

28 JUN 2002
Ah Lek-Resign
AH LEK WILLING TO STEP DOWN

KUALA LUMPUR, June 28 (Bernama) -- MCA deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek, taking the cue from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said today he was willing to resign from all party posts provided the MCA leadership drew up a comprehensive leadership succession plan.

"I would give way, give up my positions in MCA if there was a proper succession plan by the leadership. This is for the best interest of the party as only then young leaders would gain the experience to be good leaders in the future," he said.

He said while Dr Mahathir had proposed an acceptable succession plan in Umno and the government, MCA needs to come out with a plan to ensure a smooth leadership transition in future.

"MCA has a good breed of second echelon leaders to take over from the existing leaders. If I were the MCA president, I would have gone much earlier to allow young leaders to take over as it is for the good of the party," he told reporters after opening the 39th MCA Youth Assembly at Wisma MCA here.

Lim said he was willing to vacate his party position but the decision by other senior leaders should also be magnanimous as the MCA belongs to over one million members and not to one or two party leaders.

Asked who would be the right candidate or candidates to take over the present leadership, Lim said all Central Committee (CC) members were eligible to fill in the positions if they were vacated.

"All CC members are eligible to take over the positions as they are elected by the delegates. We as leaders must be bold enough to leave positions for the good of the party and the community," he said.

Lim said he had served the party and the people for over 25 years and the period was long enough for any leader to stay in power.

Asked if MCA, the second biggest component in the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN), would come up with a succession plan, he said it was not a matter of coming up with a plan but it was about training young politicians to face the political challenges of the future.

"We need to groom young leaders to prevent a vacuum when the old leaders bow out. The right people must be picked," he said.

Lim also said BN component party leaders should follow the footsteps of Dr Mahathir as the Prime Minister had stated his intention to quit from all government and party posts when he was at the pinnacle of his political career.

Like the PM, who is at his peak, had decided to go and pass the baton to DPM (Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi). This is a fine example for all BN component parties to emulate.

"This is healthy as it would not result in jockeying for positions later. We should give a thought to this example for the interests of the party. We should do it," he said.

Without naming any MCA leader in particular, Lim said the party had leaders who were capable of taking over the leadership should "something happen to us."

Asked if the party would come out with a succession plan, he said: "It's up to the president. If I'm the president, then I would but unfortunately I'm not (the president)."

-- BERNAMA
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