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Lim-challenge

LIM TO CHALLENGE DR LING IF HE'S STILL AROUND IN 2005

KUANTAN, Jan 6 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Lim Ah Lek said he will challenge Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik for the presidency if the latter is still around in 2005.

"In 2005, if he is still around and I am still around, and if no one challenges him, then I will challenge him," he told reporters after attending the 45th anniversary dinner of the Air Putih MCA here last night.

Lim, who is MCA deputy president said he did not challenge the MCA president in the last election because of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's peace plan, which imposes elections without contest.

Asked whether he is now ready to take the helm of the party, he said that decision would be up to the party and not for him to say.

Lim also said he was prepared to contest in the next general election if it helped to draw support of the Chinese voters to the MCA and other component parties of the Barisan Nasional (BN).

Before the 1999 general election, Lim then Human Resources Minister announced that he would not be contesting, preferring instead to lead a simpler life and spend more time with his family. However, he did not relinquish his position as the party's deputy president.

"And if I were to return and in the process could garner support not only for myself but also for MCA and other BN component parties, then I will not hesitate to do so," he said.

Lim said he would not run away from his obligations if requested by Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yakob, who is also the state BN chairman, to contest in the next election.

But, he said at the national level, it would be up to the Prime Minister as national BN chairman.

-- BERNAMA

HIS ABG