

In MCA, a battle between top leaders starts even before party polls
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BY EILEEN NG

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek could end his deputy's challenge for his post two months before the party's election at an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) on October 20, reflecting the ruling Barisan Nasional's (BN) reluctance for renewal despite heavy losses in Election 2013.

Dr Chua's faction, comprising at least half of the 2,400 central delegates, is expected to support a resolution to "censure" Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai for refusing to accept the party's collective decisions and directly dent his chances of taking on his boss, who has kept mum about keeping his post.

The same resolution also noted that not only has Liow failed in his duties as general election preparation committee chief, but also that his recent actions had caused infighting and tarnished the party's image.

This was one of the four resolutions set out for the EGM. The other three were to accept government posts at various levels, overturning MCA's earlier stand of not taking up any government posts because it fared badly in the 13th general election.

At the May 5 national polls, the senior BN Chinese party only managed to win seven out of 37 federal seats and 11 out of 90 state seats it contested.

Liow fell out with Dr Chua early this month after openly calling his boss a 'dictator' and 'spin doctor'. – The Malaysian Insider pic, October 5, 2013. Liow fell out with Dr Chua early this month after openly calling his boss a 'dictator' and 'spin doctor'. – The Malaysian Insider pic, October 5, 2013. In contrast, Liow, who fell out with Dr Chua early this month after openly calling his boss a "dictator" and "spin doctor", is said by party insiders to have the support of about 30% of the central delegates.

Many who had initially leaned towards Liow were said to shying away after news of the EGM broke.

Apart from some divisional leaders in his own state of Pahang and the Klang Valley, no other leaders have openly come out to state their support for Liow, unlike Dr Chua who has had leaders from Johor and Perak, two states with the highest number of central delegates, pledging their support.

There was talk that Liow has the backing of current Youth chief Datuk Dr Wee Ka Siong and those who are not aligned to Dr Chua, but the numbers are too small and fractured to make a difference.

"Their power base has been diluted, compared to Dr Chua who has always been a grassroots man and many owe him their current positions," said a division leader.

If the party's delegates vote for the resolution, Liow, a former health minister, is very likely to face disciplinary action which will either see him suspended or, worse, sacked.

"It will be quite tough for him... if Liow is censured, he is finished," political analyst Khoo

Kay Peng told The Malaysian Insider.

Central committee member Datuk Ti Lian Ker said delegates will consider many factors before making up their minds.

"Our delegates nowadays are no longer tied to the wishes of division chiefs or caidan (menu). They are very independent minded," he said.

Predictably, Liow has cried foul over this latest move, saying that the censure was "revenge" against him and his supporters for attempting to call an earlier EGM to reverse the powerful central committee's decision on Datuk Tee Siew Keong.

Tee, a staunch supporter of Dr Chua, had his three-year suspension, imposed for taking up a government post, lifted by the committee on September 5.

Liow's faction plans for the EGM did not materialise due to legal problems. - October 5, 2013.

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