

MCA can solve its problems, says Mahathir

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday expressed confidence in the leadership of the MCA to solve the party's internal squabbles.

"They are quite capable of solving their problems. I am quite sure they want to settle this," he told a press conference after attending the MIC Deepavali open house hosted by Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu at SMJK Chong Hwa here.

Asked whether he noticed the tension between the MCA leaders, Dr Mahathir said it was an internal matter.

"I think it will not drag on. I think they are sensible enough," he added.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, vice-president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting and several other leaders belonging to the so-called Team A arrived at the open house at 10am.

When Team B leaders, including Datuk Lim Ah Lek

and Datuk Chua Jui Meng, arrived half an hour later, they did not exchange greetings or acknowledge each other.

The two sets of leaders also left separately.

Dr Mahathir, who is Barisan Nasional chairman, said the media sometimes exacerbated the situation by prodding the leaders.

"If you asked this person, 'This chap is against this guy, what is your comment?' he will say something. And it goes back and forth," he said, adding that all the MCA leaders were nice people.

Commenting on the matter, Chua said he was confident the democratic process would solve all current problems affecting the MCA leadership.

"We can assure the Chinese community and Barisan Nasional that whatever it is, we will emerge stronger, more democratic, and an asset to Barisan," he said.