

**MCA-friendly businessmen plan 55,000-seat dinner to back Najib in Selangor**  
**Malaysian Insider**  
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**By Ida Lim**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 12 — Chinese groups and local entrepreneurs are splashing out to hold a mammoth dinner in Klang's West Port next Saturday, in what appears to be a bid to rally support for the prime minister in Selangor, the country's richest state.

The 55,000-seat dinner is intended to show Chinese support for Datuk Seri Najib Razak and the organisers' hope that the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition that he leads will be able to regain Selangor in Election 2013, a Sin Chew Daily report published today said, citing the event's organising chairman.

Sin Chew also featured a photograph of the tickets printed with the words "Majlis Ramah Mesra Bersama PM" and the "Janji Ditepati" (Promises Fulfilled) slogan used by BN in its campaign.

The Star today also reported that the dinner's organising committee member Datuk Philip Siew had said that the event planned months ago is "not a political function".

"This is not a money-making or a charity event. Expenses will be borne by the Chinese business community," Siew, the Orient Group of Companies' chairman, was quoted as saying by the English-language daily.

He reportedly said influential businessmen Tan Sri Ta Kin Yan and Tan Sri Abu Sahid Mohamed are organising the April 20 dinner together with Gabungan Persatuan Keturunan Cina Selangor.

According to The Star, Siew said that other businessmen would be chipping in to sponsor the dinner that aims to break the current local record of 51,000 seats to enter the Malaysian Book of Records.

MCA President Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek and Malaysian movie star Datuk Seri Michelle Yeoh are also expected to turn up at next Saturday's dinner, in addition to international artistes from Hong Kong and Taiwan who are scheduled to perform, The Star reported.

The Malaysian Insider had this month reported that opposition party DAP is facing the heat from BN-friendly business interests in Penang, with DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng claiming that "big business cronies of BN have been throwing money like nobody's business in Penang."

"This will definitely have an influence on voters and our members have to work hard to explain because we're not fighting BN but money," Lim, who is also the Penang chief minister, told reporters on April 9.

Lim declined to estimate how much money was involved in his allegations, but admitted that if this were to go on, it will be a "life and death" fight at the polls for PR.

In Penang, events involving food have popped up all over the state that is now held by DAP, with many of them organised by local non-governmental organisations and residents' associations. Some of these dinners were also reportedly hosted by Penang BN coordinators

themselves.

On April 11, the Asian Wall Street Journal reported that the BN coalition's supporters have been pumping in big bucks into Penang to cater to the state's Chinese majority.

"Many of these gatherings are sponsored by external groups and done independently," Datuk Teng Hock Nan, Penang Gerakan chief, was quoted as saying, but denied the campaign-related activities were directly funded by the BN coalition.

"As far as the party is concerned, we haven't spent a sen," he said.

BN was also previously rumoured to have links with a lavish concert featuring Korean popular singer Psy last February where coalition chairman Datuk Seri Najib Razak was the guest-of-honour.

Next Saturday, a charity concert organised by the BN-friendly NGO 1 Malaysia Welfare Club and featuring international artistes will be held in Penang.

The spending by BN supporters are likely to outweigh the limited resources of Pakatan Rakyat, making the battle for votes even harder for the opposition pact.

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