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MCA leaders say BN, community come first

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The Barisan Nasional's victory in Indera Kayangan shows that MCA leaders put the coalition and Chinese community's interests above their own.

Party leaders who said this today, however, were non-committal about whether the goodwill during the by-election campaign would continue until the national-level party elections in June.

In Seremban, party president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said the by-election has provided a platform for the MCA to build on its experience of uniting members.

"The experience of standing, working and moving together has long existed, and the result was proven yesterday," he said.

Dr Ling, who is also Transport Minister, said the win proved that "unity is strength".

Deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek said party leaders had fulfilled their pledge to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to work together to secure a bigger majority.

"I walked four to five hours a day in Indera Kayangan to meet voters. At that time, our only concern was a bigger win for the MCA," said Lim.

Asked if he expected both camps in the party to continue setting aside their differences, Lim said there was no need to touch on the subject yet as members were still recovering from the campaign.

Vice-president Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said the victory showed that the Chinese community continued to support the party under the leadership of Dr Ling.

He added that the community also wanted to see a stable MCA.

Asked if he expected any conflicts ahead of the party polls, Fong said he hoped all members would set aside their differences.

Another vice-president, Datuk Chua Jui Meng, said the goodwill generated among MCA leaders during the by-election had put the party on a better footing.

"In the months to come, I hope the differences among party leaders can be iron out," said Chua.

Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting, also a vice-president, said the outcome of the election indicated that the voters, especially the Chinese wanted a united MCA.

"The fact that we called for a truce before the campaigning helped.

"The outcome is an endorsement by the Chinese community for MCA and Dr Ling."

For Datuk Chan Kong Choy, another vice-president, the by-election showed the leaders' maturity in overcoming external challenges.

Wanita MCA chief Datuk Dr Ng Yen Yen believed women understood the importance of tolerance and stability when it came to voting.

"They are more independent and confident in their actions."

Wanita deputy head Datin Paduka Dr Tan Yee Kew said the results showed that the grassroots had accepted a woman candidate. She was also glad to have another woman in a State legislative assembly.

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