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Koh-Seat

BN COMPONENTS WILL NOT SABOTAGE GERAKAN FOR SEATS - KOH

PENANG, Aug 8 (Bernama) -- Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon today said he was confident that there will be no sabotage among Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties on the issue of seats.

He said the component parties were mature and would not sabotage each other on the issue of BN giving back the Bayan Lepas and Datuk Keramat state assembly seats to Gerakan.

"Our real reason is not to tussle over seats but to give the best service to the people," he told a press conference at his office here today.

The Gerakan vice-president also reiterated that the two seats had to be returned to Gerakan in the next general election in line with BN principles and practices.

The seats are currently represented by MCA after Datuk Keramat assemblyman Lim Boo Chang and Bayan Lepas assemblyman Lim Chien Aun switched from Gerakan to MCA after the last general election.

Dr Koh, who is also state BN chairman, said the two assemblymen did not have the right to take the seats with them even though they switched to MCA.

"The issue that they are working hard and giving good service in their areas does not arise. They cannot jump from party to party and take the seats with them as this will encourage parties to tussle for seats.

"According to BN principles and practices, if there are representatives who switch parties, the seats they won should be returned to the original party," he said.

Dr Koh cited the example of former Ulu Selangor Member of Parliament Datuk Michael Chen, who won the seat on an MCA ticket but upon his switch to Gerakan in 1981, the seat was returned to MCA in the 1982 general election.

When former Tanjung Bungah assemblyman Khoo Boo Yeang jumped from Gerakan to MCA, the seat was also returned to Gerakan in the 1988 general election, he said.

If the principle was not adhered to, more party switching would occur and cause problems which could affect relations between the component parties, Dr Koh said.

Recently, MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting said MCA wanted to discuss with Gerakan to determine which component representatives had the right to contest the two seats in the next general election.

Ong had said that although the two seats were traditionally Gerakan's, discussions were necessary as both had become MCA seats after the 1999 general election.

Meanwhile, Dr Koh said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was scheduled to open the Gerakan Delegates Conference in conjunction with the party's 35th anniversary in Kuala Lumpur on Aug 23.

He said the ceremony was very meaningful for Gerakan as it would be the last time Dr Mahathir, as BN president, would open in before his retirement this October.

-- BERNAMA

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