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'Penang MCA duo must pay price for abstaining'

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - A senior MCA leader today said the two Penang Barisan Nasional State Assemblymen who abstained from voting on a motion tabled by the DAP had gone overboard and should be prepared to pay the price.

The leader, who preferred to remain anonymous, said while there was no friction among the MCA and Gerakan at Federal level, the action by the MCA duo was creating unnecessary tension between the two parties.

He said the action by Lim Boo Chang (Datuk Keramat) and Tan Cheng Liang (Jawi) had sparked allegations, including one that the Penang MCA wakil rakyat were given instructions by certain MCA leaders to abstain from voting.

They were said to have been asked to do so to discredit the Penang Gerakan leadership.

Boo Chang and Tan face possible expulsion from the BN for their abstention on a motion tabled by Law Heng Kiang (DAP-Batu Lanchang) to postpone construction on the proposed RM1.02 billion Penang Outer Ring Road.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has described their action as a serious breach of discipline.

MCA deputy president Datuk Seri Lim Ah Lek, meanwhile, said all parties should remain calm and leave the decision to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also BN chairman.

"Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and Penang BN Whip Datuk Dr Hilmi Yahaya will be handing over a report on the matter to Dr Mahathir and it is best we leave it to him," he said.

Dr Hilmi is also Penang Deputy Chief Minister.

Lim said the two would get a fair chance to present their case.

It is learnt that MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, who recently returned from a holiday-cum-working trip to China, has cancelled his planned visit to India to attend to this matter.

In Penang, Gerakan central committee member Datuk Kee Phaik Cheen said Boo Chang and Tan should pay for their actions. "They had been briefed to vote against the motion but chose not to do so."

"They must now face the music for failing to follow the State BN leadership's directive," she said.

Tanjung Umno Youth chief Raja Munir Shah Raja Mustapha said the two should be expelled from the BN.

He said they should also consider giving up their respective State seats since they had won on BN tickets.

The State People's Progressive Party (PPP) also called on the two MCA Assemblymen to resign.

State PPP chairman Datuk Loga Bala Mohan said Tan and Boo Chang had won on BN tickets but chose not to toe the BN line.

He said the party had sent a notice to State BN secretary Datuk Seri Khalid Ahmad calling for a meeting to discuss Tan and Boo Chang's action.

"PPP Penang will propose that these errant representatives be expelled or have stern action taken against them. The BN cannot let this go unpunished.

"Otherwise, a dangerous precedent will be set, and all the BN representatives will start taking their own stand, instead of supporting the policies of the BN Government."