

Lee quits Gerakan, rebuts criticisms
Malaysiakini.com
Apr 23, 2008

Former Gerakan deputy secretary-general Lee Kah Choon has submitted a letter to withdraw his party membership and hopes that this will put an end to the controversy surrounding him. MCPX

In an one-page statement today, Lee reiterated that his objective is clear and consistent throughout his political career, which is to serve the people.

lee kah choon and gerakanThe former member of Parliament for Jelutong had resigned from all party posts after Gerakan's annihilation in Penang at the hands of the opposition in the March 8 general election.

However, controversy arose when he accepted the director post in the Penang Development Corporation (PDC) and InvestPenang on Monday in an announcement made by the state Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng.

Criticisms poured in from several quarters including Barisan Nasional chairperson Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who said Lee's decision was "against the spirit of BN."

Former Gerakan president Dr Lim Keng Yaik also offered his "pity" because Lee will have to face distrust from the party and DAP.

Also, Gerakan Wanita head Tan Lian Hoe opined that he should resign and that the party would not break up if Lee's membership was withdrawn.

Yesterday evening, Gerakan acting president Dr Koh Tsu Koon issued a show-cause letter asking him to explain why no action should be taken against him for taking up the opposition job offer.

'My record speaks for itself'

In refusing to answer the letter, Lee explained that his decision to work for the Penang state government was motivated by the island's interest which cannot be compromised by any political consideration.

"In the next quarter, the projected economic slowdown is going to affect out export oriented economic performance.

"I believe the focus on job creation and measures to ensure sustainable growth is more important than continuous politicking," he said.

"Since my decision is not acceptable to the Gerakan leadership, I believe it is best for me to retreat totally from party politics.

"This way, I hope we can put the matter to rest and move forward with some serious tasks at hand," he added.

He also rebutted criticisms from Koh who said the former only has experience as a lawyer

and a parliamentary secretary with the Health Ministry - both unrelated to investment in the industrial sector.

"Criticism on my lack of experience is inaccurate and my professional and service record speaks for itself. If any, the criticism drives me to achieve more for Penang," he said.

"With the political ghost exorcised, I now look forward to work with all parties to ensure Penang leads again," he added.

Lee, 48, who joined Gerakan in 1987, defeated DAP's Karpal Singh for the Jelutong parliamentary seat in 1999 and retained the seat in 2004.

In the March 8 polls, he was also speculated to succeed Koh as chief minister alongside party vice-president Dr Teng Hock Nan and Tanjung division chief Teng Chang Yeow.

However, he lost the Machang Bubok state seat to PKR's Tan Hock Leong. Gerakan also lost Penang when DAP clinched 19 of the 40 state seats and became the earliest state known to have fallen into opposition hands.

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