

06 JUL 1996
Gerakan-Kong
KONG'S FATE TO BE KNOWN TOMORROW

KUALA LUMPUR, July 6 (Bernama) -- Sabah Gerakan chairman Datuk Kong Hong Ming who came under fire from several Barisan Nasional (BN) component party leaders including Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for not voting for the recent amendments to Sabah laws, is expected to know his fate by tomorrow or the next weekend.

Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said today the party central committee (CC) would have to study the report by a team of CC members sent to Sabah to look into the matter.

"The team arrived yesterday and I have yet to meet them. I will get a report from them today and then I will study it," he told reporters at MCA's 43rd general assembly, here.

He said the CC would decide on Kong's fate "hopefully before next week" as he (Dr Lim) would be in Fiji on Monday to represent the Prime Minister at the week-long meeting of Heads of Government of Pacific island countries.

"So, I hope the CC could arrive at a decision before I go to Fiji...but, if that is not possible, then it will just have to wait until I return from Fiji probably on Saturday," he said.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir said Kong should resign from the party or change his stand. The Prime Minister said the stand adopted by Kong with regards to the amendments went against the wishes of the BN.

"Either he changes his stand or leaves the BN," Dr Mahathir told a news conference at the Sultan Ismail airport in Senai in Johor at the end of a two-day visit to the state.

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said he had stated this to Dr Lim when the latter raised the matter with him recently.

Kong, who is the Kudat assemblyman, was one of two BN representatives who did not vote for the Sabah Forestry Enactment (Amendment) Bill which was passed by the assembly on June 17.

The Gerakan CC expressed regret over Kong's move to abstain from the voting but decided not to take any action against him.

Jahid Jain, the nominated assemblyman from Akar Bersatu, was dismissed by his party for voting against the Bill.

Kong, however, has offered to resign as Sabah Gerakan chief.

Meanwhile, in KOTA KINABALU, Kong said he would leave it to the national Gerakan leadership to decide his fate.

"I have already told the Gerakan leaders what I have to say and now I leave it to them to decide," he said when contacted.

Kong, who is Kudat state assemblyman, also refused to comment when asked on the Prime Minister's remark asking him either to resign from the party or change his stand on the matter.

The state Gerakan Liaison committee three days ago, claiming collective responsibility on Kong's action, had urged the Gerakan leadership not to accept Kong's resignation offer.

Kong was appointed Sabah Gerakan chairman in October last year after he left the Liberal Democratic Party following a failed bid to unseat the party's incumbent president, Datuk Chong Kah Kiat, during the party elections in August.

-- BERNAMA
JS JK