

# Ah Lek: Ling must consolidate party

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## 'Don't ignore those who voted against the deal'

# party

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik should take steps to consolidate the party and ensure the Chinese community continues to support the party and the Barisan Nasional.

In making the call, MCA deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek said Dr Ling must not ignore the significant minority of 46.2 per cent or 1,019 of the delegates, who voted against the deal to acquire Nanyang Press Holdings Berhad.

"We respect the delegates' decision and we had expected the results to be very close.

"This is a democratic party and the majority rules," he said at a Press conference at Wisma MCA, after the voting results were announced yesterday.

Lim said he would still work with Dr Ling as what was important was to continue working hard for the Chinese community and address the problems faced by them.

"We will work together ... we have to do it."

Asked whether the results showed that Dr Ling did not enjoy full support of the delegates, Lim replied: "I leave it to the public to analyse the results of the general assembly.

"The delegates' message is very clear and Dr Ling must take note

of this.

"We just cannot direct the public on what to do as they have their own stand."

He said roadshows and dialogue sessions organised by his camp to explain the issue to the public, would stop.

"The decision has been made by party's highest body (the general assembly) and we respect it.

"Our main concern is that the feelings of the Chinese community should not be taken for granted and we must ensure they continue supporting the Barisan Nasional.

"Dr Ling has to reach out to the Chinese community.

"He started the whole problem and he should answer it.

"The delegates' decision should not be taken lightly."

MCA vice-president Datuk Chua Jui Meng, who was also present at the Press conference, said the decision by the 1,019 delegates to vote against the deal, was "indeed something significant to ponder on".

"I hope that in the next few days, Dr Ling would hold meetings with these people to mend the rift as we need to strengthen the party immediately.

"We must ensure continued support from the Chinese as they will determine our fate in the 2004

general election.

"We cannot afford a swing from the Chinese votes as it would have a big impact on the BN's performance."

Chua said Dr Ling must call for a meeting between all the four MCA trustees and shareholders to discuss the matter.

The four are Dr Ling, Lim, Chua and the party secretary-general

Datuk Seri Dr Ting Chew Peh.

"In future, there should be transparency in all party affairs and it should be discussed openly before any decision is made.

"We have the right to know," Chua said.

Chua said to date, he and Lim had no knowledge of the offers for Nanyang shares from different consortiums.

In Penang, DAP national chairman Lim Kit Siang described the decision as "an ignominious victory".

He said the 1,019 votes against the deal together with the solid opposition of the Chinese community should be cause for Dr Ling to summon an emergency meeting of the MCA central committee to revoke the takeover.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had saved the day for Dr Ling by saying that he gave full support for the takeover although he did not direct the MCA to do so.

Lim said Dr Mahathir's speech in the winding-up of the 55th Umno general assembly would have influenced scores of MCA delegates who had doubts before the EGM