

PM: MCA, MIC STILL BACK UNITY GOVT

Party chiefs assure me of the support, says Anwar

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MCA and MIC's decision to skip the six state elections does not mean their support for the unity government is waning.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who is also Pakatan Harapan (PH) chairman, said the presidents of MCA and MIC had given their assurance of supporting the unity government.

"Both of them (the presidents) have called and told me that even though they will not contest at this point, they will give their unwavering support (to the unity

government).

"(And) while I believe that the decision to skip (the election) is under the purview of BN, I am thankful for their support and help, as well as their assurance in supporting the government's position," he said after the 2023 International Social Well-being Conference yesterday.

On Wednesday, the secretaries-general of both the parties had announced their parties' decision to sit out the state elections.

The decision sparked speculation of a rift between the two parties and Umno, which is the dominant party in BN.

However, BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi denied any rift in the coalition yesterday. He said he respected the two parties' decision, but the matter would be discussed at the

BN supreme council meeting on Monday.

"Last night (Wednesday) I was contacted by the MCA president (Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong) regarding their top leadership's decision and I have also read the statement by the MIC secretary-general, regarding the decision of both parties not to participate in the state elections.

"As BN chairman, I respect the decision of the two parties, but we will discuss this on July 10 at the BN supreme council meeting," he said after the Rural and Regional Development Ministry's monthly assembly in Putrajaya.

MCA secretary-general Datuk Chong Sin Woon had said the party would sit out the state elections and instead focus on preparing for the 16th General Election.



MIC secretary-general R.T. Rajasekaran had said the central working committee decided on June 30 not to field candidates in the state elections after examining the political situation.

Zahid, who is also deputy prime minister, said BN had allocated seats for MCA and MIC in the elections.

"What is important is that, BN as an important and strategic component in the unity government, will continue to be together to face the six state elections that will take place on Aug 12."

Zahid side-stepped questions on whether BN would try to convince MCA and MIC to change course, merely saying the coalition would discuss the matter.

Asked what would happen to the seats allocated to MCA and MIC if the two parties did not contest, the Umno president said the seats would remain with BN.

"If they don't want them, we (Umno) will take them," he said.

He also denied that the two par-

ties had a rift with Umno.

"There is no problem in the relationship with MCA and MIC in BN... they will still campaign, just not contest."

DAP secretary-general Anthony Loke said his party and PH respected the decision by MCA and MIC.

He said the coalition was committed to ensuring candidates from the unity government won.

He said DAP would provide full support to all unity government candidates, regardless whether they were from PH or BN.

"We respect the decision of the MCA and MIC leadership in announcing that they will not contest the state elections on Aug 12.

"It is the right of the party leadership to decide whether they want to contest.

"I am sure they have discussed it in detail before making the decision. Our focus is to continue campaigning and forming the government," he said. **Additional**

reporting by Mahani Ishak