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Handling change to be key item at Gerakan conference

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - A top priority for Gerakan in the new millennium is to prepare its members with the relevant knowledge and skills to handle future changes.

Its deputy president, Datuk Kerk Choo Ting, said it was imperative that the party highlight as well find ways to face such changes.

If this is not done, there could be adverse consequences, he added.

"With the exposure brought on by globalisation, the Internet and other modern tools of communication, we expect wave upon wave of changes to occur," he said in an interview.

Kerk said the changes would include the people's priorities, mindset, perception, lifestyle and outlooks on life. "Who knows? In future, people might have different reasons for wanting to join a political party," he said.

As such, he felt party members must be able to attune themselves to the changes if they wished to succeed and to take the party to greater heights of success and be still accepted and respected by the people.

Kerk said the need for members to prepare themselves against the onslaught of future changes would be one of the main thrust of the party's national delegates conference to be held in Penang from Sept 22 to 24.

Barisan Nasional president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will open the party's national conference at Hotel Equatorial in Penang on Saturday. The opening ceremony will be carried live over RTM1.

Kerk will open the party's Youth and Wanita conference at the City Bayview Hotel, Penang tomorrow.

"We hope that by doing so, this will help to generate better and more effective approaches and means of tackling the issue," he said.

As for now, Kerk said that one of the measures was to get party members to be computer literate and to keep them in step with modern technologies.

He said the party has lined up various projects, including the Gerakan IT 2000, for the purpose. They include organising computer classes and IT courses as well as offering free e-mail services for members.

The move into the IT-arena was also aimed at attracting the younger generation to join the party, he said.

Thus far, Kerk said the strategy has already proven to be effective as reflected by number of young faces in the party's central committee.

Kerk said another major topic at the conference was the projection of its non-racial nature and moderate stand. Although the majority of party members are Chinese, Kerk stressed that the party had always been a non-racial party.

"We will be re-emphasising this aspect to attract more non-Chinese to join the party," he added.

On the party's relations with the MCA, Kerk said that as far as Gerakan was concerned, it would co-operate with all BN component parties.

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