

04 OCT 2001

Mahathir-MCA

CHUA WAS HEADING KEDAH MCA ONLY TEMPORARILY- DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 4 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister and Barisan Nasional Chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Datuk Chua Jui Meng was replaced as Kedah MCA Chairman because the situation there has stabilised and there is no longer any trouble there.

"Chua was made the Kedah MCA Chairman at a time when there was trouble and misunderstanding in the Kedah MCA. The problems have since been resolved," he told reporters in response to questions after opening the CEO Summit 2001 here.

"Now the Kedah MCA accepts (Datuk) Beh (Heng Seong). Hence the time has come for Chua to cease being stop-gap leader," Dr Mahathir said.

Dr Mahathir was asked about the move by MCA President Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik to replace Chua with Beh two days ago. Beh was the Kedah MCA Secretary.

Chua who is Health Minister and MCA Vice President and MP for Bakri in Johor, had led Kedah MCA since 1993.

Asked about the possibility of a reshuffle in the Cabinet following developments in the Barisan Nasional component party, Dr Mahathir laughed and said, "You know, I seldom reshuffle the Cabinet."

Dr Mahathir said he himself was replaced as Kelantan Umno Chief.

"Now there is someone else as head of the liaison committee. Hence this does not mean that I have to resign as Prime Minister. This has got nothing to do. He was a temporary, stop-gap (leader) because of the problems there (Kedah MCA)."

Dr Ling was today reported to have said that Chua's removal was at the request of Kedah MCA members and had nothing to do with the purchase of the Nanyang Press Holdings Bhd, as claimed by Chua.

-- BERNAMA

MAM AHH AAM