

Lim slams brakes on spat with Kayveas
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Gerakan president Dr Lim Keng Yaik has ordered his party leaders to stop the verbal jousting with fellow Barisan Nasional component party leader M Kayveas who leads the People's Progressive Party (PPP).

"I will not involve myself arguing with a confused politician," said Lim, whose party had been embroiled in a war of words ever since Kayveas suggested that PPP and Gerakan should merge several months ago.

Since then, the spat had gone down several directions - who should be Taiping BN chairperson, who should be the next Taiping parliamentary candidate and the boycott of each other's functions by their respective youth wings.

Kayveas was given the Taiping seat in the 2004 general elections following a one-off arrangement between Umno and Gerakan.

In return, Gerakan was given the Bukit Gantang seat, which originally belong to Umno. Umno wants the seat back at the next general election.

Kayveas up the ante yesterday by challenging Lim to a game of 'Liar quits cabinet post' over the facts following the latter's dismissal from MCA in 1972 and claims that PPP would be 'non-existent' in five years.

He also claimed that Lim had attempted to join PPP, a strong Perak-based opposition party in the late 60s and early 70s, after being sacked from MCA.

'Fair play' comments

Explaining the 'non-existent in five years' allegation, Lim said the comments were made following the death of SP Seenivasagam, who then led the PPP as an opposition party.

"The statement was made in the context of PPP having lost a dynamic leader - SP Seenivasagam - and we were facing a (general) election in 1969," said Lim, who at the time was contesting for the Pekan Baru Ipoh parliamentary seat.

"Those days fair play lah. PPP was in the opposition. I can say whatever I like".

Lim denied that he had attempted to join PPP after his sacking from MCA in 1972. He attributed such claims to a speculative report in the press at the time.

"So, I'm just explaining (to you reporters). I don't want to start off a debate with a confused Kayveas. No point. How to debate? I have to respond to every point he raised," he added.

He said that he would not be embroiled in any more 'debates' with Kayveas and blamed the latter for frequently shifting his ground.

PPP didn't say 'thank you'

Lim appeared oblivious to Kayveas' challenge when quizzed by reporters, but offered the following response:

"I am already stepping down as Gerakan president. What more does he want? He doesn't have to challenge me. (Is the challenge) so that he can become a (full) minister?"

To question, Lim said that the Taiping parliamentary seat which Kayveas now hold since the 2004 general election, was a 'sacrifice' by Gerakan who had previously won the seat eight times in a row.

"Do we get a 'thank you'? No. Instead we get a kick in the back," he quipped, adding that Gerakan has never mentioned that it wanted Taiping back and that the final decision on seat allocation lies with the prime minister and the Perak BN chairperson.

The veteran politician added that he was not 'attacking' Kayveas but merely clarifying to certain points raised by the latter at the request of reporters.

He added that Gerakan had no problem collaborating and clarified that Gerakan Youth only intends to boycott Kayveas' and not PPP's functions.

'Don't make me cry'

Lim was speaking to reporters after chairing his last party central working committee meeting at the party headquarters in Kuala Lumpur today.

He is set to step down as party leader on April 8, where deputy party president Dr Koh Tsu Koon would be made acting party president.

Lim refused to entertain any questions regarding his departure from the post which he has held for 26 years.

"I'm be holding a press briefing in about 10 days time, where I'll give you all my feelings. For today, don't make me cry," cracked Lim.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said that he will meet the feuding duo to resolve the squabble when Parliament resumes sitting on Monday.

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