

## **Penang Gerakan gets set for new leadership**

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**By Susan Loone**

Gerakan goes through its party elections this year, with speculation centred on whether there will be a change in its leadership, especially in Penang.

Penang was the party's stronghold, with Gerakan helming the state government from 1974 to 2008. Its defeat in the 12th and 13th general elections have put the party in a quandary.

Still seething from the GE13 of May 5, in which Gerakan was totally trounced in Penang, the party is picking itself up again for its state leadership elections slated for September.

NONEThe party, which formed the main opposition voice in Penang after the March 8, 2008 election, appeared to come to a standstill after being trashed on May 5, leading to its secretary-general and state BN chief Teng Chang Yeow quitting his posts.

Gerakan's national elections supervisory committee chairperson Chin Fook Weng (right) said the party has called on its members to come forward to take up positions in the internal elections.

"It depends on the members, whether they want a change in leadership," Chin said when asked if the party foresees any changes in its leadership line-up.

"We encourage new blood to come forward, especially those who want to serve the party and the people," he added at a press conference yesterday.

Process for branch elections has started

Chin said the Penang chapter of Gerakan, like the party in the other states, has started the process for its internal elections, which will lead to the party's national delegates conference in Kuala Lumpur on Oct 26, to be officiated by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

The conference will culminate in the election of a new president and national central committee.

NONEKoh Tsu Koon in quitting as Gerakan president last month, soon after his

party's disastrous performance in GE13, paved the way for Gerakan to elect in a new leader.

The party is currently being managed by acting president Chang Ko Youn.

Chin said Gerakan would be the first party in BN to hold its leadership elections after its crushing performance in GE13.

"We have postponed the elections since September last year. All state leaderships have been told to prepare for polling at branch level this month, to be followed by divisional and state-level elections," he added.

With Chin at the press conference was the new Penang Gerakan secretary Dr Lim Boon Ben, who was appointed on May 23 after the resignation of Goh Kheng Sneah.

Goh, who was the BN candidate for Batu Uban, quit his post after failing to capture the seat. He did so soon after state chief Teng announced his resignation.

The Penang chapter is now sending out notices for branch elections, which will take place on June 23 on the island and June 30 in Seberang Perai.

NONEFor the 13 divisions, notices for elections will be sent out on July 9, with nominations fixed for on Aug 2 and voting on Aug 18.

The state-level delegates conference has been fixed for Sept 15, after the nominations for the state leaders is held on Sept 8.

Current state Gerakan chairperson Dr Teng Hock Nan (above) also chairs the state elections supervisory committee and till now Teng has not said whether he will defend his post.

"You have to get your answer from the horse's mouth," Chin said when asked about the possibility of Teng, who is now on holiday abroad, giving up the state Gerakan leadership.

