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Koh: Recognition of our achievements

PENANG Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon yesterday described Prime Minister and Barisan Nasional president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's reaffirmation that party would continue to provide the Chief Minister as a recognition of the State Gerakan's achievements.

Koh, who is also a Gerakan vice-president, said Dr Mahathir's reassurance would inspire Penang Gerakan to redouble efforts for the Barisan Nasional and the people.

Equally important, he added, was the fact that Dr Mahathir adhered to the long-held practice and well-tested BN spirit and formula on seat allocations and Government positions based on compromise.

If seat allocations and Government posts were to be based purely on electoral performance, he warned that it would lead to dubious tactics.

"The component parties would fight among themselves as to who should get the most seats, knowing well that whichever party has the most seats would definitely get the top Government post," he told a Press conference.

"Besides defeating the BN spirit, the people would also regard the BN as a coalition of rivalries and of bickering and squabbling.

"This is bound to happen if we do not respect the BN formula."

Koh said breaking the formula would have vast implications not only in Penang but in other States.

"If the BN were to give in to the demands of the component parties, then the the seating tussle is also likely to happen at the Cabinet level."

Koh reiterated that Dr Mahathir was correct in putting this on record again when opening the Gerakan National Delegates Conference on Saturday.

The reaffirmation, he said, would help stop incidents of back-stabbing and poaching of Gerakan members to defect to other component parties.

If allegations that Gerakan did not get the people's support in Penang were true, then the party would not have won tough seats like those contested by DAP's Lim Kit Siang and Karpal Singh, he said.

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