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Penang BN likely to recommend sacking

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PENANG, Wed. - Senior Penang Barisan Nasional leaders are expected to recommend the expulsion of MCA backbenchers Lim Boo Chang (Datuk Keramat) and Tan Cheng Liang (Jawi) for breaching party discipline.

Sources told the New Straits Times that the matter would be discussed when State BN chairman Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon calls for a State BN council meeting soon.

"This is a very serious matter and we should seriously consider expelling them," a source said when asked on the course of action by the State BN council. "We have to mete out the most appropriate action for defying party line and expulsion is one of the options."

Koh, who is also State BN chairman, has submitted to Prime Minister and BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad a full report on Lim and Tan's actions on the last day of the State Legislative Assembly sitting on Nov 21.

In the incident, Lim and Tan abstained instead of rejecting a motion tabled by the Opposition to defer the proposed construction of the RM1.02 billion Penang Outer Ring Road.

Lim and Tan claimed ignorance of a directive from Koh to reject the motion, issued in their presence at a pre-Assembly meeting on Nov 9.

Another source said regardless of the outcome of the State BN council meeting, it would be up to Dr Mahathir to decide the fate of Lim and Tan.

"However, we will definitely opt for very stern action against the duo and expelling them from the BN is definitely one very possible option," the source said.

"After all, Dr Mahathir has said that the duo could be expelled since they have committed a very serious disciplinary breach.

"Besides him, a host of other senior BN leaders, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik echoed similar sentiments.

"These are very senior leaders who have gone through thick and thin to maintain harmony and order in the BN," the source said, adding that Lim and Tan or anyone who disobeyed party directives should be severely reprimanded.

Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Dr Hilmi Yahaya said State MCA chairman Wong Kam Hoong's defence of the two assemblymen was lame.

"How can he say that Lim and Tan did not know what to do after the Chief Minister had already instructed them and other backbenchers to vote against the motion?

"Although I am the party whip, I don't need to remind them of what they already knew or what they should do during the sitting.

"It is a very lame excuse," he said when commenting on Wong's claim that Lim and Tan were unaware of Koh's directive.

He confirmed that only 19 backbenchers were present when House Speaker Datuk Yahaya Abdul Hamid called for a division of vote.

"All except Lim and Tan voted against the motion.

"I am sad that my friends did not reject the motion," he said.