

05 JUL 1996

Mahathir-Gerakan

TOE THE LINE OR QUIT, PM TELLS KONG

JOHOR BAHRU, July 5 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Sabah Gerakan chairman Datuk Kong Hong Ming who did not vote for the recent amendments to Sabah laws should resign from the Barisan Nasional 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," he told a news conference at the Sultan Ismail airport in Senai here at the end of a visit to Johor.

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said he had stated this to Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik when the latter raised the matter with him recently.

Asked when Kong must resign, he said: "Now... I want everything to be fast."

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 effect of the amendment is to transfer some of the powers of the Chief Minister to the state Cabinet.

The Gerakan Central committee expressed regret over Kong's move to abstain when voting for the Bill was carried out, but decided not to take any action against him.

The committee's stand was criticised by several BN leaders.

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

-- BERNAMA

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