

Joint panel to explore MCA-Gerakan merger plan

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KUALA LUMPUR: The MCA has decided to form a joint committee with Cerakan to explore the possibility of merging the two parties.

MCA president, Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting said that this was decided by the MCA presidential council meeting chaired by him at Wisma MCA here yesterday.

He said the council had endorsed his stand on "exploring the possibility of MCA and Gerakan merging".

The meeting also decided that all discussions on the matter be kept confidential from now on.

The merger talks would henceforth be internal discussions of both parties, said Ong,

who is also the Housing and

Local Government Minister.

"We will not report to the press and let it get highlighted in the media.

"It is not a good idea to highlight the discussions in the press if we want to get things done and see results," he told a press conference.

Ong and Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik had spoken on the merger proposal during their joint party dinner in Alor Star last Thursday.

The 54-year-old MCA has 1.02 million members and is the second largest Barisan Nasional component party while Gerakan, set up in 1968, has 250,000 members.

Asked whether the MCA

Chinese members from Gerakan, Ong said: "Leave this to the joint committee. I will not pre-judge anything."

In welcoming the move by MCA, Cerakan deputy secretary-general Datuk Chang Ko Youn said there was a need for a machinery to enable the two parties to work together.

"For a start, we can have joint activities and platforms to find a common stand or approach," he said.

He pointed out that former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had also stressed the need for the present Barisan Nasional set-up to be disbanded and become one party, which would be good for the country's unity and stability.
