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Bridging communication gap with undergraduates

Chok Suat Ling

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The MCA today resolved to bridge the communication gap between undergraduates and the country's leadership, in the light of student participation in recent demonstrations.

It outlined steps to be taken to "constructively engage" students in current issues, among others, dialogues, annual camps, inter-varsity debates and forums.

Thus far, dialogues and discussions have been held between undergraduates and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and several Cabinet Ministers.

These dialogues have been described as successful in instilling patriotism among students, and helping them better understand the current developments.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said its Youth wing would be organising the activities as "it takes youths to talk to youths".

"This is a form of constructive engagement.

"It has to be carried out as there exists misguided youths who participate in demonstrations and damage public property.

"The numbers, however, are small ... only one per cent of the total number of students.

"The majority of students take their studies seriously and do not waste their parents' money.

"Nevertheless, constant dialogues must be held to ensure there is continuous communication," Dr Ling, who is also Transport Minister, told reporters after chairing a meeting between MCA and its Youth wing at his Ministry.

On preparations for the general election, Dr Ling said the party machinery was ready.

He said it was prepared to "spring into action even if the election is in one week's time".

"The operation rooms are ready, the cars are ready, and the drivers have all been listed down, among others."

On the meeting with the Youth movement today, Dr Ling said it was to exchange views on several current issues.

"Such meetings will be held once in three months."

Among topics discussed, he said, were plans for the coming millennium.

"MCA will launch several programmes in the coming century.

"They include the establishment of training centres nationwide to educate members on the party's history and developments.

"We want quality members and believe such centres will help us produce them," he said.

He added the centres would be set up in, among others, Kampar, Karak, Langkawi and Tasik Kenyir.

Other programmes included the dissemination of information regarding e-commerce, and seminars by well-known foreign and local speakers and philosophical thinkers.

He said the issue of bank mergers was also discussed but "at this point, we do not want to speculate on anything".

Meanwhile, Wanita MCA national chairman Datuk Ng Yen Yen, at a Press conference in Wisma MCA, said a charity sale for the Wanita MCA Social Development Fund would be held on Oct 9.

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