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Keng Yaik: Big money being used to lure Gerakan Assemblymen

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PENANG, Thurs. - "Big money" is being used by "power brokers" in Penang to lure Gerakan Assemblymen out of the party and destabilise the State Government, Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said tonight.

Stating that although "things have settled down in Penang" (in reference to the Gerakan-MCA feud caused by the defection of two Gerakan Assemblymen to the MCA), he said there was still undermining forces from outside and inside Gerakan to cripple Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon's leadership.

Dr Lim said that those found to be undermining from within would be expelled.

"My Assemblymen in Penang are under tremendous pressure ... Our people have been approached with money to leave Gerakan," he told reporters at the Jelutong Chinese New Year celebrations at Taman Free School.

Dr Lim said at least two Gerakan Assemblymen had been approached with promises of large sums of money by brokers "connected to stronger businessmen".

"Whether they (the brokers) have connections with other (political) parties is yet to be seen, but I believe there may be a tacit agreement with other parties to undermine us," he said.

Dr Lim said Gerakan would uphold its integrity and remain a business-friendly party but "never under any business power brokers".

Reminding former Gerakan Assemblymen for Datuk Keramat Lim Boo Chang and Lim Chien Aun (Bayan Lepas) that Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had appointed Koh as Penang Chief Minister, Dr Lim said he would brief the Prime Minister soon on the latest developments in Gerakan.

"If they keep undermining Koh, I will consider it an unfriendly act and I am giving them warning that Gerakan and I will retaliate," he added.

Dr Lim also announced the "defreezing" of the party's Datuk Keramat branch. It was frozen after its chairman, Boo Chang, resigned from the party.

After accepting the application forms of 100 people in Taman Free School to become members of the branch earlier, Dr Lim announced the appointment of the branch's former vice-chairman, Choo Tau Choy, as its acting branch chairman.

Choo, he said, would hold the post until the party's branch election in April or May.

"We will defreeze other branches like Nibong Tebal and Bayan Lepas once we have identified the right people to lead, while we will have to freeze branches where people are trying to undermine the party."

Present at today's function were the party vice-president Datuk Dr Kang Chin Seng, national Wanita chairman Datuk Kee Phaik Cheen, Penang Gerakan secretary Dr Teng Hock Nan, Jelutong MP Lee Kar Choon and Sungai Pinang Assemblymen Looi Swee Cheang.

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