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MCA-Pulau Pinang

MCA RESTRAINS ITSELF OVER POLITICAL SITUATION IN PULAU PINANG

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 7 (Bernama) -- The MCA will restrain itself over the current political situation in Pulau Pinang following the resignation of two Gerakan state assemblymen, MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today.

He said the MCA Presidential Council decided at its meeting today that the party would exercise extreme restraint over the Pulau Pinang situation which he described as a little bit "bubbly", in the interest of the Barisan Nasional (BN) and stability in the state.

"As far as the MCA is concerned, the party will continue to exercise great restraint. We are going to restrain ourselves from quarrelling publicly over too many provocations that we feel are uncalled for and unwarranted," he told reporters after chairing the meeting at his office, here.

He said the MCA was more concerned to see the whole situation cool down and the state government formed very quickly and get down to work immediately.

"We are not going to add to all the talk that are going on now," he said.

State assemblymen for Bayan Lepas, Lim Chien Aun and Datuk Keramat, Lim Boo Chang resigned from the party on Dec 2 and considered themselves as Independents under the Barisan Nasional (BN).

Asked whether the council had discussed the admission of the two Lims and if both of them had applied to join the MCA, Dr Ling said he had not received any applications from them.

"It is premature to discuss it. Once we received (their applications), definitely we will discuss it," he said.

Asked on the MCA's proposal for the posts of four ministers, six deputy ministers and two parliamentary secretaries, Dr Ling said he had presented the party's list to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"I have presented our (MCA) part to Dr Mahathir and the PM has the final prerogative," he said.

On whether there will be any surprises in the MCA cabinet line-up, he said the party had not asked for any change and presumed it would be maintained.

However, he said there would be changes in the deputy ministers' posts.

On other matters discussed at the meeting, Dr Ling said the council had agreed to accept the resignation of Datuk Lim Ah Lek as the MCA state chairman for Pahang and Perak.

Lim Ah Lek, who is the MCA deputy president, did not seek re-election in the Nov 29 general election.

Dr Ling said the party sincerely thanked him for his services and contributions especially for Pahang, where he served for many years.

He said the council had appointed Datuk Ong Ka Chuan as the new Perak state chairman and Datuk Chan Kong Choy as Pahang state chairman.

"We are confident that both of them will continue the good work and improve the situation at both states," he said.

Dr Ling said the MCA also thanked all party members and the people for supporting the party and the BN in the last general election and promised that the party would not fail them.

"Any promises that we have given, we are going to get down to work very very soon to fulfil those promises," he said.

Asked on the "kharaj" tax on non-Muslims imposed by the new PAS-led Terengganu government, Dr Ling said the party's legal experts were looking into it and would brief the presidential council on the matter.

"It is something that we have to take very seriously...all the implications, so our legal experts will study the matter and come back to us quickly," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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