

MCA crisis: Nothing left to mediate, says PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, commenting on the MCA crisis, said today that there is nothing left to mediate.

Replying to a question about a report that he had given the go-ahead to Barisan Nasional secretary-general Ghafar Baba to conduct fresh negotiations to settle the crisis, the Prime Minister said:

"I don't know what there is to mediate. It has gone to the courts. It is up to the courts to settle."

He said the MCA leaders who met him yesterday briefed him on what was happening in the party.

"That is all," Dr Mahathir told newsmen during a visit to the Islamic Centre to inspect the preparations for the Quran reading competition.

The MCA leaders, led by acting president Datuk Dr Neo Yee Pan, met

Dr Mahathir said Usno president Tun Mustapha Datu Harun, who is here on a holiday, could come and see him if he wished.

A report today quoted Tun Mustapha as saying that he hoped to meet Dr Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir, who was visibly annoyed by some of the questions fielded by the newsmen, told them: "Don't you have other questions to ask?"

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He asked if there were no better developments in the country worthy of Press coverage than the MCA crisis and the Cuepacs claim for salary revision for civil service employees.

"How are we going to attract more tourists if the papers continue to highlight the MCA quarrel and the Cuepacs claim?" he asked.

Meanwhile, Encik Ghafar Baba said today that he has not received fresh

instructions from Dr Mahathir to act as mediator in the MCA crisis.

Speaking to reporters, who had gone to his office to get his comments on a report that he had been given the "go-ahead" to conduct fresh negotiations in the crisis by the Prime Minister yesterday, Encik Ghafar said:

"I have not met the Prime Minister or spoken to him over the telephone since yesterday," he said.

He only read about the latest development (regarding the go-ahead from the Prime Minister) in the newspapers.

He said he had not met the two factions officially since the signing of the Jan 30 agreement. Only some casual contacts, he added.

"I think it is best to let them settle the problem among themselves without interference from a third party like me."

Encik Ghafar said the news of the party's crisis should come from the court.

"Go to the court, that's the best place for you newsmen to get the best news for your papers on the crisis," Encik Ghafar said.

Encik Ghafar was instrumental in bringing the two factions together to sign the agreement on Jan 30.

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the Prime Minister for about an hour.

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