

Tiong Lai: 'Anwar' factor will help MCA 'rise again' in GE13
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 20 — MCA will “rise again” in the next general election, party deputy president Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai predicted today, citing the “Anwar” factor as one of the reasons behind the return of Chinese support to Barisan Nasional (BN).

Liow said that Pakatan Rakyat’s (PR) practice of putting Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim on a pedestal would only thwart the opposition’s campaign, claiming that the former deputy prime minister’s past record and broken promises would hamper his rise to victory. “His record worries the people,” the leader told the MCA Youth annual general meeting (AGM) today. “The people are smart enough to judge that Anwar’s victory would not bring them prosperity, but would only retard the country’s development process.”

Liow reminded delegates of Anwar’s failed September 16, 2008, or “916”, takeover attempt, saying it showed that the opposition leader was willing to create instability in the country in his haste to wrest federal power.

“Not only did he fail to deliver on his promise, but the country’s image was destroyed to a point that we suffered losses in terms of time and money,” he said.

Speaking at a press conference later, Liow blamed Anwar for the 1987 Operasi Lallang crackdown, pointing out that the former education minister had at the time refused to budge on the government’s appointment of non-Mandarin speaking educationists to vernacular schools.

He said Anwar “cannot be trusted”, particularly by the Chinese community, as the leader had used his position in 1987 to suppress Chinese education.

“Operasi Lallang... this is all the doing of Anwar Ibrahim,” he said.

Operasi Lallang saw the arrest of 106 opposition leaders, Umno politicians and Chinese educationists under the Internal Security Act (ISA).

The crackdown — which the government has described as necessary to head-off growing racial tension between the Malays and the Chinese— also saw the printing permits for four papers revoked.

Liow also said that his prediction for MCA’s return to power was due to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak’s attention to Chinese issues, which he said has helped woo the community back into BN’s fold.

He said the prime minister’s outreach towards the Chinese community, even resorting to social media tools like Facebook to create a Chinese persona, “Ah Jib Gor”, had successfully convinced voters that the community would not be left out of the nation’s development.

"The feel-good factor is coming back. And the commitment from the PM to the Chinese... the Ah Jib Gor factor shows that he will listen to the Chinese community," Liow told the press conference.

He added that the MCA has made many changes since Election 2008, when it had recorded its worst electoral losses to date.

In his speech earlier, Liow had also said that the negative comments made against BN and its component parties were now on the decline.

He said this was a good sign for the ruling pact, particularly in the months leading up to the coming 13th general election.

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