

Mahathir agreed. to decision, *STAR 13 . 7 . 2003* says Ong

BY SUSAN TAM

KUALA LUMPUR: The decision to lift the suspension on the two Penang MCA assemblymen was made after consulting Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting.

"He agreed. I informed him even before MCA had a meeting a few days before the suspension was lifted.

"I must give the highest respect to the Barisan chairman as I am not able to do it without consultation," he said.

Ong said he had sent out letters to inform other party component leaders, including Penang Barisan chief Tan Sri Koh Tsu Koon, of the decision.

He was responding to a statement by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who said he had no objections to the duo's reinstatement if it benefited Barisan.

"I respect Abdullah's statement and am confident that the

two representatives will strictly adhere to the Barisan principle.

"I have given them advice that they should work as a team with the coalition and abide by the (decisions) of the Penang leadership," he said after launching a book, *Shui Qing Shi Zi Jian* (The Rocks Are Visible in Clear Water), at Wisma MCA yesterday.

The MCA lifted the suspension on Tan Cheng Liang (Jawi) and Lim Boo Chang (Datuk Keramat) on Thursday.

The duo were suspended indefinitely on Dec 16 after they abstained from voting in the Penang state assembly against a DAP motion on the state's Outer Ring Road Project.

Asked if the other component parties would object to the decision, Ong said party leaders must have the confidence to work together and follow the Barisan spirit.

On the party's three-man panel to look into problems in the Youth wing, Ong said they were progressing well.