

Gerakan to unveil potential candidates next year
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Gerakan will to identify and introduce its candidates for the next general election after the Chinese New Year next year, which falls on Feb 3, party president Koh Tsu Koon said today.

He also said that besides launching the party machinery, he had been traveling to all the party-held constituencies over the last four months to make a preliminary evaluation of the political situation on the ground.

gerakan life member council congress 061110 koh tsu koonHe said the evaluation and selection of the candidates would be based on qualities such as commitment, integrity, capability and "win-ability".

"We will visit all our state and parliamentary constituencies over the next three months to evaluate the performance of the elected representatives and coordinators," he said in his presidential speech at the 39th Gerakan national delegates conference at Menara PGRM, Kuala Lumpur.

The conference was opened by Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin who represented the prime minister, Najib Abdul Razak.

Koh also emphasised that he did not want Gerakan members to lobby or garner support to become general election candidates. "Do your work, do not lobby," he said.

In the last general election, in 2008, Gerakan lost all the 12 state seats it contested, and retained only two of the 10 parliamentary seats where its candidates were fielded.

'Not useless and hopeless'

Koh called on Gerakan members to remain united and work hard to reconnect with the people and, at the same time, prove to critics that their negative view of the party was misplaced.

"We may be weak but we have not fallen flat on our faces. Our critics are attempting to portray Gerakan as a useless and hopeless party.

"If that's the case, why have three independent elected representatives chosen to join our party? If that's the case, why have 20,000 people in all the states become our new members, and 5,000 more are in the process of applying to join us?" he asked.

Koh, who is Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, said Gerakan was also committed to promoting democracy.

He also said that party members should practise moderation and inclusiveness, especially when discussing opposing and varying views, with an open mind.

He also called on the young leaders in the party to understand the history and ideology of the party's struggle as well as the struggles of past leaders.

Potential candidates needs to be tested

Koh said that though current leaders appreciated the struggles and services of the veterans, the leadership of today should be adapt to the current situation.

"I am sure they also understand that changing times require new strategies, new approaches and new leadership styles," he said, reported Bernama.

At a press conference later, Koh clarified Gerakan will publicly identify potential candidates for most seats in the early half of next year in order for them to be tested.

"They need to be tested by the public. If they are deemed suitable, they will be fielded as candidates," said Koh.

Asked if this will come in conflict with Penang Umno chief Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's call for seats traditionally allocated to BN component parties to be reviewed, Koh brushed the matter aside.

"This reflects his personal views. It was never discussed at the BN supreme council meeting or the management committee. So I regard our seats, as ours," he said.

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