

Tsu Koon says will stay in Cabinet only until elections
The Malaysian Insider
April 09 , 2012
By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, April 9 — Tan Sri Koh Tsu Koon said today he would only stay in Cabinet until the next general election expected to be called soon, calling time on his 30-year political career.

The Gerakan president was reappointed as a senator today but pointed out that he would not contest in the general election that must be held by May next year.

"I have sought the prime minister's understanding that I shall serve in the Cabinet only until the coming general election," the minister in the Prime Minister's Department said in a statement today.

The former Penang chief minister said he would help BN campaign during the polls and then "devote myself full-time to Gerakan until the party elections... by which time, or before then, I shall also decide on my future role in the party."

Koh's (picture) Gerakan was nearly wiped out in Election 2008 and failed to win any seat in its former stronghold of Penang.

He was due to make the step up from Penang chief minister to the Cabinet but was defeated by DAP deputy secretary-general P. Ramasamy in Batu Kawan.

Although he was appointed into the Cabinet when Datuk Seri Najib Razak took over as PM in April 2009, Koh announced late last year he would not contest in coming polls after BN-linked media pressed for changes in the multi-racial party.

The Malaysian Insider understands that the view in Putrajaya is that the mild-mannered Gerakan chief should step down as head of the BN component party before the general election if the coalition is to have any chance of wresting back Penang from PR.

While Koh has not been dogged by allegations of corruption and abuse of power as other politicians, he is viewed as indecisive and a symbol of the BN leadership that voters rejected in 2008.

Najib has spoken behind closed doors on the need to rejuvenate the Gerakan leadership with younger talent, and acknowledges that BN component parties need new talent if inroads are to be made in Penang, where DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng is a formidable opponent.

Koh, who has helmed the party since 2008, has been constantly criticised for his leadership, which many deem as "weak and soft". He is also under immense pressure from party members to come up with a firm decision on his position in the party.

Dissenting voices grew even stronger at the party's 40th national delegates' conference in

mid-October, which prompted him to announce at the end of the conference that he was "willing to sacrifice himself for the party".

Koh added in his statement today that his reappointment would enable him to continue work on his unity and performance portfolio and take the new Rukun Tetangga Act through Parliament.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/tsu-koon-says-will-stay-in-cabinet-only-until-elections/>