

Submit to MCA, BN to contest Pandan, Soi Lek tells Tee Keat
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 15 — MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek has issued an ultimatum to his predecessor Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat — “submit to MCA and Barisan Nasional (BN)” to stay in Pandan.

Dr Chua (picture) told The Star in an interview carried today that he has not ruled out the possibility of allowing Ong to re-contest his Pandan seat but said his predecessor and fierce rival would first have to meet BN’s “winnable candidate” criteria.

“I am very open, in the sense that as long as he meets the criteria, he can be a candidate, but must submit to the party and Barisan Nasional,” Dr Chua was quoted as saying.

This meant that Ong would need support from the party, have good ties with NGOs and BN leaders, as well as a good command of Mandarin, Malay and English, he explained.

“As our party is very structured, it is very difficult to ensure that the machinery works and reaches out to the people if the candidate does not enjoy support within the party,” Dr Chua said.

Ong vowed last week to defend his seat in the next general election even if MCA drops him as a candidate.

The former MCA president remains very popular among his constituents, who are said to support him and not the party he represents.

Ong, however, today dismissed rumours that he intends to join DAP on January 20 despite confirming that he had met with opposition leaders recently.

His denial today comes after two MCA grassroots leaders closely linked to him — Penang MCA Youth chief Eng Hiap Boon and Johor MCA’s Taman Desa Skudai Flats deputy chairman James Wu Chee Heng — quit the party.

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