

BN leaders: Dr Mahathir's advice timely, should be taken seriously

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BARISAN Nasional component party leaders yesterday welcomed Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's words of wisdom to the MCA to resolve its internal problems.

Many said the Prime Minister had given a good advice that should be taken seriously.

In his speech at the 48th MCA annual general assembly, Dr Mahathir called on the MCA to resolve its problems without weakening the party.

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu expressed confidence that the MCA would be able to resolve its problems.

"It is normal to have differences of opinion, but views must be put forward in a democratic and proper manner," said Samy Vellu.

He added that the culture of throwing chairs and verbal abuse was not healthy and must be nipped in the bud.

Gerakan president Datuk Seri Lim Keng Yaik said he fully supported Dr Mahathir's speech and hoped MCA would solve its problems as soon as possible.

"I am not smiling or happy about what happened yesterday as I don't

consider them as rivals. We are all component parties of the BN and I am watching with trepidation and hope MCA solves its problems for the good of BN."

People's Progressive Party president Datuk M. Kayveas said Dr Mahathir's speech was a strong message to MCA and it should be taken very seriously.

"It emphasised unity at the top level."

Kayveas said if the party was not united at the top level, it would spill over and the overall structure of the party would be affected.

He said PPP had undergone similar problems in the past, adding that such problems could bury a party for a long time.

Kayveas said yesterday's problem at the MCA Youth general assembly showed that the party was losing control of the situation.

Meanwhile, party deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek said the party must not be weakened because it would affect the BN, especially during the 2004 general election.

"We must deliver the votes and I've always been saying it. We have

to strengthen, consolidate and work hard to win the support of the Chinese community." MCA secretary-general Datuk Seri Dr Ting Chew Peh said there were no problems that could not be resolved, and in the party, it should be overcome in a democratic manner.

"I am saddened by yesterday's incident, but I hope everyone learns from this lesson," he added.

Vice-president Datuk Chan Kong Choy said all members should put aside their feelings for the good of the party.

He added that he also agreed with Dr Mahathir's views that MCA could settle all its problems.

Another vice-president Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said all members should play their role in strengthening the party without resorting to rash acts.

Vice-president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting said the Prime Minister's advice was timely.

"It is a correct message to all leaders and members to settle our differences in a constructive manner."