

14 APR 2002

Mahathir-MCA

NO MORE STATEMENTS ON MCA, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, April 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that no one should make further statements on the MCA leadership issue.

He said this was agreed to by him, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and deputy president Datuk Lim Ah Lek.

"There would be no statements on MCA to be given by anybody, including myself," he told reporters at the Glenmarie Golf and Country Club charity golf competition in Subang, near here.

The competition was held to raise funds for the welfare and education funds of Yayasan Pembangunan Masyarakat Kubang Pasu and Yayasan Bestari Kuala Langat.

Asked how long the moratorium would be enforced, Dr Mahathir said, "Don't know yet."

Dr Mahathir kept mum despite attempts by reporters to get him to comment on issues related to MCA.

Among other things, he was asked on a front-page report in a Chinese daily which quoted sources as saying that he had asked Lim to call off the extraordinary general meeting scheduled on April 21.

He was also asked whether there was an agreement by MCA leaders not to contest top posts in the party elections and whether he would be meeting Lim.

To all the questions, Dr Mahathir, with a hand covering his mouth, said: "I am sworn to secrecy and silence."

Dr Ling yesterday met the Prime Minister over the problems in the party which are threatening to split the second largest component party in the Barisan Nasional (BN).

Contacted after the meeting, Dr Ling described it as positive and said the Prime Minister had come up with "an agenda for stability and peace".

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, had said earlier that he would meet MCA leaders to help resolve differences between Team A and Team B, led by Dr Ling and Lim respectively.

Dr Mahathir had also said that he believed Dr Ling and Lim could resolve their problems through negotiations.

Team B has said it would convene the EGM on April 21, which has been rejected by party secretary-general Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh, to resolve the issue of phantom members in the list of delegates to the party elections in June.

They also want the party election to be postponed for the membership list to be cleansed and verified.

Lim reportedly said on Thursday that he and Dr Ling had had irreconcilable differences for a long time and that they had been merely putting on a show of unity in public.

The problems plaguing the MCA surfaced last year when the party's top leadership decided to purchase Nanyang Press Holdings Berhad, which controls both Nanyang Siang Pao and China Press.

-- BERNAMA

HK AT MFJ YBY