

## **Gerakan, MCA hope to avoid getting an 'egg'**

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GE13 WATCH Penang BN chief Teng Chang Yeow's candidacy in Bukit Tengah has come as no surprise - Malaysiakini had got wind of the move, given his frequent presence on the mainland since last year.

Teng, a three-term assemblyperson for Padang Kota, lost the chance to take on DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng, who offered to battle him in the constituency.

He is now expected to meet state PKR deputy chief Law Choo Kiang, in one of his fiercest battles yet, which will determine BN's relevance in Penang come polling day on May 5.

In a bid to improve its performance, Gerakan has dropped state chief Dr Teng Hock Nan, the former Pulau Tikus assemblyperson, and will field former Bukit Bendera MP Chia Kwang Chye (right) in Tanjung Bungah.

Chia became well known when he beat DAP senior leader Lim Kit Siang in the 2004 polls, where the loosely formed opposition - Barisan Alternatif - suffered its worst defeat.

Gerakan is to contest 13 state and four parliamentary seats, opting to field eight newcomers to overcome the party's poor performance in 2008.

The new timers for the three parliamentary seats are former Penang Indian Chamber of Commerce president N Gobalakrishnan (Batu Kawan), former municipal councillor Teh Leong Meng (Bukit Bendera) and businessman Ng Song Kheng (Tanjung).

Those contesting state seats for the first time are state Youth deputy secretary H'ng Chee Wey (Kebun Bunga), lawyer Rowena Yam (Pulau Tikus), state Youth chief Oh Tong Keong (Padang Kota), and Teng's special assistants Tan Loke Heah (Machang Bubok) and Loo Jia Sheng (Air Itam).

The MCA will field five new recruits in the 10 state seats it is contesting - businessman Sum Yoo Keong (Sungai Puyu), insurance manager Tan Chuan Hong (Bagan Jermal), businessman Tan Ken Keong (Air Puteh), company secretary Low Joo Hiap (Seri Delima) and teacher Koh Wan Leong (Paya Terubong).

Newcomers are also to be fielded in all four parliamentary seats: Youth leader David Chua Teik Siang (Bagan), businessman Gui Guat Lye (Bukit Mertajam), lawyer Teh Beng Yeap (Bukit Gelugor) and engineer Tan Heap Seng (Bayan Baru).

PCM in the mix?

The battle is expected to be challenging in at least three parliamentary and three state seats due to the debut of the relatively new Parti Cinta Malaysia (PCM), which will contest its first election.

Observers said the situation is favourable to DAP because PCM's entry into the fray will likely attract votes from BN supporters, putting MCA or Gerakan candidates at a disadvantage.

PCM was founded by former Gerakan vice-president Huan Cheng Guan (left), who still commands support from BN supporters who have become disillusioned with the current leadership.

Speculation is rife that PCM will contest the parliamentary seats of Bagan, Batu Kawan, and Jelutong.

If Guan Eng were to recontest his parliamentary seat in Bagan, he will face MCA and PCM's Lim Kim Chu.

A DAP candidate is expected to face Gobalakrishnan and Huan in Batu Kawan, a seat formerly held by Deputy Chief Minister II P Ramasamy.

Ramasamy is expected to defend only the state seat of Prai, in line with the DAP's one-candidate, one-seat policy.

Interestingly, there may be a four-corner fight in the Komtar state seat, where Guan Eng's political secretary Ng Wei Aik, if fielded, will meet MCA's Loke Chye Teik.

The duo may face Nibong Tebal incumbent Tan Tee Beng and PCM's Liew Yeow Hooi.

DAP's veteran politician Phee Boon Poh is expected to meet MCA's Sum Yoo Keong and PCM's Lim Seang Teik in the Sungai Puyu state seat.

In Bagan Jermal, another veteran DAP leader Lim Hock Seng, if fielded again, will face MCA's Tan Chuan Hong and PCM's Lim Kim Chu.

PCM's Huan is also vying for the Bukit Tambun seat, against Gerakan's Lai Chew Hock and a PKR candidate who will replace Law, the incumbent.

In 2008, BN only managed to grab two parliamentary and 11 state seats, which were all held by Umno.

This election, dubbed the 'mother of all battles' will show if the BN can gain more seats and whether its non-Malay allies - Gerakan, MCA and MIC - can avoid an 'egg' (no seats at all) from Penang's voters.

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