

I'm a winnable candidate, says embattled philanthropist
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Bera MCA division chief Tang Hock Lok, who controversially received RM500 in government aid, has claimed that a "despicable personal attack" against him was launched by the opposition as he is a "winnable candidate" in the upcoming general election.

The well-known local community leader and philanthropist denied that he received the cash handout through a loophole in the Bantuan Rakyat 1Malaysia (BR1M) programme, which is aimed at aiding low-income people.

In a telephone interview with Malaysiakini yesterday, Tang said that the Pahang state seat of Triang, where he has been active, may see a MCA candidate after Gerakan failed to capture it in the previous elections.

Triang, a rural constituency in southwest of Pahang with 72 percent Chinese voters, has been a DAP stronghold currently represented by four-time assemblyperson Leong Ngah Ngah.

"Didn't (Prime Minister) Najib (Abdul Razak) say he want winnable candidates? Coincidentally, in terms of Triang, the winnable candidate is me," said Tang with pride.

"That's the reason that has prompted the opposition to politicise the (BR1M) issue and launch a 'despicable personal attack' against me," claimed Tang, who has a datukship.

Tang's RM500 payout has drawn flak from Internet users who questioned his eligibility for the aid, and whether the BR1M programme was being abused.

BR1M cash payout: 'I did not cheat'

However, Tang said he had donated the money to a disabled villager, arguing that his intention of applying for the aid was to assist the needy.

Tang stressed that the donation was not made under pressure in the wake of news reports on the controversy.

"I did not cheat and take this money for myself. I thought that since I am eligible, I can apply for it... for others who need it more."

The father of three sons and five daughters is well-known for his generosity in helping local organisations, which has earned him the nickname of "king of officiating ceremonies" after having attended hundreds of events both as sponsor and donor.

The retiree reiterated that he is a man of no income after transferring all his properties to his children.

"I don't even earn a sen now," he claimed.

However, Tang said that he still contributes to charity and local organisations from the money given by his children and his own savings, including the proceeds from the sale of two shoplots 10 years ago.

"I sold my inherited assets and my own properties to fund my donations," said Tang.

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