

Soi Lek says may contest in Perak, Johor or Negri Sembilan
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 17 – Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek is considering standing for elections in Perak, Negri Sembilan or his homestate Johor, a move likely to invite flak from the MCA president's detractors in the party.

Chinese-language daily Nanyang Siang Pau reported today Dr Chua's speech during a Deepavali dinner in Seremban last night where the senior politician purportedly claimed to have received invitations from all three state mentris besar to stand in the coming polls.

But, added the daily, Dr Chua (picture) had stressed he would first consider the feelings of MCA leaders in each state and gauge local sentiment before making his decision.

"Just because I am the party president, it does not mean I can simply contest anywhere, or take over someone else's position for my own interest," he was quoted as saying.

Dr Chua currently chairs both the Johor and Perak state liaison committees.

His announcement comes just two weeks after he declared himself a "winnable candidate" despite his sex scandal past, in the heat of his squabble with Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat, his predecessor in MCA.

Ong, Dr Chua's most outspoken critic in MCA, had said he did not consider the party president a qualified candidate for the polls due to his scandalous past, adding the latter would not fit Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's "winnable candidate" criteria.

But with Chinese support for Barisan Nasional (BN) still weak, it appears the veteran politician cannot afford to shy away from the coming polls, viewed as the pact's most crucial, and will have to lead his party into the foray by standing as a candidate.

Failing which, Dr Chua will remain an MCA president without any government post, the second such occurrence in the 62-year-old party.

Dr Chua's bitter rivalry with Ong first erupted in 2009 when he was expelled by the latter from his deputy president post due to his 2007 sex scandal.

He had earlier clinched the post during the party polls in 2008 in a momentous comeback after the scandal saw him resign earlier that year as health minister and MCA vice-president. He had also announced his intention to quit his Labis federal seat but Election 2008 was called before he officially did so.

Dr Chua, however, made his final comeback during last year's party polls, and successfully edged out Ong from the president's seat in a three-cornered fight with another former president Tan Sri Ong Ka Ting.

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