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MCA-Suspension

MCA SUSPENDS TWO PENANG ASSEMBLYMEN OVER ANTI-PORR STANCE

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 16 (Bernama) -- The MCA has suspended indefinitely its two Penang state assemblymen over the Penang Outer Ring Road (PORR) issue.

The MCA Presidential Council unanimously decided on the indefinite suspension of Tan Cheng Liang (Jawi) and Lim Boo Chang (Datuk Kramat), party president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik announced after the council's meeting here today.

The Presidential Council's decision was based on the party's disciplinary committee's recommendation, he told reporters.

Tan and Lim have abstained from voting against a DAP motion in the Penang state assembly on Nov 21 to defer the RM1.02 billion PORR project until after the completion of the RM400 million Jelutong Expressway.

This caused an uproar among Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties in the state which felt that the trend, if left unchecked, would cause major problems in the ruling coalition.

The BN took up the matter at its Supreme Council meeting and decided that the MCA should be left to mete out the appropriate punishment against the two state assemblymen.

The MCA Presidential Council then directed the party's disciplinary committee, headed by Datuk Kam Woon Wah, to investigate the matter and recommend the type of action to be taken against the duo. The meeting today was to endorse the disciplinary committee's decision.

"They (MCA disciplinary committee) unanimously recommended that we suspend indefinitely the membership of the two state assemblymen. This is the collective wisdom of the disciplinary committee and the Presidential Council has decided to accept and respect their recommendation," said Ling.

He said that the suspension would take effect immediately, without a time limit.

Ling said that he spoke to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is BN chairman, on the matter before Dr Mahathir left for Japan last week.

"This is a normal practice on all major issues...I always consult the Prime Minister because as the father of BN, and when you sit at the top, you have a wider overview of things," said Ling, who is Transport Minister.

He said that the penalty imposed on the two state assemblymen was a "serious and appropriate disciplinary action."

Tan and Lim, he said, can appeal to the party's Central Committee within the next 14 days if they were not satisfied with the Presidential Council's decision, in accordance with the MCA constitution.

He said that the party would also convey its decision to the BN secretariat as soon as possible.

Ling said that the MCA would also write to the two assemblymen to convey the ruling but "they would continue as the state assemblymen".

"They are elected state assemblymen by the people. They will still have the responsibility to the people who elected them to serve them well," Ling said.

However, he said that the two state MCA assemblymen would not be allowed to use the party machinery in carrying out their duties.

Ling also declined to reveal the content of the investigation conducted by the party's disciplinary committee.

Asked on his advice to the state assemblymen, he said: "Let me think

about it. Right now, no."

Asked on MCA's stand on the PORR, Ling said: "PORR is not a federal project, people like me don't have a clue what PORR is about. Because it is a Penang outer ring road...it is not a Federal Territory outer ring road or Johor outer ring road project. So, as far as we are concerned, we don't have a clue and we don't want to make a stand on things we don't know anything about."

-- BERNAMA

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