

Leave me out of MCA issue: PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that he does not want to get involved in the latest MCA controversy.

He also laughed off claims by MCA secretary-general Yeoh Poh San that he had promised Datuk Mak Hon Kam the MCA presidency if he could persuade acting president Datuk Dr Neo Yee Pan to step down. (See report on page 3)

"I am glad to hear that I elected the MCA president," he told a Press conference at Subang airport on his return from Nassau where he attended the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

On the calls by two former members of the MCA ad hoc committee, Datuk Mak and Datuk Dr Tan Tiong Hong, asking Ghafar Baba to resign as its chairman because they had lost confidence in him, Dr Mahathir said: "I do not want to get involved."

Asked if these developments would result in the 19-month crisis being prolonged, Dr Mahathir said: "Maybe. But I heard the courts have rejected ... (applications to stop the MCA elections scheduled for Nov. 24)."

On the decision to equip a MAS Boeing 747 jet with Pratt and Whitney engines from the United States instead of British Rolls Royce engines, Dr Mahathir said: "It is purely a business deal."

Dr Mahathir dismissed the speculation by the *Asian Wall Street Journal* that the decision was an about-turn by the Malaysian Government. (See report on page 5)

Asked if this move would be seen as "a slap in British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's face," Dr Mahathir said: "I do not think so. It is in the best interests of MAS to use these (Pratt and Whitney) engines."

Dr Mahathir added that Petronas was buying the engines and leasing it to MAS because "we do not want MAS to spend too much on capital."

On the civil servants' wage claims issue, Dr Mahathir said he would comment on it once he had been briefed on the developments.