

Chua: Don't use PM's name

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Dr M had not supported takeover, he says

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs: MCA vice-president Datuk Chua Jui Meng refuted today party president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik's claim that the prime minister supported the party's acquisition of a majority stake in Nanyang Press Bhd.

"I spoke to the prime minister, I don't think that's true," he said after the opening of the Umno general assembly by Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Chua was asked to comment on reports in several Chinese-language dailies, quoting Ling as saying that Mahathir gave him the go-ahead for Huaren Holdings Sdn Bhd to purchase the stake in the company that owns *Nanyang Siang Pau* and *China Press*.

He said a number of organisations representing the Chinese community have spoken against the deal, including the Federation of Chinese Associations Malaysia, the National Chinese Chamber of Commerce, all the dialect groups - the Hokkien, Hainanese, Cantonese, Teochew, and Fuchow - the intellectual groups, writers and educationists.

Chua said their general view is that the party should not be defiant and arrogant, and they are complaining that the MCA leaders do not want to listen to them.

"And now you want to use the prime minister's name, and I think it is wrong to do this. The prime minister should not be brought into this at all because he has said very clearly that he does not instruct anybody to buy.

"He does not say that he has a stand on this particular purchase ... don't drag the PM into this."

- Chua

"He does not say that he has a stand on this particular purchase ... don't drag the PM into this," he said.

Chua also said the outcome of the party's extraordinary general meeting (EGM) on Sunday will not reflect a vote of confidence or no confidence against any party leader.

On MCA secretary-gen-

eral Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh's statement yesterday that the results would be a show of support for or against certain party leaders, Chua said: "That's another red herring. That does not address the issue at all."

However, he believes the EGM results will affect the Chinese community's support for the party and Barisan Nasional itself.

"The prime minister has said very clearly just now (about) the loss of 21 parliamentary seats to the Opposition (in the last elections). We must alleviate that kind of situation," he said.

Ling, also met after the opening of the assembly, called on the MCA to reunite once the controversy is over.

"We must let the EGM make the final decisions. Once it's over, we should work together to fulfill our many agendas in education, culture, religion and others," he said.

Ling also said the MCA needs the full support from its members and leaders, and not factions.

"We value everyone in MCA. We want a 100% MCA, not a 50% or 25% MCA," he said.