

06 JUNE 2000
Ling-Minister
MCA PRESIDENT DECIDES NOT TO QUIT CABINET

KUALA LUMPUR, June 6 (Bernama) -- MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, who surprised the nation on May 22 when he announced he will quit the Cabinet, has decided to stay on.

The Transport Minister, fresh from a 10-day holiday in Perth to think over his quit decision, made the announcement of his change of mind in a prepared statement he read out to reporters at the MCA headquarters, here, today.

Dr Ling said that he met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad this afternoon and had once again been advised to stay on in his post.

Following the announcement of his intention to resign from his cabinet post last month, he had also been advised by Dr Mahathir to just keep his resignation letter.

Dr Mahathir instead wanted him to go on leave to think over his decision.

"Dr Mahathir is always giving me advice and guidance in various aspects," he said.

The news conference called by Dr Ling to announce his decision not to quit however did not materialise as he declined to answer questions from the 50 media representatives who were present.

Dr Ling's announcement was greeted with much cheer by party leaders who were also present.

They included deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek, all four vice presidents -- Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn, Datuk Chua Jui Meng, Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting and Datuk Chan Kong Choy.

In his six-paragraph statement, Dr Ling said that his expressed intention to resign from his cabinet post had created reactions among MCA leaders and members at all levels, leaders of Chinese organisations, Barisan Nasional leaders and the public.

"They have conveyed messages by phone, fax, through the media and my friends.

"I am touched by the support and encouragement of all parties calling on me to reconsider the resignation from the cabinet post," he said.

He said that he got a clearer picture of what the majority of the people wanted him to do after thinking over the appeals and advice from all parties, whether inside or outside the MCA.

Appeals and advice were also given in discussions with MCA leaders before and after he went on leave.

"I respect the wishes expressed by all parties especially MCA members, community leaders, my supporters and friends.

"As such, I would like to announce that I will continue to serve in the government," said Dr Ling who also thanked all parties for their support and encouragement to him over the matter.

Meanwhile, Lim thanked Dr Mahathir for his views and advice which had persuaded Dr Ling to stay on.

"I'm proud and this means that our efforts to get him to reconsider his decision to quit the cabinet are successful," he said.

Dr Fong said that with the decision, Dr Ling could continue to represent the Chinese community in the cabinet with full mandate from all levels of society.

"With this, I believe that the aspirations of MCA members and the Chinese community will be more effectively expressed in the cabinet," he said.

He denied that Dr Ling's decision to resign was expected from the beginning.

Chua said Dr Ling's decision to stay on had brought cheer to everyone

after various parties had appealed to him to reconsider.

He, however, conceded that there would be people who would make negative assumptions, saying that this was only normal.

MCA Youth chief Datuk Ong Tee Kiat said Dr Ling's decision today was a relief to everyone and would enable the party to concentrate on the challenges it faced in the new millennium.

In PORT DICKSON, MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu welcomed Dr Ling's decision and hoped he would continue with his good work.

"It's a good decision. I hope he doesn't resort to such a decision again. Such decision creates a lot of problems to his friends," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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