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MCA-Reaction

MCA LEADERS SUPPORT DR M'S UNITY CALL

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 4 (Bernama) -- Opposing factions in the MCA have welcomed Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement that the party needs to strengthen unity to remain a backbone of the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN).

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said Dr Mahathir's call showed that he cared for the party and wanted it to be strong for the future.

"I believe his advice would be heeded by all in the MCA as we too want MCA to be stronger through unity...but in any chain there is always a weak link," he told reporters after the party's AGM at Wisma MCA here today.

Asked if MCA could be considered the weakest link in the BN party chain, he said: "No, I don't think so, but we may become the weakest if the disunity in the party continues."

The rift among the MCA top leadership became visible when deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek, vice-presidents Datuk Chua Jui Meng and Datuk Chan Kong Choy and Youth chief Datuk Ong Tee Keat opposed MCA investment arm Huaren Holdings Sdn Bhd's takeover of Nanyang Press Holdings.

The purchase was initiated by Ling with backing from the other two vice-presidents Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting and Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn and secretary-general Datuk Seri Dr Ting Chew Peh.

Lim said the maturity displayed by the MCA delegates today showed that they could solve any internal issues through amicable discussions.

This attitude should be adopted by all MCA members in line with the Prime Minister's reminder that MCA should resolve its problems wisely without weakening the party and the BN, he said.

"The MCA represents the Chinese community and this is the kind of attitude expected by our Chinese friends. We do not want to see problems like what happened at yesterday's (Youth) meeting," he told reporters after the AGM.

He thanked all delegates for their cooperation which led to the smooth conduct of the AGM.

Today's proceedings were in sharp contrast to yesterday's Youth AGM which was marred by a bomb scare, fist fights and throwing of chairs among some members, and a walkout by a section of the delegates.

Chan said Dr Mahathir had sent a clear message in his capacity as the BN chairman and he meant well for the MCA.

Everybody should work towards restoring party unity and set aside personal differences, he said.

"I think if everybody has the right attitude, we can move toward that direction," he said.

Central committee member Datuk Fu Ah Kiow said all party leaders and members should thank the Prime Minister for his concern and "very fatherly advice."

"I still believe that with our wisdom, together we will be able to resolve whatever differences that exist in the MCA," he said.

-- BERNAMA

ZAI AT SR KHY YBY