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Lim ready to take on Ling (HL)

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KUANTAN, Mon. - MCA deputy president Datuk Seri Lim Ah Lek said he will challenge party president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik for the top post in the next party election in 2005.

However, Lim said he would only challenge Dr Ling if there were no other challengers.

"If Dr Ling is still the MCA president in 2005, I am still around and there are no other challengers for the president's post, I will challenge him," he said after attending the MCA Air Putih's 45th anniversary dinner at the Indera Mahkota Seafood Restaurant, here, last night.

Lim said in the last MCA election in 2002, he did not challenge Dr Ling as he respected Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's peace plan.

Asked if he was prepared to be the MCA president, Lim said it was up to the party members to decide.

On his return to active politics and plans of contesting in the next general election, Lim said he would contest if asked to do so by party leaders and if his return would be able to increase support for the MCA and Barisan Nasional.

"If Menteri Besar (Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob), who is the State BN chairman, urges me to return and contest in the next general election, I will surely contest."

Lim said the final say on his return to active politics would still be up to the Prime Minister, who is the BN chairman.

"I am not the one to decide if I will contest or not but if I am asked to do so, I will serve the MCA, BN, the community and the nation," he said.

Lim said he had obtained strong support from various places he visited and was urged to reconsider his decision to quit politics.

"Now, I see things have changed compared to 1999 (when Lim decided to quit politics).

"The support from the Chinese community is very important and if I return to active politics I want to see if I can bring back the support for the MCA and BN."

Lim said it was not important where he would contest as long as he was accepted in the constituency.

"Even Datuk Seri Adnan had said that I can contest in Kuantan, Bentong or Raub," he said.