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Penang MCA ends meeting on calm note

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PENANG, Sun. - The five-hour Penang MCA delegates' conference at Komtar today went without incident.

There was no fiery or motivational speeches from national and State leaders, including party president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and State chairman Datuk Dr Sak Cheng Lum, despite the party national election slated for July 17.

Pundits said the tranquillity of the meeting signified a very stable MCA and also a sign of its confidence of winning all seats it will contest in the next general election.

The only stir came when three delegates spoke on the possibility of the MCA being "returned to real power in the State".

Jalan Baru branch delegate Tham Soon Seong reminded the assembly that the Penang Government was once led by MCA under Tan Sri Wong Pow Nee from 1957 to May 10, 1969.

"We have been there before and we can be there again," he said.

In reference to the chief ministership that it covets, Tham said it was time for the State MCA to stop existing in the shadow of the Gerakan.

Earlier, Dr Ling was reluctant to say if the MCA would make a bid for the chief ministership if the party fared better than the Gerakan.

"The issue does not arise," he said. "Right now, we must only focus on ensuring that every Barisan Nasional candidate wins in the general election."

He said the MCA would not ask for additional seats to the nine State and three parliamentary seats it contested in 1995.

Dr Sak had recommended that the existing nine MCA State Assemblymen and two parliamentarians be given the chance to defend their seats.

"I agree," Dr Ling said, adding that he would recommend to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to retain the MCA line-up in Penang.

Dr Ling praised MCA's elected representatives in the State as moh tuck teng (excellent) but slammed the DAP as moh kau chor (must be joking) to think they could help solve the people's problems.

The convention later passed 15 resolutions, including:

* supporting the State Government's appeal to the Federal Government to defer the transition period of the Control of Rent (repeal) Act;

* supporting Dr Mahathir and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to continue leading the BN Government;

* maintaining the MCA leadership of Dr Ling and his deputy Datuk Lim Ah Lek; and,

* urging the Penang Government to speed up completion of infrastructure projects relating to transport and flood mitigation.

Yesterday, in Sungai Petani, Dr Ling said many aspirants would withdraw from the party election before the MCA's general assembly next month.

He said this was because MCA members and leaders were a mature and disciplined lot and wanted to avoid a split in the party.

"Many party members have offered their services for the various top party posts. Of late, many have also announced their withdrawals," he said after opening the Kedah MCA annual delegates' convention.

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