

# Ong eager to meet Mahathir

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KUALA LUMPUR: MCA Youth chairman Datuk Ong Tee Keat is ready to meet Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"I tried to call the Prime Minister's office today. I'm looking forward to meet the him after this," he said.

Ong has described as "very timely" the advice by Dr Mahathir to MCA leaders to swallow their pride and not be too hard on one another.

Ong, who is also Youth and Sports Deputy Minister, said his sincere wish was to see the party leaders heeding the Dr

Mahathir's advice. "I've given my assurance to Dr Mahathir that I will abide by any advice he gives," he told reporters at the ministry here yesterday.

He was responding to Dr Mahathir's remarks on Saturday night when asked by reporters on the crisis in the MCA and its decision to suspend the Youth wing's central committee headed by Ong.

Dr Mahathir noted that the two sides seemed unwilling to compromise and he thought that at times there was a need for people to swallow their pride.

Dr Mahathir, who had also spoken to both Ong and MCA President Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, said he had asked both of them not to be too hard on each other.

Given Dr Mahathir's vast experience in politics, Ong said his advice would certainly enlighten the MCA members in overcoming the prevailing problems.

On MCA's preparation for the Indera Kayangan by-election, Ong said he would go to Perlis with party members from the various states tomorrow to prepare the campaign in the constituency.

Commenting on the opposition front's statement that they would capitalise the MCA crisis in their campaign, Ong said it showed that the opposition was running out of issues.

"This shows that the opposition parties are practising parasite politics and they do not have their own agenda," he said.

In **Kangar**, Umno Youth vice-chairman Datuk Abdul Aziz Sheikh Fadzir said he would call Ong to seek his commitment on the wing's involvement in the by-election.

Abdul Aziz said he would discuss with him the Youth wing's preparations for the by-election and get his commitment.

Ong was reported to have rejected an offer to head the MCA Youth Indera Kayangan by-election committee but said he would campaign as a Barisan Youth leader.

Former Mentri Besar Tan Sri Dr Abdul Hamid Pawanteh believed that the voters in the Indera Kayangan by-election would choose wisely.

He said the voters would make the correct choice to ensure continued development

in the constituency and state. "From my experience as a MP, a doctor and Mentri Besar here for some two decades, I understand the mindset and sentiments of the voters," Dr Abdul Hamid said at the funeral of Datuk Khor Liang Tee.

He said Barisan Nasional might be able to achieve a higher majority this time around, based on current sentiments in the country.

"I believe that the Chinese community would support Barisan and will avoid whatever tactics employed by the Opposition," he said.