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MCA to use BN channel to get seats

SANDAKAN, Sun. - MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting said today his party will use the Barisan Nasional internal channel to secure seats for the Sabah MCA in the next State and parliamentary elections.

Sabah MCA is ready and will help all BN candidates win the elections, he said after opening the Sabah MCA's 12th convention here.

Yesterday, the Sabah MCA Youth movement passed a resolution seeking two State seats and one parliamentary seat for Sabah MCA in the next elections.

Under the BN concept, seats are allocated among the various component parties to contest the polls. In the last 12 years since the peninsular-based party came to the State, Sabah MCA had not been allocated any seat.

Opening the convention, Ong called for the continuation of party programmes, including education programmes, and stressed the need for integrity and unity in the party.

He explained the benefits of national service training and urged local MCA leaders to explain the programme to the people.

He said through national service training, youths would become more disciplined and patriotic.

Meanwhile, Sabah MCA chief Datuk Edward Khoo said it was about time that the State MCA was given the opportunity to contest both the State and parliamentary seats so that it would have representation in the State Assembly and the Federal Parliament.

"I would like to ... urge the party president to secure a fair and equitable number of seats for the party to contest in Sabah," he said.

Request for seats in the coming State and parliamentary elections, a call on Kota Kinabalu City Hall to reduce parking rates as well as expressing support for the national leadership were among the resolutions adopted at the convention today.

The convention resolved to respect and accept Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's decision to retire in October and to give full support to his successor Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Sabah MCA also urged the State Government to obtain more funds under the Eighth Malaysia Plan midterm review to upgrade basic facilities, particularly water supply in Sandakan.

It also urged the Government to address traffic congestion in major towns and to build more lowcost housing to meet demand in Sabah.

It also urged Kota Kinabalu City Hall to reduce parking rates within the capital city.

Meanwhile, State BN chairman Datuk Musa Aman said today Sabah Barisan Nasional would consider MCA's request that the party be allocated seats in the next State and parliamentary elections.

"When the time comes, we will discuss the matter with component members (in Sabah) and then we will present it (report) to the BN at Federal level.

"All component parties are asking for seats and we will discuss this. However, it is for the leadership to make the final decision. Parties are free to ask for seats but all will abide by the leadership's decision."