

17 JUL 2004
Gerakan-Gag
GAG ORDER ON GERAKAN PRESIDENT

KUALA LUMPUR, July 17 (Bernama) -- The Gerakan Central Committee (CC) today imposed a gag order on party president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, prohibiting him from responding to media queries or even talking in the open about his retirement from active politics.

Gerakan secretary-general Chia Kwang Chye, in announcing this after the party's three-hour monthly CC meeting here, said: "The CC has asked the president not to take notice about the calls for his resignation. We have also asked him not to talk on issues pertaining to his retirement."

He said the party's highest decision-making body also felt that the president should continue his "good work" for the party and the country as his services were still very much needed.

However, he said, the Gerakan CC would not stop any of the party's 150 divisions, which are currently holding their elections, from passing resolutions against the president as it would be undemocratic, otherwise.

Chia was responding to questions from the media, which were directed at Dr Lim, after the CC meeting at the Gerakan headquarters.

Last Sunday, the Taiping Gerakan division, at its annual general meeting, passed a resolution asking Lim to step down as party president to give way to his long-time deputy, Datuk Seri Kerk Choo Ting, to take over the helm of the multiracial political party.

In 2002, Dr Lim announced that he had put on hold plans to step down in view of political changes in Umno and the Barisan Nasional when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was set to take over from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad in October last year.

The Taiping division also supported Dr Lim's previous announcement that Gerakan deputy president Kerk be his successor.

"I can't speak about it," was the only response from Dr Lim when asked about the division's resolution.

On another matter, Dr Lim said said the party's 1,132 branches had completed their elections and presently divisional polls were on going.

"Of the 1,132 branches, only 17 branches saw contests. Although the divisions are smaller in number (150 divisions) there may be some hot contests. We are monitoring the election process and everything is proceeding smoothly," said Dr Lim, who is Energy, Water and Communications Minister.

He said that although there might be "problems" in one or two divisions, the party's election supervisory committee would either postpone the meeting or tell delegates how the divisional meetings should be conducted if things got out of hand.

The party president also announced that Gerakan would be holding its annual delegates conference on Sept 11 and 12, which would be opened by the Prime Minister who is also the BN chairman. The party's Youth and Wanita assemblies would be held on Sept 10.

Dr Lim also said that he would be going around the country to advise Gerakan elected representatives not to neglect their party responsibilities by placing too much emphasis on their constituencies.

This year will be a non-election year for Gerakan national and state posts. The party's branches and divisions hold elections every two years while at the state and national levels elections are held triennially.

-- BERNAMA

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