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MCA branches in dispute perfectly legal, says Ling

M.K. Megan

SHAH ALAM, Fri. - MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said the legality of the 261 branches in dispute should not be questioned any more as they had been formed according to the law.

"In every election year there is a cut-off point for new branches and in this case it is Dec 31. The party's central committee met on or before Dec 31 to approve all the remaining applications for branches and memberships.

"The central committee is the ultimate body. All other matters after that are only a formality including the submission to the Registrar of Societies," he said.

He said the updated list with the party may not tally with that of ROS' list until such time that the party had submitted to them.

"But that does not mean the branches were illegal, because they have been approved by the central committee.

"If the ROS becomes the ultimate body to approve branches it should have been stated in the law so that the parties can have their meetings early and submit the list to ROS before the cut-off time," he said.

Furthermore, he said, the ROS should reply within seven days from the submission date of the new list.

"Otherwise it is considered that the new list has been approved," added Dr Ling after attending the one-day Selangor Barisan Nasional Convention at the Dewan Raja Muda Musa at the Selangor Youth and Cultural Complex here.

Dr Ling said the law had been amended to make sure that a political party remained independent, sovereign and had the powers to run the activities by itself.

"No outside parties should file any protest seeking to declare the party illegal," he said quoting Umno as an example.

"Umno did all the work but an outside party applied for it to be de-registered," he said.

He also thanked Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for clarifying the situation of the 261 branches. Dr Mahathir had said the affairs of political parties were not subject to the Government's or the court's intervention.

When asked if any disciplinary action would be taken against any party members for harping on the legality of the 261 branches, Dr Ling said he would not be instigated into commenting on the matter.

"I am a very patient man. My mother and my teachers all taught me patience is important in solving problems."

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