

GAG ORDER ON MCA

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By ZULKIFLI ABD RAHMAN

PETALING JAYA: The Prime Minister has placed a gag order on MCA leaders on the party's leadership crisis.

At a press conference after attending a charity golf tournament yesterday, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said:

"Can I make a statement?"

"My statement is that no statement on MCA is to be made by anybody, including myself. That's all."

When asked by a reporter whether she could clarify stories on MCA, the Prime Minister again said: "No statements at all. I'm sure you are all very disappointed."

He also revealed that both MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and party

deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek had agreed to the gag order. Dr Mahathir, who is also Barisan Nasional chairman, declined to say for how long the decision would be enforced.

Asked whether he would make a statement on the matter after he returned from his trip to Libya, Morocco and Bahrain on April 21, Dr Mahathir said: "I don't know."

On the move by MCA's Team B to go ahead with the extraordinary general meeting on the day of his return from his overseas visit, Dr Mahathir said: "We'll see."

Asked to comment on reports in the Chinese press that the EGM should be cancelled, Dr Mahathir placed his hand on his mouth, signifying silence.

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On whether the MCA could pass a resolution that the posts of president and deputy president be left unchallenged to resolve the problem, Dr Mahathir again placed his hand on his mouth.

"I'm sworn to secrecy and silence. Why don't you tell them (MCA leaders) that,"

he told reporters after attending the charity golf tournament in aid of the Kubang Pasu community development foundation and the Kuala Langat Bestari Foundation, at the Glenmarie Golf and Country Club

Dr Ling, when asked to comment on the gag order, reiterated his statement on Saturday? saying: "The Prime Minister has outlined

an agenda for stability and peace in MCA. I promised Dr Mahathir to support the agenda and work hard towards achieving it."

Dr Ling and Dr Mahathir held a meeting at the Prime Minister's office in Putrajaya on Saturday.

Lim, when asked for his response said: "Gag order means both sides (Team A and Team B) will not talk

openly on party problems. It is a cooling-off period while the Prime Minister comes up with a solution. We must heed the Prime Minister's advice."

He, however, declined to reveal whether he had met Dr Mahathir over the MCA leadership crisis.

Asked whether he had any idea of what the solution was about, he said: "Yes. I am

sure the Prime Minister will make an announcement when there is a formula, solution or package which both sides can agree to," Lim said.

On the April 21 EGM, Lim said: "It is definitely on, nothing to say it is not on."

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