

**Looming battle of 'MCA Ong' dynasty**  
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As the battle lines are drawn following the MCA presidential council's recent endorsement of the party national polls to be held on Oct 18 this year, more criticisms and accusations are expected to surface during the divisional elections scheduled in July. MCPX

ong ka ting and mcaDetractors in rival camps are likely to expose the alleged manipulations, double-standards and high-handedness of party president Ong Ka Ting and his brother, secretary general Ka Chuan. The pair have been widely accused of building an 'Ong political dynasty' at the expense of the party.

The MCA national assembly and elections will be held over a two-day period while the branch and division elections have been scheduled earlier on June 15 and July 27 respectively.

It was also announced that the membership roll would be distributed to all divisions and branches on April 27, followed by objections before May 12 and the amended roll will be published on May 20.

In early January, the party leadership had decided to postpone the elections to three months after the general election in accordance to Article 167 of the MCA constitution, which provided for the postponement of its election for 42 months after the last general election.

Since the party's poor electoral performance, opponents to Ka Ting's leadership had blamed the president for adamantly refusing to pay heed to advice from his fellow critics and rivals, who accused him of promoting an 'Ong dynasty' within the party leadership.

The latest move being promoting Ka Chuan into a cabinet post as minister of housing and local government. This fanned suspicions further that Ka Ting would manipulate his brother to become his successor to the party's throne.

**Based on calibre?**

"For years, the ministry has been considered a cash cow (surplus government allocations), besides other JKKK posts and incentives essentially for new villages which can be used to boost votes for any particular candidate vying for party posts in the coming elections," a former central committee member disclosed.

mca new cabinet member 180308 ong ka chuanIt was nevertheless reported that Ka Ting had justified to the party rank and file that Ka Chuan was appointed based on the latter's calibre. On the other hand, Ka Chuan made it seem as if he was 'forced' to accept the post.

In fact, Ka Chuan tried to prove his 'calibre' in the 2004 general election but lost in the Batu Gajah parliamentary seat to DAP. This time around, he preferred not to display his 'calibre' and opted for the safer Tanjong Malim seat.

It was also rumoured that Loke Yuen Yow who had been dropped to pave way for Ka Chuan

in the constituency would be "politically rewarded" through an appointment. Some quarters speculated that Loke might be given the Port Klang Chairmanship, replacing Chor Chee Heung who had been promoted to deputy minister in the home affairs ministry.

Those who are following Ka Ting's political maneuvering have also accused his latest takeover of the Johor state chairmanship from acting chairman Tan Kok Hong as a clear example of blatant power play.

It was alleged by some that Tan was directed to resign and Ka Ting was accused of projecting a deceptive "public relations exercise" through the media as though Tan had stepped down voluntarily. Tan was appointed by Ka Ting in January to replace Dr Chua Soi Lek who had resigned from his ministerial and party posts following a scandal.

That move of Ka Ting is central to his other tactical plans to lobby for votes across the country in anticipation of the party elections. In the same vein, it is believed that his recent trip to MCA Sabah was strategically made with the same motive to control and garner the most votes from the larger states particularly from Sabah, Johor and Selangor.

Given the prerogative to appoint "obedient" state chairmen, Ka Ting has the advantage in safeguarding the various elections at branch and division levels in boosting the number of central delegates aligned to his camp. This is the basic tactical move within the party for decades, "by shoring up voting support" whenever there are factional in-fighting just before a party election.

There is a combination of reasons, according to party observers that Ka Ting is making "sinister moves" to frustrate rival supporters from getting elected at branch and divisional levels who are currently aligned to Soi Lek, Donald Lim Siang Chai and "old guards" previously loyal to former president Dr Ling Liong Sik.

Criticisms from within and without the party are increasingly being raised as to whether Ka Ting should continue as president given his questionable leadership qualities already proven by his two-terms. Is it wise for him to position his brother, Ka Chuan to succeed him in perpetuating the 'Ong dynasty' under the so-called "healthy political culture"?

### **Saving party or himself?**

A party branch leader from Bukit Binatng quipped, "Ka Ting lacks political wisdom. The Chinese sayings reflect his foolishness."

Citing an example on MCA's post mortem on the electoral setback, he said, "Shi Hou, Kung Ming (meaning, only after defeat, questions on whys are raised). In the recent elections, Ka Ting should not have ignored the ancient advice "Zhi Ji, Zhi Bi." (Know yourself and your opponent, you will not be defeated).

"The humiliating electoral loss of the party is rooted in Ka Ting's leadership role. Do not blame the collective leadership as he alone, was given sole accountability to make many choices and decisions. But he had abused this freedom and power to boost his political self-vested interests," said the branch leader.

A final note on MCA's future, a frustrated party insider asked: "Is Ka Ting saving himself and his brother or is he sincerely trying to save the party."

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