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EGM-Cancelled

MCA TEAM B CALLS OFF EGM ON PRIME MINISTER'S ADVICE

KUALA LUMPUR, April 19 (Bernama) -- The MCA Team B has cancelled the Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) scheduled to be held this Sunday, MCA deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek said today.

Lim, the Team B leader, said the decision was taken on the advice of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is the Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman.

It had also been decided that the party's general assembly would proceed as scheduled in June but that elections at the division and state levels and for the party's top posts had been "called off", he told a press conference here.

Lim said that the calling off of elections was in accordance with the "agenda of peace and stability" proposed by the Prime Minister.

"The Prime Minister and Chairman of Barisan Nasional has given the advice to both sides in the MCA and his advice has provided the framework for resolution of the present split within the party," he said in a statement read out at the press conference.

"The advice of the Prime Minister-cum-chairman of Barisan Nasional was driven by the desire for unity which is a true spirit of the BN and is based on trust and equitable terms which include calling off the EGM, as well as the party elections from divisional level onwards.

"However, the scheduled division, state meetings and general assemblies will proceed as usual but without elections," the statement said.

When asked whether Team A had agreed to the calling off of the party election in June, Lim said: "I cannot speak on behalf of them (Team A). You have to ask them. Please stick to the statement."

However, party secretary-general Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh, in an immediate reaction, said party elections at all levels would go on as scheduled.

"I am quite surprised with the announcement that the elections have been cancelled...this would only confuse the grassroots and is not good for the party," he told reporters at the party headquarters here.

Dr Ting said the party constitution stipulated that elections must be held every three years and must be held before Aug 31.

He said only the Central Committee (CC) had the power to decide on such matters while the president had the power to postpone the AGM.

Lim said that from now on there should no longer be any Team A or Team B.

"From now on there should not be Team A or B...because we are talking about unity," he said.

Dr Ting said since the CC had already decided on the dates of nominations and elections, calling off the elections would only create chaos.

"And as far as the MCA Election Steering Committee is concerned, our job is to ensure the smooth running of the elections," he said.

Dr Ting advised party members to check with the headquarters if they had any doubts on the party elections.

"Any party announcement must come from the headquarters, either by me or the president," he said.

MCA president and Team A leader Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, when contacted, said he would comment on the matter later.

Dr Mahathir has intervened to resolve differences between the rival

factions, whose rift first surfaced with the purchase of Nanyang Press Holdings by the party last year.

The two groups were subsequently engaged in a dispute over the list of delegates to the party elections, with Lim's camp claiming there were phantom members.

In a meeting with Dr Ling on Saturday, Dr Mahathir offered an agenda for peace to resolve the problems in the party.

-- BERNAMA

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