

People the winner in Chinese debate, says Soi Lek
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 18 — Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek has called his debate with DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng this evening a victory for the public, who got to hear views from both sides of the political divide.

The MCA president, whose hour-long debate in Mandarin with Lim was shown live on Astro, stressed that the public should not see the event as a “school debate” with winners and losers but a chance to better understand the two parties.

“The winner is the people, and not Lim Guan Eng or Chua Soi Lek, because they are the ones who know the true position of the parties,” he told reporters after the debate at the “Malaysian Chinese at the Political Crossroads” conference here.

Dr Chua hoped the debate held at Berjaya Times Square Hotel here would serve as starting point for similar events between the MCA and DAP in future, but said that it would be up to individual politicians to decide if they wanted to do so.

Lim also said today’s debate on the two-party system in Malaysia had benefited the people as such exchanges were part and parcel of a healthy democracy.

This was because debates helped to air advice and dissent, which is crucial to building consensus through a process of public consultation, he explained.

He wished to see other leaders from Barisan Nasional (BN) and Pakatan Rakyat (PR) take part in such debates, singling out Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

“We hope this small step will be followed by a big one, that is (a debate) between Datuk Seri Najib and opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim,” Lim said, joking that the public would get bored if only he and Dr Chua debated each other.

Najib has balked at several offers from Anwar to debate on policy issues, which the PKR de facto leader has said would let voters decide for themselves if the opposition pact’s plans for the country had merit.

The Umno president had previously demurred by saying debates were not necessary as political parties were more important than individuals in Malaysia’s parliamentary democracy.

Both Dr Chua and Lim said they would debate each other again soon in Bahasa Malaysia and English on another topic.

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/people-the-winner-in-chinese-debate-says-soi-lek/>