

18 JUL 1999
MCA-Assembly (Wrap-up)
UPHILL TASK AWAITS MCA

KUALA LUMPUR, July 18 (Bernama) -- Shouts of "Hidup Barisan" and "Let's Bury Them" reverberated the Wisma MCA here over the weekned, sending a loud and clear message to the opposition that the MCA is ready to face them in the coming general election.

Now that the party elections are over, the MCA is in a stronger position than ever to face the opposition especially the DAP.

"The stage is now set," declared MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, triggering thunderous applause from over 2,000 delegates at the party's 46th general assembly today.

In his winding-up speech at the end of the two-day assembly, Dr Ling reminded party members that the DAP was their "main opposition".

A cheerful Dr Ling later told reporters: "Now all the guns must be facing upwards, not facing inwards."

And indeed the delegates turned their artilleries at the opposition during the debate, firing their first salvo against DAP for misleading the Chinese community.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad set the tone by asking the Chinese community to ensure a two-third majority victory for the BN in the coming general election when he opened the assembly yesterday.

And today, the delegates vowed to get party members to pool their resources to do just that.

The delegates spoke in Cantonese and Mandarin but occasionally interspersed with Malay to get the message across to the Opposition parties through the mainstream media.

They took turns to hit out at the so-called Islamic party for trying to woo the Chinese into believing that their rights would be protected if PAS comes to power.

They also lambasted PAS leaders for proposing to take Perlis out of Malaysia if they come to power in that state.

Parti Keadilan Nasional (Keadilan) was also not spared and so was PRM.

The DAP, PAS, Keadilan and PRM have formed a pact in a bid to oust the BN in the next general election.

While the assembly went on smoothly, there was some tense moments.

Even before the delegates cast their ballots at the party polls yesterday, rumours had it that one of the "president's men", incumbent MCA vice-president Datuk Chua Jui Meng would not retain his post.

But in the final count, Chua took the second spot in the five-cornered fight for the four vice-presidents post.

The casualty was incumbent vice-president and party veteran Datuk Yap Pian Hon who lost to Datuk Chan Kong Choy. Two other incumbent vice-presidents -- Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn and Datuk Ong Ka Ting -- retained their post.

With a new team behind him, the burden is now on Dr Ling to deliver the Chinese votes to the BN.

-- BERNAMA

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