

State chairmen, Youth chiefs to brief panel today

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KUALA LUMPUR: MCA state liaison committee chairmen will be asked to brief the party elections steering committee on the state-level Youth nominations that resulted in 10 of the 13 Youth chairman's posts being contested.

Party headquarters elections steering committee chairman Datuk Seri Dr Ting Chew Peh said the briefing today would provide a clearer picture of the situation he described as "quite unexpected".

For instance, Perak was reported to have come up with a single list for the Youth office-bearers with consensus from all its 23 division Youth chiefs and yet others not in the list had put in their nomination forms, he said.

Others states, including Selangor, Federal Territory and Negri Sembilan were confident of coming up with a single list before the nominations but negotiations seemed to have run into difficulties, he added.

"Let's hear from the state chairmen and their Youth chiefs first," he said when

asked to comment on the unusual number of contests despite the no-contest ruling under the MCA peace plan.

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, provided status quo for incumbent leaders from the division level upwards.

As for the Youth chiefs, those who have passed the 45-year-old age limit under the movement's by-laws must vacate their seats and the vacancies will be filled through negotiations and consensus by those involved.

The nine-man special committee headed by party president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik will meet today on how to handle the situation.

Johor state chief Hoo Seong Chang and Malacca Youth chief Soon Tian Sze who are still within the age limit are expected to retain their posts despite being challenged.

Seven state Youth chiefs who are over 45 - in Penang, Perak, Selangor, Federal Territory, Negri Sembilan,

Pahang and Terengganu - also saw their vacated seats being "fiercely contested" despite several rounds of negotiations to find their successors.

As for Perlis, its state chief Chan Poo Pee, who had resigned, also saw his seat being contested.

A source said the decision on the successors for the eight vacated posts would depend on the formula for negotiations, adding that many of the negotiations were derailed.

Citing Negri Sembilan as an example, the source said its deputy Youth chief Loh Seng Kok who had the support of four of the seven Youth division chiefs would be the most qualified.

Rasah Youth assistant secretary Mah Ann Ann and Rasah deputy chief Tang Thien Ming who are also vying for the Negri Youth chief's post were junior to Loh, said the source.

In Pahang, Liow Tiong Lai, tipped to be returned unopposed as Pahang Youth chief, was challenged by Goh Hay Joo, and a party insider attributed it to a "sign of protest against him".