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Mahathir-BN

BN WILLING TO DISCUSS PROPOSAL FOR EXPELLED BN REPS TO VACATE SEATS

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 20 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that any proposal for Barisan Nasional (BN) representatives who are expelled from their parties to vacate their seats will have to be referred to the coalition's supreme council.

"We will bring it to the BN if such a matter is raised," the prime minister told a media conference after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting at the Putra World Trade Centre, here.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the BN chairman and Umno president, said the BN supreme council was scheduled to meet next month and would make a decision if the matter was raised.

He was replying to a question on the possibility of BN state assemblymen or members of Parliament having to vacate their seats if they are expelled from their parties.

Dr Mahathir said the Umno supreme council meeting today discussed at length the MCA's decision to suspend two of its representatives for abstaining from voting against the DAP's motion to defer the Penang Outer Ring Road (POOR) project at the Penang state assembly last month.

He said the MCA regarded the abstention by Jawi state assemblywoman Tan Cheng Liang and Datuk Keramat state assemblyman Lim Boo Chang as a serious matter.

"Our opinion is that although the action of a party member is the party's responsibility, we regard these people as representing the Barisan Nasional and as such, the Barisan Nasional plays a role in determining whether the suspension is adequate," he said.

He said he also obtained new information on the incident.

Asked for Umno's stand on the matter, Dr Mahathir said that based on the information available, the matter was a BN problem.

"This means that the matter is slightly different from my earlier announcement and it must be referred to the BN and we (Umno) will abide by the BN stand," he said.

Dr Mahathir had earlier said that he was leaving the decision to the MCA and the BN was willing to review the case if the MCA wanted it to make the decision.

Asked whether the Umno supreme council was satisfied with the MCA's decision to suspend its two representatives, he said: "The supreme council considered the matter and decided that it should be referred to the Barisan Nasional."

Declining to disclose the new information he had obtained on the matter, he said: "It's not necessary...we have got new information and we will submit it to the Barisan Nasional because we don't want this matter to be the subject of discussion which can influence the Barisan Nasional's stand."

-- BERNAMA

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