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Two top Gerakan posts may be appointed

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Parti Gerakan plans to amend its constitution to make the posts of secretary-general and treasurer-general appointed positions in order to streamline the party machinery to face future challenges.

Party president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said today the proposal would be tabled at the party's delegates' conference on Aug 16 and 17. The conference will be opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said the appointments would be made by the president with the consent of the central committee.

Another amendment to be tabled is a provision for all the party's local councillors and candidates for State and parliamentary elections to be appointed by the party's central working committee, which is the party's executive body.

Previously, the task of appointing these people was shouldered by the central committee, he said.

"Those who are not in a position to serve the party, the country and its people should accept the party's decision (to exclude them) and not pressure the party unnecessarily," he told a Press conference after chairing the party's central committee meeting.

Dr Lim said the party also proposed to have two additional deputy secretaries-general in view of the increasing workload and the need to train new members. "The appointments will be made by the secretary-general in consultation with the party president."

Other proposed constitutional changes include extending the election term of the party at State level from the present two years to three years.

"We have decided that State chairmanship will continue to be an elected post, but we will tighten our supervision on them, especially to prevent them from using their influences to build political kingdoms.

"The elections at the party's branch and divisional levels will continue to be held every two years," he said.

Dr Lim, who is also Primary Industries Minister, said that only members who had joined the party for a minimum of two years were allowed to vote or stand as candidate in a party election.

Those who have been in the party for less than two years would be allowed to do so only if they get a written approval from the CWC.

"However, their rights to attend or speak up during party meetings are maintained," he said, adding that such move was intended to curb mass mobilisation of new members during party election.

On another development, Dr Lim said his intention to step down from his ministerial post would depend on his personal assessment on the credibility of his successors.

"But I welcome remarks from members as long as they do so within the party and not bring the matter outside," he said.

Dr Lim said the party had also decided to establish a research department to provide input on the party's struggle, various social and political issues faced by the country and methods of handling them.

"We are also working towards revamping the party's headquarters by employing more full-time staff."

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