

Air of 'football fever' for Guan Eng-Soi Lek debate

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With the much-anticipated debate between DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng and MCA president Chua Soi Lek just five days away, the grassroots in Penang are preparing large gatherings to watch the debate on live television.

penang lodge mcmc report against blogger 210910 ng wei aik When contacted, Guan Eng's political secretary and Komtar assembly person Ng Wei Aik (right) said the debate would be screened at the lobby of Prangin shopping mall in Penang.

He said the state government would prepare 250 seats and a large television screen, but many more could watch the show from the floors above, potentially bringing the total audience to about 1,000.

Meanwhile, Penang MCA's deputy chief Lim Yik Tuan told Malaysiakini that the party will be watching the show in an atmosphere "like a football match" at an Insa Dunia restaurant in Bukit Mertajam, Penang.

He estimated that the debate could draw an audience of about 500 to the dim sum restaurant.

Yik Tuan denied that he was competing against DAP as he did not know they were organising a similar event, but said that the debates is healthy and more people should watch it.

When Ng was told about MCA's event, he said, "We will gather our people, and go to MCA's event to cheer for Guan Eng."

According to the organiser, the Chinese language debate, titled 'Chinese at the Crossroads: Is the two party system becoming a two race system', would be broadcast live from the venue in Berjaya Times Square Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, on Astro AEC and YouTube.

Those who wish to watch the debate in person would have to register and attend the Saturday event early, as only about 50 vacant seats remain out of 600 and registration does not guarantee admission for latecomers, according to Asian Study and Leadership Institute (Asli) CEO Michael Yeoh.

"The DAP has even offered that those who could not get a seat could approach them for extra seats from the DAP quota," he told a press conference today, explaining that seats had been allocated for both DAP and MCA so that they could bring their supporters.

Grand finale to all-day conference

The debate would be the grand finale to an all-day political conference organised by Asli and MCA-linked think tank Institute of Strategic Analysis and Policy Research (Insap).

The conference is slated to be officially opened by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, and would feature prominent speakers from both sides of the political divide such as Gerakan president Koh Tsu Koon, DAP deputy chairperson Tan Seng Giaw, and Deputy Education Minister Wee Ka Siong.

The conference would start at 9.30am, but the debate between Chua and Guan Eng would not begin until 5pm.

"By organising this political conference, we are providing a platform for political leaders to share their views and aspirations, for the benefit of all Malaysians," said Yeoh.

"We are hoping that this would be an intellectual debate that people could come together in a very

gentlemanly fashion, exchange ideas, and discuss issues in a very rational and unemotional manner.”

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