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Keng Yaik: Gerakan to undergo a total revamp

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IPOH, Sun. - Parti Gerakan is to undergo a total revamp which will enable it to adapt to the country's current and future development, its president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said.

He admitted that the defeat in the recent Teluk Intan parliamentary by-election had jolted the party into taking stock of its future direction.

"Future political struggles may be quite different from those of the past, but the old time-tested principles and the spirit of the struggles must remain.

"In politics, the people, party and country must come first.

"That is part of the sacrifice you make and choose to adhere to when you join a political party," he said in his keynote address at the Perak Parti Gerakan delegates conference at the party's headquarters here today.

Dr Lim, who is also Primary Industries Minister, described the belief that the interests of the people and the nation must prevail above all else as the golden principle which would determine the party's success.

However, he added, the younger generation found it hard to accept such principles and preferred to use the party as a stepping stone to material gain.

"This, if not addressed immediately, will bring disrespect to the parties and spread a new culture where political parties are considered fair game and suitable vehicles for materialistic gain, rather than vehicles to serve the country," he said.

Dr Lim hoped that Gerakan could encourage party members to fight money politics and other ills and thus bring healthier development to the country.

He said the 53.2 per cent voter turn-out in the Teluk Intan by-election was a clear reflection that the people were no longer interested in political parties and elections.

Dr Lim also criticised several ministries, State Governments and local authorities for being insensitive towards "bread and butter" issues.

Service departments like the Land Office, Immigration Department and others which had contact with the people should also improve their services, he added.

Dr Lim stressed that the development strategies planned by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad were steering the country into the next millennium, but they would not be successful if the bread and butter issues were ignored.

He said while the people were pleased with the big development projects and held the Prime Minister in high esteem, but they were also dissatisfied with services at local administrative level.

He emphasised the need to address the issue of income inequality and the need to work towards a just and equal Malaysian society.

"The PM's leadership and all our development policies are just right and the infrastructural and economic development projects will complement each other. However, please do not neglect the people's concerns.

"These need to be solved through the complementary efforts of the ministries, State Governments and local authorities," he said.

Dr Lim called for a minimum standard of living befitting Malaysia's developing status - one which would steadily increase as the country moved towards the year 2020.

He said Gerakan would also be holding several seminars nationwide to

identify current and future issues in order to come up with some solutions.

On his stepping down from his ministerial post before the end of the current electoral term, Dr Lim said he hoped that it would send a strong message that politics was not merely about position and status.

Also present was Gerakan deputy president Datuk Kerk Choo Teng and vice-president Dr Goh Cheng Teik.

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