

PM: MCA quota in Cabinet stays

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he cannot give the MCA more seats in the Cabinet.

He said it cannot simply be done without upsetting other mu-ties.

As far as numbers are concerned, he said, the Barisan Nasional government has given due consideration to the MCA.

"The MCA has performed very well . . . but today one does well, the next day one does not do so well.

"As you can see, when the

MCA did not do so well, we did not reduce their participation in the government. So it is very bad to respond, to a certain situation without thinking of the future or the past," he told reporters after delivering a keynote address at the Asia-Africa Forum III (see **report Page 4**).

Yesterday, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, who resigned from his Cabinet post, said the problem within the party is due to the MCA being short of one minister's post.

The party has four minis-

'& plans ahead to develop transport industry'

ters and six deputy ministers.

"When former Human Resources Minister Datuk Lim Ah Lek resigned from the Cabinet post, Pahang MCA was left without a Cabinet minister as the post was given to a person who is not from Pahang," said Mahathir, who is the BN chairman.

Asked whether the Transport Minister posts stays

with the MCA, Mahathir said it is not necessary so.

He said the government needs to have an evaluation of who is qualified to hold the post as it is an important one and it has big plans to develop the transport industry

"We need to make some adjustment . . . maybe those with already some experience can take over the post

and the newer one will take over the post which has less responsibility," he said.

Asked whether he will accept the MCA's recommendation to appoint Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Chan Kong Choy as the new Transport Minister, the Prime Minister said he will study the proposal.

Asked if he had tried to persuade Ling to stay, he said he would like to do so as Ling is an experienced person.

To a question, Mahathir said although he feels that it is not wise for Ling to leave

the Cabinet right now, he may have other reasons for doing so.

Mahathir said he does not want to speculate on claims that Ling's decision to resign is for him to interfere in the "squabble" between Ling and deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek.

Asked on the reason Ling cited for resigning, Mahathir said: "He said it is for the good of the party. He said there is a need for younger people to lead the party. The Cabinet needs a different representation."