

We Want To Focus On Hudud, Says Mca On Avoiding Bukit Gelugor By-Election

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By Looi Sue-Chern

The MCA is not contesting the Bukit Gelugor by-election as it wants to focus on its fight to defend the Constitution, said its secretary-general Datuk Seri Ong Ka Chuan.

He said the party wanted to give full focus to the controversy sparked by PAS's push for the implementation of hudud law in Kelantan.

"We need to strive wholeheartedly to conduct activities to protect the Constitution.

"In consideration of the various issues that have arisen, MCA has decided not to contest.

"Although we will not be contesting, MCA will continue to serve the people... we hope the rakyat understands that MCA must make a correct decision at this critical time," he told a press conference in Penang today.

Ong said the decision has been relayed to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who is also the Barisan Nasional chairman.

He said Najib had asked the party to state any positive factor for contesting in Bukit Gelugor but the party was hard put for an answer.

"We could not find a prominent positive factor to go into this by-election, but this does not mean we are avoiding our responsibilities.

"We should conserve our resources to get ready for the 14th general election," Ong said.

However, he declined to comment on whether this meant MCA knew it had no chance in Bukit Gelugor.

Karpal's son, Ramkarpal Singh Deo, has been named the DAP candidate for the by-election on May 25.

Ong said contesting the by-election could divert the party's attention from fighting the hudud issue, which is the MCA's priority now.

Party vice-president Datin Paduka Chew Mei Fun said the state committee in Penang headed by her supported the decision not to contest.

"We have been concerned about the by-election but the most important issue we have to address now is the possible constitutional crisis.

"We had an in-depth discussion today with state leaders and our conclusion is to support the decision by the top leadership.

"Parliament will be in session on June 9, two weeks after the by-election. At this time, we need to mobilise our efforts to address the problem brought by PAS with its private member's bill on hudud," she said.

The party had previously been tight-lipped on whether to contest the seat, left vacant by Karpal's tragic death on April 17.

Although there had been signs that MCA would avoid the by-election, there were no movements on the ground all week as nomination day neared.

MCA lost the seat to the Karpal in three consecutive general elections since 2004.

Karpal, who won the seat with a modest majority of 1,261 in 2004, retained the seat in 2008 with a majority of 21,015, and in 2013 won by a thumping 42,706 votes. – May 10, 2014.

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