

Three reasons why Yee Pan was dropped from Cabinet

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — At the start of the Barisan Nasional Supreme Council meeting this morning, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced that Datuk Dr Neo Yee Pan had been dropped from the Cabinet.

The meeting had started at 10.15a.m, 15 minutes later than scheduled, after Dr Mahathir was told by Barisan executive secretary Kamarulzaman Bahadun that the MCA representatives were tied up at their own meeting.

Dr Mahathir told the other Barisan members that the Chinese community must have representation in the Barisan Nasional and the coalition did not want to allow the support of Chinese community to be eroded because of any one individual.

He also said that that as the Chinese formed the second largest community in the country, their interests had to safeguarded at all

times.

Dr Mahathir told the party leaders that he had been sympathetic with Dr Neo at the beginning of the party crisis but now felt that if Dr Neo was dropped, the party crisis would end.

While the MCA crisis was being discussed, Dr Neo and Datuk Mak Hon Kam, both of whom claimed to be acting presidents, walked in at about 10.50a.m. They had arrive in the same car.

Datuk Mak told the meeting that the MCA needed three months to resolve the crisis, failing which the party would opt out of the coalition temporarily.

When Barisan leaders asked Datuk Mak what "authority" he had in making the request, he replied that he was speaking in his capacity as party acting president.

Dr Neo was then asked if his silence meant consent. He said Datuk Mak was only the party spokesman

and then suggested that the Barisan referred to both of them as representatives of the MCA to avoid any problems of recognition.

The council agreed.

At about 11a.m., Dr Neo and Datuk Mak left the room for the Barisan leaders to discuss the three-month request. Thirty minutes later they were told the request had been agreed on.

Among those who attended the meeting were Datuk Abdullah Haji Badawi and Encik Anwar Ibrahim from Umno, Datuk S. Samy Vellu and Datuk S. Subramaniam (MIC), Datuk Dr Lim Kheng Yaik and Datuk Paul Leong (Gerakan), Datuk Leo Moggie and Daniel Tajem (PBDS), Datuk Patinggi Taib Mahmud and Alfred Jabu (PBB) and Datuk Mohamed Noor Mansoor (Berjaya).

Also present were SUPP, Berjasa and PPP leaders as well as Barisan treasurer-general Daim Zainuddin.