

Guan Eng: Koh must battle in Penang
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By Susan Loone

Embattled Gerakan president Koh Tsu Koon has no choice but to return to Penang to contest in the 13th general election.

NONEHis nemesis, Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng (left), said the main battle would be in Penang and Koh as the party's leader, must return to face the challenges here.

Lim was speaking to reporters after presenting his talk on Budget 2012 in Penang last night.

On whether Koh would be daring enough to return and face him in the polls, which may be called as early as next year, Lim reserved his comments.

Instead, he reminded reporters about his own situation prior to the March 2008 general election, dubbed the 'political tsunami'.

In that election, Pakatan Rakyat captured five states - Kedah, Kelantan, Penang, Perak and Selangor. BN however reclaimed Perak after three assemblypersons from Pakatan defected in 2009.

"In 2008, I, too, had no choice, in terms of political strategy. A leader has to lead his army into the most challenging area."

He was responding to questions about Koh declaring he was ready to sacrifice himself for the party as he prepared his strategy going into the next general election.

Koh was also challenged by his own members at the party's national delegates conference in Kuala Lumpur to return to Penang to face Lim at the coming polls.

Serious threat

When asked to comment about the possibility of Koh facing off with him at the coming polls, which is not due until 2013, Lim said he would accept that challenge, adding that he would face any opponent and give due respect to anyone who contested against him at the polls.

On Umno's plan to recapture Penang from Pakatan, Lim warned that this is a serious threat.

The DAP national secretary general said Pakatan and Penangites would have to decide their future and face this threat seriously.

NONEHe added that if BN wins in the election, Umno may say it will not claim the Chief Minister's post but the party would still decide who leads Penang anyway.

"Whether the person is from MCA or Gerakan, he (or she) would still be Umno's puppet," he cautioned.

Lim was also asked about the case in Perak where Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin (left) from PAS was chosen to be Menteri Besar although DAP had won the most seats in the 2008 polls.

This earned criticism from BN that he was merely a puppet of the DAP even though he was the state's leader.

"The situation in Perak is different. The constitution there says a Malay Muslim must be MB, and it was

the sultan who decided that it should be a PAS candidate," said Lim.

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