

DR M COMMENTS ON REPORTS ABOUT MCA CHIEF

# PM: I did not ask Neo to step down

NSunT 21 JUL 1985

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that he has not asked MCA acting president Datuk Dr Neo Yee Pan to resign.

"I have not asked him to step down," he told newsmen after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting tonight.

"Other people may have asked him to step down, but I have not," he added.

He was commenting on reports that some circles in Umno and Barisan Nasional had called for Datuk Dr Neo to step down to resolve the MCA crisis.

Dr Mahathir said the MCA crisis was discussed at length at the council meeting tonight.

The main focus was on the impact the crisis would have on Barisan and Umno. He did not elaborate, however, on what the possible effects could be.

"We merely discussed and exchanged in detail views on possible impact on the Barisan and Umno," he said.

"It is an issue which has had the attention of many people, and some of our members had many things to say. That's why the discussion went on for about two-and-a-half-hours."

Dr Mahathir said, however, the MCA crisis was a "domestic" affair and Umno therefore did not take any stand on it at meeting.

"We discussed possible effects because Umno should know about them and what it could mean for the Barisan."

Dr Mahathir also said the Council discussed developments in Sabah politics since the State elections in April.

This was the first time the Council had talked about Sabah politics, apart from discussing a brief report submitted soon after the election.

"We have not, however, taken any stand. We just took note of it."

Commenting briefly on the recent Berjaya party election which saw the presidency won by Datuk Mohamed Nor Mansor, Dr Mahathir said Umno supported whoever had been chosen by the people.

"We did not back any candidate and we accept whatever decision was made by the party," he said.