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Keng Yaik to contest general election

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said today that he will contest the next general election and remain as party president until "the time is right".

He said just because other party leaders had stepped down did not mean he had to do the same.

Dr Lim, referring to the MCA, said the top two MCA leaders had to step down because of internal problems and circumstances.

Asked if he would defend his Bruas parliamentary seat in Perak, he said: "Yes, why, does anyone else want my seat?."

He said he made the decision to defend his seat and continue as party president as he felt he had to provide continuity, especially at the time when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was scheduled to step down and his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi would be taking over.

"I mentioned about three years ago that I wanted to step down as Gerakan president, but could not as the time was not right then.

"I will go and shall go when the time is right. After all, I am only just six months older than Pak Lah (Abdullah)," he told a Press conference today. Abdullah is 64.

Dr Lim joined the MCA in 1968 and was a rising star before he was expelled in 1973 for leading the MCA reform movement.

He joined Gerakan in 1974 and was party deputy president from 1976 to 1980, when he became the president. He has been the Primary Industries Minister since 1986.