

BN FIRST, THEN PARTY

Most Chinese want a strong
govt, says Ghafar

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SHAH ALAM, Fri. — Encik Abdul Ghafar Baba is confident the Chinese will support the Barisan Nasional in the general election regardless of developments in the MCA.

The Deputy Prime Minister said today the majority of the Chinese would continue to back the Barisan because it wanted a strong government that could guarantee prosperity.

He told newsmen after visiting the Proton factory here that the question of whether the MCA would win or lose in the general election under Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik did not arise.

"In an election, the Chinese are

not only voting for the MCA or who leads the party. They consider the need for a strong government that can formulate liberal economic policies that can ensure success," he said.

Encik Ghafar, who is Barisan secretary-general, had been asked to comment on developments in the MCA, and how these could affect the party's performance in the general election.

As Encik Ghafar saw it, a weak government could jeopardise the country's interests more so than a weak party.

"Party problems can eventually be resolved. But if a government faces problems and becomes weak, the political and economic stability of the country as well as its security will be threatened," he said.

Encik Ghafar said the Barisan would not intervene to avert contests in the MCA elections due on July 28 because such an act would be against the democratic process.

He said it was true that the Barisan had intervened in MCA affairs before (in 1985), but this was at the request of the party to resolve the problem of phantom members.

"The present situation is different. It concerns the process of choosing the party leadership. We have to leave it to the democratic process," Encik Ghafar said.

"MCA members are free to elect those they feel should lead the party at the general assembly."