

21 JUN 2003

Gerakan-Penang

GERAKAN LAUDS STATEMENT ON PENANG CM POST

KUALA LUMPUR, June 21 (Bernama) -- Gerakan today lauded Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement that the Penang Chief Minister's post will remain with the Barisan Nasional (BN) component party.

Its president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said: "We (Gerakan) welcome the Prime Minister's assurance at the Umno general assembly regarding the Penang Chief Minister's post."

"This is one concept of power sharing among BN component parties. As a leading party in Penang, we (Gerakan) will lead other component parties to face the coming general election."

Lim told reporters this after chairing the Gerakan central committee meeting here today.

Dr Mahathir yesterday gave this assurance when responding to the call by Penang Umno Youth that the best way to protect the Malay interest on the island was by appointing a Chief Minister from Umno.

Commenting on the same issue, Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon said Tanjong Umno Youth leader Raja Munir Shah Raja Mustapha only expressed his personal views at the Umno general assembly.

"It was only a personal statement and not a proposal. I will convince all the component party leaders to cooperate. There are some shortcomings but we will increase our efforts to face these challenges," said Dr Koh.

"I stress that in Penang we will try to take care of all communities and groups. We do face problems like shortage of land and resources but with the cooperation from the people and the private sector we will overcome these problems," he said.

Meanwhile, Dr Lim also welcomed the new spirit in Umno, where members pledged not to jostle for party positions.

"It shows there will be stability when Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi takes over (as Umno president and prime minister). People are united and motivated in building Vision 2020," he said.

Dr Lim reminded that national unity is crucial to achieve progress.

"Only if we are strong and united we can compete in the globalised economy. Through self-determination we can face the future challenges," he said.

He also said Gerakan's election machinery was ready to contest in the general election.

"Gerakan will reorganise the party's organ according to the new redelineation of seats to face the general election," he said.

Dr Lim also refuted claims that Dr Koh will be transferred to the federal government.

"It's all rumours. He has done a lot for Penang and there is no intention to bring him over. It is not easy to build an industrialised economy with a competitive labour force," added Dr Lim.

-- BERNAMA

VP HK ZUL