

MCA may need to accept other races, says Donald Lim
Malaysian Insider
May 18, 2013
By Emily Ding

KUALA LUMPUR, May 18 — The MCA may have to open its party membership to other races after its worst result in history in Election 2013 as it cannot just bank on the Chinese vote, says the party's Selangor chief Datuk Donald Lim.

He said the Chinese component party under the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) government should look at the bigger picture and take into account the reality of the urban-rural divide, rather than a racial one, as reflected by the election results.

"The MCA probably will have to move away from being a race-based party. Maybe the party constitution will have to be changed to allow other races to come in," Lim (picture) told The Malaysian Insider.

"This is a different century. These days we are multiracial and people need to move forward and mix around freely. At this juncture, it is better to open up to serve the people better," he added.

In the May 5 general election, the MCA won only seven parliamentary seats and 11 state seats out of the 37 parliamentary seats and 90 state seats it contested — less than half the federal seats it took in 2008.

For this reason, the MCA has been left out of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's new Cabinet line-up, consistent with party chief Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek's pledge that the party would refuse any government posts if it failed to take more federal seats than in 2008.

When asked about the possibility of merging all BN component parties into one, Lim said: "It's a good suggestion but it will take a while because Umno is still doing quite well so they might be resistant to it."

However, he said it may be an option for the MCA to merge with other BN component parties such as Gerakan and the Sarawak United Peoples' Party (SUPP) to become a stronger force.

Gerakan won only one parliamentary seat of the 11 seats contested in the 13th general election, and only three of the 31 state seats it contested.

Some quarters have also been calling for BN to offer direct and multiracial membership into the coalition rather than only via its component parties, a suggestion Lim was also agreeable to while acknowledging that it may herald the end of some component parties.

"If BN offers direct membership then slowly the component parties may start disappearing, but of course some may stay on if they are strong enough," he said.

He also conceded the possibility that the move could eventually herald the end of the MCA if the party did not bolster its strength and popularity.

"Anything can happen" he said, though he added that it would probably take a long time for

that to materialise.

Lim said, however, that any such moves would have to await the party's internal elections until a new party president and a new team are elected to decide how to move forward.

Lim contested in the May 5 general election for the federal seat of Selayang, but lost to PKR's William Leong by 17,846 votes.

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