

18/12/2002

Refer grouses to BN council, says PM

Firdaus Abdullah

PETALING JAYA, Tues. - Barisan Nasional component members who are unhappy with MCA's decision to suspend the two Penang State Assemblymen should refer the matter to the coalition's supreme council for further deliberation, BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"It's not just my opinion that counts; the opinion of all the component members is vital and must be considered.

"Umno itself will discuss this matter. I do not know if other component members are satisfied or not, and if there is any dissatisfaction, then we should have a BN supreme council meeting," Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said when asked for his opinion on the "indefinite suspension" decision.

He was speaking at a Press conference at the Royal Malaysian Air Force base in Subang on his return from an official visit to Japan.

When told that Gerakan had voiced its dissatisfaction with the decision, he said Gerakan should refer its argument to the BN supreme council.

Asked if the MCA decision was vague, since it had no implications on the two State Assemblymen's status quo, he said he had not studied the matter yet.

"But I don't think they represent MCA anymore. We cannot ask them to resign.

"They have been suspended from MCA, so it is now up to the duo whether they want to resign or be independent representatives, or they could even join the Opposition," he said.

Asked if BN could force MCA to sack the duo, he said the only way to do so was by sacking MCA from the coalition.

"And that would be a very serious move which must be weighed from all angles," he added.

The Government jet carrying Dr Mahathir and his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali touched down at the RMAF base at 10.30pm.

Present to receive the First Couple were Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak, Second Finance Minister Datuk Dr Jamaludin Jarjis, National Unity and Social Development Minister Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman and Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Samsudin Osman.