

10 state Youth chief posts up for grabs

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KUALA LUMPUR: Ten of the 13 MCA state Youth chairman's posts will be contested despite a no-contest ruling under the MCA peace plan when nomination for the movement's state-level elections closed at 8pm yesterday.

Federal Territory topped the list with four challengers, followed by three challengers each in Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Johor, two challengers each in Perlis, Penang, Perak, Pahang and Terengganu and one challenger in Malacca (see box).

Kedah Youth chief Chua Kim Chuan, Sabah Youth chief Chew Kok Woh and Kelantan's Leong Soo Kheng were returned unopposed.

Under the peace plan, which provides status quo for all incumbents, Chua and Chew, who have not passed the 45-year-old age limit under the movement's by-laws, were entitled to retain their seat.

Eight Youth chiefs who have passed the age limit will have to step down and their successors will be chosen through negotiations and consensus among the state Youth leaders.

Despite intense negotiations in the last two weeks, with some said to have reached consensus on their

"candidate" there was more than one nomination during the four-hour nomination which started at 4pm.

The MCA Wanita state elections also had their nominations nationwide while there were no elections for the state MCA parent body.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said he was confident that the peace plan, based on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's agenda for peace and stability to end the party's 14-month power tussle last month, could be implemented despite the hitches at the state Youth elections.

Dr Ling said the nine-man special committee headed by him to help iron out hitches to implement the no-contest ruling would meet at the party headquarters here tomorrow morning.

MCA elections steering committee chairman Datuk Seri Dr Ting Chew Peh said the three main principles under the peace plan - maintaining status quo, mutually agreed list of office-bearers for 2002/2005 and vacancies to be filled through negotiations must be adhered to, adding that the steering committee would meet at the party headquarters tomorrow afternoon.