

27 SEP 2001

Lim-Resignation

GERAKAN TURNS DOWN DR LIM'S WISH TO RESIGN FROM HIS CABINET POST

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 27 (Bernama) -- Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said today that the party's central committee has turned down his wish to resign as Primary Industries Minister to concentrate on party matters.

"Personally, I feel this is the time to let the second echelon leaders take over as the Gerakan is in a very stable condition," he told a news conference here.

Dr Lim said that the Gerakan central committee had asked him to hold on to the cabinet post for a few more years as he possess experience and seniority to help the country overcome its domestic problems.

He did not disclose when the party's central committee decided on the resignation issue.

At the 29th National Gerakan Delegates' Conference in Penang last year, Dr Lim stated that he was seriously considering to retire as cabinet minister to focus on the party.

However, he had then wanted to discuss his wish with the party's central committee before setting a date to resign from the cabinet post.

Dr Lim, who joined the Gerakan in 1973, was elected as party leader in 1980. He was appointed to the cabinet in 1986.

Dr Lim said that the Gerakan had lined up its leadership over 10 years ago with deputy president Datuk Kerk Choo Ting having held the post for over 13 years and vice president Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon for over 10 years.

To prepare them for the responsibility to assume the top leadership, Dr Lim said that he was providing Kerk and Dr Koh the opportunity to open the state Gerakan delegates' conferences this year.

"Besides Perak and Penang, I'm letting them open the delegates' conferences in the other states to expose and prepare them," he said.

Dr Lim said that he would eventually have to retire but not in the near future.

Referring to the 30th National Delegates' Conference over the weekend, he said that it would focus on steps to further enhance relations between component parties of the Barisan Nasional and the shortcomings of the coalition.

He said that the issue on the economy would touch on the global economic situation following the US economic slowdown which also affected Malaysia's economic growth.

The delegates would also discuss measures to preserve national security which had existed for a long time under the BN rule and religious-based politics as subscribed by PAS, he said.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is BN chairman, is scheduled to open the conference on Saturday.

Some 1,600 delegates are expected to attend the conference.

-- BERNAMA

RZS MFJ RM