

No seat for Gerakan's Teng in Penang?

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By Susan Loone

Penang Gerakan chief Dr Teng Hock Nan will not be fielded in the state in the next general election if speculation is proved correct.

According to reliable sources, the full list of proposed candidates for Penang has been worked out and handed over to party president Koh Tsu Koon.

However, they said that Teng's name is not on the list. He once held the Pulau Tikus state seat.

NONETHree newcomers - lawyers Rowena Yam and Baljit Singh and former Penang municipal councillor Geeta Suresh Chand - have been shortlisted as candidates for Pulau Tikus, said the sources.

Teng's (right) political career almost came to an abrupt halt in 2010 when he narrowly scraped through an emergency general meeting convened for a vote of no-confidence in his leadership.

The sources said Gerakan will contest four parliamentary and 13 state seats in the 13th general election, the same as in 2008.

Of the 30 names submitted to Koh, 18 comprise newcomers while the rest are incumbents. Five names have been proposed for two of the constituencies, said the sources.

Teng's rival to make comeback?

Former federal deputy minister Chia Kwang Chye, who has been silent on the political front following his defeat in 2008, is tipped to contest in Tanjung Bungah.

chia kwang chye interview 290806 talkingChia (left), an arch-rival of Teng in Penang and former Gerakan secretary-general, was the member of parliament for Bukit Bendera.

Current secretary-general Teng Chang Yeow has been proposed for Padang Kota (his former constituency) and Machang Bubuk (formerly held by Toh Kin Woon, a former Penang cabinet member who has since quit Gerakan).

Chang Yeow is slated to take over from Koh as the Penang BN Chief, but the announcement is still pending approval from BN head Najib Abdul Razak.

Another mini-shake up is the absence of state treasurer Ng Fook Onn's name in the state seat list.

Although he has expressed his interest in contesting in Sungai Pinang, his name has been proposed for the Jelutong parliamentary seat instead.

Ng, the former Batu Lanchang assemblyperson, has reportedly threatened to quit the party if he is not fielded in Sungai Pinang.

Baljit, the party's vocal human rights and legal bureau chief, and another second-time contestant Dr Thor Teong Ghee are slated for the Sungai Pinang state seat.

Thor, an active local campaigner, had contested and lost the Jelutong parliamentary seat in March 2008.

Hock Nan philosophical

When contacted, party secretary-general Chang Yeow confirmed that the list has been submitted to Koh,

but refused to disclose details.

"I do not want to create speculation or misunderstanding among party leaders," he explained.

Hock Nan said it is "immaterial" whether he contests or not, and that it is more important for the party to field winnable candidates.

He confirmed that there will be new faces in the line-up as the party is serious about embracing change.

Penang Gerakan will not ask for more seats in order to prevent friction with other BN component parties.

"There's no point having more seats when we cannot win. If we keep asking for more seats, it could lead to disagreement and quarrels," he said.

"Now is the time for everyone to put in an effort to win. The newcomers must work with others.

"It would be pointless if they merely want to show off or prove they are better than others. Then, it will be very difficult to win."

Ng, meanwhile, said it is premature to say who will contest in each constituency as the leaked list may not be 100 percent correct.

"I do not think it is a final list. It will definitely go through some changes when it goes before the central and BN committees," he said.

"At that stage, there is bound to be consultation and evaluation before the list is finalised."

He declined to comment on whether he may be assigned to contest Sungai Pinang after all, saying that party leaders will consider all factors before making the final decision.

