

MOHAMMAD ADIB RAWI / THESUN

Will Liow horse trade with Chua?

PRESS DIGEST

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MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek has hinted of a conditional blessing for his deputy Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai in the latter's bid for the party top post.

According to a report in *Nanyang Siang Pau* yesterday, Liow would have to agree to a negotiated new leadership in return for Chua's support in the year-end party elections.

The report said although Chua does not have a strong line-up, he controls several key states and would have no problem defending his post, should he choose to do so.

It is understood that Liow has held negotiations with Chua over the Dec 21 party polls but their talks were deadlocked due to hindrances from within Liow's camp.

A source from Chua's camp said the party chief holds sway in Johor, Selangor and Perak, besides strong support from the smaller states of Kedah, Malacca, Negri Sembilan and Perlis.

Without Chua's blessing, Liow will find it an uphill task to contest for the top post, the source opined.

"Liow cannot afford to lose, but his influence is confined to only Pahang, Terengganu and to a lesser degree Selangor.

"As long as he negotiates with Chua to include the latter's men in the new line-up, including making Chua's son Tee Yong as his running mate, an infighting can be avoided and MCA will have peace."

An old hand at politics, Chua has mustered the support of the majority of grassroots leaders, which Liow is not capable of, a Chua loyalist told the daily, adding that the internal divide has worsened in the recent years and is unlikely to improve soon because there were too many personal agendas in the way.

He said other president's men such as vice-president Gan Ping Sieu, secretary-general Datuk Seri Kong Cho Ha, central committee member Datuk Lee Chee Leong and Wanita vice-chairman Datuk Heng Saei Kie are still loyal to Chua.



Soi Lek



Liow



Tee Yong

Esscom DG rubbishes claims of shootout

LAHAD DATU: Eastern Sabah Security Command (Esscom) director-general Datuk Mohammad Mentek has rubbished claims that eight Malaysian soldiers were killed in a recent shootout in Lahad Datu.

Describing the recent statement by the so-called Sultanate of Sulu in Philippines newspapers as mere propaganda, he said since the intrusion of Sulu armed men into Tando, Lahad Datu in February, there had not been any recent clash between them and Malaysian security forces.

"How can they make that claim when there was no war? That claim is baseless," he said when asked to comment on the matter.

He reiterated that the reports were intended to reflect the situation in the state as unstable, apart from an attempt to stir unrest.

The so-called Sultanate of Sulu was quoted as claiming recently that its forces led by a veteran guerilla from Tawi-Tawi, killed at least eight Malaysian soldiers in a shootout in Lahad Datu.

On June 19, Mohammad also dismissed a report in a Philippines newspaper of a skirmish between Malaysian security forces and about 400 armed Sulu armed men at Kampung Dengan Tungku near Lahad Datu.

Meanwhile, Esscom yesterday opened a 24-hour operations room to enhance security in the east coast.

Mohammad said the operations room is based in Lahad Datu and the public can contact it by telephone (089-863181) or fax (089-863182) to make enquiries, lodge complaints or provide information.

He advised the public, including village chiefs and chairmen of village development and security committees, to alert the operations room immediately of suspicious immigrants in their villages. - Bernama



COLOURS OF MERDEKA ... Three tourists visiting the Merdeka Square in Kuala Lumpur yesterday posing in front of a giant Malaysian flag formed by banners erected for the Independence Day celebrations.

Pak Lah denies 'conspiracy'

> Ex-PM clarifies misconceptions about book on his administration

BY **ELLY FAZANIZA**
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PETALING JAYA: Former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday dismissed accusations that he had conspired with the Opposition to go against Umno, through the publication of the book *Awakening: The Abdullah Badawi Years in Malaysia*.

"That is tantamount to twisting the facts and is slanderous. The criticisms given during the interview with me, as contained in the book, were made because I wish to see that Umno continues to have the people's mandate and trust.

