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Ling-Singapore

LOOK AT YOURSELF FIRST, DR LING TELLS SINGAPORE NEWSPAPER

KUALA LUMPUR, June 20 (Bernama) -- MCA President Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik today joined the chorus of criticisms by Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders on the Singapore Business Times' editorial report two days ago, saying "it is too amusing to merit a serious comment."

He said the report was "accurately mirroring the republic's own problems."

"Singapore newspapers better look at themselves first before talking about others. I think (former prime minister) Lee Kuan Yew has been governing for 31 years, (and) he's still there. I think we don't enjoy talking about neighbouring countries," said Dr Ling, who is Transport Minister.

The newspaper in its editorial on Friday said winning the general election would not seal Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's legacy "because that will only come if he can set the foundations for Malaysia's sustained economic progress in the new millennium under a new team."

It also said the BN coalition had been characterised by component parties which showed a very low propensity for renewal. It said Dr Ling had been at the helm of MCA since 1986, MIC's Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu since 1980 and also pointed to no Gerakan leadership change for more than a decade.

"They should mind their own business. It is a frivolous and reckless report by a foreign newspaper," Dr Ling told reporters after opening Selangor MCA convention at the party headquarters, here.

Dr Mahathir said yesterday that the Singapore press had a "habit of writing nasty things" about the country while Malaysia had always been reserved in criticising the republic.

On the upcoming general election, Dr Ling said he concurred with Dr Mahathir's view that the BN could retain the two-thirds majority in the polls.

He said he was confident of achieving a comfortable majority as the opposition alliance was in disarray with the DAP pursuing its "Malaysian Malaysia" concept, PAS adamant to establish an Islamic state while Parti Keadilan Nasional (Keadilan) had no stand whatsoever.

"This is a marriage of convenience of strange bedfellows who will not last long," he added.

Meanwhile, opening the Federal Territory MCA convention, Dr Ling called on party members to avoid a split in the run-up to the July 17 party election.

"We should follow the formula of minimum distraction and maximum unity to prevent disunity," he said.

Federal Territory MCA chief Datuk Tan Chai Ho also urged party members to be united and continue their solid support for MCA and the ruling BN government.

Members' unity and comradeship were crucial as the party geared up for the general election, said Tan, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry.

-- BERNAMA

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