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PM confident MCA will overcome current crisis

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed confidence that MCA would soon be able to overcome the current crisis, saying that its problems were not as serious as those faced by Umno in 1987.

"This is an internal problem. It is not as serious (as the 1987 Umno crisis). There will be no splinter group leaving the MCA to form another party," he said.

Dr Mahathir was referring to the Umno crisis in 1987 when the then vice-president Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah challenged incumbent Dr Mahathir for the presidency.

Tengku Razaleigh, having lost the contest, went on to set up the Parti Melayu Semangat 46 with his supporters.

Speaking to reporters after launching the Tun Ismail Mohamed Ali gallery at Menara PNB in Jalan Tun Razak today, Dr Mahathir said the problems in MCA were "personal", and members of both opposing factions in MCA were still loyal to Barisan Nasional.

MCA Youth chief Datuk Ong Tee Keat 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.

Dr Mahathir said yesterday he hoped to meet Ong for the second time to help cool down things in the party.

On Thursday, the MCA suspended the 46-member Youth central Committee (CC) and certain parts of the movement's by-laws.

With the decision, no extraordinary general meetings or CC meetings can be held while activities in the movement have also been suspended.

The Youth CC's function was taken over by a three-man committee. In the unprecedented move all Youth CC members, including Ong, who was accused of premeditating the Aug 3 Youth general assembly ruckus, have been rendered powerless until a new team of leaders is voted in at next year's party election.

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