

**Umno mulls straight fights with DAP, banks on Malay vote**  
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**By Jahabar Sadiq**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 10 — Umno plans on fielding their candidates either in all of the DAP seats or most of them as the Malay vote is more dependable than Chinese support, say strategists.

The Malaysian Insider understands the Barisan Nasional (BN) war room believes Umno candidates can beat back the DAP attack in Johor and other Malay-majority states rather than MCA hopefuls.

“Umno candidates have a better chance of keeping BN seats than the MCA, so we’re looking into pushing more Malay candidates,” a ruling coalition source told The Malaysian Insider.

DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang is spearheading the move into traditional MCA seat Gelang Patah while party strategist Liew Chin Tong is eyeing the Kluang seat. Johor PKR chief Datuk Seri Chua Jui Meng has also been named for the Segamat seat held by MIC.

It is learnt that BN will use the race card in the strategy against Pakatan Rakyat’s (PR) Chinese candidates, especially in the Umno bastion state of Johor where the coalition won 80 per cent of the Malay vote in Election 2008.

“The MCA stands zero chance of winning any battle with the DAP. So, we can definitely beat DAP with our Malay support and at least 25 per cent Chinese support,” another BN source told The Malaysian Insider.

The Sin Chew Chinese daily had reported this week that MCA will “lend” its seats to Umno in Election 2013, in what is seen as an acknowledgement that the BN Chinese party is not confident of winning its seats.

MCA won only 15 out of the 40 federal seats in contested in Election 2008. It has also said it was swapping the Tronoh seat in Perak with MIC, which also suffered major losses in the 2008 general election.

But the move has not gone down well with MCA grassroots, who fear they will not get back their seats in future elections and reduce their power in the ruling coalition.

BN deputy chairman and Umno deputy president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said yesterday the coalition was “looking” into the possibility of fielding caretaker Johor Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Abdul Ghani Othman in Gelang Patah rather than an MCA candidate.

He claimed that grassroots support for the idea was positive, saying that Lim did not anticipate this and that the DAP stalwart “is now trapped there”, suggesting that the veteran lawmaker would likely be defeated in the BN fortress.

“We are taking into consideration the views of all quarters because we need to study the details thoroughly as there are pros and cons,” Muhyiddin said.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek has refused to contest the federal seat, saying local leader Jason Teoh would be the candidate while his party-controlled newspaper The

Star has been promoting Ghani for the seat.

The 66-year-old Ghani has been a four-term menteri besar in Johor and is likely to be replaced by interim higher education minister Datuk Seri Mohd Khaled Nordin, who is not contesting again in the Pasir Gudang federal seat.

Some 13.3 million voters, including 5,200 abroad, are eligible to cast their ballots in Election 2013 to elect lawmakers in 222 federal and 505 state seats in 12 states. Sarawak already held its state elections in 2011.

The Election Commission (EC) will meet this morning to decide the nomination and polling dates in what is seen as the closest race in Malaysian history.

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