

It's good for Barisan, they say

PM, leaders happy MCA issue settled

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — The Prime Minister is happy that the MCA leadership tussle has been settled without a contest between president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and his deputy, Datuk Lee Kim Sai.

Datuk Seri Dr Ling, the Transport Minister, told reporters that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had expressed happiness with the settlement after today's Cabinet meeting.

He said his other Cabinet colleagues also congratulated the party on the amicable solution to the problem.

The tussle ended after yesterday's four-hour central committee meeting where both Datuk Seri Dr Ling and Datuk Lee, the Housing and Local Government Minister, nominated each other to defend their present posts.

Datuk Lee had announced on July 4 that he intended to contest the presidency and this was supported by the Selangor MCA at its convention last Sunday.

Other Barisan Nasional component party leaders hailed the move to call off the contest, saying it would

boost the BN's chances in the coming general election.

In Alor Star, Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba, approached by newsmen late last night after a *ceramah* in Guar Chempe-dak, 30km from here, cheerfully said: "It (the contest) has been called off? Thank you. I am very happy."

Maintaining that the spirit shown by the MCA leaders was commendable, he said the move would further strengthen the Barisan Nasional.

Encik Ghafar, who is also Umno deputy president and

Barisan Nasional secretary-general, said the no-contest decision meant MCA leaders could now concentrate their forces on the general election.

In a lighter vein, he said the spirit displayed by the MCA leaders was better than the spirit of the Semangat 46.

Education Minister Anwar Ibrahim, who was also present, commended the spirit of the MCA leaders.

"It is certainly a good sign for the general election."

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said he was glad Datuk Lee had shown maturity in dealing with the problem and decided to place the interests of the party and community above his own.

"By calling off his challenge against the incumbent president, Datuk Lee will have actually gained more support. Datuk Lee's example is one that others should emulate."

Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, expressing his happiness at the Ling-Lee agreement, hoped MCA delegates and members would respect the agreement and go about their delegates' conference peacefully and quickly prepare their party machinery for the general election.

"The Gerakan looks forward to closer co-operation with the MCA leadership," he added.