

UP TO PM

STAR 22 APR 2002

Ling to clarify MCA 'unity' memo with Dr Mahathir

By FOONG PEK YEE and
NORMAN ONG

KUALA LUMPUR: Rival factions in the MCA are eagerly awaiting the arrival of the Prime Minister today to seek clarification on a memorandum that was supposed to have stopped the party's elections although branch elections have been concluded at 3,965 branches throughout the country.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who was away on official

visits to Morocco, Libya and Bahrain, is scheduled to arrive at 10.30am. The nominations for MCA's 166 divisions are to start at 4pm and end at 8pm.

The memorandum, purportedly based on the agenda of peace and unity by the Barisan Nasional chairman, was prepared by businessman Tan Sri Lim Kok Wing and signed by deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik who heads Team A,

confirmed yesterday that he did not sign it, adding that he wanted to wait for the Prime Minister's return.

"I hope to meet up with Dr Mahathir as soon as possible to clarify certain matters," Dr Ling told reporters after a closed-door briefing for Johor leaders in Batu Pahat.

"I have spotted some elements in the memorandum that are not in accordance with the MCA constitution, including calling off the elec-

tions from the division level onwards.

"We are studying the document prepared by Tan Sri Lim and signed by Team B. It was not discussed substantively. We only knew about it about seven hours after Team B's announcement (about 1pm on April 19)."

"We regard the Prime Minister as the Father of Barisan Nasional and will heed his advice. There is still room for peace talks."

● JURN TO PAGE FOUR

CC member: Constitution clear on polls

STAR 22 APR 2007

● F&M PAGE ONE

At a press conference here on Friday, Ah Lek said he had signed the memorandum last Thursday but declined to reveal who drafted it or provide details of its contents.

The memorandum reportedly had three points — status quo in the party, cancellation of the EGM called by Team B and postponement of party elections.

Ah Lek also announced the cancellation of the EGM slated for yesterday.

The EGM, aimed at stopping the party's ongoing elections, was declared invalid by secretary-general Datuk Seri Dr Ting Chew Peh on April 9 because it did not have written support from a third of its 2,384 central delegates.

The EGM requisition, submitted on April 5, purportedly had signatures from 810 central delegates but 49 later submitted affidavits to withdraw, leaving 761 or 33 short of the required 794.

On the same day (April 5), 1,526 central delegates submitted signed documents to the MCA central committee, requesting that the elections proceed.

According to Ah Lek, calling off the EGM as well as the party elections from division level onwards was based on just and equitable terms.

Yesterday, Dr Ling said: "Team B's EGM is unlawful and unconstitutional. It cannot use an illegal instrument to go against a legal proceeding (party elections)."

"The memorandum would amount to endorsing the agenda in Team B's unlawful and unconstitutional EGM," said central committee member Datuk Dr Chua Soi Lek.

"We have the highest respect for the Prime Minister but we must also consider the wishes of the majority of grassroots members who want the on-going elections to continue.

"We must abide by the party constitution and democratic process which the party was built upon," he said.

On Saturday, 10 state MCA chiefs, a deputy chief and a

secretary came out in full support of the party elections to proceed as decided by the central committee.

They said their consensus on the elections would be conducted in accordance with the party constitution and nobody could overrule the process.

Dr Chua, also Johor MCA deputy chief, said the party constitution was very clear on the party's triennial elections, citing among others, Article 167, adding that nobody could postpone or cancel the elections as or when he liked.

Article 167 states that every branch, division and general assembly shall hold a general election of its office bearers once every three years.

In the event of any branch or division failing to hold its elections by the respective due dates provided under this constitution, the president or a member appointed by him for the purpose shall have the power to convene a meeting to hold the elections.

"The elections had already started and concluded at the branch level involving 3,965 branches nationwide early this month and all, including those aligned to Team B, had taken part.

"The elections should not be seen as causing disunity just because some leaders complained," Dr Chua said, adding that the election process this round was the same as what was practised in the last four party elections that had concluded smoothly.

Another senior leader from Perak also pointed out that there were many "unanswered questions" on the so-called solution for the party crisis as outlined in the memorandum.

"What does it mean by status quo, who are involved and how can it bring peace and unity in the party? Does it mean that if certain people get to keep their posts without elections, this will resolve the party's current crisis?" the leader asked.

"As such, it is best that the president hears it directly from the Prime Minister and Barisan Nasional chairman," he said.