the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) not to stoop to vote-buying but to run a clean and fair race.

Two of the three seats up for grabs this Saturday in Taoyuan, Taichung and Taitung counties were left vacant by former KMT legislators found guilty of vote-buying.

"We call on the KMT candidates to fight a dignified battle by breaking with the KMT's tradition of buying votes. We also urge prosecutors to monitor the races closely to prevent any chance of vote-buying," DPP spokeswoman Hsiao Bi-khim (蕭百愷) said.

The Taoyuan County Second District spot became vacant in October after the KMT's Liao Cheng-ching (廖正興) lost his seat following a conviction on vote-buying charges.

RIVAL

The KMT nominated former lawyer Chen Li-ling (陳立榮) as its candidate to face off against the DPP's Kuo Jung-chung (郭俊承), a former lawmaker.

The Taichung legislative by-election will fill the seat left vacant when former KMT legislator Chiang Lien-fu (張連福) lost his seat, also on vote-buying charges.

Taiping Mayor Yu Wen-chin (俞文彬) has been chosen to run against the DPP's Chien Chao-tung (錢朝東).

KMT Legislator Justin Huang (黃俊英) resigned in October to run in last month's Taitung County commissioner election, making him the seventh lawmaker in the current legislature to fail to complete his legislative term.

The KMT nominated Taitung County Commissioner Kuang Li-chen (康立群) to run in the county's by-election for his spot. That prompted claims by the DPP that the nomination was a trade-off for Kuang agreeing not to seek re-election as county commissioner.

Kuang's DPP rival is Lai Kun-cheng (賴坤成).

IN PERSPECTIVE

Hsiao said given that none of the three locations had ever elected a DPP legislator, if the DPP can win even one of the seats it will indicate that the party has made a comeback.

If the DPP wins just one seat, it will put the number of DPP lawmakers at 28 — one seat short of the over one-quarter threshold required to launch a presidential recall motion.

The DPP's morale has improved following the party's performance in last month's county

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commissioner and mayoral elections, where it nabbed Yilan County, a key battleground viewed by both camps as a gauge of popularity nationwide.

Another three legislative by-elections are scheduled for Feb. 27 for Hualien County, Taoyuan County's Third District and Hsinchu County.

Ahead of the polls, DPP Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) has been zigzagging the country along with other DPP heavyweights since last week to encourage voters to support the pan-green camp.

On the other hand, Tsai's pan-blue counterpart, President and KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九), has stayed relatively quiet.

After the KMT failed to win big last month, some political commentators said Ma had lost his "Midas touch" and was bad news for candidates.

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