

Penang MCA revolts, Gerakan closes service centres

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By Susan Loone

After suffering a crushing defeat in the 13th general election last Sunday, a revolt appears to be brewing in Penang MCA, while Gerakan is responding to being rebuffed by the electorate by closing its service centres.

MCA division leader David Yim, who was not considered as a candidate despite being active in Bayan Baru, is calling a press conference today to demand the resignation of party president Dr Chua Soi Lek.

He follows his comrades and division leaders Tan Chong Seng (Kuala Selangor), Lee Wei Keat (Subang) and Liew Yuen Keong (Serdang), who had earlier accused Chua of ceding three parliamentary and two state seats to Umno without good reason, thus affecting party's morale.

NONEChua (left) was also accused of cronyism, for picking those loyal to him as candidates and not those seen as dissidents.

The trio also blamed Chua for adopting wrong campaign strategies and making inappropriate statements, resulting in MCA vote canvassers facing ridicule from the Chinese community.

The calls come ahead of the party's elections at its general assembly, which will take place later this year.

It was supposed to be held every three years - the last one was in 2008 - but last year the party amended its constitution to allow it to be delayed to six months of the general polls.

MCA is not the only ones hurting over poor performances in Penang which saw DAP retain all its 19 seats while PKR won 10 (gaining one), and PAS took one (status quo), against Umno's 10 seats.

To add insult to injury, according to Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng, Pakatan won 66 percent of the popular vote, an increase of three percent from the last election.

Umno, too, took a beating when it lost Seberang Jaya to PKR, and failed to recapture the Nibong Tebal parliamentary constituency when state Umno liaison

chief Zainal Abidin Osman lost to PKR's Mansor Othman by a majority of 8,598 votes.

Throwing in the towel

MCA and its allies Gerakan and MIC were wiped out in the state, with Pakatan candidates winning by higher majorities in most seats.

As soon as the results were out and it was clear that Pakatan had enough seats to form the Penang government, state BN chief Teng Chang Yeow threw in the towel and announced his resignation, including as Gerakan secretary-general.

"I don't feel bad. I have accepted the fact that Penangites do not accept my leadership," he said in an SMS to Malaysiakini.

NONETeng (right in photo) contested the Bukit Tengah seat in a three-cornered fight with former BN coordinator A Mohan, and a virtually unknown PKR lawyer, Ong Chin Wen, who won by 5,190 votes.

The following day, state Gerakan secretary Goh Kheng Sneah followed suit, resigning from all party posts after losing to PKR's T Jayabalan in Batu Uban, who won with a 9,857 majority.

It is learnt that the BN component parties still wanted Gerakan to lead the coalition in Penang, and this was supposed to be announced yesterday at a press conference attended by its four other partners - MCA, MIC, Progressive People's Party and Umno.

However, the press briefing was cancelled at the eleventh hour.

Meanwhile, some BN leaders have announced that they are closing their service centres.

"Gerakan will close all its service centres in Penang, we will not have the resources any more to maintain them..." said state BN Youth information chief H'ng Khoon Leng on his Facebook page.

Yim, a former BN coordinator also stated that he is contemplating closing down his 17-year-old welfare centre in Bayan Baru.

"Sorry, right now I have no resources to help, kindly call the new elected representative to assist you," he said in a Facebook posting.

The BN team felt "cheated" by the people whom they had been wooing with the RM500 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M) money, free dinners, drinks and attractive lucky draws via the 1Malaysia-Penang Welfare Club which openly supports BN and Premier Najib Abdul Razak.

'Played out by the Chinese'

The feeling of total defeat was also felt by Parti Cinta Malaysia (PCM), who dared take on giants BN and Pakatan in several fights - and lost their deposits.

NONEPCM vice-chief Huan Chang Guan (left) is calling a press conference today, and is also expected to announce the shutting down of his service centre in Perai.

"This election is interesting, (we were) totally played out by the Chinese, when they need help for schools, temples, association and others, they come for me. But when they vote, they vote for DAP.

"I have learnt my lesson. Now I will close down all my service centres. Will spent my time enjoying myself. Lu orang mati lu punya pasai. Jangan cari saya lagi. (If you die, it is your business. Don't look for me again)," said a bitter Huan on his Facebook page.

Huan contested for the Batu Kawan parliamentary seat in a four-cornered fight and lost to DAP's Kasthuriraani Patto who won by a whopping 25,962 majority.

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