

MCLM names another lawyer as candidate
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The Malaysian Civil Liberties Movement (MCLM) has named lawyer Sreekant Pillai as its second candidate for the next general election.

malaysian civil liberties movement MCLM chooses Sreekanth Pillai 211210 sreekant gesturing Sreekant, 37, (right) is the son of late veteran journalist MGG Pillai, a pioneering figure in Malaysia's online political news reporting scene and former Malaysiakini columnist.

Currently, Sreekant is representing the Selangor government in the Teoh Beng Hock inquest.

"My father taught me there is nothing wrong in being idealistic, to always stand for what you believe in and always search for the truth.

"That is what I'm doing now," a cheerful and energetic Sreekant told a crowd of 150 at the Kuala Lumpur-Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall.

He said he was first asked to participate in the last general election in 2008, but rejected the offer.

Two months ago after MCLM was set up on Oct 30, Sreekant was presented with the opportunity again and, after much thought, he agreed with a sole purpose to serve the people and reform agenda.

malaysian civil liberties movement MCLM chooses Sreekant Pillai 211210 sreekant "I'm hoping to be able to serve and protect the rights of the rakyat. That's exactly what I want to do.

"I'm not going to back down now. It's too late for that," he said, drawing cheers from the crowd.

On Dec 12, MCLM declared human rights lawyer Malik Imtiaz Sarwar as the first among a total of 19 "repairmen" that it will offer to both BN and Pakatan Rakyat coalitions.

It aims to garner at least 30 suitable candidates through a stringent selection process by February.

The idea behind this movement is to supply "credible" and vetted candidates that will work for public interest and are less prone to defection, which have rocked the opposition coalition.

However, MCLM does not discount the possibility of fielding its candidates as independents.

Giving the opening remarks earlier, MLCM president Haris Ibrahim said the initiative was launched to reassert the people's power.

He told the packed lecture theatre at the Kuala Lumpur-Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall

that the candidates are not being offered to BN, as the ruling coalition has not shown its political will and commitment to reform.

This does not mean that Pakatan is better off, however, as their parliamentarians' integrity "are not unquestionable", either, and have betrayed the prevalence of the politics of patronage within the opposition coalition.

Risk analysis

According to Haris, MCLM will use PKR's yardstick to measure the competence of Pakatan Rakyat's current legislators. If by such measures there are MPs who fall short of expectations, MCLM will proposed its candidates as replacement.

malaysian civil liberties movement MCLM chooses Sreekanth Pillai 211210 haris ibrahimIn this way, he said, split-voting three-corner tussles can be avoided.

In the event the proposed candidates are rejected by Pakatan leaders but accepted by 'the people', Haris (right) said further, MCLM will field them as independents.

Haris said many Malaysians living overseas support MCLM's cause and have pledged donations amounting to RM10 million to assist the candidates in their task.

"Those who do get into Parliament, we are committed to them in aiding them in being the effective MPs we want them to be, by providing the mechanism and the infrastructure... We will see them through," he said.

"I don't know if there will be 30, 20 or 10 but we are sure on this: they must be of good quality," he added.

MCLM's selection of candidates would be thoroughly scrutinised, Haris said further, by a risk management agency, which will evaluate shortlisted candidates and "weed out" the high-risk ones.

"There will a statutory declaration in place to declare their assets, a detailed profile and they would have to sign an agreement that would bind them from jumping ship".

malaysian civil liberties movement MCLM chooses Sreekanth Pillai 211210 haris and groupSpeaking later to reporters, Haris said that lawyers are looking into terms of the binding contract to be drawn up whereby MCLM's candidates are penalised if they decide to leap without the mandate of their constituencies.

"Say, for example, the candidate decides to opt into DAP after being elected as an independent – if he or she does it by calling for a gathering of his constituents and ask them for their agreement and then proceed, there are no problems," he said.

Shadow MPs, periodical polls

Unlike other parties, MCLM will not keep mum who their candidates will be.

In fact, MCLM would actually assist its candidates to begin work immediately in the selected constituencies after being identified.

"They would be 'shadow MPs'," said Haris, and every infrastructure would be set in place for

the candidates to fulfil their duties as 'the people's representatives'.

Moreover, the trial run will be bolstered by "periodical polls" which will be conducted every two months.

malaysian civil liberties movement MCLM chooses Sreekanth Pillai 211210 "They are professionals in this industry who (will) go down to the ground to do sampling... They literally go down and live among the constituents to see the traction and the non-traction of the candidate.

"Even before the candidate goes to the constituency, we will do a poll then to see whether there is any improvement, and that gives you the confidence whether the candidate is resonating with the voters or not.

"It will not only help us to gauge (the candidate) but help us in identifying early whether we've got the wrong person in the wrong constituency," he added.

This way, the non-BN parties will be given an opportunity to observe the performance of the candidates and offer them to be stand under their respective flags – DAP, PAS or PKR – as independents.

"If you want to sell your products, don't lock it up in the storeroom and display it (only) in showcases," he said.

MCLM's which is contrary to the accustomed practice whereby candidates are made known only days before or on the day of nomination itself.

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