

**MCA must make a stand on PKFZ: Ong
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EXCLUSIVE The MCA has everything to lose if it chooses to ignore the RM12 billion PKFZ controversy, said former president Ong Tee Keat.

ong tee keat pkfz klang visit 060508 11Ong, whose crusade for the truth in the high-profile case cost him his positions as party president and transport minister, said this very issue was a strong contributor to MCA's whitewash by the opposition in the 12th general election two years ago.

"MCA as a party, more so as a partner in the ruling (BN) coalition, was greatly disadvantaged in the past GE such as in Selangor and the Federal Territory... we all know PKFZ is one of the root causes," he told Malaysiakini.

"It is only appropriate for MCA to make a stand on the subject, if we really uphold the principles of integrity and transparency."

MCA, the second-largest BN component party, has long had a close association with the Port Klang Authority - which owns PKFZ - by virtue of the party's monopoly of the transport ministership.

MCA's links to the PKA go as far back as 1989, with at least five successive party leaders sitting as chairperson of the government agency such as Michael Chen, Ting Chew Peh, Yap Pian Hon, Chor Chee Heung and current chair Lee Hwa Beng.

The Transport Ministry likewise has been under the party's stewardship, with the president traditionally taking the post including Dr Ling Liong Sik and Ong Tee Keat, though it has also been held by former deputy president Chan Kong Choy and currently by secretary-general Kong Cho Ha.

In an earlier interview, Ong had said he was playing on dangerous ground when he launched the probe into the PKFZ scandal, ultimately costing him his presidency and ministership.

New president backtracking

NONEMoving forward, Ong pointed out that while he was president, MCA's presidential council had endorsed the view that the scandal is a party concern - insinuating that his rival and recently-elected president Dr Chua Soi Lek is taking a few steps back on the issue.

"The current president (Chua) held a different view. He once argued (when I was president) that the issue if investigated, would further jeopardise the party and the BN.

"He said PKFZ should not be a party matter, it is strictly under the Ministry of Finance (MoF). Likewise for sports betting, if the same argument were to hold water, people could argue it is a MoF matter and not a party concern.

"The fact is it (sports betting) was discussed at the presidential council and they made a stand to support it... whether it is a case of double standards or otherwise, let the fact speak for itself," he said, referring to MCA's open support for issuance of the sports betting

licence.

'Blame PKA board'

Ong however did not want the blame to be put on the shoulders of his predecessors in the Transport Ministry, especially Chan who has been a marked man since the issue went public.

ong tee keat pka klang whistle blower 210110 02He instead said the burden of responsibility should fall on the PKA's board of directors at the crucial time the PKFZ deal was inked.

"The board itself should be held responsible, irrespective of party affiliation... we should view the issue comprehensively; who has done what and the lines of responsibility," he said.

Ong also declined to comment on Kong's recent statement that there is no need to re-visit the PKFZ issue, saying he does not know if it was his view as transport minister or MCA secretary general.

On his grand plan to reform the 61-year-old MCA, Ong was at a loss to pinpoint what exactly he did or did not do that led to his fall from the presidency.

"I think the results spoke loudly, on whether or not I made it. During the party election on March 28, I was defeated.

"I'm not sure if the delegates made their choice based on issues or principles of the three candidates, because I didn't do a survey."

Chua performing well?

Ong however took a dig at Chua, brushing aside talk that his successor is doing a good job at patching the cracks that have fractured the party over the past year's protracted leadership crisis.

NONEHe said it is not enough to just run an extensive public relations exercise, as a situation could be more - or less - than what it seems.

"Maybe it would be useful for a more in-depth survey (into Chua's performance), rather than taking the word of a few individuals.

"Sometimes what we observe may not represent the real picture... let the facts speak for themselves."

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