

# I will heed PM's advice, says Ong

SUM 25/12/78  
KUALA LUMPUR, Mon: MCA youth chief Datuk Ong Tee Keat said he will heed the advice of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad regarding the crisis in the party.

He said he is responsible for safeguarding the good name of the cabinet and will follow any advice given by Mahathir.

He was responding to Mahathir's call to the MCA leaders to swallow their pride and not to be too hard on one another.

The prime minister also said he views the crisis in MCA as serious and that he hopes to meet Ong again on the problem.

When asked what he thinks Mahathir wants to see him about, Ong said: "With the suspension of the movement, maybe he has some advice for me." However, he said, the meeting will depend on Mahathir's schedule, and he is willing to meet the prime minister at any time.

Ong also said he is confident Mahathir's leadership capabilities and his advice will give him the confidence to face the crisis in the movement.

He added that on his last meeting with Mahathir on Dec 13, they discussed not only MCA matters, but other issues as well.

On the MCA, he said he explained to Mahathir his position, especially on the veterans' committee report.

"As the deputy youth and sports minister who was appointed by the

prime minister, I needed to explain to him that I did not premeditate the youth fracas and that the allegations in the report are baseless," he said.

Asked whether he tried to resolve the problems, Ong said he was unable to do so as after the meeting, he went on a week's leave.

He said when he returned on Dec 20, his powers as the youth chief were suspended by the party.

Ong also said he is "confused" by the action of the three-man panel to appoint him to the movement's Indera Kayangan by-election committee as earlier, panel chairman Wang Choon Wing together with five other party veterans had come up with a report which stated that he premeditated the fracas.

However, he is willing to work with any MCA candidate to help retain the Indera Kayangan seat, regardless of their alignment.

He said the most important thing is to ensure a big win for the Barisan Nasional (BN) candidate.

He added that he will be leaving for Perlis tomorrow to meet with local leaders to identify current issues which the BN should address.

The Indera Kayangan seat fell vacant following the death of its assemblyman Datuk Khor Liang Tee last Wednesday.

Khor, 59, died of colon cancer at Gleneagles Intan Medical Centre in Kuala Lumpur.