

Gerakan to adopt text messaging culture for conference

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PENANG, Sun. The text messaging culture which has swept like wildfire in the Philippines and Japan — will be one of the technology-savvy ways Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia will embrace next month at its annual national delegates' conference.

Cellular phone-totting delegates are expected to widely use the short message service (SMS) facility to communicate with each other, while conference organisers will also use the service for sending last-minute announcements, alerts and reminders and also locate party leaders and members during the Sept 22-23 event.

The use of this cheaper and more discreet mode of mobile communication at the conference, is aimed at advocating the efficient use of technology in daily life, Gerakan secretary-general Chia Kwang Chye said today.

The two-day NDC to be held at the party's Dewan Wawasan at Menara PGRM in Kuala Lumpur, will be attended by about 1,800 delegates and themed *Bangsa Malaysia, Generasi Wawasan*. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will open the NDC.

The event will be preceded by the party's Youth and Women's wings conferences on Sept 21.

Chia said nearly all the delegates attending the NDC were mobile phone users and the party was now working out a mechanism to link these participants via a web-based SMS system. "We are also making arrangements with cellular phone service providers for fast and smooth inter-operator SMS services."

Chia was speaking to reporters after Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon launched "The Fluid of Life" blood donation campaign at the Copthorne Orchid Hotel.

The inter-operator SMS facility is currently available among subscribers of Maxis, TimeCell and TMTouch, while Celcom and DiGi have a separate arrangement which allows its pre-paid and post-paid subscribers to send and receive text messages across the two networks.