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Keng Yaik hopes Kerk will not be challenged

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik today issued an appeal so that the post of party deputy president will not be challenged on Saturday.

"I have expressed my wish that challengers for the post withdraw (from the contest) to safeguard party unity," he told reporters at the Parliament lobby here today.

Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Kerk Choo Ting, who is the incumbent Gerakan deputy president, will be challenged for the post by the Lukut Gerakan branch chairman Tan Keng Leng at the election.

Dr Lim said the contest, if it materialised, would be conducted fairly and it was up to the delegates to determine their respective choices.

"If he (Tan) does not heed my advice and insists on contesting, the election will be carried out fairly."

He said party contests were still allowed according to the Gerakan constitution to prove that the democratic process was practised in the party.

Dr Lim also said Gerakan would accept the candidates decided by the Barisan Nasional leadership for the coming general election and would not ask for additional seats for the party.

He was asked to comment on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement yesterday calling for BN component parties to accept candidates chosen by the top leadership to ensure a comfortable victory at the general election.

In Penang, the State Gerakan liaison committee today expressed its full support for Kerk to be the deputy president.

Party chief Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, who is also Chief Minister, said the State liaison committee members had full confidence in Kerk being returned unopposed for a third term.

Koh said he had also received a letter from Wanita national deputy president Datuk Rhina Bhar indicating her decision not to contest as a central committee member.

Rhina has been a central committee member for the past four terms since being elected in 1987.

"Rhina has been very magnanimous and we respect her decision in not seeking re-election, thereby allowing other members from Penang to seek election to the central committee," Koh said.

Meanwhile, at another Press conference, incoming national Youth chief Teng Chang Yeow urged all Youth delegates with voting rights in the national body to return Kerk as the deputy president.

Teng said the national Youth body had also expressed its support for outgoing Youth chairman Datuk Chang Ko Youn to contest for a place in the central committee.

Besides Chang, the national Youth body is also supporting central committee member Hoo Saw Ho to stand for the Youth secretary-general's post.

"After consulting with all the new State Youth chiefs, the national Youth body is unanimous in giving its support for Hoo to be elected as the Youth's secretary-general," said Teng.

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