

# Gerakan's landmark day

NET- 28/3/2007

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The stage is set for the handing over of the president's post in Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia.

On April 8, Gerakan members will bid farewell to their colourful and dynamic leader, Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, who has been president for 26 years.

His deputy, Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, will be endorsed as the acting party president at the Extraordinary National Delegates Conference (ENDC).

Gerakan secretary-general Datuk Seri Chia Kwang Chye said the central committee had called for the ENDC to debate and approve two resolutions: Lim's resignation and Koh's subsequent appointment as acting president, a post he would hold until the party's election next year.

Lim had long expressed his desire to retire but he only made the formal announcement in June last year.

Chia said although Gerakan members had been appealing to Lim to reconsider his decision, they would respect his wish to step down.

"Since he had put a proper succession plan in place, the central committee finally accepted his resignation.

"We certainly value his leadership. However reluctant we feel, we respect Lim's wishes as he has been leading the party for many years and he feels it is only fair he gives a younger leader a chance to lead the party," Chia said at Menara PGRM yesterday.

Despite holding the president's post for so long, Lim is known as a forward-thinking leader who is constantly reinventing the party with new approaches and ideas.

"He has prepared the party to ensure it is relevant in modern times and is moving in the right direction,"

Chia said.

Calling Gerakan a "predictable party", Chia said he did not foresee any problems in the transition period. The party was stable and all its members would give their full support to the president.

On the possibility of Koh's quiet demeanour being perceived as a sign of weakness, Chia said the Penang chief minister's inner strength lay in his intelligence.

He said it was not easy to debate with Koh as he was very knowledgeable and well-read.

Asked if Lim would hold any position in the party after his retirement, Chia said it was too early to tell.

Lim is the chairman of the Gerakan-run Wawasan Open University and will be active in the forthcoming National Dialogue Initiative, which will discuss "sensitive" issues behind closed doors.

