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Kit Siang: Issues, not me, important

PENANG, Sat. - DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang today refused to comment on whether he will contest the next general election, saying what is more important are the issues being championed by the party.

Telling reporters to check with party secretary-general Kerk Kim Hock on whether he (Lim) would contest, Lim said: "I am not important. What is important is the country and we want to see Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi take over as the fifth Prime Minister in October with full powers and not taking the burden and baggage from Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's Cabinet."

Lim said this at the State DAP Chinese New Year open house at the Gan Association in Jalan Perak. Present were deputy secretary-general Chong Eng and Penang chairman Chow Kon Yeow.

Earlier, Lim said the parliamentary sitting next month should clarify Article 43 of the Federal Constitution, by establishing the constitutional practice that when the prime minister resigns or dies, the entire Cabinet resigns.

Referring to the New Straits Times Benchmark column last Thursday by former Federal Court judge Tan Sri Harun Hashim entitled "When PM resigns, entire Cabinet should quit", Lim said: "The Dewan Rakyat is the proper venue and occasion to clarify these constitutional questions - whether by way of a constitutional amendment or by a ministerial statement after full consultation with the Attorney-General as well as constitutional experts and jurists."