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`Factions must give-and-take'

Firdaus Abdullah

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight said there must be the spirit of give and take between the two "warring" factions in MCA.

"Both sides appear to be very unwilling to compromise," said Dr Mahathir after launching the PNB Darby Park serviced apartments last night.

"I think there is a need for people to swallow their pride a bit."

Dr Mahathir voiced concern over the internal squabbles in MCA, the ruling coalition's second largest component party.

"Of course I view it very seriously," said the Prime Minister when asked of his concern over the leadership crisis in MCA and its effect on the BN.

However, he expressed confidence that the BN could retain the Indera Kayangan seat in the Perlis State Assembly by-election.

The Prime Minister said he hoped to meet suspended MCA Youth chief Datuk Ong Tee Keat for the second time to help cool down things in the party.

"I have spoken to Datuk Ong Tee Keat, I have spoken to (MCA president) Datuk Seri (Dr) Ling Liong Sik to ask them not to be too hard on each other, but beyond that it's up to them."

In Kangar, Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said Parti Keadilan Nasional's move to capitalise on MCA's internal problems would not work in their campaign for the Indera Kayangan seat.

Keadilan, said Shahidan, is plagued by worse internal problems compared to the MCA.

Shahidan, who is Perlis Barisan Nasional chairman, said Indera Kayangan voters know that all MCA leaders solidly supported the BN although some were not in agreement with each other.

"Furthermore, no MCA member has left the party due to the current internal problems," he said after attending a Hari Raya open house hosted by the Perlis Special Affairs Department at Medan Raja Syed Alwi.

Shahidan also praised MCA Youth chief Datuk Ong Tee Keat's willingness to assist in the BN's by-election campaign despite the suspension of the party's Youth central committee on Thursday.

Ong was yesterday reported to have rejected an appointment to head the party's Youth by-election committee, but said he would assist the BN campaign.

But Perlis Pas commissioner Hashim Jasin said he was sceptical that the MCA's warring factions could unite for the Indera Kayangan by-election.

In Kuala Pilah, Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein said today that Ong was a capable leader in whom he had trust to help the BN win.

Hishammuddin said Ong, who is the Deputy Youth and Sports Minister, would help despite the MCA's internal problems.

He was speaking at the Hari Raya open house hosted by Kuala Pilah Umno Youth chief Abdul Samad Ibrahim at Taman Murni near here.

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