

Hard for Gerakan to return to its glorious days
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NEWS ANALYSIS KUALA LUMPUR - The attempt to return to its glorious days has become an uphill task for Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Gerakan), a component party of the ruling coalition of the Malaysian federal government, when its adviser has decided to resign.

In an unexpected move, Lim Keng Yaik (*picture*) told reporters here on Monday that he had decided to quit his post as the party adviser, citing disappointment with Koh Tsu Koon, the party president.

As an adviser, Lim does not have the authority to run and manage the party. However, the resignation of the outspoken veteran in the Malaysian political arena is no difference from instituting a no-confidence vote against his successor, Koh.

Koh was hand-picked by Lim as his successor. However, their styles of leadership are very much different, as Koh has been described by Lim as a person who is afraid of speaking evil of somebody.

In a harsh comment, Lim also said Koh was burying his head under the sand like an ostrich, bringing a lot of problems to the party instead of solving the issues that arose.

According to local media, Koh's refusal to attend the state-level extraordinary general meeting (EGM) of the party to solve the leadership crisis in the Penang State in the northern part of west coast of Peninsula Malaysia has triggered Lim to resign.

However, political observers believe that this is only an excuse for Lim to actually burst into anger openly in front of the reporters as Lim is deemed to have long been annoyed by Koh when the latter insisted on accepting the appointment as a Malaysian minister.

Koh was defeated in the country's general election in March, 2008, but he was later appointed as a senator, paving his way for the ministerial post.

The Penang State has been widely perceived as a "Gerakan State" as most of its state assemblymen were mainly members of the party.

However, the state fell into the hands of Pakatan Rakyat, the opposition coalition, in the same election when Koh was defeated.

While Lim is of the view that Koh should stay in the state, where he has served four terms as the state's chief minister for a total of 18 years, Lim also disagrees with the way Koh is made a minister.

Meanwhile, Gerakan is now entangled with state-level leadership crisis in the Penang State when a few disgruntled members want an EGM to be held so that a vote of no confidence can be tabled against Teng Hock Nan, state chairman of the party.

However, Koh has chosen to attend the annual general meeting of the Malaysia Chinese Association (MCA), the second largest political party in the country's federal ruling coalition, instead of the EGM of his party.

For those who know Lim well, this will not be the outcome as Lim will either interfere in the matter at an early stage to prevent the calling of the EGM, or will attend the EGM to help find solutions to party issues.

In fact, Lim admitted that he had once assigned a deputy to attend other member party's annual general meeting as he prioritized Gerakan's affairs.

Gerakan started off as an opposition party but it later joined the federal ruling coalition in 1974, with an ambitious dream to take over the MCA as the second largest component party of the coalition.

After the massive defeat Gerakan suffered in the last general election, some UMNO members have asked the party to give the seat candidacies to other component parties in the next election.

When the ruling coalition and all its component parties are striving to reform themselves to win the electorates' hearts, Lim's resignation will have some negative impacts on the alliance's efforts.

With his abundant experience in the political field, Lim is definitely aware of this. He also knows it is not necessary for him to announce his resignation in a "high-key" manner.

However, from the way he made the announcement, it is apparent that Lim already feels uneasy with the party's future, especially there is call for other component parties to take over Gerakan in the Penang State.

Losing the Penang state government has slammed Gerakan hard.

With its president staying away from the state and being involved in the country's federal administration, Gerakan is akin to relinquish the state.

When internal conflicts continue to exhaust the party's resources, and Lim quitting as the adviser, it is difficult for Gerakan to flare as it did in the past. — *XinHua*

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