

MCA to stay clear of Bukit Gelugor rumble
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Just hours after DAP announced Ramkarpal Singh as its candidate for the Bukit Gelugor by-election, MCA announced it will not contest the seat.

MCA secretary-general Ong Ka Chuan said the party had reached the best decision after reviewing the political scenario and after consulting the party members on the matter.

Ong (right) said Prime Minister and BN chairperson Najib Razak is aware of the decision, adding the final decision was made this morning at the party's presidential meeting in Ipoh, Perak.

The party had earlier mulled whether to contest or not, and had conducted a "scientific survey" among 400 voters in Bukit Gelugor to help it make an accurate decision.

Although the matter was first alerted in the Chinese media, Ong said the announcement in Penang is the "official version".

"MCA will not participate in the poll as the party wants to fully focus on the hudud issue to protect the federal constitution," Ong said at the party's state headquarters in Jalan Pahang.

"If we contest, some issues might crop up and divert us from our focus, which is to stop the PAS Private Member's Bill from being tabled in Parliament on June 9," he added.

"We hope the public will understand why we took the decision, but even though we are not contesting, we will continue to serve the public," he said.

'Much humiliation expected'

Asked if MCA felt it would lose the poll, Ong said that even if the party contested, "there will be much humiliation".

"We also have to conserve our resources and prepare for the coming 14th general election," he added.

On Najib's response to MCA's decision not to contest, Ong said earlier the PM had asked the party to look for positive factors that would ensure its victory in the by-election.

"We tried very hard and felt that we cannot find a prominent factor to turn around the by-election results," Ong said.

Accompanying Ong were state MCA liaison committee chief Chew Mei Fun and state party advisor and Bukit Gelugor Koay Kar Huah.

On whether MCA would be supporting any independent candidate, Ong said it is their policy not to support any party since it has decided not to contest.

The by-election was triggered by the tragic death of incumbent MP Karpal Singh, who died in a road accident last month.

DAP has picked the late MP's third son Ramkarpal Singh to defend the seat.

In the last general election, MCA candidate The Beng Yeap lost by a landslide to Karpal with a 41,778 margin, bagging only 14,061 votes.

Nomination day is Monday at the Dewan Sri Pinang, while polling is on May 25.

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