

Sabah Umno MP claims Gerakan hired crowd for launch
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By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 17 — A Sabah Umno lawmaker today accused Gerakan of paying RM300 to members of the public to attend a launch of its branch office in Tawau by Tan Sri Koh Tsu Koon a few weeks ago.

Kalabakan MP Datuk Ghapur Salleh said this in Parliament today while telling the Gerakan president to forget about contesting in Sabah as the Chinese community there would not support the party.

“If (the money) is confined to just their own members then it would not be so bad. But they even had to bring Umno members, including those from Kalabakan.

“It is shameful,” he said while debating Budget 2012 today.

Gerakan secretary-general Teng Chang Yeow said yesterday that the party is in talks with Sabah Barisan Nasional (BN) to contest in three parliamentary and one state seat there in the coming general election.

On October 8, Koh had said in Tawau that the party is capable of serving effectively if allowed to contest in the constituency.

“We hope to be considered because we have a potential candidate who is popular in the area,” he said after opening the Sabah Gerakan annual delegates meeting.

Today, Ghapur said Gerakan should not look to contest in Sabah after having been rejected in the peninsula during the March 2008 election.

Gerakan was wiped out in its stronghold of Penang where it ceded the state administration to Pakatan Rakyat (PR). It also won just two federal seats nationwide.

One of their MPs, Liang Teck Meng, later denied Ghapur’s allegation and called for BN whip Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin to take disciplinary action against the Sabah backbencher.

“This is not the first time he has criticised his (BN) family,” the Simpang Renggam MP said.

Gerakan has struggled to recover from the mauling it took in Election 2008 and Koh, a minister in the Prime Minister’s Department, said yesterday he was willing to “sacrifice himself” for the good of the party. He stopped short, however, of confirming if this included resigning his post.

On Saturday, Wanita Gerakan chief Datuk Tan Lian Hoe had called for the former Penang chief minister to shape up or ship out.

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