

Gerakan rubbishes talk Umno behind Koh's indecisiveness

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by Susan Loone

The Penang Gerakan leadership has rubbished talk that Umno is behind party president Koh Tsu Koon's perceived indecisiveness in naming a successor before he quits as state BN leader.

At a BN walkabout in Butterworth today, state Gerakan chief Dr Teng Hock Nan said the allegation that pressure from Umno caused Koh to delay naming his successor as "rubbish".

"All rubbish... rubbish, rubbish", the state BN working committee chairperson told reporters when asked to comment on the matter.

Teng (right) said it was not a matter of Umno's intervention in the issue but that the coalition, which comprises Gerakan, MCA, MIC, People's Progressive Party and Umno, practises consultation.

He also described as "vicious" those who said Koh had been pressured by Umno to name a particular successor who is not his choice.

"There is definitely the usual discussions and consultation. To say that a certain party is interfering is very vicious..."

"We consult with PPP, MIC, MCA," Teng told a press conference after distributing biodegradable bags to traders and shoppers at the popular Apollo wet market on Jalan Raja Uda with other state BN leaders.

Koh's choice is a tough-talker

Koh, a federal minister, caused new rounds of speculation against him when he announced recently that he was willing to give up his post as Penang BN chief to a leader acceptable to the coalition partners.

This prompted the choice of leader Koh is said to have in mind - Gerakan secretary-general Teng Chang Yeow - to admit he told his boss that he was prepared to take the challenge to lead Penang.

Chang Yeow (left), a former Penang state executive councillor and ex-Padang Kota assemblyperson, also said that Koh had approached him twice on the change of leadership.

However, speculation is rife that Teng prefers state Gerakan vice-chairperson Ong Thean Lye for the post as Chang Yeow is perceived as a tough-talker and not a "yes-man".

Teng has described the succession issue as "sensitive", which he did not raise with Koh when the latter was expected to announce his resignation soon.

This resulted in media analyses attributing Koh's indecisiveness as a change of mind at the last minute, due to pressure from Umno.

Umno is said to wield the most influence in who becomes state BN chief as the right to appoint such leaders is in the hands of Prime Minister and BN national chairperson Najib Razak.

Chang Yeow lets off steam

Meanwhile, Chang Yeow, who is now in China on a business trip, has indicated his frustration at Koh's indecisiveness on his Facebook page.

In one message, Chang Yeow says, "I do not wish to be drawn into unnecessary 'battle field' where indecisiveness dominates the battle!"

In another, he says he likes a quote on tough decision-making by former Singapore prime minister Lee Kuan Yew, hinting at Koh's trademark indecisiveness.

"I'm very determined. If I decide that something is worth doing, then I'll put my heart and soul to it. The whole ground can be against me, but if I know it is right, I'll do it. That's the business of a leader," Lee says in the biography *The man and his ideas* written by Foong Kwang Han.

Chang Yeow is not short of supporters, if his Facebook comment section is anything to go by.

One of his supporters - Hoe Hong Seng - left a comment that he strongly believes Chang Yeow to be the kind of leader that can bring Gerakan to a better future.

"We may dislike his strongman personality, but we can't deny him as a good leader.

"I hope Gerakan need not get approval of Umno to accept him as our future leader, why (is)Umno scare(d), because he dares to speak out? Let us decide for ourselves, Gerakan can and will," Hoe says.

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