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Dr M: Fresh polls will only weaken MCA

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PUTRAJAYA: Fresh elections in the MCA will only lead to a "weak party", former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

He was responding to calls by the party's Wanita wing and several of the central committee members for fresh party elections.

"It will only divide the party because those who lose will not reconcile and in the end, you will only have a weak party."

He also said that political

leaders now were only interested in self-gain.

"The problem now is not only in MCA but also MIC and even Umno.

"They're only thinking about people who will become leaders, and not about the party.

"The party is only a horse they ride on and they think that if they associate themselves with the party, they'll get something for themselves.

"They are not interested in the party, or the country, and that is what that's causing the split."

Meanwhile, Social Care Foundation chairman Tan Sri

Robert Phang suggested that the MCA top leaders hold a public forum to explain the "real" story in the party's leadership crisis.

He said the public, especially the Chinese community was confused over the happenings in the party.

"I think the Chinese community is looking forward to have a direct dialogue.

"There are a lot of things we don't know."

He also said party president Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat must also explain why he could not fulfil his earlier pledge to quit if he lost in the EGM.

He said Ong's biggest chal-

lenge now was to ensure his "greater unity plan" — unveiled two weeks ago when he buried his differences with former deputy president Datuk Seri Dr Chua Soi Lek — would work.

"The peace plan should be given a chance to work. Party polls should be the last resort."

In *Alor Star*, Kedah MCA defended Ong's "greater unity" plan.

State MCA deputy chief Datuk Chong Iit Chew called on all quarters and critics to give a chance for the plan to materialise for the benefit of the party.