

# Ling: Let delegates decide

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By R. Manirajan

**SHAH ALAM**, Fri: MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik is leaving it to the party delegates to decide whether the present party leadership's actions are right or wrong.

"It is close to party elections ... let the ground decide whether they approve or not of what we are doing," he said when asked to comment on the continuous objection from Team B on the party's membership list.

Speaking to reporters after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad officiated the Selangor Barisan Nasional's convention, Ling clarified that the amendments to the party constitution were made out of the experience Umno went through when it was ruled illegal by the court.

He said it is the political parties themselves which decide on its internal matters such as formation of branches.

Leaders of Team B have disputed the right

of 261 MCA branches to hold elections.

"The Registrar of Societies (ROS) is just doing the formality of registering the branches.

"The process of setting up branches would have been different if the decision lies solely with the ROS as the structure would be different," he added.

Citing an example, Ling who is also transport minister, said there is always a cut-off date (for registration of branches) in any election year and normally it is before Dec 31.

He said the normal practice is for the party's supreme body to hold its last meeting near or on Dec 31 to approve all remaining branches and membership, adding that this does not require ROS approval because they cannot approve it before Dec 31.

"If it is intended that ROS be the ultimate body to approve such matters before Dec 31, it should have been restructured otherwise so that the supreme council's last meeting can be held earlier.

"Even then, the ROS must reply in seven days when the list of new branches is submitted because it is considered approved if there is no reply," he added.

Ling also thanked the prime minister for clarifying yesterday that party matters be decided by political parties and not by the government or courts as the laws are already amended.

Asked if the prime minister's statement will prevent Team B from making further allegations, he said Mahathir's comments was with regard to ROS.