"I have never left Umno and, God willing, when the time comes I will breathe my last in this world as an Umno member who loves his motherland," he said in a statement.

"The book was not written by me," Abdullah said, adding that it was compiled by two academicians, James Chin and Bridget Welsh, who included several essays by contributors on his administration as prime minister.

The editors, who are university academics, also had to issue a similar statement last Saturday, stressing that Abdullah's contribution was only in the interview

with them.

"We have contributors from all sides of the political divide and academic observers. We worked to have a balanced collection and part of the balancing was to give space to (Abdullah) himself to put himself on record on his tenure," they said.

Abdullah, 73, acknowledged the potentially controversial reaction to the book but urged the public to be open-minded when reading it.

He said that he was only associated with an interview in 2011, which was more inclined towards replying to questions raised by the writers who had contributed to the book and providing him with an opportunity to clarify several points inserted in the book.

"I did not sponsor or ask for the book to be published. It is the norm for academicians to make an analysis of our country's political history and, definitely, my era did not escape academic research.

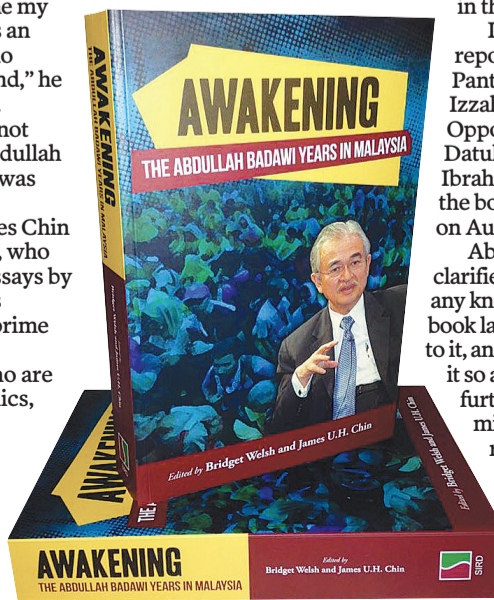
"I only agreed to be interviewed so that my views and explanations can be carried in the book," he said.

It had been reported that Lembah Pantai MP Nurul Izzah, daughter of Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, would launch the book in Singapore on Aug 30.

Abdullah also clarified he did not have any knowledge of the book launch or invitations to it, and would not attend it so as to prevent further

misconceptions regarding the book.

He said any decision and effort to publicise the book is the publisher's.



BRIEFS

SUPPORT FOR MUSA

KOTA KINABALU: Several Sabah Umno leaders have expressed support for Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman, who is Sabah Umno liaison committee chairman, to contest for the party's vice-president post at this year's party election. They opined that Musa was the apt choice, considering his record in Umno and in the government, to fill one of the three Umno vice-president posts. Musa's supporters included Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Seri Yahya Hussin and Sipitang Umno division leader Datuk Sapawi Ahmad. - Bernama

AZIZAH FOR VEEP POST

BEAUFORT: Women, Family and Community Development Deputy Minister Datuk Azidah Mohd Dun has confirmed that she will bid for the Wanita Umno vice-chief post in the party polls. "Having substantial experience in Umno as Beaufort Wanita Umno chief, state Wanita Umno vice-chief and Wanita Umno exco, I believe I can contribute much for women not only in Sabah but nationally as well," she said. - Bernama

COORDINATED AID

SERIAN: The Serian district office and Samarahan Resident's office will coordinate with each other in determining the form of aid to be given to the 42 fire victims at Kampung Soh, Batu 27, Jalan Kuching-Serian. The victims were left homeless when fire ravaged their two-storey longhouse at 9am on Sunday. Kota Samarahan MP Rubiah Wang said the coordination was necessary in terms of future plans to resolve the victims' plight, and proper distribution of the various assistance that had been pouring in for them including from the Social Welfare Department. "The victims will also receive special cash aid through the offices of the Samarahan parliamentary and Muara Tuang state constituencies," she said. - Bernama