

Suspension on MCA assemblymen lifted

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KUALA LUMPUR: The MCA revoked the suspension of two of its assemblymen in Penang yesterday.

The party's presidential council reinstated Tan Cheng Liang (Jawi) and Lim Boo Chang (Datuk Keramat), who were suspended on Dec 16 last year. They had defied the party whip by abstaining on a vote on the Penang Middle Ring Road (PORR).

MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting, who announced the decision, said the party had been receiving appeals from the people, particularly from Tan's and Lim's constituencies, to reinstate them.

He said Tan and Lim had also written to the party recently, appealing to be reinstated.

"The presidential council felt that after this period of suspension of more-than six months, the two state assemblymen should now be reinstated. This would be in the best interest of Barisan Nasional and that the lifting of

the suspension would definitely enable these two state assemblymen to continue to serve their constituencies well," Ong said.

He also said the BN leadership will be informed of the decision straightaway.

Asked if the reinstatement was up to the BN leadership, he said: "The suspension is an internal matter. We suspended the two and then informed the BN leadership, and now we are reinstating the two and we will inform

the BN leadership."

Ong declined to answer when asked if he was confident the BN leadership would agree with the council's decision.

In PENANG, Lim attributed the reinstatement to his constituents.

"I have gone through untold hardship as a result of the suspension," he said.

He said although Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said he and Tan were still BN state

assemblymen, "Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon interpreted the suspension to mean that we lost every right as BN state assemblymen".

"We couldn't apply for allocation as Koh had instructed all departments and agencies not to give us any allocations," said Lim, who had defected to the MCA from Gerakan, of which Koh is a vice-president, in 2000.

"We were even barred from the district development meetings, and also various other executive council committee meetings in which we were representatives."

However, Lim said "we should let bygones be bygones".

Tan also lamented that she was unable to serve her constituents as allocation from the state government was not forthcoming. "I couldn't do anything against the decisions (by the state government) as they just did what they wanted to do," she said.

Both assemblymen declined to comment on the stand they took at the Nov 21 state legislative meeting when they refused to vote against a DAP motion.