

MCA 'always' relevant, say party leaders
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By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 1 — MCA leaders today lambasted former party president Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat for saying the party is becoming increasingly irrelevant, claiming there is no basis for his remarks.

They denied that the Chinese community had written the party off, claiming that the MCA was on its way to regaining Chinese support.

Liow said the MCA still has strong representation within the Chinese community. — File pic Ong had told The Malaysian Insider in an interview that the MCA was on the path to irrelevance, and that the Barisan Nasional (BN) component has not heeded the push for reform that saw the party lose 25 of the 40 federal and 59 of the 90 state seats it contested in Election 2008.

He had said the reforms he tried to implement in the MCA “all went down the drain” after he was ousted.

“MCA is always relevant. Although we lost badly in 2008, we still have strong representation within the Chinese community.

“He (Ong) can say what he likes, but he must not eat his own words,” said MCA deputy president Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai.

Liow said that when Ong was president, he had instructed MCA members to refrain from saying bad things about the party.

“No (we are not irrelevant), MCA has been working hard to ensure support of Chinese,” said Liow.

MCA Youth chief Datuk Dr Wee Ka Siong said that proof of Chinese support for the BN component party was the “huge” increase in Youth members over the past two years.

“We have registered 27,000 new members over the past two years,” he told reporters today.

“The former MCA president’s claim that MCA is irrelevant is baseless,” said Wee.

He asked reporters to decide for themselves the changes made during Ong’s tenure as president and the current leadership under Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek.

“I do not intend to create a conflict with Ong Tee Keat, but every leader is given a timeframe to implement changes in the party, not all phases or timeframes are the same,” said Wee.

Ong had also previously said that the current MCA president was not a “winnable candidate” due to a much-publicised sex scandal during his tenure as health minister.

When asked to comment on this, Wee simply shrugged and said, "Is it news, what he (Ong) is saying?"

Liow added the MCA president had requested that party members not respond to Ong's remarks.

The MCA has seen Chinese support continue to shrink in by-elections, as some analyses have found that the Tenang polls held earlier this year saw just 18 per cent of Chinese voting for BN.

Datuk Seri Najib Razak has assumed the charge for Chinese votes, spending last weekend dishing out RM15 million to Chinese schools and exempting a Community Chest project headed by Chinese tycoons from tax to help it channel RM100 million a year into vernacular education.

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