

Penang duo may face action,

says Dr M

By NICK LEONG

PETALING JAYA: Disciplinary action may be taken against two Barisan Nasional state assemblymen who abstained from voting against a motion by the opposition at the Penang State Assembly recently, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

Dr Mahathir, who is Barisan chairman, said what Tan Cheng Liang (Jawi) and Lim Boo Chang (Datuk Keramat) did was a serious breach of party discipline.

"Yes, it's possible. It is a serious thing, a lack of party discipline," he said when asked whether the two would face any disciplinary action.

He said the coalition needed to look into similar breaches of discipline before deciding what action would be taken.

On whether the two should be penalised for acting in accordance with the people's wishes, Dr Mahathir said this implied that Barisan's wishes were not the wishes of the people.

"If I have to ask my constituents every time there is a vote, I will not be supporting anything and I will have to return to my constituency all the time," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the excuse given by the two legislators

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for their action was poor.

"If everybody's voting is based on conscience, there will be no party (Barisan)," he said.

He said everyone lobbied to become candidates during elections.

"When they want to contest, they ask the party for support.

"But after they have won, they want to become independent," he said.

He said not many independent candidates had won in previous elections.

"How many independents won during the last election?

Not many. The winner is actually the party. We depend on the party, so we have to accept the discipline of the party," he added.

Asked whether Barisan would tighten laws on party hopping, Dr Mahathir said it would conduct a comprehensive study on the issue.

"Sometimes, people want to hop into the party. If we disallow it, we deny people the chance to join us," he said.

Asked on development of property on hillslopes, Dr Mahathir said the Government would conduct a study on the matter, adding that not

such places were dangerous.

On his decision to appoint two new ministers to the Cabinet recently, Dr Mahathir said he had a lot of work to do and the new ministers would help ease his burden a little.

Asked if newly appointed Second Finance Minister Datuk Jamaludin Jarjis would be appointed Umno treasurer, Dr Mahathir said it was not necessary.

He said there was a time when Tun Daim Zainuddin was Umno treasurer when Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was finance minister.

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