

Mend the rift, says Mahathir

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Support for BN affected if problems not solved: PM

By **B. Suresh Ram** and **Roy Goh**

PETALING JAYA, Sun: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has advised the MCA leadership to mend the rift over the party's takeover of Nanyang Press Holdings Bhd.

The prime minister is confident the dispute will be resolved.

Asked what is his advice to the MCA, he replied: "*Suruh dia orang buat baik* (Ask them to patch up)"

Mahathir was speaking to reporters on his return from a four-day visit to Japan at the Royal Malaysian Airforce base in Subang here today.

He said: "We all have problems. Umno also has problems. All the parties have problems. They will have to resolve the problems."

On Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's statement that the problem could affect support for Barisan Nasional (BN), Mahathir said: "If all the parties are affected then the support for BN will be undermined."

In **KOTA KINABALU**, MCA deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek said the party's failure to listen to the grassroots in the controversial takeover of Nanyang Press Holdings could have a negative impact on the BN in the next general election.

Using the Lunas by-election as an example, he said that despite it being an "extremely" safe seat for BN, a big chunk of votes from the Chinese community went to the Opposition, hence, the eventual defeat.

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party will have to pay a heavy price. Every five years when we face the general election we go to them for help to support the MCA," Lim said, explaining his concern over the takeover and the reason why he and seven other leaders are going on a nationwide roadshow.

"We are not the Opposition," he said, adding that the people concerned are those who gave them the mandate.

"Can we just ignore them? That is why we have to see

whether it (the takeover) is against the sentiments of the Chinese community," he said when met after the Sabah MCA convention here.

He said: "The roadshow must go on to explain to our friends because we don't want to go down in history ... the eight of us will be blamed later on ... we do not want that to happen.

"We will go to the grassroots because they need to know why we do not support. It's our responsibility because we are elected by the grassroots."

Lim said that as one of the four Huaren Holdings trustees he knows little about the takeover.

"They just keep saying this is a good business consideration," he said, adding that he might learn more about it after the trustees' meeting on Wednesday.

The other trustees are president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, vice-president Datuk Chua Jui Meng and secretary-general Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh.

Lim said, morally, he will be attending the meeting on behalf of the party's 800,000 members who are the shareholders.

On a proposal to hold an extraordinary general meeting to resolve the issue, Lim said if that is what the grassroots wants then it should be held.

The other central committee members who opposed the takeover are Chua, vice-president Datuk Chan Kong Choy, Youth chief Datuk Ong Tee Keat, Wanita deputy chief Datuk Tan Yee Kew, Datuk Tang See Hang, Datuk Wong Mook Leong and Fu Ah Kiow.

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