

PPP's request for return of seats under fire
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Barisan Nasional component party leaders have criticised the People's Progressive Party (PPP) for making the distribution of seats the party's main agenda.

On Feb 25, PPP president M Kayveas sought the return of four parliamentary seats and 12 state seats in Perak currently held by Umno, MCA, MIC and Gerakan.

He said the four parliamentary seats - Beruas, Sungai Siput, Ipoh Barat and Gopeng along with 12 state seats were once PPP's in 1972.

However, the party's stronghold have dwindled after a power struggle in 1975.

According to Bernama, Barisan Nasional Backbenchers Club chairperson Raja Ahmad Zainuddin said the question on seats should not be a main agenda of any component party in the BN.

"The priority for all component parties is to work towards strengthening solidarity in BN and to get the people's support so that BN continues to get a big win in the next general election," the Larut Umno division head reportedly said.

He said the distribution and allotment of seats plus the selection of candidates are matters which Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as BN chairperson will have the last say.

Gerakan president Dr Lim Keng Yaik also said it was inappropriate of Kayveas to raise the matter openly.

"The issue on seats is not to be discussed in the open because it has been the practice that the matter be decided by the BN leadership," he was quoted as saying.

Furthermore, Lim said it was not the right time to raise the matter as the date for the next general election had yet to be decided and warned PPP not to create any problems.

He then advised Kayveas to recall how PPP was allowed to contest in Taiping in the 2004 general election.

Be patient, Kayveas

"Gerakan does not fight for seats. We had been contesting for the Taiping parliamentary seat for seven consecutive terms but gave it to PPP when the BN leadership asked us to do so," he added.

Perak MIC chairman G Rajoo also questioned Kayveas' move in raising the question on seats to the media when he could bring it up at the BN supreme council meeting.

Rajoo, who is also a Perak state executive councillor said Kayveas should be patient because the general election was still a long way off.

Lumut Umno head and Perak state executive councillor Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir pointed out that the issue on seats was a sensitive matter which should not be subjected to an open debate..

"The election is still far away. It is still not the time to discuss the matter. All BN component parties should give priority to strengthening their election machineries," he added.

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