

Keng Yaik: Politicians are like wild animals
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Outgoing Gerakan president Dr Lim Keng Yaik likened politicians to wild animals.

"I always say politicians are like wild animals... if not imbued with the right principles and philosophy they will only cause the destruction of the party they belong to," he said.

The veteran politician shared these words of wisdom on the '60 Minutes with a Minister programme' aired live on RTM1 last night.

According to Bernama, Lim, who will step down as Gerakan president on April 8, also advised younger politicians that leadership positions in government or party come with heavy responsibilities and are not gifts for personal gain.

He said this was a principle or philosophy not very well understood by the younger politicians now so much so they forget what is expected of them.

"Power goes to their head and they forget their responsibility to the people... younger politicians need to be reminded about this," said Lim, who is also energy, water and communications minister.

He also expressed hope that the younger set of politicians would strive to forge a common Malaysian identity where a person's race would be of no significance.

Lim, who has served under four prime ministers, said he was stepping down from his party post as he felt the time was right and Gerakan had an able successor to carry on its struggle.

Expressing satisfaction that the party was on sound footing for his successor Dr Koh Tsu Koon, he said he would not interfere in party affairs as each leader has his own style of doing things.

"But remember I am not that old or have become senile... I became president of Gerakan at the age of 41, so there's much that I can share but at the same time no one is indispensable in a party," he added.

Auspicious number

According to Lim, he paid more attention to quality than quantity and adopted a non-racial approach in handling issues and the people's problems during his 26 years at the helm of Gerakan.

He said he chose April 8 to retire as the date coincided with his 68th birthday.

"I wanted it to be a happy occasion besides eight is an auspicious number according to Chinese beliefs," he explained.

On contests for posts within a party, he said these were healthy so long as members

did not go overboard.

Lim, who was sacked from MCA in 1973 for calling for a reform of the party, said he "was an outspoken person who did not beat around the bush".

"I speak what is in my heart ... the prime minister once said I am a brutally frank person," he said, adding that he often resorted to humour when discussing sensitive matters as this often helped soften tensions that arose.

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