

Consolidate, PM urges MCA

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KUALA LUMPUR: The MCA should proceed with efforts to consolidate the party, now that the issue of Nanyang Press Holdings Bhd takeover by Huaren Holdings Sdn Bhd had been resolved, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

"There should not be any revenge on those opposing the deal. MCA must consolidate," the Prime Minister said after launching the 20th session of Albaraka Islamic Economics symposium at a hotel here.

Dr Mahathir said it was for MCA to decide on the acquisition of the two Chinese dailies *Nanyang Siang Pau* and *China Press*.

"The question of a small or big majority endorsing the

deal does not matter. I hope the party will not become divided."

A total of 1,176 of the 2,216 MCA central delegates who attended the MCA's extraordinary general meeting on Sunday voted in favour of the purchase of Nanyang Press by Huaren, which is the party's investment arm.

The remaining 1,019 central delegates voted against it while there were 12 spoilt votes.

Asked whether he supported the idea of one group controlling the Chinese dailies, Dr Mahathir said: "No. I don't support the idea but I think everybody should have a chance to buy shares in newspapers.

"I notice many of these Chinese newspapers are very

pro-opposition which means they are almost run by the opposition. They have columns dedicated to the opposition. Anything good about the opposition will be played up."

He also advised newspapers to report the truth as readers deserved the truth.

Asked whether there would be a backlash within the Chinese community supporting the Government following the decision, he said: "I don't know. Some people are claiming that whatever they think reflects the views of the community.

"For instance Suqiu and other Chinese groups claim that everything they talk about is the view of the Chinese.

"What they are trying to do is to get the Chinese community to oppose the Government

and support the DAP."

However, Dr Mahathir said the attempts by these groups had failed during the last general election as for the first time the Chinese rejected DAP leaders Lim Kit Siang and Karpal Singh at the state and federal levels.

"Now DAP is working with Suqiu, Chinese parents and teachers and some Chinese organisations to make it seem that the Government is anti-Chinese. They brought up issues that have been settled like the relocation of the SJK (C) Damansara.

"They do not want to see Chinese schoolboys mixing with Malay schoolboys from the vision schools. This is a bad attitude."

Dr Mahathir said the Government was striving to build

a nation where schoolchildren were encouraged to play and study together.

"They made the Nanyang deal into an issue of Chinese rights," he added.

He reiterated that Malaysia was the only country that allowed the existence of Chinese schools.

"No other countries allow that. I challenge all developed countries to show that they are more liberal than us."

In Kuantan, Roslina Mohamad reports that Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob was confident that the MCA leadership could handle the Nanyang issue.

"I am sure MCA will resort to good sense in closing the gap which transpired from the purchase," he said.