

DPM: BN preparations unaffected by Koh's decision
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by Hafiz Yatim

The announcement by Gerakan president Koh Tsu Koon that he won't contest in the next general election will not affect the BN's preparations.

Saying this today, BN deputy chairperson Muhyiddin Yassin however did not want to be drawn into speculation as to who would replace Koh in Gerakan.

Muhyiddin, in thanking Koh (right in photo) for his contributions, said everyone should accept Koh's decision not to contest as he was meeting the demands of Gerakan members who wanted him to focus on the party winning in the next general election.

Possibly, he said, Koh could now focus on ensuring Gerakan candidates who contest in the next election would win.

"That should be the immediate focus. I do not think his decision not to contest will weaken the BN party machinery.

"Surely he knows for himself of his decision and we in BN also understand his decision (not to contest) after the last general election results and also the voters' view of the party. He has also considered the views of his party in this," Muhyiddin said.

What was important now, he said, was that there is a new batch of Gerakan leaders and the party will move on from there.

The deputy prime minister said this at the SK Seri Sentul 1 today, where 41 pupils obtained 5As in their Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah examination.

He said the government and BN appreciated and recognised Koh's contributions to the coalition and nation.

Koh had earlier today announced that he would not be contesting in any parliamentary or state seat in the coming general election, paving the way for a new Gerakan leader to step up in Penang.

'All have to accept Koh's decision'

Muhyiddin said all quarters have to accept Koh's decision as he had taken the views of his members during the last Gerakan annual general meeting.

"They have asked Koh to concentrate on ensuring victory for Gerakan candidates. We hope Gerakan as an important component in BN would focus on its candidates winnability.

"Koh had served long in the government and party as an elected representative. We acknowledge the great service he has done," he said.

Asked about the disbursement of the RM100 award to pupils in secondary and primary schools, which is provided for in Budget 2012 but was carried out despite the budget not having been passed by Parliament, Muhyiddin said the matter had been explained in the House - unless the opposition wanted the government to withdraw the payment.

He also refused to comment on the arrest of 11 individuals in Sabah under the Internal Security Act, despite the reforms announced by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to have the legislation repealed.

“Let the inspector-general of police deal with this,” he said.

The 11 were picked up in Sabah by the police anti-terrorism unit, putting into question Najib's sincerity over reforms of legislation that for long has been criticised as draconian and against human rights.

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