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It's a relief to step down, says Ah Lek

DATUK Seri Lim Ah Lek said he felt relieved at finally being able to step down as MCA deputy president but stressed it was important for the party to unite for the general election.

"My decision is final and I did it without any hesitation. We must be prepared to sacrifice for the party, Barisan Nasional and the people," Lim, the former Human Resources Minister said after leaving the central committee meeting half-way.

Lim also thanked Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his advice and guidance. He pledged to help BN in the next general election, but said he would not contest.

"I also want to apologise to my supporters who wanted to come in droves asking me to reconsider. I told them not to because I do not want to be accused of staging a sandiwara," he said, in an apparent reference to the continuous stream of supporters who have in the past few days gone to Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik asking him not to leave.

Asked to comment on his successors, Lim was evasive. "I went into the central committee meeting this morning wearing the second-largest hat in the party and left wearing a hat worn by some one million members. I should not comment on such things. Let the committee decide."