

## **Sim: I'm contesting as Independent to save DAP**

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**By Hafiz Yatim**

Malacca DAP stalwart Sim Tong Him, already defending the Kota Melaka parliamentary seat under the party ticket is also contesting as an Independent for the Kota Laksamana state seat, said he is doing so to save the party.

Sim (right) said he was worried that DAP candidate Lai Keun Ban would do badly as the feedback that the Malacca DAP had received indicates that the supporters would not back this candidate.

"We have asked Lai to consider pulling out but it seems that he does not want to. Hence, following last night I felt hopeless and have to make the hard decision of also contesting in the Kota Laksamana seat as an Independent.

"Kota Laksamana is a DAP stronghold and we do not want to see it being lost. I know there will be repercussions to my decision but I am doing this to salvage the situation. I am prepared to face any repercussions from the party," said Sim.

He wants party supporters to either vote the DAP or him to ensure that it remains in opposition hands and not BN.

Hence, the Kota Laksamana state seat sees a three-cornered contest with Sim, former senator and Malacca PPP chief Chiw Tiang Chai and Lai from the DAP.

Sim, 65, formerly led Malacca DAP and is a ever popular figure in the state after contesting and defending the Bandar Hilir state seat for several terms before moving to the Kota Melaka parliamentary seat in 2008.

Will they or won't they?

He, along with the present leadership, are known to be opposed to party secretary-general Lim Guan Eng in Malacca.

Lai is said to be a veteran DAP member who had contested and won the state seat in Malacca. However, it is learned that the opposition by the Malacca DAP stems on Lai having been expelled from the party following a disciplinary matter, though he is said to have rejoined the party since then.

Yesterday, it was reported there were problems in Malacca DAP following Lai's

candidacy, with Malacca DAP Alor Gajah candidate Damien Yeo, aligned to Sim and present Malacca DAP chief Goh Leong San, threatening to pull out.

Sim said he honestly does not know whether the DAP will sack him or not for this move.

"Hopefully, the central leadership will consider (that) what I am doing is to give an alternative for the Kota Laksamana voters not to vote for BN and to continue supporting the DAP."

The Kota Laksamana electorate of 19,772 voters comprises 83 percent Chinese, 14 percent Malay and Indians, three percent.

Incumbent Betty Chew Gek Cheng (right), who is the incumbent Penang chief minister's wife, is not defending the seat.

Malacca DAP is the opposition in the state with four seats, namely Bandar Hilir, Kota Laksamana, Kesidang and Ayer Keroh.

In a related development, the DAP secretary-general has urged Sim to publicly withdraw as an Independent for the Kota Laksamana state seat and declare full support to Lai.

Lim, in a statement today, said that by Sim putting himself as an Independent candidate for Kota Laksamana, it is a disservice to the hopes of Malacca voters who want to see a change of government in Malacca from BN to Pakatan Rakyat.

Lim issues ultimatum to Sim

The party secretary-general said that there had been no communication from Sim to the party leadership that he had wanted to contest in Kota Laksamana as an Independent.

"Clearly, this shocking action of a DAP parliamentary candidate, who is also standing as an independent candidate against the official party candidate in the state seat, has brought shame to DAP. Such an act would invite automatic expulsion from the party as stated by party national chairperson Tan Kok Wai.

"However, in view of Sim's years in the party, the DAP central leadership is still willing to give him an opportunity to correct this grievous error by publicly withdrawing from the state contest and giving full support to Lai. This would enable Sim to concentrate on winning the Kota Melaka parliamentary seats and all the

state seats in his constituency," said Lim (left).

He described Sim's actions as violating the party's four-member selection committee, as previously, the Malacca DAP veteran was said to have accepted Lai when DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang had met him.

Lim added that the party refuses to entertain suspicions and rumours that Sim's shocking actions were somehow related to some grand design by BN to sabotage DAP's election campaign.

"Sim just can not contest under a DAP ticket for the parliamentary seat of Kota Melaka, and at the same time, contest as an Independent for the Kota Laksamana state seat.

"Sim can not have one leg in the DAP boat, and the other leg in a non-DAP boat," he stressed.

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