

Party leaders: PM's statement makes it clear

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KUALA LUMPUR: The controversy over MCA's purchase of Nanyang Press Holdings Bhd should now end following the explanation by Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, party leaders said yesterday.

They said the Prime Minister's confirmation that he had given the green light to the MCA to take over the two Chinese newspapers should remove any doubts over the issue.

Party vice-president Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said that Dr Mahathir's explanation had proved who had been consistent and truthful in explaining the controversy.

"With this explanation, we believe the delegates will be able to draw the distinction in the briefings given by both sides.

"They will now be able to see clearly how the issue has been exploited by some people to pursue their political agenda," he said.

Central committee member Datuk Chor Chee Heung said the statement by Dr Mahathir confirmed what Dr Ling had been saying about the issue.

"With Dr Mahathir's statement, I think there is no longer a need to talk about the issue.

"I believe the delegates are mature and intelligent enough to see through the issue," he added.

On Thursday, Dr Mahathir said the MCA had the right to buy the newspapers and that the MCA should sell some of the shares.

Earlier, vice-president Datuk Chua Jui Meng had said it was not true that Dr Mahathir had given approval to anyone to buy Nanyang Press Holdings.

The Health Minister said he had spoken to Dr Mahathir over the matter and that "as far as I know, it's not true the PM instructed anyone to buy Nanyang Press Holdings."

In Penang, state MCA deputy chairman Wong Kam Hoong said that Dr Mahathir's confirmation should put the issue to rest.

"The matter is very clear now since we are hearing it from the Prime Minister himself. It also proves who has been telling the truth," he said.

Wong appealed to Chua and seven other central leaders conducting a roadshow to oppose the deal to "cease all activities that will tarnish the party's image and come back and work as a group".

He urged delegates to endorse the deal, saying the delegates should vote rationally and base their decision on facts.

"Don't be distracted or succumb to rumours," he said.

An accountant by training, Wong said the Nanyang transaction was a long-term strategic investment that would benefit the party.