

## **Chang Yeow dismisses 'next Penang CM' talk**

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**By Susan Loone**

Newly-minted Penang BN chief Teng Chang Yeow has quashed the notion that he will automatically become the chief minister should the coalition win back the state in the 13th general election.

"It is not necessary that this will happen," he said flatly, when asked by reporters.

NONEChang Yeow, the Gerakan secretary-general and a former state executive councillor, also revealed his plan to contest a state seat but was silent on the constituency.

He said it is too early to talk about his candidacy as this will have to be discussed by the state BN committee.

Speculation is rife that Chang Yeow is slated for his former state seat Padang Kota or Machang Bubok. He had lost Padang Kota to Penang DAP chief Chow Kon Yeow in 2008.

"We'll take it step by step to overcome the hurdles. Wait until we sit down with other BN component parties to discuss the matter," he said yesterday on the sidelines of a dialogue session between premier Najib Abdul Razak and about 1,000 Chinese NGO representatives in Penang.

najib in penang usm dialogue 220412Najib had earlier held a similar session with about 500 representatives of Indian NGOs at the same venue. He was on a working visit to the state, with an earlier stop in Nibong Tebal where he had announced Chang Yeow's appointment.

Chang Yeow dismissed a question as to whether this would have an adverse impact on his relationship with state Gerakan chief and former Penang BN head Teng Hock Nan.

Even if there are minor misunderstandings, he said, this is not a big issue.

"Our primary task will be to call for meetings of state BN party leaders to work out the election mechanism and find ways to strengthen the coalition and plan strategies to make Penangites regain confidence in BN," he said.

On whether ex-party secretary-general Chia Kwang Chye will return to contest in Penang, Chang Yeow failed to provide straight answers, only saying that "everyone is an asset".

Asked about BN's chances of winning Penang, he said this would have to be left to the coalition's plans and strategies.

As to whether there is enough time for him to turn the tide, he laughed and said a shorter period would somehow compel members to come up with good ideas.

Chang Yeow also denied that sabotage within his party had caused his downfall in the last election, adding "we now look forward to working within the same team".

Koh 'satisfied and relieved'

Gerakan president Koh Tsu Koon said he is thankful and "feels relieved" about Chang Yeow's new appointment, as this signifies Phase Two of political transformation in Penang.

He admitted that, post-2008, there has been confusion in the state BN. However, after Najib became

national chairperson, coalition partners started to band together through hard work and frequent meetings.

NONE"Now we are prepared (to face the challenges ahead) with a new and young leader but he is not alone, he will be assisted by veteran leaders," said Koh of his protege.

"I am very satisfied with the continuity. I, as Gerakan chair(person), will continue to support the state party leadership and BN and will assist Chang Yeow with his new responsibilities."

Asked why the announcement had been delayed and if this had anything to do with certain forces trying to withhold the appointment, he said "that is a very naughty question".

Koh, who was elected the Tanjung MP on April 22, 1982, described the new arrangement as "timely", as it coincides with his 30 years of involvement in politics.

On his next course of action, he said he will go to the ground to assist Gerakan and BN in every state during the election campaign, as he will not be contesting himself.

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