

'Policies more important than who is state BN chief'

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By Susan Loone

Penang BN is recovering from another massive defeat in the just-concluded general election, after which it would have to identify a good strategy to revamp the coalition to serve the people better.

State BN Youth chief Oh Tong Keong said adopting the right policies was more important than who helms the coalition into the 14th general election.

NONE "The post of the BN chief is just a captain or helmsman of a boat, the position is important, but more important are the policies that adopted by the coalition," Oh (left) told Malaysiakini.

"If we do not want to rebrand the dacing (BN's party symbol) and the coalition, the problem cannot be solved no matter who holds the post," added the state Gerakan Youth chief.

"We need structural change even in our policies. The ones we had like restore the free port status to improve the state's economy and monorail to solve transport problems cannot convince Penangites to vote for us," he added.

"Penangites want something bigger liked fighting corruption, helping the poor, economic equality, stop playing with racial sentiments and understanding the youth," he stressed.

"This is especially so in fighting for corruption and inequality. If we cannot do this, people do not care who is the state BN chief."

Oh was responding to calls by several quarters to let Umno take over the state BN chief post.

Gerakan secretary-general Teng Chang Yeow quit the post when BN performed badly in the elections, garnering only 10 out of 40 state seats, losing one from the 11 they won in the 2008 elections.

Other BN allies like Gerakan, MCA and MIC repeated their massive loss in 2008, failing to capture any seats, with majorities increased for Pakatan.

This prompted state Umno liaison chief Zainal Abidin Osman to propose that the

party can assume the post if Gerakan - which has helmed the position since assuming the chief minister's post in Penang - does not want to continue with it.

'Most logical conclusion'

Local-based NGO Penang Malay Congress (PMC) has also made a similar proposal, saying that this was the most logical conclusion as the Malays are losing power in the state.

NONEPMC president Rahmad Isahak (left) welcomed Prime Minister Najib Razak to helm the post, adding that "symbolically" it would return Malay support to Umno.

"Anyone can express their views but it is BN national chief Najib Razak's prerogative to decide who holds the position," said Oh.

"Perhaps, the election is just over and Najib is busy with his new cabinet and is not free yet to deliberate over the matter," he added.

"If the state BN mechanism is working well, I do not see any problem if he appoints the new chief within half a year or even one year later," Oh added.

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