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Ong, Chan likely to receive nod

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting and his deputy Datuk Chan Kong Choy are expected to receive their stamp of endorsement to lead the party from MCA's highest body on Sunday.

The 3,000-odd delegates to the general assembly at Wisma MCA are expected to endorse a resolution supporting the leadership of Ong and Chan, who stand out as the only top two leaders in the party's history elected to their posts by the central committee instead of the general assembly.

Insiders say the resolution, likely to be passed, will give the Ong-Chan leadership a "sense of legitimacy" following their election by the committee on May 23.

All 13 State liaison committees which held their respective conventions over the past month had also endorsed a resolution to support the two leaders.

Ong and Chan, previously vice-presidents, took over following the simultaneous resignation of former president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and deputy president Datuk Seri Lim Ah Lek as part of a peace plan to end the three-and-a-half-year party crisis.

Under the MCA constitution, any vacancy involving elected national-level office-bearers will be filled by the central committee members themselves through voting in the committee.

Usually, such posts are elected by the delegates to the general assembly during the triennial party elections although in 1986, Dr Ling (then a deputy president) assumed the presidency following the resignation of then president Tan Koon Swan.

Ong and Chan are the only top two leaders not elected by the general assembly.

The general assembly, to be opened for the last time by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is also expected to pass a resolution paying tribute to Dr Ling and Lim for their contributions to the country.

Also expected to be tabled is a resolution expressing gratitude to Dr Mahathir's service to the nation and to support Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who will take over as Prime Minister in October.