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MCA speaks with one voice on English

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The MCA spoke with one voice when it opposed the proposal to teach Science and Mathematics in English in Chinese primary schools next year, party leaders said.

"Both the so-called Team A and Team B leaders spoke with one voice. They felt now is not the best time to implement the proposal," said a central committee member who attended Friday's central committee meeting in which the decision was made.

He also said the stand was taken after consultation with various quarters. Party leaders, however, said that it did not mean that the party was opposed to the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

When contacted, none of the committee members who attended the meeting wanted to comment.

At the meeting, all present, including president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, opposed the proposal. They counter-proposed that Science and Mathematics be taught in English in secondary schools instead.

Some even proposed that bilingual text be used in the teaching of both subjects in primary schools.

The decision was the party's clearest stand yet on the issue, made four days before the Barisan Nasional supreme council meeting on Tuesday. MCA Youth secretary-general Loh Seng Kok said every member was in favour of the promotion of English proficiency but its implementation needed careful study.

"It was a party decision and not that of the president alone. I believe it was taken after extensive consultation with the grassroots. A lot of factors need to be considered before the Government decides," said Loh, who is also Dr Ling's political secretary.

Another party leader said MCA had always abided by the BN spirit to discuss sensitive issues behind closed doors and any solution needed to be done through consensus.

"We have always done things the BN way and we will continue doing it. It is best that we remain calm and wait for the discussions during the BN supreme council meeting."