

## **MCA undaunted by challenges in S'gor**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**April 22, 2013**

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Selangor MCA chairperson Donald Lim knows he is facing an uphill task leading both MCA and helping BN campaign to regain the state, but he is unperturbed by the challenge.

In this interview with The Malay Mail, he speaks about the challenges ahead, the differing expectations between urban and rural voters, BN's efforts to tackle corruption and the decision that led to dropping former Pandan MP Ong Tee Keat.

The Malay Mail: Datuk, how do you feel about contesting for the Selayang parliamentary seat?

Lim: I have contested four times before, all in PJ Selatan. I have won three times and in 2008 I lost. But I've moved because of a request by Selayang MCA, who was looking for a suitable candidate for the MCA seat.

How do you feel about Selangor MCA's chances this time around?

Since I took over as Selangor MCA chairman in 2010, we have been doing well. We have rebuilt our relationship with the people in areas where we are contesting. From our observation, we find that we are gaining back support in these areas.

But we must be very frank about it. The choice of our candidate will determine whether we win or lose. The only area where we found some difficulties are where some of the chosen candidates were having resistance from the grassroots, which we know is normal.

After the dramatic defeat in 2008, do you feel Selangor MCA has a better team of winnable candidates in 2013?

We feel this time we are better. Now we can work on the campaign. We have directed our members in Selangor MCA to put in their effort to ensure a victory for BN.

Selangor BN chairperson Najib Abdul Razak made some surprise choices for the state, including choosing Perkasa's Zulkifli Noordin for Shah Alam. Do you feel that was a right choice?

In life, we all want to do the perfect thing but there are also considerations that we must also pay attention to. We must understand that Malaysia is a multiracial society. Choosing Zulkifli (right) also may have resulted in resistance.

I have had some members complaining to me, too. They want him to apologise for what he has said. If he has said the wrong thing, he should probably apologise.

We want everybody to respect each other. Touching on race and religion is something that politicians from both sides must avoid. It will hurt the nation's harmony.

Have the people's expectations for MCA, particularly in Selangor, changed since 2008? What is MCA doing to address this?

People here are slightly different from the rest of the country. Almost 93 percent live either in urban or semi-urban areas. Selangor surrounds Kuala Lumpur.

The biggest airport and seaport in the country are in Selangor. Selangor has the most number of five-star hotels, as well as the most number of listed companies.

National policies are made here and this is an area that poses the biggest challenge to us. Residents here have more access to information and they cast their votes based on the candidate as well as the party.

In contrast, rural areas need more assistance in infrastructure, whereas in cities there are no such problems. Overall, the environment is quite good.

This is BN's strong point — the overall scenario in the country is good. We know there are shortcomings in several areas, including how we handle illegal foreign workers, how we handle minimum wages, how we handle security and the crime rate, as well as the balance of racial harmony.

How about the thorny issue of corruption?

The issue of corruption is something we need to look at and it has been addressed in the BN manifesto. The people must understand that corruption can only be reduced, not eliminated. Corruption is like drugs, like traffic accidents. You can only fix the system and methodology to reduce it.

Corruption will however be reduced through education. We have to work on this continuously. The PM has done his best. We have seen several major figures charged. Previously politicians were never charged. Now it is about transparency.

What are your thoughts on the recent entanglement between DAP and the Registrar of Societies (ROS)?

Again, transparency is the main point. Take the DAP central executive committee (CEC) elections, for example. They cannot be so arrogant.

You cannot announce and say, "This is the new result," unless the court decides. They have to rectify. This is simple accountability.

You must account for whatever you do. If you know you are wrong, then hold an extraordinary general meeting. But I don't feel that it's right for the ROS to make such a decision so close before nomination. People will get the wrong idea.

One of the chief criticisms by Pakatan Rakyat towards Selangor BN is that there's no one, designated menteri besar in waiting.

Selangor is a front-line state which is led by the PM, who is also handling the whole country. Yes, we do have someone in mind to be the administrator of our promises in Selangor.

Not all the candidates on both sides are inherently all good or all bad. The Pakatan state government has failed. Well, now the country needs to move on.

Speaking of good candidates, why was former party president and Pandan incumbent Ong not selected despite many quarters calling him 'winnable'?

The MCA president has decided this and explained it. Ong (right) was not toeing the party line. Dr Chua Soi Lek has the prerogative not to select him as a candidate. That's the scenario. Although Ong was the only MCA incumbent in Selangor and we have to admit that he was a good candidate for BN but unfortunately he was not selected.

While we know he has a good rapport with the people in Pandan, the selection has been made. I'm okay with Ong. We have been vice-presidents together in the early days, Ong, Chua and myself.

Where will your political career go from here?

I joined MCA in 1980. I have been contesting since 1995. I'm already 58-years-old. If the people of Selayang do not give me a mandate, perhaps it's time to see if I should retire.

That's the rule of the game. I may have spent a lot of time in politics and not as much time with my family. All my four children are grown up. I also love golf, because it de-stresses me. It's the one time when I can switch my handphone off.

A lot of politicians feel a need to stay on beyond what the people want. There are a lot of things after politics, too.

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Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/227630>