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MCA-Status

MCA TO MAINTAIN STATUS QUO AT ALL LEVELS UNTIL 2005, SAYS DR LING

KUALA LUMPUR, April 23 (Bernama) -- All factions in the MCA have agreed that the party elections will proceed as planned but there will be no contest for all posts, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik announced today.

He said the decision was made unanimously by the party's decision-making body, the central committee (CC), in support of the "Peace and Stability Agenda" forwarded by Prime Minister and Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Dr Ling said that incumbents for all posts from the divisional to the national levels would be renominated to hold their respective posts for another three-year term, until 2005.

"We've decided unanimously to support the agenda and therefore the status quo at all levels, from division to state and national, will be maintained," he told a media conference after a two-hour CC meeting at the party headquarters, here.

The conference was attended by all the party leaders -- those aligned to the party president, or "Team A", as well as to party deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek, or "Team B".

"We thank the prime minister for his concern on our unity and we also agreed unanimously to work together to maintain the peace and stability in the party," Dr Ling said.

He also announced the new nomination and election dates for the divisional level with nominations to be held on May 10 and elections for division youth and wanita on May 14, followed by elections for the party divisional posts on May 15.

He said the holding of the party elections was to comply with the party's constitution which stipulates that elections of office bearers at all levels shall be held every three years.

"Under provisions of the constitution, we are duty bound to hold elections once in three years, so we have to strictly adhere to the constitution and this is what we are doing," he added.

Dr Ling said party leaders from both sides would advise and persuade their supporters to abide by the agenda forwarded by the prime minister in the interest of the Barisan Nasional.

"This is something we'll try to achieve. We will persuade the members in the interest of the BN. We appeal to them to support the plan," he said.

Asked whether the CC decision to maintain the status quo at all levels in the party is an advice or an order, Dr Ling said: "This is an advice and we will advise them".

Asked what action would be taken against party members who did not maintain the status quo, he said: "We will cross the bridge when we come to it".

The decision on the status quo would also apply to the youth section, which was suspended and placed under a three-man committee last year, he said, adding that after the elections, the suspension would be lifted, he added.

Meanwhile, Lim, when asked whether he was happy with the decision, said he welcomed the decision to maintain the status quo.

"What is most important is that the party should be united, we should not be talking about Team A and Team B. The prime minister has stressed many times that he wants to see 100 per cent MCA.

"I think if we work together for the sake of the community and the country, I'm very confident we will be able to achieve this," he said.

Asked by reporters later whether the CC decision also meant that a verifying committee would be set up to check on the new membership list for any phantom members, Dr Ling said the list had been accepted for the branch elections and would continue to be accepted for the divisional level.

Lim, however, refused to comment except to say that the most important thing was to adhere to the peace and stability agenda.

Under the prime minister's plan for the agenda, both sides are supposed to sign a memorandum of understanding based on three principles.

They are that party elections at the divisional, state and national levels be called off, that the party leadership status quo remain and that the extraordinary general meeting (EGM) called for by Team B also be called off.

-- BERNAMA

AT ZS JK