

11 AUG 1996  
Gerakan-Kong  
KONG HONG MING MAY BE SACKED

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 11 (Bernama) -- The Gerakan Central Committee (CC) today decided on the action to be taken against suspended Sabah Gerakan pro tem chairman Datuk Kong Hong Ming for abstaining in the vote on an amendment to the Sabah Forest Enactment in the Sabah State Assembly on June 17.

Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, who chaired the three-hour meeting at the party headquarters here, declined to disclose the action to be taken against Kong.

A party source however said the CC, the party's highest decision-making body, decided to expell Kong but did not announce the decision today to give time for Kong to tender his resignation "so that he can leave the party honourably rather than wait to be expelled".

Speaking at a news conference after the meeting, Dr Lim said he would announce the decision taken by the CC by Wednesday after briefing the Sabah Gerakan pro tem committee.

"The decision was taken after the CC went through the reply sent by Kong after he was issued a show cause letter as to why he should not be expelled from the party," he said.

The Gerakan Central Working Committee (CWC), the party's disciplinary body, had on July 14 suspended Kong's party membership. He was also issued with a show cause letter and was given a week to reply.

Kong, who is State Assemblyman for Kudat and former Sabah Minister of Social Services, was also absent during the vote on four other Bills which together were aimed at limiting the powers of the Chief Minister.

Kong has been criticised by leaders of the Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties for not supporting the amendments. Prime Minister and BN Chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had said that Kong should resign from the party or change his stand.

The reactions from the BN leaders prompted Kong, who is also a Gerakan national vice-president, to offer to resign and last Monday he was quoted as saying that he would leave his fate to the CC and was ready to face whatever action taken.

Nominated Sabah assemblyman Jahid Jahim of Angkatan Keadilan Rakyat Bersatu was sacked by his party for voting against the Forestry Bill.

Dr Lim said he decided not to announce the decision on Kong because it would not be fair on the Sabah Gerakan pro tem committee.

Asked if the decision would "please" the BN, Dr Lim said: "It is purely a disciplinary matter within the party. We make our decisions step by step and not in haste."

He however admitted that "the decision" should have been taken earlier.

Dr Lim said the CC today also endorsed Sabah Gerakan pro tem deputy chairman Dr Chong Eng Leong to take over from Kong as the Sabah Gerakan pro tem chairman.

On the Sept 14-15 Gerakan delegates conference, Dr Lim said it has been postponed to Oct 5 and 6 at the Prime Minister's request.

About 1,300 delegates and 1,200 observers will attend the two-day conference to be opened by Dr Mahathir at the Gerakan headquarters.

Dr Lim, who is the Primary Industry Minister, said the party will also amend its constitution at the conference. The proposed amendments include allowing the party's Youth and Wanita wings to send 50 delegates each to the annual delegates conference.

Gerakan will also unveil its new song and launch its homepage over the Internet. The party will also launch the Gerakan University Loan Education Fund.

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