

Gerakan Youth boycotts Kayveas
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The rift between Gerakan and the People's Progressive Party (PPP) widened today with Gerakan Youth stating it would boycott all functions officiated by PPP president M Kayveas.

Gerakan Youth chief Mah Siew Keong also wanted the BN leadership to take action against Kayveas.

"Gerakan Youth would boycott all functions officiated by Kayveas with immediate effect.

"Gerakan Youth calls on the BN leadership to take disciplinary action against Kayveas who is behaving irresponsibly as a component party president," he said in a statement.

Responding to Kayveas' remark yesterday that Gerakan 'would close shop in five years', Mah described it as a 'stupid' statement and demanded for it to be retracted.

"In view of the possibility that the next general election can be called at any time, (BN) component parties should play their role to maintain unity in BN," he said.

According to Mah, the interests of BN outweighed the issues of whether PPP would be given additional seats in the coming polls and if Kayveas would continue to defend his Taiping parliamentary seat.

Despite numerous attempts, Kayveas could not be reached for comment.

Bad blood

Tensions have been brewing between the two parties when Perak Menteri Besar Tajol Rosli appointed Gerakan Wanita head and Bukit Gantang MP Tan Liao Hoe as the BN Taiping division chief.

Fuel was added to the fire when a Gerakan vice-president openly told Kayveas to accept that Taiping was a Gerakan seat.

Kayveas was given the Taiping seat - a traditional Gerakan stronghold - in the 2004 general elections following a one-off arrangement between Umno and Gerakan. In return, Gerakan was given the Bukit Gantang seat.

Gerakan also irked Kayveas when it dismissed his proposal three months ago for a merger between the two parties.

Kayveas ruffled feathers recently by openly airing his disappointment with Tan's appointment as BN Taiping chief and requesting the return of four parliamentary seats and 12 state seats in Perak to PPP.

In a news report today, the PPP president claimed that his Gerakan counterpart Dr Lim Keng Yaik had said shortly after the death of former PPP president SP Seenivasagam in 1975 that PPP would close shop in five years.

"Now I am saying, after Lim retires on April 8, Gerakan would close shop in less than five years. Even its election seats have been reduced," he was quoted as saying.

'He should be grateful'

Meanwhile, Gerakan vice-president Dr S Vijayarathnam said Kayveas should concentrate his criticisms on the opposition instead of Gerakan.

"Will Gerakan help him if he stands for election? Our influence is considerable in many constituencies.

"He should be grateful that we gave Taiping and Pasir Bedamar (a state seat in Perak) to PPP during the last elections," he added in a statement.

He also refuted the claim that Gerakan would close down and called on Kayveas to bring his grouses to the BN supreme council.

However, the supreme council, which met yesterday, reportedly did not discuss about the spat.

Coming to Kayveas' defence was his Youth chief T Murugiah who saw nothing wrong in the PPP president's actions.

"What's wrong? He (Kayveas) won the seat in Taiping and never disturbed Gerakan. He is protecting our party's interest. It is not a good idea to boycott the functions of BN leaders," he said when contacted.

Describing it as a 'small problem', Murugiah said he would discuss the matter with the Gerakan Youth chief.

"The party president was merely repeating what (Lim) told PPP in the past (about winding up)," he added.

Murugiah also said it was wrong for BN not to appoint Kayveas as the Taiping division chief.

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