

'For Gerakan's dignity, Koh must face Guan Eng'

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Three Gerakan central delegates today urged party chief Koh Tsu Koon to stand as an election candidate in his home base of Penang because it was a matter of the party's dignity.

tan lian hoe gerakan wanita chief agm 2011 4Speaking at the 40th Gerakan National Delegates Conference this afternoon, Johor delegate Teng Koh Keng called on the party president to personally take on Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng in the parliamentary seat of Bagan in the next general election.

"It would be best for our president to return to Penang and courageously face Lim Guan Eng," he declared to cheers and applause from the floor.

He added that if Koh contested in the party's former stronghold, it will boost their morale and unify the party.

"Winning or losing is another matter, at least we will regain our dignity."

This comes after intense speculation that Koh will be contesting for a parliamentary seat either in Perak, Kuala Lumpur or Johor.

gerakan press conference koh tsu koon 2Gerakan had ruled its stronghold Penang for almost 39 years but was abruptly wiped out of the state in the last general election after it lost all of its seats there.

Another delegate, Ngooi Ah Fatt from Kedah also agreed that Koh should remain in Penang should he choose to contest in the next general election.

Speaking to Malaysiakini after his speech, Ngooi said, "I hope he returns to Penang to contest; it will improve Gerakan's motivation and will increase our chances of winning."

Echoing this, Terengganu delegate Feng Swee Heng noted that there was intense debate over whether Koh should contest in Penang in the next general election.

He joked that Koh's Chinese name meant "anak jantan" (man) in Malay, deflecting crude criticism against Koh that he lacked courage in confronting his political opponents.

Penang uphill battle

However, Penang delegate Lee Boon Tien cautioned the floor that the state remained staunchly anti-establishment, stating, "If Koh can win in Penang, then its good, but what if he loses?"

Speaking at a press conference after the meeting, Koh said that he noted the sentiments of the party delegates.

"I hear what they are saying; but where I will contest, I will make an announcement soon."

Earlier in the day Gerakan Wanita chief Tan Lian Hoe launched a broadside against Koh calling him to buck up or step down, but toned down her criticism as the day progressed.

"When I say 'step aside' it doesn't mean stepping down as president; I don't want him to contest in the next general election," said Tan.

She added that she had "full confidence" that Koh would be able to shape up before the next general election.

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