

Dr M aware of situation, says Ling

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KOTA TINGGI: The MCA has always maintained constant consultations with the Barisan Nasional leadership on all decision-making, including the controversy over the two Penang state assemblymen, its party president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said.

He said as a component party in the coalition, MCA had always sought the advice of Barisan chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on all things "to come up with an overview of what is best for the coalition and the country.

"We have constant consultations with the Barisan leadership to ensure everything is well understood.

"In the case of the two Penang assemblymen, MCA has sought the advice and also briefed the Barisan

chairman from time to time but I would not want to delve into the details now.

"The Prime Minister is absolutely right in saying Barisan has the power over any errant party in the coalition but he also agreed it is the right of MCA to discipline its members," he said here yesterday.

Ling was asked to respond to Dr Mahathir's statement that all component parties in the Barisan must abide by the coalition's stand and that Barisan had the power to determine membership in the ruling coalition.

Asked if the statement could be regarded as a warning to MCA, Dr Ling said: "I do not perceive the statement as a warning. The Prime Minister was merely stating the truth according to the coalition's

constitution.

"MCA is sticking to what is provided by the constitution," he added.

On Wednesday, Dr Mahathir said all component parties must abide by the coalition's stand on any issue and if a party was not willing to abide by Barisan's stand, it meant the party was not willing to subscribe to the coalition's spirit of co-operation.

Dr Mahathir said the MCA and not the Barisan, had the right to discipline its members, but the Barisan had the power to determine membership in the coalition.

Tan Cheng Liang and Lim Boo Chang caused an uproar when they abstained from voting against a DAP motion at last month's state assembly seeking deferment of the Penang Outer Ring Road project.