

Penang Umno: Teng can lead state BN again if ...

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By Susan Loone

Penang Umno would have no qualms with Teng Chang Yeow resuming his position as state BN chairperson if he is elected state Gerakan head.

State Umno liaison chief Zainal Abidin Osman said the Gerakan secretary-general continues to enjoy the party's confidence and that no one has yet replaced him as state BN head.

NONETeng (left) had stepped down as state coalition head after the BN failed to recapture Penang in the May 5 general election, even performing worse than it did in 2008.

He also failed to win the Bukit Tengah state seat, which he had contested against the incumbent, PKR's Ong Chin Wen.

"We will only discuss the matter after all BN component parties end their election process this year," Zainal told a press conference at Menara Umno yesterday.

"We still have confidence in Teng. If he becomes the new state Gerakan chief, we would have no problem with him leading the BN again."

Datuk Zainal Abidin Osman, penang umno chiefGerakan members will nominate candidates for their state chief on Sunday, while voting is due to be carried out on Sept 15.

Zainal (right) also conceded that it has been tough for Umno in Penang as the BN no longer forms the state government.

But the party, which won 10 seats in the state in the last polls, is not about to give up and will move on with Gerakan, MCA and MIC as a "good opposition" coalition.

"We will continue to serve the people. All representatives have set up their service centres and in constituencies where Umno did not win, our divisions will act as service centres," he said.

Three new appointments

Zainal then announced replacements for the party's three main posts in the state.

Bukit Mertajam division chief Musa Sheikh Fadzil will replace former state opposition leader Azhar Ibrahim as secretary.

Azhar, the former Penaga assemblyperson, had refused reappointment, citing his wish to retirement as he has held the post for 18 years under four different state chiefs.

Penanti assemblyperson Roslan Saidin is now the treasurer, replacing Nor Mohamed Yaacob who, like Azhar, also wants to retire. He did not defend the Tasek Gelugor parliamentary seat in the 13th general election.

Tasek Gelugor MP Shabudin Yahaya will replace Balik Pulau MP and state deputy chief Dr Hilmi Yahaya as information head.

NONEZainal admitted that Umno needs new blood, noting that although the new appointees are not newbies, they can be considered "new faces" in the Penang liaison committee.

In the same spirit, Zainal declared that Penang Umno will support Musa's candidacy for a post in the Umno supreme council.

"Hilmi and I will not be contesting to be part of the supreme council as we wish to focus our work on Penang, to regain public confidence in Umno and BN," he added.

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