

23/11/2002

Two BN reps face expulsion (HL)

Noor Adzman Baharuddin

KEPALA BATAS, Fri. - Two Penang backbenchers, Lim Boo Chang (MCA-Datuk Keramat) and Tan Cheng Liang (MCA-Jawi), face possible expulsion from the Barisan Nasional for refusing to vote against a motion tabled by an Opposition member to postpone the construction of the proposed RM1.02 billion Penang Outer Ring Road, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

The Deputy Prime Minister said their refusal to vote against the motion, tabled by Law Heng Kiang (DAP-Batu Lanchang) at the State Legislative Assembly yesterday, was a serious breach of discipline.

"I have directed Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon as State BN chairman to submit a full report to BN chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as soon as possible.

"I have also directed the State BN whip of the House, Datuk Dr Hilmi Yahaya, to submit a similar report to Dr Mahathir," he told reporters after giving away Hari Raya gifts of rice, sarongs and duit raya to about 200 poor and needy people here.

Besides refusing to vote against the motion, tabled on the last day of the State Assembly sitting, Lim and Tan also remained seated during a standing count.

Law's motion received three votes, comprising his and those of two other Opposition members (Abdul Rahman Kadir-Keadilan and Mohd Hamdan Abdul Rahman-Pas), and was defeated by 19 votes from the Government benches.

Eight other backbenchers had either left or were absent when the voting was carried out.

Abdullah said action must be taken against the two backbenchers since their offence was a serious disciplinary breach for the BN. "They could be suspended or expelled from the BN," said Abdullah.

He said Koh had met him earlier today on the matter.

Asked if there had been a precedent for the case, he said: "Yes, in Sabah."

It is believed Abdullah was referring to the June 1996 case of Sabah Gerakan pro-tem committee chairman Datuk Kong Hong Ming, who was expelled from the party for not supporting the Sabah BN-sponsored Sabah Forestry Enactment (Amendment) Bill, aimed at reducing the administrative powers of the Chief Minister.

Another case, also in Sabah, involved Sabah BN nominated Assemblyman Jahid Jahim, who was expelled for voting against a State Government Bill to amend the Forest Enactment in the State Legislative Assembly, also in June 1996.

Jahid, former Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat Bersatu information chief, was absent when Chief Minister Datuk Yong Teck Lee tabled four other amendment Bills then.