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Khalil-Assemblymen

LIFTING OF SUSPENSION NOT AN ISSUE, SAYS KHALIL

PETALING JAYA, July 13 (Bernama) -- The MCA's decision to lift the suspension on its two Penang state assembly members should not be made an issue, Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob said today.

He said the decision to reinstate them was referred to Prime Minister and Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and had his prior approval.

Khalil, who is Information Minister, told reporters this after launching the ministry's family day celebration at the Sunway Theme Park, here.

He was asked to comment on the MCA presidential council's decision on Thursday to reinstate Lim Boo Chang (Datuk Keramat) and Tan Cheng Liang (Jawi) who were suspended indefinitely on Dec 16 last year for abstaining from voting against a DAP motion opposing the RM1.02 billion Penang Outer Ring Road Project (Porr) at the state assembly.

Yesterday MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting said the party had referred to Dr Mahathir before making the decision.

However, Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon said that he was surprised that the suspension was lifted without first referring to him as the state BN chairman.

Khalil said that personally, he felt that all parties, including the BN components should accept the MCA's decision.

"It should be resolved before the general election and to me, it (lifting of suspension) is no longer an issue because all parties must look to a solution to the matter," he said.

Khalil was also asked to comment on the National Economic Action Council's (NEAC) move to publish a series of advertisements and a booklet to reveal the truth behind the impasse on the water supply talks with Singapore to counter the republic's allegations.

He said that prior to this, the ministry, through Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM), had given attention to the water issue with Singapore and "we will continue to give information based on our own perspective through various means including news and documentaries".

Asked on the latest development in RTM's corporatisation, Khalil said the option letters on whether to remain in the government service or to join RTM Berhad (RTMB) was issued to all the staff nationwide on June 16 and they had two months to opt.

"We are now selecting a full board comprising the board secretary and two other members...when we have appointed the board members, we will decide on the schedule for the corporatisation," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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