

03/07/2002

Ling refused to take up my challenge, says Ah Lek

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik yesterday allegedly turned down a challenge by his deputy Datuk Lim Ah Lek to hold a joint Press conference to explain why he (Lim) has not given up his party post.

Lim said today that the dare was made after numerous queries by party leaders who wanted to know why he was still holding on to the post despite saying that he was prepared to leave for the past 10 years.

The challenge was made at the MCA presidential council meeting yesterday.

"Because of the peace plan, I was hoping that members would maintain unity. But these people wanted to discredit me and this left me with no choice," Lim, a former Human Resources Minister, said.

During the proposed Press conference, Lim said both he and Dr Ling could clear the air over why he (Lim) was still deputy president. They could also immediately rebut if they disagreed on the points raised by the other party.

Dr Ling, however, refused to take up the challenge, Lim added.

Lim was asked to respond to queries from MCA leaders like Senator Yew Teong Look, Datuk Ong Ka Chuan and Chew Kok Woh who had questioned why he had yet to step down as deputy president.

They said Lim, since he was an executive council member in Pahang 10 years ago, had said he wanted to leave but until now, had not.

These people were reacting to Lim's statement last Friday that he was prepared to step down and let younger leaders take over.

Lim then called on Dr Ling to emulate Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and formulate a succession plan for MCA.

On allegations that the disciplinary committee that he headed had not been effective, Lim said the body was like a toothless tiger as it could not initiate proceedings without a directive from the president.

"Under the party's constitution, only the president can instruct the disciplinary committee to conduct an inquiry. It is unfair to say that the committee has been ineffective."

The committee, Lim said, had wanted to look into the chair-throwing incident during last year's Youth general assembly but the central committee instead set up a six-man inquiry panel.

He said it would be unfair to blame the disciplinary committee for not taking action against the perpetrators in the Youth assembly incident or the several cases of indiscipline that happened after that.

On Sunday, MCA central committee member Donald Lim had said that the disciplinary board had been ineffective and proposed changes to the present line-up.

(END)