

Acting Gerakan chief rallies troops to rise again

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By Susan Loone

Acting Gerakan president Chang Ko Youn has urged the party's members to return to their role of "constructive opposition" in Penang following their massive defeat in the 13th general election.

NONE "We urge our members to be more active," Chang (right in photo) said at a press conference last night, before attending a two-hour dialogue session with the members at the state Gerakan headquarters on Jalan MacAlister.

"We understand that after the general election, they have been demoralised," noted Chang, who took over as acting president after Koh Tsu Koon stepped down last month.

"Now that we had enough rest, we have to move on, to take up issues in Penang," he said.

Chang said there were bound to be examples of 'abuse of power', policies and plans by the present administration, led by Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng.

He urged his comrades to play their role in exposing the wrongdoings so that the people could make an informed choice in the next general election.

"Don't give up, for politics is a long-term struggle. Take it as part and parcel of the struggle. We have to face Pakatan Rakyat," said Chang.

He pointed out that it is crucial to identify the party's weaknesses laid bare by the May 5 general election to be able to tackle issues effectively.

Younger generation to the rescue

Asked if the party was conducting a post-mortem on why it lost so badly in GE13, Chang said: "We are doing a review, not a post-mortem as we are not dead yet."

There are avenues for the party to make adjustments and changes as there are young, energetic and IT savvy members wanting to play a meaningful role in the party, he said.

Out of the 11 parliamentary seats Gerakan contested, it won only one, Simpang

Renggam in Johor, while out of the 31 state seats it contested, the party captured only Pemanis (Johor), Sidam (Kedah) and Tanjong Papat (Sabah).

Despite leading the state government in Penang since 1971, Gerakan was wiped out in the state in two consecutive elections since 2008.

On who will the new state BN chief, Chang said there was no urgency for the position to be filled, after Teng Chang Yeow quit the post following BN's failure to recapture Penang on May 5.

Miracle of info age

On how the state BN component parties were coping and coordinating with one another without a chieftain, Chang jested "we communicate through handphones".

He is traveling around the country to meeting with members, especially in states where the party's candidates contested, to obtain feedback, examine their weaknesses and plan for the future.

Penang is his second stop, after visiting Alor Setar on Monday.

Nominations for the 97 state branches in Seberang Perai will be on June 23 and their annual general meeting is scheduled for June 30.

Several Penang Gerakan leaders, including Koh, have given up their branch chairmanship when nominations for branch elections closes on Sunday.

Koh is being replaced by former secretary general Chia Kwang Chye as chairman of the Tanjung Bungah branch.

Penang Gerakan chairperson Dr Teng Hock Nan has given way to Dr Tan Boon Cheong as chairman of Pulau Tikus branch while Ch'ng Keong Leh takes over from Dr Chin Fook Weng as Sri Nibong branch chairman.

Chang Yeow, who is Gerakan secretary-general, also gave way to Loo Jieh Sheng as Muntri Street chairman while former Penang Gerakan secretary Goh Kheng Sneah made way for Cheah Hock Hing as Batu Uban branch chairman.

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