

# PM: I'll ask Ling to reconsider

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But says the final decision  
rests with the MCA leader

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon: The Prime Minister will ask Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik to reconsider his resignation as Transport Minister but says the final decision rests with the latter

"I will try to ask him to reconsider his decision. Whether it is welcome or not in the MCA is another matter. Of course, the final decision lies with him," said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said he has not accepted Ling's resignation. "I haven't accepted it yet but I will have to consider"

He said Ling had indicated his wish to him earlier and he had tried to stop him and wanted him to continue as he has done a good job especially in promoting the ports.

"He has been visiting the ports, meeting with shipping line owners, etc. He has been very successful. The ports have achieved almost 200% growth since he started handling things himself.

"He is a good minister. I would be sorry to lose him but then we cannot stop him if he is determined to do so. He said

it is in the interest of the Party"

Mahathir was speaking to reporters after launching the new corporate image of MEC Dagang Sdn Bhd.

Asked why Ling wishes to resign, he said Ling wants MCA to be strong by giving way to the new and younger generation of leaders.

"He thinks it is important for him to step down as he has been there for a long time. (He said) It's for the best interest of the party as well as Barisan Nasional.

"(Earlier) I told him he has a very important role in the government. I respect him and appreciate his work but of course, the final decision lies with him," he said, adding that he is supposed to meet Ling today but was unable to do so.

Asked by an RTM journalist whether there will be a

major Cabinet reshuffle, Mahathir said it has to be done since there will be a vacancy if Ling decides to leave.

On whether the decision has anything to do with talk that the MCA was not well rewarded for the victory in the November general election, Mahathir said: "It is not a question of reward. We recognise the role of MCA. I don't think we can then start shuffling around the proportion because once we do, we'll have a lot of problems later"

Mahathir also stressed that the decision will not have any impact on the Barisan Nasional's position in the Teluk Kemang by-election next month.

Asked about the situation where a party leader does not have a government post, he said: "If that is the case, there is nothing we can do, we have to make do."