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Kit Siang-Contest

"IT'S NOT IMPORTANT WHETHER I STAND IN THE ELECTION OR NOT" - KIT SIANG

PENANG, Feb 8 (Bernama) -- DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang said today whether he stands in the coming general election or not is not important compared to the future of the country which will see a change in leadership.

He said the question whether he would stand in the election or otherwise was not important for discussion now because the country's future and direction after the retirement of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad must be ascertained before hand.

"(Whether) I (stand or not) is not important. What is important is the nation. If you want to know about candidates and the party's policies, then ask the party's secretary-general (Kerk Kim Hock)," he told reporters at the DAP open house in conjunction with the Chinese New Year, here.

He said what was more important was that Dr Mahathir's successor, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi would have full power to lead the country and did not take along the burden and baggages from the previous cabinet.

He said this when asked to comment whether he would stand in the coming general election or emulate several Barisan Nasional (BN) leaders who are willing to make way for new faces.

Meanwhile, in a statement issued earlier today, Kit Siang said the parliament session next month should clarify Article 43 of the Federal Constitution by establishing the constitutional practice that when the Prime Minister resigns or dies, the entire Cabinet resigns.

The Dewan Rakyat will be meeting from March 10 to April 8, 2003 and this is the proper venue and occasion to clarify this constitutional question - whether by way of a constitutional amendment or by a ministerial statement after full consultation with the Attorney-General as well as constitutional experts and jurists, he added.

He said, if Abdullah were to start as a Prime Minister in the full sense of the office in October, he should not be burdened with Dr Mahathir's Cabinet but should have his first Abdullah Cabinet.

This was the rationale for the interpretation of Article 43 that the cabinet resigned when the Prime Minister resigned or died, as the cabinet must be deemed to have ceased to exist when the Prime Minister who appointed it was no more in office - although the successor could re-appoint the same cabinet ministers, he added.

"Malaysians are waiting and watching as to whether Abdullah will bring in a new breath of air in the corridors of power when he takes over from Mahathir in October," he said.

In another issue, Kit Siang said the 100th birthday centennial celebrations planned by the Ministry Of Culture, Arts and Tourism was an injustice and disservice to the memory, contribution and legacy of Bapa Malaysia Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Alhaj.

He said the DAP had received an invitation to send five representatives to a seminar held in conjunction with the celebration but was disappointed by the programme when the panelists of the seminar were not representative of all the different races, religions and cultures which uniquely made up plural Malaysia.

He also said, it was not too late for the Cabinet to organize a more high-level, imaginative and inspirational Month to Commemorate the 100th birthday of Tunku, involving all political parties, all ethnic communities, religious groups, NGOs and universities and schools to cherish the memory

and contribution of Tunku.

"There is even time to organize an international commemoration event to coincide with the 13th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit in Kuala Lumpur from Feb 20 to 25, to be attended by world leaders and representatives from the member countries, to give global recognition to Tunku's contributions in the international arena.

-- BERNAMA

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