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We'll follow BN ruling against cross-over, says Ka Ting

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - All Barisan Nasional component parties should let previous incidents of cross-overs from one party to another be bygones and look forward to fostering closer relations in the real spirit of BN, said MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting.

Ong had been asked to comment on a statement by coalition secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamed Rahmat who said a BN party might be expelled if it accepted an elected representative from another component partner as a member.

"I do not think any BN component party will go against the no-cross-over ruling.

"However, if this (any cross-over) should happen in BN, it has to be sanctioned by the coalition's supreme council and also open to all component parties.

"It (cross-over) should be made fair to all component parties," he said, after launching a book called Hua Sao 200 Nian which is an analysis of the Chinese community's thinking and feelings over the last 200 years in Malaysia. The book was written by Tan Swee Heng.

"In BN, we take a common stand in supreme council meetings and all views are expressed at the meeting.

"Of course, in the past there were cases where members from one party crossed to another...it happens every now and then.

"It recently happened in Malacca where some MCA members crossed over to Gerakan and previously in Penang (where two Gerakan elected representatives, Jawi Assemblywoman Tan Cheng Liang and Datuk Keramat Assemblyman Lim Boo Cheng crossed over to MCA soon after the 1999 general election)," he said.

Ong, who is also the Housing and Local Government Minister, added currently all BN component parties had a good relationship and co-operated with each other.

"With the latest advice from the Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad) and the Deputy Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi) on unity in the coalition, besides the genuine wishes of MCA and other component parties, I am very confident all that happened in the past will be left as bygones.

"Let us all be forward looking," he stressed.

Yesterday, Mohamed said the no-cross-over ruling was made at the BN supreme council meeting in January and all component parties must abide by the ruling or face disciplinary action, which included expulsion.

Mohamed said the BN supreme council took it very seriously when Tan and Lim decided to cross over after winning their seats under the Gerakan ticket.

He also said their action at the Penang State Assembly was tantamount to back-stabbing as it was practically an effort by MCA to wrest power from Gerakan. Perhaps the MCA thinking was that it had the right to rule in Penang because it had more seats than Gerakan.

"It is an action which can be interpreted as undermining the State Government. It becomes a serious matter as it is a case of a component party trying to take over the State Government," he said.

Mohamed said if any party were to claim the Penang Chief Minister's post, it should be Umno because the party had the maximum number of State seats.

"But Umno has conceded that Penang should be governed by a non-Malay component party, which is Gerakan, and that position stands," Mohamed said.