

BERNAMAPIX



MERDEKA SPIRIT ... The silhouettes of two pedestrians are seen through this Jalur Gemilang, one of the thousands now decorating Kuala Lumpur in conjunction with the 56th Merdeka Day. The theme of this year's celebration, "A Sovereign Malaysia: My Homeland", is aimed at promoting patriotism and unity among all Malaysians and an awareness on national sovereignty and national security.

Focus on public issues, not party polls: Soi Lek

BY **ELLY FAZANIZA**
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KUALA LUMPUR: MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek yesterday skirted the issue of whether he will run for the party's top post in the upcoming party elections.

He also reminded party members to focus on issues which affected the public.

"I have told party members not to focus so much on (their stand) on the elections as there are many issues which need to be addressed," he told the press after chairing the party's central executive committee (CEC) meeting here.

His statement comes amidst speculation that an agreement had been reached with his deputy Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai for the latter to gain the top post.

According to recent reports in Chinese dailies, Liow would have to agree to a negotiated new leadership in return for Chua's support in the year-end elections.

Earlier, both Chua and Liow addressed a Wangsa Maju divisional member's grievance regarding the president's position as Penang Port chairman.

They advised the member to raise the matter at the annual general meeting (AGM) which will be held soon.

On a separate matter, Chua denied allegations that MCA plans to sell off its shares in *The Star*.

"That is not true. *The Star*'s shares which are listed under MCA, not the president, have gone up the past three years. In fact, it is difficult to sell the shares now," he said.

He also announced the establishment of committees to tackle three fundamental issues affecting the public.

Datuk Dr Wee Ka Siong has been tasked to address entrance into public universities, Gan Ping Sieu to address religious sensitivity while MCA young professionals bureau chief Datuk Chua Tee Yong will tackle the Trans-Pacific Partnership issue.

Each committee head will draft a proposal within two weeks and submit its findings to the appropriate ministry.

BRIEFS

AG REVIEWS CIVIL LAW ACT

KUALA LUMPUR: The Attorney-General's Chambers is reviewing the appropriateness of adopting the Civil Law Act 1956 (Act 67), particularly the provision on the granting and calculation of damages for personal injury and fatal accidents. Attorney-General Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail said in a statement yesterday its preliminary study revealed that there were provisions in the act that could be revamped in line with the latest economic and social developments in Malaysia. He also said a survey form has been uploaded to the AG's Chambers website (<http://www.agc.gov.my>) to get feedback on the proposal to improve the act. — Bernama

BE MORE RESPONSIBLE, MERDEKA CENTRE URGED

KUALA LUMPUR: The MIC has urged the Merdeka Centre to be more responsible and accurate in its study of voting patterns. Its deputy president, Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam, said the study by Merdeka Centre was flawed and aimed at creating a wrong impression to the general public. "The recent analysis carried out by Merdeka Centre is a blatant lie," he said in a statement yesterday. The study showed that two MIC cabinet ministers, Dr Subramaniam (Segamat, Johor) and Datuk Seri G. Palanivel (Cameron Highlands, Pahang) would have lost their parliamentary seats without the advance and postal voting. — Bernama

Palace 'intruders' referred to religious dept

> Police say Kumpulan Panji Hitam not a security threat

BY **CHARLES RAMENDRAN**
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KUALA LUMPUR: The leader and followers of a deviant group who were held last week for attempting to trespass on Istana Negara in Jalan Duta will be handed over to the Islamic

religious department for further investigations.

Kuala Lumpur police CID chief SAC Datuk Ku Chin Wah said police have deemed the group that calls itself Kumpulan Panji Hitam (the Black Banner Group) representing the so-called East Empire of Langkasuka Nusantara harmless and not a threat.

"Our findings show they are not violent or a threat. They are lost in deviant teachings. "They will not face any

charges but we will hand them over to the religious department for further action," he said.

He said the group had not trespassed on the palace but merely demanded to be allowed in.

Ten people in the group including the 40-year-old leader, his 52-year-old wife and their 11-year-old daughter, had turned up at the Istana Negara gates at 4.30am on Aug 5 claiming they were the rightful heir to the royal throne and demanded they be

allowed in.

Palace guards called police who promptly arrived and detained the group.

While the woman and the child were freed a day later, the leader and his seven followers were remanded until Saturday for investigations.

Among the items police seized from them were flags with Islamic writings and documents from the Philippines stating the group leader is the rightful king of the country.

Nazri appoints son 'special officer'

KUALA LUMPUR: Tourism and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz has appointed his controversial son, Mohamed Nedim, as his "special officer" although the ministry website does not specify his duties as such.

Nedim was connected to an assault case in March 2012 where his bodyguards allegedly assaulted a condominium security guard. No action was taken against him by police.

He was also in the news last year when he was found driving a luxury car registered to Michael Chia, who was reportedly investigated for graft involving RM40 million. Chia was later cleared of the charge.

Nazri, when contacted, said as Nedim is not a gazetted officer, his salary is not paid by the government.

Nazri said he appointed his son to help him reach out

to the young voters in his constituency in Padang Renggas.

"I have 6,000 young, first time, voters in my constituency. So I asked Nedim to help organise programmes and activities for them. These voters are apolitical. So I purely asked Nedim to organise programmes for them because he is young as well. The funds for these programmes and activities comes out of my own pocket," Nazri said.

Nazri stressed that Nedim is not involved in any matter related to his ministry.

"I have told him not to get involved in politics. His duty is just to engage with the young voters."

Resolve conversion issue once and for all: Civil society groups

BY **DOROTHY CHENG**
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PETALING JAYA: The government has to come up with a concrete solution to deal with disputes over the conversion of children as court rulings will not achieve anything in the long run, civil society groups said.

They were commenting on reports that the Perak government, Perak Islamic Religious Department, and the Registrar of Muslim Converts have filed appeals against a High Court decision last month annulling the conversion of three Hindu children to Islam.

Lawyers for Liberty co-founder Eric Paulsen said the solution for disputes between parents should not be through the courts and that the issue calls for a political solution.

"The government needs to resolve the issue once and for all. Fighting it out in court is far too complex, especially because this is an issue between family members," he said.

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