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Don't play up issue, says MCA veep

PUTRAJAYA: The media and political parties have been told not to blow up the issue of the two Barisan Nasional assemblymen who abstained from voting against a motion by the Opposition at the Penang state legislative assembly last Thursday.

MCA vice president Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said yesterday it would not bring Barisan Nasional any benefit.

"Let's gather information on the matter and discuss it later," he said after chairing the post-cabinet meeting at

the Human Resources Ministry.

Fong said the matter would be discussed with MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik when he returns from his holidays.

Gerakan Youth chairman Mah Siew Kong said the MCA leadership should have the courage to discipline its own party members.

He said the BN leadership had no choice but to take serious action against the two MCA assemblymen - Lim Boo Chang and Tan Cheng Liang - who abstained from voting on a

motion tabled by the Opposition to ask the government to postpone the construction of the Penang Outer Ring Road (PORR).

"What use is it to stand under the BN banner if they cannot follow the rules? And if they are let off scot-free, won't others feel that they, too, can do as they wish?" Mah asked in a statement.

He said that not disciplining them would start a dangerous precedent whereby disloyalty and indiscipline were encouraged.

Commenting on the matter on Tuesday, Prime Minis-

ter Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the two assemblymen had committed a serious breach of party discipline and could face disciplinary action.

Gerakan Wanita chairman Datuk Rhina Bhar said that both Tan and Lim were two-term assemblymen who were more than adequately knowledgeable of the BN spirit and code of practice in the state assembly.

"The cardinal issue here is discipline and not the PORR issue or the views and principles of the individual state assemblyman."