

30 SEP 1996  
Gerakan-Chong  
CHONG PREPARED TO DROP COURT ACTION IF...

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 30 (Bernama) -- Batu MP Datuk Joseph Chong said today he is willing to drop civil action against Gerakan provided he is allowed to challenge party president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik.

In a statement, Chong said he was only asking for his legal right to be a candidate as provided under Rule 2.5 of the Gerakan Election Procedure 1996.

He said if Dr Lim insisted that his (Dr Lim's) interpretation of the party constitution was correct, then party members would doubt the legitimacy of the existing leadership because many were neither branch chairmen nor elected delegates to the National Delegates Conference.

Chong said he was always prepared to meet Dr Lim to discuss any matters in the interest of the party.

Meanwhile, Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik today clarified that Chong was not disqualified from contesting the party presidency but was just ineligible.

"He is not being disqualified (unlike what was reported by most newspapers) ... he is not qualified (to contest). Being disqualified and not qualified are two different meanings," he told reporters after opening the Pacific Bank branch at Menara Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (PGRM) in Cheras here.

He said he wanted Chong to fight in a fair and proper manner for whatever position but he should respect the party constitution.

"We cannot allow him to contest knowing he is not a qualified candidate ... we cannot do an unlawful act just to please any party members," said Dr Lim, who is Primary Industries Minister.

Most newspapers reported that Chong was disqualified from contesting despite obtaining an injunction from the High Court restraining the party from disqualifying him.

Party election supervisory committee chairman Tan Sri Chan Choong Tak had said that Chong could not contest in the party election because he was not an elected delegate to the national conference on Oct 5.

Dr Lim advised Chong not to be aggressive for the wrong reason as he might regret it someday.

"As a politician, it's good to be aggressive, not to your comrades but towards the opposition like the DAP," he said.

On Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's advice to Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties to avoid taking political disputes to court but to solve their problems internally, Dr Lim said he agreed with Dr Mahathir's view.

"We must be united and accommodating. Don't be hasty and don't take actions that one might regret later on," he added. -- BERNAMA

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