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A smear campaign against me, says Ling

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PUTRAJAYA, Wed. - MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today certain quarters are spreading lies about him and also using the courts as part of a smear campaign against him.

"All sorts of lies have been said and some even throw in court cases," Dr Ling, who is also the Transport Minister, said in an apparent reference to a suit filed against him last Thursday.

Former Royal Malaysian Air Force chief Lt Jen (B) Tan Sri Mohamed Ngah Said filed the suit against Dr Ling and his son Hee Leong for allegedly breaching an agreement over a business deal.

Mohamed Ngah alleged that the deal involved Hee Leong's purchase of Rekapacific from the Berjaya Group, through Linksun Avenue Sdn Bhd.

Dr Ling said the timing of these cases was "very political" and usually filed days before the party's general assembly.

The suit by Mohamed Ngah was filed three days before the party's extraordinary general meeting to debate and pass a resolution on Huaren Holdings Sdn Bhd's acquisition of Nanyang Press Holdings Bhd.

Last year, two days before the party's annual general meeting, fugitive businessman Datuk Soh Chee Wen also filed a suit against Dr Ling over a failed business deal.

"My conscience is very clear. Let time tell and the truth will emerge, either in court or otherwise.

"I must declare that I won't say a single bad word against anybody. It is not worth it and there is no point hurting the feelings of other people."

He said this before chairing the ministry's weekly post-Cabinet meeting today.

On Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call to MCA to close ranks now that the issue concerning the acquisition of Nanyang Press Holdings was over, Dr Ling said he was supportive of it.

He added that it was vital for the party to remain united to overcome internal and external challenges.

During the EGM, 53.3 per cent of the delegates voted in favour of the deal, while 46.2 per cent opposed it.

"We went through the total political process to endorse the deal - the presidential council, central committee and also the general assembly. During the EGM, everytime the speakers touched on party unity, everybody clapped.

"This is the spirit of the EGM. I am determined to fulfil the wishes of the EGM."

Asked on deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek's statement that the party president should make the first move towards reconciliation, Dr Ling said his door was always open.

"I have no hard feelings against Ah Lek or anyone of the eight central committee members who voted against the deal," Dr Ling added.

On whether his willingness to meet with any of the eight central committee members was an overture for a truce, Dr Ling said if anyone in the party had any other suggestions, they could come forward with it.