

# High drama in Johor MCA over alleged tryst

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JOHOR BARU: It has politics, sex and violence — all the classic ingredients for a headline-grabbing story.

Understandably enough, the story remained on the front pages of Chinese vernacular newspapers for days, and continues to be the talk of the town.

But, unfortunately for the Johor MCA, it has been unwittingly drawn into the controversy.

For the man said to be involved in an alleged tryst with a married woman is one of its rising stars.

Low Teh Hian, 57, the state assemblyman for Pengkalan Renting, was recently stripped of all his party posts pending a police investigation into the case.

Low, who has been a MCA politician for over 30 years, found himself in a raging storm when a fellow party stalwart accused him of having an affair with his wife.

The man, a Johor MCA Youth member, had gate-crashed into an apartment rented by Low in the early morning of July 6 and found mm with the 43-year-old woman.

In the commotion that ensued, Low pulled out his revolver and apparently threatened the man, who was accompanied by several others, including the latter's mother.

The incident made the front pages of all Chinese papers and was the talk of the town, at least in the Chinese community, because of Low's high profile.

More importantly, the three-term assemblyman is widely regarded as the right-hand man of MCA strongman Datuk Dr Chua Soi Lek, who is party national vice-president and Johor MCA chief.

The party, in a bid to protect its public image and integrity, has come down hard on Low. Besides the suspension, he has been banned from attending all party functions indefinitely.

This has been a major blow for Low as speculation is rife that his alleged tryst with the married woman, and his subsequent face-off with her husband, has virtually killed his otherwise distinguished political career.



**Low has maintained his innocence**

"He was held in high esteem by the Johor Chinese community. His work in helping the poor and needy through the MCA public complaints bureau is widely recognised. It's going to be hard for him to make a comeback in active politics," said a political observer.

Although the spotlight on Low has died down somewhat, this has not stopped his friends and foes from slugging it out in the Chinese Press over so-called 'conspiracy theories'.

Allegations are rife that Low was a victim of a ploy to finish him off politically.

This theory gained credence after his alleged lover attempted to take her life last week, and left behind four suicide letters, one of which apparently claimed her husband was being "manipulated by people" to "destroy Low".

Low has maintained his innocence, saying the woman was nothing more than his business partner, and that he was forced to pull the gun on the man and his accomplices as an act of self-defence.

Police have yet to complete their investigations into the case.

Meanwhile, Low remains unfazed, and has pledged to continue with his public service, despite his personal problems.

But it remains to be seen if his grassroots popularity and solid record of public service is enough to pull him through this crisis.