

# MCA unites

SUN. - 2 JAN 2002

## Factions to ensure BN victory in Indera Keyangan by-election, says Dr M

**KUALA LUMPUR, Tues: Feuding factions in the MCA have agreed to set aside their differences and unite to ensure a Barisan Nasional (BN) victory in the soon-to-be held Indera Kayangan by-election in Perlis.**

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today this was the result of his meeting with leaders of both factions at his office yesterday.

"I advised them to forget their internal problems and concentrate on cooperating and achieving victory in Indera Kayangan, and they agreed to that. As for their internal dispute, it will be discussed later," Mahathir, who is also the BN chairman, told reporters after attending the People's Progressive Party (PPP) open house at Putrajaya World Trade Centre.

Yesterday, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and his deputy, Datuk Lim Ah Lek, who heads the rival faction, met separately with Mahathir.

Ling arrived at the prime minister's office at 2.45pm and left an hour later. Lim, accompanied by vice-president Datuk

Chua Jui Meng, Youth chief Datuk Ong Tee Keat and central committee member Datuk Wong Mook Leong, arrived at 5pm and left at 6.30pm, half an hour after Mahathir left his office.

Asked if there is an agreement between the two factions over the choice of a candidate, Mahathir said: "I don't know about any agreement . . . (there is) no agreement."

The candidate will be finally decided by me. I can solve all this, no problem. They (Teams A and B) will work together."

Mahathir said there will be no Team A or Team B.

"The candidate will not even be an MCA candidate. He will be a BN candidate," he said.

Asked if the cooperation between the teams is only temporary, Mahathir said it is a beginning.

Meanwhile, inter

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viewed on the **Wawancara Bernama dengan Perdana Menteri** programme aired over RTM and Astro tonight, Mahathir said if the squabbling within MCA is prolonged, the opposition parties may exploit it.

But he could see signs that they can resolve their misunderstandings and unite for the by-election, he said.

He said the differences of opinion among MCA leaders was a normal thing as such squabbling occurred in all political parties

including opposition parties.

"It happens in Umno, Gerakan, the DAP too, and Keadilan, and it is not surprising if it happens to MCA," he said.

He asked them to settle their problems in an amicable way by giving priority

to the party, not to certain people or leaders.

Mahathir said: "What is important is the party, not leaders."

"Leaders come and go, but the party is here to stay."

So, look after the interest of the party, not the interest of individuals."