

MCA polls to go on despite gag order

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. The MCA elections steering committee today announced the party polls will go on as scheduled despite the gag order imposed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday.

Team B today also said the directive barring party officials from making statements about the MCA crisis had not affected its plans for this Sunday's extraordinary general meeting.

"Whatever gave you the impression that the elections will be postponed because of the gag order?" steering committee chairman Datuk Seri Dr Ting Chew Peh responded when asked by reporters if the elections would proceed as planned. The committee, he added, was entrusted with ensuring the party elections are conducted as smoothly as possible.

Except for two divisions, he said

the other 166 divisions nationwide had sent out the notices of meeting on April 11, the date set by the committee to issue the notices.

He refused to identify the two divisions but said the State liaison committees had been directed to investigate. If the divisions were found not to have followed procedure, the State liaison committee would take over the running of the divisional elections there.

Nominations for the divisional posts have been fixed for April 22 while the polls for the Youth and Wanita wings on April 27 and division proper the following day.

On the recently concluded branch elections, Ting, who is also secretary-general, said the committee had received 22 complaints and most of them had been resolved or found to be unsubstantiated.

The Wanita wings of the Bandar Baru Temerloh and Sungai Lui Baru branches have been directed to hold re-elections as soon as possible as the polling conducted earlier was not according to procedure.

Ting also announced the suspension of the Jalan Wooten branch in Klang where the nomination and polling were found to have been improperly done.

Meanwhile, key Team B leader Datuk Yap Pian Hon said the EGM would go on and the faction would continue with its nationwide roadshow to urge delegates to attend.

"So far, I am not aware of any directive from the Prime Minister asking for the EGM to be called off. It will only be called off if the party agrees to set up an independent verification committee," said the Serdang MP.

Team B has proposed that the elections be rescheduled pending the cleaning up of the disputed membership list while Team A has opposed the EGM, which it says is unlawful.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir barred "everyone" including himself from making any public statements about MCA and refused to answer reporters' queries about MCA's problems.