

**Chua defends Umno, party not racist**  
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MCA president Dr Chua Soi Lek today defended Umno, which has been labelled by the opposition as a racist party, claiming that the party does not champion "Malay supremacy".

Chua Soi Lek quizzed by police 4 "In my association or MCA's association with Umno, I have never heard of any Umno leader saying that Malays are superior to non-Malays," he told reporters today.

He said this when asked if he agreed with Singapore Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew's comments that Malaysia would have better race-relations if it had followed the island state's model for social integration.

Chua admitted that race relations are "not as good as it should be", but shot down a question on whether it was due in part to the championing of "Malay supremacy".

"I don't think it is fair to say that Malay leaders always harp on Malay superiority... those who do, count among the minority of the minority.

"(Poor race relations are) because after the March 2008 elections - there has been intense competition to get support. In Malaysia, race is a very easy issue to use to get support... This is the tactic of the opposition to make Umno look bad."

Dr M 'entitled to his opinion'

Chua was evasive when asked to comment on former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad's warning that Umno's move to distance itself from Malay rights pressure group Perkasa is at its own peril.

Chua said that Mahathir was entitled to his opinion, adding: "There is no democracy in the world where 100 percent of the people talk the same tune.

"Mahathir is a senior statesman and we respect his views, but I would place more relevance on the views of the prime minister."

Later, Chua questioned Pakatan Rakyat's credentials in managing race relations, citing the recent protests by Malay hawkers in Penang and the support letter controversy in Selangor.

"I don't know why people think that the Pakatan will do better in managing race relations. You have street protests happening in Penang, and in Selangor you've got the 'support letter' issue which is only affecting one race and one party.

"BN has proven its worth in the last 53 years in managing the complexity of race relations, but we are not perfect.

"This is to be expected... If you have been in power for 53 years and you have no defects, then something is wrong, but Pakatan in only two years have already exposed their defects," he said.

Chua remained on the defensive when asked about direct membership to BN, saying that it

has nothing to do with race relations.

He deflected a question on whether it would lead to the merging of all BN components into a single entity, saying that direct membership is merely to admit those who support BN but are without a party.

"In the long term, I hope that politics will be non-racial," he said.

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