

27 MAY 2001

Staff-Protest

STAFF OF NANYANG, CHINA PRESS OBJECT TO MCA ACQUISITION

KUALA LUMPUR, May 27 (Bernama) -- Members of the Nanyang Siang Pau and China Press Editorial staff object to the proposed acquisition of the two dailies by MCA through its investment arm, Huaren Holdings, their spokesman Ding Lee Leong said today.

Ding, who is a journalist with Nanyang Siang Pau, said they took pride in the fact that the two dailies were free from political control.

"None of us wants to see the newspapers to which we have dedicated our lives over the years becoming the vehicle of a political party," he told a press conference here.

Nanyang was established in 1923 while China Press was founded in 1946 and had never been owned by any political party in Malaysia.

Ding said they were shocked and angered to learn from a local daily report today that Nanyang Press owner "was under tremendous pressure" to sell the company to MCA's Huaren Holdings.

"We are further disturbed over speculation that our main competitor Sin Chew Jit Poh will acquire 18 per cent equity in Nanyang Press, hand in hand, with Huaren Holdings's 52 percent," he said.

Sin Chew had yet to clarify this matter, he added.

He said the group had registered its "strongest objection" in the form of an appeal to Hong Leong Group, the current owner of the dailies, and had also launched a "Yellow Ribbon" Campaign whereby staff would wear yellow ribbons as a sign of protest.

Ding said the group appealed to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as Chairman of the Barisan Nasional to intervene and stop the deal "as it had done injustice to the staff who were not consulted at all over the deal."

The MCA is the second biggest party in the BN.

MCA President Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik had said that the proposed acquisition was purely a business deal.

--BERNAMA

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