

MCA Boss Steps Aside As BN Rejuvenates For GE13
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 11 (Bernama) -- As the Barisan Nasional (BN) heads into its most intense race to seek a fresh mandate from the people, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek has become the latest stalwart to step aside to rejuvenate the face of the coalition for the coming 13th General Election.

In a strong signal to voters of the MCA's will to reinvent itself and groom new leaders to take charge, Dr Chua, who will turn 65, three days before the May 5 polling, said he would lead the party's campaign but would not be contesting.

Two other BN component party leaders had announced earlier that they were making way for new blood, Gerakan president Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and Sarawak United People's Party president Datuk Seri Peter Chin Fah Kui.

Describing the upcoming polls as the 'mother of all elections', Dr Chua said nearly half the MCA candidates for the parliamentary and state contests would be new faces.

Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, who is leading the BN into the general election for the first time after four years helming the country as prime minister, continues to take his message to the people that there is no need to change the government merely for the sake of changing, because the BN has demonstrated it was capable of transforming for the good of the people.

"We are capable of making major changes if the people want them, and there is no need for the government to be replaced by a new one. Major changes can be implemented with the same government," he said in his speech while launching the Pahang Urban Transformation Centre (UTC) in Kuantan Thursday.

He later visited the Gumum Orang Asli village in Chini and assured the orang asli community that the BN would continue to look after their welfare as under the 1Malaysia policy, the BN cared for all communities in the country.

The BN also launched its supplementary manifesto for Kelantan Thursday, pledging to bring a better future in the state which has lagged behind under the PAS-led government for the past 23 years.

Kelantan BN chairman Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said if voters reinstated BN to power, Kelantan would develop a new landscape in the next five years, with 30,000 job opportunities and nurture scholars and young leaders with strong Islamic values.

Meanwhile, PKR president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail said Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim might not be retained as Selangor menteri besar if the opposition continued to rule the state because there were several potential candidates, other than Abdul Khalid.

"(It) Doesn't matter who is going to be the MB (menteri Besar) in Selangor as long as the person has the right policies," she told a press conference at the PKR headquarters in Petaling Jaya, Thursday.

So far, PKR has confirmed Abdul Khalid would defend his seat in the Bandar Tun Razak parliamentary seat but has yet to announce if he would stand again in the Ijok state

constituency or be moved to Pelabuhan Klang.

With nomination looming on April 20, PKR and PAS are at loggerheads over who will stand in the Changkat Jering state seat in Perak and the Sungei Acheh state seat in Penang.

PAS has announced that Datuk Seri Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin would contest the Changkat Jering seat but PKR said it could only happen if Changkat Jering was swapped for a seat held by PAS.

For Sungai Acheh, PAS has picked its state Youth chief Yusni Md Piah as the candidate. PKR is eyeing to field Badrul Hisham Shahrin, also known as Cikgu Bard there.

In Tampin, DAP lost seven senior branch leaders who say they want to support the BN because the coalition had championed the welfare of the Indian community.

"We saw the opposition's manifesto during the 2008 General Election in Selangor, but (after they failed to fulfill it) they said their manifesto wasn't a promise and this is different from the 'Aku Janji' made by BN," Ladang Paroi DAP vice-chairman David Dass said after delivering a ceramah at Ladang Rajent, Gemencheh, Negeri Sembilan, Wednesday night.

Joining him were Desa Dahlia DAP chairman Richard Francis, Desa Dahlia DAP vice-chairman Jesu Dason, Desa Dahlia DAP secretary S. Karthiyaini, Ladang Rajent DAP secretary Chelvam Katham, Ladang Rajent DAP vice-chairman M. Subramaniam and Ladang Paroi DAP secretary K. Mahendran.

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