

24/05/2000

Top MCA officials brief Dr M on central committee's view

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - MCA deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek today conveyed to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad the party presidential council's decision to ask Transport Minister and MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik to reconsider his decision to resign from the Cabinet.

Lim said he led the MCA team comprising three of the four vice-presidents - Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn, Datuk Ong Ka Ting and Datuk Chan Kong Choy - to meet the Prime Minister at his office in Putrajaya this morning.

The fourth vice-president, Datuk Chua Jui Meng, who is Health Minister, is overseas on official duty.

"We conveyed to the Prime Minister the decision of the MCA presidential council and central committee yesterday to ask Dr Ling to reconsider his decision," Lim said.

Lim said they asked Dr Mahathir, who is also Barisan Nasional chairman, "to try to use his influence to persuade Dr Ling not to retire".

Yesterday, Dr Ling announced his decision to resign from the Cabinet but would remain as party president.

Earlier today, Dr Mahathir reiterated that he would try and persuade Dr Ling to reconsider his decision but maintained that it was still up to Dr Ling.

On the outcome of today's meeting with Dr Mahathir, Lim did not say what the Prime Minister's reaction was.

"We only conveyed the decision of the council and committee yesterday," he said.

Lim said although all the central committee members were informed of the meeting yesterday, not all attended it as many were overseas.

Asked if he was aware that the MCA Youth held an emergency meeting today, Lim said the meeting would endorse the decisions of the council and committee yesterday.

Meanwhile, both the MCA Youth and Wanita wings today appealed to Dr Ling to withdraw his resignation as Transport Minister.

MCA Youth vice-chairman Hoo Seong Chang said that Dr Ling had contributed a lot to the country and party and it would be a great loss if he no longer remained as a senior Cabinet Minister.

The movement's head Datuk Ong Tee Keat was not present at the meeting today as he was in Solomon's Island on official business.

Wanita MCA chief Datuk Dr Ng Yen Yen today expressed shock over the resignation.

"We hope Dr Ling will not leave his Cabinet post." She appealed to party members to remain calm.

Dr Ng, who is also Deputy Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister, is in Taiwan to promote Malaysia as a tourist destination. She will cut short her trip and return tomorrow to chair the movement's emergency meeting.

(END)